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THÈSE DE DOCTORAT

« A la recherche d'indices »

La philosophie de D. H. Lawrence, à partir de sa non-fiction

Présentée en vue de l'obtention grade de docteur
en **Etudes du monde anglophone** de **l'Université Paul Valéry-Montpellier 3**

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Présentée par **Tim GUPWELL**

Dirigée par la Professeure **Christine REYNIER**

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École Doctorale ED58 Langues, Littératures, Cultures, Civilisations LLCC

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‘Searching for Clues’: The Philosophy of D. H. Lawrence in his Non-Fiction

Abstract: This thesis elucidates the philosophy of D. H. Lawrence, focusing on the totality of his voluminous non-fictional writings. Hitherto the vast majority of critics seem to have found it difficult to take Lawrence’s philosophy seriously. The aim here is to show that Lawrence does indeed have a philosophy which is not only coherent and comprehensive, but also remarkably sophisticated. Not only did he actually complete one philosophy book, *At the Gates*, which had unfortunately been lost, but much of his writing is of an unmistakeably philosophical tenor. Although this is not intended to be a study of influence as such, the crucial influence of William James’s book *A Pluralistic Universe* cannot be ignored, and is vitally important for explaining Lawrence’s own claim that ‘the Greeks, being sane, were pantheists and pluralists, and so am I’ (RDP 313). This thesis also seeks to explain Lawrence’s religious views, his understanding of the cosmos, his belief in a central mystery, and the reasons for his distaste for the man-made world. The title ‘Searching for Clues’ alludes to the fact that Lawrence’s philosophy is perhaps first and foremost a hermeneutic one, but Lawrence also has refined views about the nature of perception, the nature of freedom, and even political matters. Indeed, the solutions Lawrence proposes remain largely relevant today, and he can in many ways be seen as a precursor of modern ecological thought.

Keywords: D. H. Lawrence, non-fiction, philosophy, pluralism, being, William James, Arthur Schopenhauer, Friedrich Nietzsche, hermeneutics, anthropomorphism, relations

« À la recherche d’indices » : la philosophie de D. H. Lawrence, à partir de sa non-fiction

Résumé : L’objet de cette thèse est d’analyser la philosophie de D. H. Lawrence, à partir de l’ensemble de son œuvre de non-fiction. Jusqu’ici, la majorité des critiques semblent avoir eu du mal à considérer la philosophie de Lawrence comme une vraie philosophie. L’objectif ici est de montrer que Lawrence a bel et bien une philosophie, au sens strict, et que celle-ci n’est pas seulement cohérente, mais également d’une grande subtilité. Il est, par ailleurs, l’auteur d’un ouvrage de philosophie, *At the Gates*, malheureusement perdu, et une grande partie de ses écrits a une teneur indéniablement philosophique. Dans ce contexte, l’influence cruciale du livre de William James, *Un univers pluraliste*, ne peut être ignorée et elle est d’une importance décisive pour expliquer l’affirmation de Lawrence le concernant : « les Grecs, sains d’esprit, étaient panthéistes et pluralistes, et moi aussi ». Cette thèse cherche également à expliquer la vision religieuse de Lawrence, sa compréhension du cosmos, sa croyance en un mystère central et les raisons de son aversion pour le monde créé par l’homme. Le titre « À la recherche d’indices » renvoie au fait que la philosophie de Lawrence est peut-être avant tout herméneutique, ce qui n’empêche pas Lawrence d’exprimer une vision subtile de la nature de la perception, de la nature de la liberté, et même des questions politiques. Les solutions proposées restent d’ailleurs largement pertinentes aujourd’hui et Lawrence peut, à bien des égards, être considéré comme un précurseur de la pensée écologique moderne.

Mots-clés : D. H. Lawrence, non-fiction, philosophie, pluralisme, être, William James, Arthur Schopenhauer, Friedrich Nietzsche, herméneutique, anthropomorphisme, relations

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List of Abbreviations Used

Lawrence's Works (Cambridge University Press Editions)

A Apocalypse and the Writings on Revelation
AR Aaron's Rod
IR Introductions and Reviews
K Kangaroo
1L The Letters of D.H. Lawrence: Volume I: September 1901-May 1913
2L The Letters of D.H. Lawrence: Volume II: June 1913-October 1916
3L The Letters of D.H. Lawrence: Volume III: October 1916-June 1921
4L The Letters of D.H. Lawrence: Volume IV: June 1921-March 1924
5L The Letters of D.H. Lawrence: Volume V: March 1924-March 1927
6L The Letters of D.H. Lawrence: Volume VI: March 1927-November 1928
LCL Lady Chatterley's Lover and A Propos of "Lady Chatterley's Lover"
LEA Late Essays and Articles
LG The Lost Girl
MEH Movements in European History
MM Mornings in Mexico and Other Essays
MN Mr Noon
PFU Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious and *Fantasia of the Unconscious*
Plays The Plays
PO The Prussian Officer and Other Stories
PS The Plumed Serpent
RDP Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine and Other Essays
SCAL Studies in Classic American Literature
SEP Sketches of Etruscan Places and Other Italian Essays
SM St. Mawr and Other Stories
SS Sea and Sardinia
STH Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays
T The Trespasser
TI Twilight in Italy and Other Essays
WL Women in Love
WP The White Peacock

William James' Works

EW (Early) *Writings 1878-1899*
ERE *Essays in Radical Empiricism*
Pragmatism *Pragmatism and Other Writings*
1PP *Principles of Psychology Vol. 1*
2PP *Principles of Psychology Vol. 2*
PU *A Pluralistic Universe*

Nietzsche's Works

GS Gay Science
TST Thus Spake Zarathustra
TWP The Will to Power

Schopenhauer's Works

TWWR The World as Will and Representation Volume 1
2 TWWR The World as Will and Representation Volume 2
2PP Parerga and Paralipomena: Volume 2

Heidegger's Works

Basic Problems *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*
Basic Questions *Basic Questions of Philosophy: Selected Problems of 'Logic'*
Question Concerning Technology: *Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*

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Introduction

The Circularity of Lawrence's thought

Hitherto, virtually all critics have been primarily concerned with explaining Lawrence's literature. My primary aim is, on the contrary, to explain Lawrence's philosophy. It must always be borne in mind, however, that none of Lawrence's writings, however philosophical they were in nature, make any pretentions to be pure philosophy. As will be shown shortly, his philosophical works were either thrown away, never completed, or were lost—all that remains are essays, travel fiction, articles, reviews and literary criticism. None of these can be said to be bound by the same requirements as a work of philosophy is. And because Lawrence urgently wanted to get a message across, he never felt bound by the need to employ a consistent vocabulary, to tone down the lyricism, or even to temper the rhetorical aspects of what he was writing—all of which can make the attempt to reconstruct his philosophy frustrating. Indeed, so frequently does he appear to be contradicting himself that in a recent contribution to *The Edinburgh Companion to D. H. Lawrence and the Arts* Howard J. Booth assumes, rather peremptorily, that everyone has now given up on the idea of trying to make Lawrence agree with himself: 'past writing on Lawrence and politics was usually predicated upon his having a consistent position and message, delivered using conventional literary forms and writing styles, which is simply not how critics read Lawrence today' (Booth, Politics and Art 129). If this were really the case and if it simply must be taken *as an article of faith*, that Lawrence's position *is* inconsistent, then there would probably be no point in embarking on a study of his philosophy. But for my part, I have found that after repeatedly reading and re-reading Lawrence's non-fiction, many of Lawrence's seeming contradictions can be explained away—as I hope to demonstrate in the following pages. Without denying the frustration, which P. N. Furbank expressed many years ago, that 'one always seems on the point of grasping his thought as a whole, then this goal recedes bafflingly' (Furbank 145), it is also to assert as Furbank himself did, that with Lawrence's writings, as with Nietzsche's, 'if you are patient and allow them to work upon you, they reveal all the self-sufficiency of high art' (Furbank 145). Thus, when one finally understands the distinction Lawrence makes between *being* and *existence*, a great number of apparent contradictions are resolved. When one understands what Lawrence means by 'freedom', by 'pluralism', by 'the central mystery', or by many other such terms, what has often seemed paradoxical finally starts to make sense. I have therefore striven to always assume that if there is any misunderstanding on my part, this could be due to my own limitations. From

my perspective, calling Lawrence inconsistent is a position which is all too comfortable—it is always far easier to blame the thinker than to cast doubt upon oneself. As a result, the deepest conviction of this study is that Lawrence's ideas are not fundamentally inconsistent (even if at times his language is so). Lawrence, in short, was not a philosopher in the strictest sense of the word, but he did indeed have a coherent philosophy. My aim is to reconstruct this philosophy, as sympathetically as possible, from the writings which remain.

It is also my contention that the principles underpinning his thought remained broadly the same throughout Lawrence's writing life, even as he continually and repeatedly sought to cast them into different words. I am not suggesting that Lawrence's thought did not evolve or change as he grew older. If one compares earlier texts like *Study of Thomas Hardy* or 'The Crown' with later ones, one can clearly sense a change of tone and a shift of emphasis. But suggestions that he dramatically shifts direction (often after having read one particular author) are nearly always over-blown.[1] Consequently, I argue here that it is more a question of fine-tuning those original intuitions, that had already been arrived at relatively early on.[2]

For reasons which I will detail over the following pages, this will also be one of the very few studies to focus almost entirely on Lawrence's non-fiction. The scope and flavour of Lawrence's non-fictional writing, given his relatively short life (he died in 1930 at the age of 45), is breath-taking, and all of it is now available in the Cambridge Editions. It includes travel fiction *Twilight in Italy* (2002), *Mornings in Mexico and Other Essays* (2014), *Sea and Sardinia* (2002), *Sketches of Etruscan Places* (2002); two psychological treatises *Psychology of the Unconscious* & *Fantasia of the Unconscious,* (2014); *Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays* (1985) and *Studies in Classic American Literature* (2014),[3] books which are often defined, rather inadequately as literary criticism; a collection of *Introductions and Reviews* (2014) spanning Lawrence's entire writing career; *Late Essays and Articles* (2014); a collection of essays *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine* (1988); *Apocalypse* (2002), a discussion of the biblical book of *Revelation*; *Movements in European History* (2002), a history book written for children; not to mention 8 volumes of letters, and other important introductions like 'A Propos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*' in the eponymous volume (2002) or the preface to *New Poems* (1919). Unsurprisingly, given the sheer scale and size of these editions, certain volumes have

[1] A case in point is Mara Kalnin's suggestion, in her collective volume *D. H. Lawrence: Centenary Essays*, that upon re-reading John Burnett's *Early Greek Philosophy* (which he had first read in 1915), 'his interpretation of the ideas he found there underwent a striking change in 1929, the final year of his life' (Kalnins 173).
[2] It is for this reason that I include dates of composition throughout.
[3] Some of these were also available earlier in a standalone volume entitled *The Symbolic Meaning*.

been somewhat neglected, in particular the invaluable *Reflections of the Death of a Porcupine*,[4] the fascinating unpublished fragments of *Apocalypse* that were among Lawrence's last pieces of writing, or *Sketches of Etruscan Places*, and it is my hope that the present study will also serve to redress the balance. The Cambridge Editions ushered in a new era of authoritative texts, edited by prominent Lawrence scholars, with each edition preceded by an introduction, a textual history and followed by extensive notes and textual apparatus.[5] Moreover, they made available a relatively large quantity of previously unpublished material.[6]

In 1932, not long after Lawrence's untimely death in 1930, a young Anais Nin had already published one of the very first studies of his work, in which she asked: 'he had a vision. Will it take us one hundred years to understand Lawrence's vision as it took us one hundred years to understand Blake's' (Nin 22). Writing nearly one hundred years after Lawrence's death, it is my hope that this study will finally go some of the way towards dissipating the idea that Lawrence's philosophy is hopelessly confused and beset with contradictions. Nin went on to make the following remark about Lawrence's philosophy:

> In himself he was utterly convinced of the soundness of his philosophy. No man ever wavered less in his convictions. But he was waiting for the world to catch up with him and so he remained long on this first ground, propounding, pleading, emphasising and re-emphasising his ideas. This accounts for much in his work that seems redundant and overemphatic. (Nin 20)

In a more general sense, the French philosopher Henri Bergson argued something similar in a lecture entitled 'Philosophical Intuition', republished in the volume *The Creative Mind*. In it Bergson insists that the thought of any philosopher always circles around one simple idea, a point of which they themselves are often only dimly aware. This point is, Bergson affirms, 'something simple, infinitely simple, so extraordinarily simple that the philosopher has never

---

[4] This is not universally true of all the essays, 'The Crown' for example, perhaps partly inspired by Henry Miller's praise in *The World of Lawrence: A Passionate Appreciation* (1980) (Miller) has received quite a lot of attention, and Michael Black has written about some of the earlier essays like 'The Reality of Peace' (Black, The Early Philosophical Works).

[5] All references will be to the Cambridge Editions, with the exception of the *Collected Poems*. As the editorial board intended, I also give the line references wherever possible. See Michael Black' contribution in *D. H. Lawrence: Centenary Essays*: 'if the text we have produced achieves the status we want for it, it will become the standard text, and to have provided also this standard lineation means that from now on all scholarly work on Lawrence is provided with a simple reference system, and that is a great benefit' (Black, The Cambridge Edition of Lawrence in Historical Context 200).

[6] All three versions of *Studies in Classic American Literature* (2014)[6], two unpublished fragments in *Apocalypse* (2002), the earlier and later versions of *Twilight in Italy* (2002), two versions of the essay 'Pan in America' in *Mornings in Mexico and Other Essays* (2014), to give just a handful of examples.

succeeded in saying it. And that is why he went on talking all his life' (Bergson, The Creative Mind). Bergson suggests that this intuition actually starts from a negation, a refusal to accept what everybody else seems to take for granted: 'faced with currently-accepted ideas, theses which seemed evident, affirmations which had up to that time passed as scientific, it whispers into the philosopher's ear the word: Impossible! Impossible, even though the facts and the reasons appeared to invite you to think it possible and real and certain […] these facts must have been badly observed, these reasonings false' (Bergson, The Creative Mind 128). In his essay 'The Novel' (1925), Lawrence himself seemed to be arguing something similar: 'you can tell me, Flaubert had a "philosophy", not a "purpose". But what is a novelist's philosophy but a purpose on a rather higher level? And since every novelist who amounts to anything has a philosophy — even Balzac — any novel of importance has a purpose' (STH 179:25). Lawrence himself had early on refused to accept that the world could be meaningless, and that there must be some kind of God. But having lost his faith in the Christian God he had been brought up to believe in, he had to formulate, in his own way, a new belief in the divine mystery of the continual creation of the world. The critic, who, it seems to me, got closest to understanding this was Paul Poplawski in his full-length study *The Promptings of Desire: Creativity and the Religious Impulse in the Works of D. H. Lawrence*, but he was primarily interested in Lawrence's fiction, and also failed to draw out all the implications for Lawrence's philosophy (Poplawski).

As Shirley Bricout has pointed out, Lawrence himself was fascinated by the circularity of thought, as his discussion of ancient thought in *Apocalypse* shows: 'a completed thought was the plumbing of a depth like a whirlpool, of emotional awareness, and at the depth of this whirlpool of emotion the resolve formed. But it was no stage in a journey. There was no logical chain to be dragged further' (A 93:18). Bricout points out that Lawrence finds a similar rotary movement in the Psalms and claims that Lawrence 'resolutely identifies such images and the cyclical writing as the aesthetic means to convey a more ancient mode of thinking, from which modern man has become disconnected' (Bricout, Biblical Aesthetics 98). Gilles Deleuze also draws attention to this circularity in his introduction to *Apocalypse*.[7] In his discussion of symbols in Lawrence, he comments that the symbol for Lawrence, is 'a *rotative* thought, in which group of images turn ever more quickly around a mysterious point […] for the symbol

[7] The introduction was to his wife Fanny's translation of Lawrence's *Apocalypse*, and was, in fact, signed by both his wife and himself. It has been translated as 'Nietzsche and Saint Paul, Lawrence and John of Patmos' in *Essays Critical and Clinical* (Deleuze, Nietzsche and Saint Paul 36-52).

is the thought of flows, in contrast to the intellectual and linear process of allegorical thought. "The modern mind apprehends parts, bribes and pieces, and puts a point after each sentence, whereas the sensible consciousness apprehends the whole as a flow or flux". The Apocalypse reveals its own aim: to disconnect us from the world and from ourselves' (Deleuze, Nietzsche and Saint Paul 49).[8] Lawrence is advocating, therefore, a return to a quite different, non-linear way of thinking, to a more cyclical way of thinking, and, as mentioned just above, his own thought certainly seems to revolve around one central idea, the idea of the *creative mystery*.[9] As a result, because it is necessary here to impose a linear structure upon what is essentially a circular, tightly enmeshed thought, it is impossible to avoid revisiting certain notions, though I have tried to avoid this as much as possible.

Lawrence and Philosophy

D. H. Lawrence is best-known as a novelist or poet, but he also devoted considerable time and energy to philosophy, traces of which are to be found throughout the entirety of his writings. In the introduction to the Cambridge Edition of *Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays*, Bruce Steele insists on this very aspect:

> In January 1916, he began his philosophy for the fifth time. "It's come at last. I am satisfied, and as sure as a lark in the sky". But this version entitled 'Goats and Compasses' was abandoned during 1916, and the manuscript destroyed. By September 1917 yet another version was complete entitled 'At the Gates', and this time the manuscript was sent to Pinker in whose hands it remained until 1920. It has since disappeared. It would be a book of about 140 pages, he told Pinker, based upon the more superficial 'Reality of Peace'. (STH xxxi)

Although, *At the Gates* was, as Lawrence said himself, based on the short essay 'The Reality of Peace', he insisted in a letter to his agent J. B. Pinker that this book was different: '*this* is pure metaphysics, especially later on: and perfectly sound metaphysic, that will stand all the attacks of technical philosophers' (3L 455). The story that it was destroyed—and 'put to the

[8] In the original, the quote, drawn from the penultimate chapter of Lawrence's *Apocalypse* actually reads as follows: 'the emotional consciousness of man has a life and movement quite different from the mental consciousness. The mind knows in part, in part and parcel, with full stop after every sentence. But the emotional soul knows in full, like a river or a flood' (A 142:20). Presumably (particularly given the presence of the false friend 'bribe' in the translation to translate 'parts') the translator has translated directly back from Deleuze's French version, rather than locating the original citation.

[9] See chapters 2 and 3 for a development of this point.

base uses of the water-closet' (Nash) — by Philip Heseltine as a revenge for having been caricatured in *Women in Love*, is surely apocryphal, since according to Mark Kinkead-Weekes, Heseltine had described it as 'the supreme utterance of all modern philosophy', and elsewhere called it 'a stupendous book' (Kinkead-Weekes 390). Nonetheless, all that remains of it are three short readers' reports, transcribed by Andrew Nash in his article '"At the Gates": New Commentaries on a Lost Text by D. H. Lawrence' (Nash). The readers, who were clearly not particularly well versed in philosophical matters, expressed a degree of bafflement and bewilderment that would foreshadow many of the reactions of later readers and critics to Lawrence's philosophy,[10] though both also commented on the fineness and lucidity of some passages. Geoffrey Whitworth's report is undoubtedly the most informative, notwithstanding his reservations about the 'looseness and wilfulness of the style', and is worth reproducing in full:

> Those who are not easily disconcerted will realize that they are in the presence of something which in earnestness and sincerity—though not in intellectual width & grasp—may not unfairly be compared with such a book as the *Confessions* of St Augustine. Mr. Lawrence has much of the temperament of the religious mystic, but he is destitute of any perception of a personal God, equally destitute of any bias towards 'morality'. Hence his readiness to conceive an ethical system devoid of moral values in any ordinary sense of the words. 'Desire' is the be-end and end-all of existence for him. 'Intellect & will' he abominates as dangerous nullifications. Desire is the flower upon the stem of life. Its fruition is all that matters. So what is usually conceived as the 'goodness' or 'badness' of any particular desire is irrelevant to this main article of faith, with the result that certain pages of the book glorify passion with an unblushing seriousness not often met with in prose writings. Oscar Wilde certainly forbade his followers only to 'resist temptation'. But Mr. Lawrence says: 'Meet it with open arms. It is the way to God. Not temptation at all, but the Holy Ghost himself'. It must not be imagined that these teachings occupy the whole of the book. There is much beside—much purely metaphysical speculation which would prevent the

[10] Swinnerton made his bewilderment clear: 'Mr. Lawrence says a great deal that is obscure to me, and intellectually I do not follow him, either in theory or in actual meaning, since much of the book is written in a sort of mystical phraseology that means very little to me' (Nash).

> book appealing to any but the most advanced & 'literary' public. I do not therefore suppose the book would do wide harm. Though in 'self-defence' I think that any publisher would be wise to demand the expurgation of those pages in Chap VII which appear (whether intentionally or otherwise) to inculcate unnatural love as a kind of supreme initiation of the soul. The book has an extreme interest as the product of a modern soul at a time of world cataclysm and at grips with the fundamental problems of existence. As such it is certainly worth publishing. (Nash)

Whitworth, though remaining admirably open-minded, is clearly rather bewildered by Lawrence's prose, finding it both beautifully written, and yet largely incomprehensible. Nonetheless, his report does provide many clues as to the real content of the book. Particularly remarkable is the comparison to Saint Augustine (hedged with qualifications as it may be); remarkable too is the final assertion that the book is interesting as 'the product of a modern soul at a time of world cataclysm and at grips with the fundamental problem of existence' for as we will see, this aspect does indeed lie at the very heart of Lawrence's philosophy. Noteworthy too are the references to Lawrence's religious views, his relativistic ethics, and the salience of such concepts as desire, will and intellect.[11] As such, it provides a fascinating glimpse into the nature of Lawrence's thought, essential if we are to ever get close to understanding Lawrence—which is the aim of this study.

As will be shown, Lawrence's early reputation as an anti-intellectual, anti-scientific figure runs counter to the reality. As a matter of fact:

> Bert Lawrence of Eastwood, devourer of books, first of all in England and Wales in the 1904 King's Scholarship examination (Moore 65), pronounced 'well-read, scholarly, and refined' by his teaching supervisor in 1908 (Moore 84), and commended by his Croydon headmaster for his teaching of biology (Nehls 86), cannot be called a despiser of intellect. (Wallace 103)

In her book *Modernist Physics: Waves, Particles, and Relativities in the Writings of Virginia Woolf and D. H. Lawrence* Rachel Crossland argues convincingly that Lawrence had a very sound grounding in basic science.[12] And though he had had no formal philosophical training,

[11] As the lost book was said to amount to about 140 pages it cannot be assumed that it would have been a complete expression of Lawrence's philosophy.

[12] Crossland explains that in his scholarship exams, for which he was placed in the first division of the first class, he had to take a course in elementary physics and chemistry, and that later, as a teacher, he influenced the science

Lawrence's knowledge of philosophy was also extensive, as his childhood friend Jessie Chambers underlines in *D. H. Lawrence: A Personal Record*. According to her, it was during his second year in College that Lawrence began to read philosophy: 'I cannot be sure whether he read Kant at this period, but he advised one of my brothers to give me Schopenhauer's Essays for my birthday, and read 'The Metaphysics of Love' aloud to us' (Chambers 111). She also notes that Lawrence read, in no particular order, Arthur Schopenhauer, Friedrich Nietzsche, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin, Ernest Haeckel, Charles Darwin, Julian Huxley, John Locke, Bishop Berkeley, Herbert Spencer, William James, John Stuart Mill, Samuel Butler's *Erewhon,* amongst many others. Furthermore, Lawrence's non-fiction contains an impressive number of references to important intellectual figures and works, including the Pre-Socratic philosophers, Plato's *Timaeus, Phaedo, Phaedrus*, *The Republic*, Leibniz's *Monad,*[13] Bishop Berkeley, Immanuel Kant, Spinoza,[14] Bergson, Thomas Aquinas, Saint Augustine, Hume, Hegel, Carlyle, John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer, and many more.[15] In the checklist of his general reading section in *A D. H. Lawrence Handbook* (1982), which is compiled from references in his works, letters, and biographies, the list of philosophers known by Lawrence also includes Balfour, Lord Haldane, Kierkegaard, Plotinus, Rousseau, Ruskin, Russell, Swedenborg, and Whitehead (Sagar, D. H. Lawrence Handbook 122). Moreover, Lawrence, as we will see was well versed in the major philosophical problems of his time: the mind-body problem, causality and determinism, different definitions of infinity, the distinction between essence and existence, positive and negative conceptions of freedom, the distinction between perception, apperception and conception, the problem of the one and the many, the problematical nature of epistemological truth claims and of ethical value judgements, theological problems and the different conceptions of God (deism, pantheism), the discourse of science, to name just a few. And in addition to all this, Lawrence had pored over books like Robertson's *Letters on Reasoning*.[16] A quick glance through the long extract given here from Robertson's book—merely the outline of the arguments in one of the letters—gives a flavour of the rigour of the argumentation and the breadth of the topics covered:

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teaching of the whole school to such an extent that the subject was highly recommended by the Board of Education Inspectors (Crossland 84).

[13] See RDP 313.

[14] See STH 91, RDP 198.

[15] These last six as early as 1908 in the first version of 'Art and the Individual' (STH 223 - 229).

[16] Which he mentions in a letter to Blanche Jennings on the 8th of May 1909. Despite the fact that he calls him 'a poor fool' for declaring Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* the finest book written, he clearly knows Robertson well, saying: 'he has called me a fool often enough in his damned *Letters on Reasoning*' (1L 126).

The logical problem of "design" — Transition from the fallacy "not by chance" to the fallacy " designed by an Infinite Person" — Fallacy of the watch argument — Its negation of design in the desert to prove design in the watch — Logical correctness but practical inutility of the proposition that the order of Nature is a matter of chance — Confusion of the argument from a bag of letter-blocks — Similar procedure yields phenomena such as are recognised as part of natural order — Theistic argument from the " machine" to Nature— The totality of things is as such necessarily incommensurable— The sympathetic fallacy exploded as to phenomena, insisted on as to the totality— There can be no rational ascription of single mode to the totality of things — Terms of mode, to be significant, must be comparative or contrastive — Professor Jevons's use of the term "thing" — Infinity a negative predication: otherwise non- significant— Nullity of the formula "Good Infinite" — The formal fallacies of idealism— Its propositions finally verbalisms, signifying only changes in definitions of terms — Progression of fallacy up to theism— Momerie on " purpose " and " chance " — His metaphysical inconsequence — Mill's self-contradictions as to the external world — Hamilton on primary and secondary qualities of matter— The idealist verbalism as to thought maintaining objects — Mill and Hamilton on the metaphysics of the Infinite — Infinite Goodness a countersense — Mill and Mansel — Momerie on Infinite Personality — The outcome of argument on The Absolute — The making of an Absolute from Self— Dr. W. Smith's exposition of Fichte- —Nullity of the teaching— Professor Bradley's grounds of rejection — Summary of the debate on design in terms of logical first principles — Theological insincerity as to causation— Causation not a modal conception but part of the reasoned conception of sheer existence — The theologian's self-stultification in passing from "infinite design" to "individual free-will" — Such intellectual perversity an aspect of the evil in the order of things — To be conceived in terms not merely of insincerity but of difficulty of problem — Above all in terms of imperfection of the instrument of language — The admissions of Jonathan Edwards — Language as such peculiarly hard to reform — Conduct, however, in somewhat similar case through force of early education — Rarity of faculty for independent and morally consistent thought — Need for recognition of

> this in order to the maintenance of charity— Approach to the problem of Free-Will — Need to prepare for its difficulty. (Robertson viii)

Published as a second edition in 1905, it was heavily engaged in contemporary philosophical debates and interestingly, many of the terms used find an echo in Lawrence's own vocabulary. Lawrence had probably read other works by Robertson, although this cannot be ascertained with certainty,[17] but he had also read similar works by other well-known contemporary thinkers such as Balfour. Finally, Lawrence's family were avid readers of periodicals like *The New Age*, which published many articles and essays on subjects held to be topical at the time. Thus, Lawrence was philosophically competent, and well-versed in the fundamental problems of philosophy.

The point Jessie Chambers emphasizes, however, is that Lawrence's recourse to philosophy was a very personal one, and stemmed, at least initially, from a need to figure out his place in the world. She notes that reading Schopenhauer in particular seemed to give him some solace at a time when he was feeling lost: 'Schopenhauer seemed to fit in with his mood. He thought he found there an explanation of his own divided attitude and he remained under the influence of this line of reasoning for some time' (Chambers 84). For it was to philosophy that Lawrence turned during the period of his great spiritual and intellectual crisis. She writes that, during these college years, Lawrence had changed:

> It was during these years that Lawrence seemed to lose much of his spontaneous gaiety. In earlier days the whole family, from father downwards, would light up at his coming. But now he often came into the house in a brooding, abstracted mood, and would sit quiet, as if withdrawn into himself. The eclipse of his sunny nature was probably due as much to the growing complexity of his inner problems as to any influence of the wider world. (Chambers 64).

She goes on to explain that 'what he read was to be applied here and now; he seemed to consider all his philosophical reading from the angle of his own personal need':

> He certainly read much more than is indicated here; he seemed to read everything. His vitality and interest were the same in the sphere of books as

[17] See note 1 of the letters ((1L 37).

> in other departments of life. He took in eagerly all that came to his hand, shaping it according to his need (Chambers 93)

In other words, it was to philosophy that he turned when he started to look for answers, and it is philosophy which underpins his future work. In a much-discussed letter to a former college teacher, Lawrence writes: 'I owe you a debt. You were my first live teacher of philosophy: you showed me a way out of a torturing crude Monism, past pragmatism, into a sort of crude but appeasing Pluralism' (1L 147).[18] The torturing crude monism probably refers to the kind of monism to be found in materialists like Haeckel, but the reference to pluralism must surely refer to William James, the author of *A Pluralistic Universe.*[19] Later too, in a time of personal crisis, Lawrence turned to philosophy as we can see in a letter to Middleton Murry on the 23rd of May 1917: 'philosophy interests me now—not novels or stories. I find people ultimately boring; and you can't have fiction without people' (3L 127).[20] To put it in a nutshell, Lawrence saw philosophy as a response to existential angst, and in this respect, he more closely resembles thinkers like Kierkegaard (whom Lawrence had some knowledge of) than philosophers of the like of Bertrand Russell whom he was later to befriend. His philosophy was a hermeneutic one, a search for meaning in a world which seemed to him to have gone badly awry. Philosophy was thus a vital part of his make-up, and yet, relatively little attention has been paid to this aspect of his work. It is my hope that the present work will go some of the way towards rectifying this.

Lawrence and the Critics

In the early years succeeding Lawrence' death in 1930, a rather negative picture of Lawrence was often painted, via a spate of aestheticized, psychologized 'new biographies' that were very much in vogue at the time (Baldick 261). Many of these, like Middleton Murry's *Son of Woman: The Story of D. H. Lawrence* seemed to be as much about settling old scores as

[18] Montgomery discusses this letter, but, to my mind, he misinterprets it. According to him, 'This implies that by the time he left college in 1908 he was no longer a Pragmatist and within another year had moved past Pluralism. Pragmatism could not long satisfy Lawrence's philosophical appetite' (Montgomery 32). It does not follow from what Lawrence writes in this letter, that he had moved beyond pluralism, and as the title of this book makes clear, Lawrence still considered himself to be a pluralist many years later. It seems possible that Montgomery draws this erroneous conclusion because he does not draw a clear distinction between pragmatism and pluralism.

[19] What Lawrence found in William James will be developed in greater detail in chapter 2.

[20] As Mills (1988) points out, one should not overstate the importance of Lawrence's extreme declarations in personal correspondence, but it is evident that Lawrence turned to philosophy during the war (Ellis and Mills 40-41).

about Lawrence himself. Murry alleged that Lawrence was 'a sex-crucified man' (Murry 21) and in the final pages condemned him as a kind of failure:

> We needed a leader and a prophet, you were marked by destiny to be the man; and you failed us. It was your destiny to fail us, as it was your destiny to fail yourself. In the measure in which you failed yourself, you failed your fellow-men. (Murry 366)[21]

In a similar vein, one of the earliest books on Lawrence by William York Tindall, *D. H. Lawrence & Susan his Cow* (1939) adopted a rather supercilious tone, sneering at Lawrence's intellectual capacities, accusing him of primitivism, of falling under the mystical spell of the theosophist Helen Blavatsky, and indeed going so far as to charge Lawrence (as Russell soon would do too)[22] with having fascist tendencies (Tindall). Frieda replied in 'A Small View of D. H. Lawrence', criticizing Tindall's 'jeering tone' and lambasting Tindall for calling Lawrence a fascist: 'As for his being a Fascist, that is bunk. He was neither a Fascist nor a Communist nor any other "ist". His belief in the blood was a very different affair from the Nazi 'Aryan' theory, for instance. It was the very opposite […] He wanted a new awareness of everything around us. Fortunately, we have more means of knowing than merely through the intellect, but Professor Tindall does not know this' (F. Lawrence, The Memoirs and Correspondence 136).[23] Nonetheless, in many ways these early engagements with Lawrence set the tone for much of what was to come. Already by 1955, Mary Freeman in her far more sympathetic *D. H. Lawrence: A Study of his Ideas* was able to identify at least four pervasive illusions about D. H. Lawrence. Firstly, that of 'an erratic, contradictory man who can only be enjoyed but not understood'; secondly, that of 'a Lawrence preoccupied with sex, or chronically rebellious'; thirdly, as 'a supposed atavist', yearning for the past; fourthly, 'either that of a reactionary', resistant to our most benevolent ideals, or as a 'a fascist'. Though mainly focused on the novels, her fine book, full of insights, was one of the first to set about repudiating these ideas, and striving to establish Lawrence as a serious thinker, mainly through eight 'cross-sections'

[21] Lawrence's wife Frieda must have been responding to this charge in her brief essay 'D.H. Lawrence, the Failure' when she emphasized his zest for life and 'his absolute need to investigate all his relationships to their very roots', riposting that 'if Lawrence's life was a failure, then I long for more failures like this in our day' (F. Lawrence, The Memoirs and Correspondence 128-9).

[22] See Russell's *Portrait from Memory* in which he states that Lawrence's 'blood-consciousness' seemed to him to be 'frankly rubbish, and I rejected it vehemently, though I did not know then that it led straight to Auschwitz' (Russell 107). This was almost certainly disingenuous. As Booth points out, 'Russell had fallen out badly with Lawrence and there was perhaps a personal animus' (Booth, Politics and Art 131).

[23] Frieda replied to Russell too: 'As for calling Lawrence an exponent of Nazism, that is pure nonsense. You might as well call St Augustine a Nazi' (F. Lawrence, The Memoirs and Correspondence 137).

dealing with a number of aspects of his philosophy: 'At the time of Lawrence's deepest despair and confusion he made his most persistent efforts to clarify and simplify his beliefs' (Freeman 82). Yet, notwithstanding her efforts, Lawrence continued to be misunderstood, or pigeon-holed as a prophetic figure.

Paul Eggert notes that there was 'an appetite in critics in the 1950s and afterwards to cast Lawrence in the role of prophet and saviour' (Eggert 30) due to a widespread loss of belief and sense of existential crisis, a feeling that 'the moral stables of Western society had to be cleansed before any civilisation worth the name could be created' (Eggert 30). Mark Spilka's *The Love Ethic of D. H. Lawrence* (1955), for example, 'turned Lawrence's writings into a religious love ethic' (Eggert 31). But this view of Lawrence as a prophet was often accompanied by the assertion that Lawrence was no philosopher, like Graham Hough in *The Dark Sun* (1956), that what Lawrence offers is merely 'a *Weltanschauung*, his own vision of life. But we have no convenient word for this; so we must fall back on philosophy, bearing in mind that it is philosophy only in a loose sense of the word' (Hough 218). Although Montgomery argues that Leavis's later book on Lawrence *Thought, Words and Creativity: Art and Thought in Lawrence* (1976) is less binary about classing Lawrence as either a prophet or an artist, it is also true to say that although Leavis supported Lawrence, he identified himself as an anti-philosopher which meant, of course, that he believed Lawrence was not one either.[24]

Meanwhile, the status of non-fiction was gradually being eroded, partly due to the influence of *New Criticism*, with which Leavis was closely identified. *New Criticism* was the dominant movement in literary criticism throughout the middle decades of the twentieth century, putting the emphasis on close reading of texts, and its methodology was influenced, amongst others, by William Empson (himself a trained mathematician), and I. A. Richards who argued in *Practical Criticism* that literary study should follow the principles of 'objective' science. New Criticism, therefore, strove to treat the work of art as an autonomous object, seeking to divorce it from its social, cultural and historical context. As Michael North writes: 'in the mid-1970s, Cleanth Brooks was still distinguishing the proper, intrinsic study of literature as such from 'the study of sources, social background, history of ideas, politics, and social effects' (North 28). Nevertheless, as Pericles Lewis highlights in *The Cambridge*

[24] In his earliest book on Lawrence, Leavis had already declared: 'I think of myself as an anti-philosopher, which is what a literary critic ought to be—and every intelligent reader of literature is a literary critic' (Leavis 34). A few years later another collection of critical essays and papers entitled *The Critic as Anti-Philosopher* (1982), in which Leavis praised Lawrence, was published.

Introduction to Modernism: 'literature in general clung stubbornly to reality' (Lewis 4). Even the stream of consciousness technique was ultimately an attempt to realistically render the subjectivity of experience. In his words: 'modernism represents not the rejection of conventions altogether but simply a new, more authentic set of conventions' (Lewis 5).[25] Literature in fact never went as far as art and continued to interact with the social, cultural and political world.

Nonetheless, one of the lasting consequences of this focus on the autonomous work of art was the downgrading of non-fiction, less amenable to formal analysis than the novel or the poem.[26] This despite the fact, as Chris Baldick points out in the *Oxford Literary History*, that in the early twentieth century non-fiction was considered just as important as fiction, poetry and theatre, with nearly all Modernist writers, including T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, E. M. Forster, T. E. Hulme, Aldous Huxley, and many more, expressing themselves in a wide variety of genres:

> Before the Second World war there prevailed among readers, authors, and publishers a shared conception of literature far more capacious than the restricted model of 'imaginative' writing that we now usually entertain. It was taken for granted that Literature included not only poems, plays, and fictional prose, but also biographies, travel books, essays, memoirs, critical studies, historical narratives, philosophical treatises, sermons, political speeches, and even scientific lectures (Baldick 253)[27]

Moreover, the emphasis on the autonomy of the work of art, and its formal qualities led to some extent, to a concentration on literary techniques such as the 'stream of consciousness', the use of free indirect discourse, the 'unreliable narrator'. Indeed, as Shane Weller notes in *Modernism and Nihilism*: 'in the field of modernism studies, it has long been the accepted practice to consider Modernism primarily, if not exclusively, as an aesthetic phenomenon' (Weller 1). Lawrence himself, as McCarthy points out, protested against this preoccupation with

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[25] Throughout, Modernism will be used to refer to the literary period running roughly from 1910 to 1940, not to be confused with Modernity which refers to a style or a way of life and thought of the Modern Era, dated back by some back to the Renaissance, and by others to the ancient Greeks and Romans.

[26] Eggert notes, for example, that 'the travel essay was better suited to old-fashioned belles-lettrisitic appreciation than it was to the rigours of close-reading and New Criticism' (Eggert 29).

[27] He goes on to point out that: 'this breadth can be seen in the scope of the reprinted classics issued by J. M. Dent in their popular Everyman's Library Series. These included, along with poetry, drama and fiction, dozens of volumes categorized under Biography, Essays and Belles-Lettres, History, Oratory, Philosophy, & Theology, Science and Travel & Topography; the number of titles published under those categories indeed outnumbered those in the Fiction list' (Baldick 253).

subjectivity and form (McCarthy 23).[28] As a result, the majority of studies preferred to focus on Lawrence the novelist, with his non-fictional writings being more or less relegated to the lesser status of secondary sources what were considered to be the more important novels. Thus, non-fictional works like *Study of Thomas Hardy* or 'The Crown' were not considered in their own right, but were merely seen as helpful means of explicating novels like *The Rainbow* (Kermode), or *Women in Love*.

A greater interest in the literary, cultural and philosophical context emerged anew from the 1980s onwards, and imparted considerable impetus to the studies of Lawrence's thought and non-fiction.[29] Paul Eggert notes that from around 1980 (with the introduction of the Cambridge Editions) there came about a far greater emphasis on 'authorial intertextuality': 'suddenly everything Lawrence wrote was understood to be related intimately to everything else written around the same time' (Eggert 49). More attention was paid, for example to Lawrence's interaction with the early Greek philosophers (Eggert 49). The decade from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s saw a tremendous upsurge in the attention paid to the context of Lawrence's thought, with the first full-length studies devoted entirely to Lawrence's non-fiction. Daniel J. Schneider was the first to really take Lawrence's thought seriously with two incisive monographs. His first book *D. H. Lawrence: The Artist as Psychologist* (1984) sought to demonstrate that Lawrence was 'a healthy and detached intelligence' (Schneider, D. H. Lawrence: The Artist as Psychologist 1), arguing that 'no one has as yet done a comprehensive study of the principles of Lawrence's psychology or a systematic analysis of the problems (Schneider, D. H. Lawrence: The Artist as Psychologist ix):

> What is disturbing, however, is the view that Lawrence's thinking is incoherent, compulsive, self-defensive, or just plain silly—a view that ignores his detachment, his power of observation, his intelligence, his prolonged efforts to define and account for the deep psychological and moral problems of our age, and his prolonged meditation on the sources of renewal of individual and social health. (Schneider, D. H. Lawrence: The Artist as Psychologist 3)

[28] For example, Lawrence criticizes Fry's 'significant form' in 'Introduction to these Pictures'.
[29] Similarly, as Micheal North points out, Alex Zwerdling's *Virginia Woolf and the Real World* (1986) was meant to be mildly polemical, since previous Woolf scholarship, he argued, had largely ignored Woolf's interest in 'realism, history and the social matrix' (North 25).

Structured into three parts, Schneider's book examines Lawrence's psychological principles, before looking at the way they impacted on his fiction, and finally comparing his psychology with that of his contemporaries, as well as that of more recent psychology. Thus, the first three chapters of the first part look directly at Lawrence's psychology, making use of all his discursive writings. He sketches out, very clearly, in the opening pages, some of the basic premises of Lawrence's thought. There follows a discussion of Lawrence's philosophical sources: the materialists (Darwin, Huxley, Haeckel, Spencer), and the respectively decisive influences of Schopenhauer, William James and Nietzsche. The third chapter provides a brief but interesting analysis of Lawrence's theory of the unconscious. Schneider's second book *The Consciousness of D. H. Lawrence: An Intellectual Biography* (1986), is, as its title indicates an intellectual biography. Each chapter covers a key moment in his life, often linked to a theme of his thought ('resonance to the All', 'blood consciousness', and so on). More importantly, Schneider correctly argues that 'the failure to appreciate Lawrence's religious nature at all stages of his life has led to subtle but important distortions' (Schneider, The Consciousness of D. H. Lawrence: An Intellectual Biography). As stated earlier, Schneider's work was important because he was one of the first scholars to take Lawrence seriously, and yet as with most critics, he tended to focus mainly on the fiction.

Increasing attention was paid to issues that had been central to the literary world at the beginning of the twentieth century. Notions of Modernism were revised, with increasing attention being paid to the thought of the period, and, in particular, the powerful impact of thinkers like Bergson and Nietzsche, as Mary Ann Gillies observes:

> The last two decades of the twentieth century witnessed a renewed interrogation of all facets of modernist culture. The 1980s, in particular, witnessed a reassessment of modernist aesthetics. The work of Sanford Schwartz, Michael Levenson, and Ricardo Quinones, to name just three of the important re-interpreters, transformed the way in which we talked about the literature and art of the early twentieth century. (Gillies 112)

Quinones, for example, pointed out the manner in which early Modernism was attempting to throw off the influence of the Romantic and the Victorian era, as can be seen in T.E. Hulme's *Speculations*. Sanford Schwartz emphasized the importance of Bergson, William James, Bradley and Nietzsche in *The Matrix of Modernism*, his study of the poets T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. The philosopher Charles Taylor analysed in great detail the philosophical issues at stake

during the period in his magnum opus *Sources of the Self* (1989) (Taylor, Sources of the Self). And as Jeff Wallace shows in *Beginning Modernism* (2011) certain ideas were fundamental to modernist thought (the secular and the religious, evolution and entropy, physical fields and forces, language, time and space, the human subject), and not to be ignored (J. Wallace, Beginning Modernism).

At the same time, Michael Bell's *D.H. Lawrence: Language and Being*, (1991), widely acknowledged as seminal in Lawrentian studies, used the work of Martin Heidegger to shed light on Lawrence's, affirming that: 'Lawrence's *oeuvre* is best elucidated by through the approach to Being which constitutes the central philosophical concern of Martin Heidegger' (Bell, D. H. Lawrence: Language and Being 6). Bell convincingly shows that Lawrence did have a metaphysic, and that, like Heidegger, he was concerned with casting doubt upon 'the assumed dualism of world and consciousness' (Bell, D. H. Lawrence: Language and Being 6).[30] However, as Bell himself states, his analysis concentrates almost entirely on the novels.[31] Also published in 1991 was *The Apocalyptic World of D. H. Lawrence*, by the Norwegian scholar Peter Fjågesund. Fjågesund analyses Lawrence's historical vision, again focusing primarily on Lawrence's novels, though he briefly alludes to some of his non-fictional works; but his repeated description of Lawrence as 'a prophet of doom' is diametrically opposed to the view that will be laid out here (Fjågesund). Another book belonging to this category, which has already been mentioned, is Paul Poplawski's insightful but ultimately frustrating *Promptings of Desire: Creativity and the Religious Impulse in the Works of D.H. Lawrence* (1993). Though Poplawski correctly identifies the concept of creativity and the creative mystery as being at the very heart of Lawrence's thought and work, he fails to clearly define the terms, or to draw out the consequences; and, as with many critics, he focuses almost entirely on the fiction. Anne Fernihough's *D.H. Lawrence: Aesthetics and Ideology* (1993) also takes Lawrence's thought seriously, but concentrates on his aesthetics rather than his thought as a whole (Fernihough). Finally, Montgomery's *The Visionary D. H. Lawrence: Beyond Philosophy and Art* (1994) argued that Lawrence's work fused the two modes of what Middleton Murry had called the

[30] For Michael Bell, Lawrence (like Heidegger), contested the dualism world/consciousness: 'the mistake lies in conceiving of Being as separable from consciousness' (Bell, D. H. Lawrence: Language and Being 7).

[31] Bell expresses a preference for concentrating on the novels on the basis that other forms such as his travel writing allowed Lawrence to express and explore his ontological vision "largely in his own terms" whereas, in the novels this vision was 'brought into mutually testing conflict with the conventional sensibility and the society of his day' (Bell, D. H. Lawrence: Language and Being 11). I would argue that this conflict with the society of his day is by no means limited to his fiction, and that this dialectic is between the two also an integral feature of his non-fiction.

'prophetic' (Middleton Murry) and F. R. Leavis the 'artistic',[32] into one mode he called the 'visionary' (Montgomery). Using other thinkers like Coleridge, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, the pre-Socratics and Boehme, he sought to bring out Lawrence's ideas by means of what he called 'explicatory parallels'. This can yield some useful insights (such as the explanation of polarity), but Montgomery often seems to forget who he is supposed to be discussing and spends far more time talking about other thinkers than about Lawrence himself with the result that there are, at times, whole pages where little or no mention of Lawrence is made at all. (Montgomery 66-69).

The cultural turn also manifested itself in the rise of 'studies of influence', though the earliest examples of this type of criticism, notably those of Emile Delavenay, do actually date back to some of the earliest Lawrentian scholarship. For any study of a thinker's thought, it is helpful to delineate the framework of this aspect since on the one hand, writers like Lawrence were continually on the lookout for new ideas, as he admits in *Fantasia of the Unconscious*:

> I am no "scholar" of any sort. But I am very grateful to scholars for their sound work. I have found hints, suggestions for what I say here in all kinds of scholarly books, from the Yoga and Plato and St. John the Evangel and the early Greek philosophers like Herakleitos down to Fraser and his "*Golden Bough*," and even Freud and Frobenius. Even then I only remember hints — and I proceed by intuition (PFU 62:22)

On the other hand, as Lawrence himself takes care to point out here, their influence should not be over-exaggerated. There are many drawbacks and limitations to studies of influence, not least of which is that 'it is impossible to describe or even enumerate all the contexts of a given text. Whatever particular context is limned in a particular discussion, the text will in some sense exceed it' (Mao 12). Over-reliance on a pre-established framework or an overly linear manner of thinking can be counter-productive, as is the case (or so it seems to me), in Barry J. Scherr's full-length study *D. H. Lawrence's Response to Plato: A Bloomian Interpretation* (1996). Examining Lawrence's rather ambivalent relationship with Plato, he employs Bloom's concept of the 'anxiety of influence' to impute to Lawrence a belief in his own greatness and an unconscious desire to assure his own 'poetic immortality',[33] declaring that 'wrestling with Plato was essential to his attainment of poetic immortality' (Scherr 18). As a defence mechanism,

[32] In Leavis's earlier work *D.H. Lawrence: The Novelist*.
[33] A point contradicted in Worthen's biography (Worthen 190 – 191).

Lawrence is alleged to have created a 'blind "self-serving" misinterpretation of Plato' (Scherr 44). Scherr then proceeds, rather unconvincingly to my mind, to show how scenes in *The Rainbow* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover* were supposedly motivated by Lawrence's unconscious reaction to Plato's *Phaedrus.* Delavenay's much earlier examples, for all their careful scholarship, exemplify other potential pitfalls. As Schneider and others point out, 'no direct evidence proves that Lawrence ever read Carpenter or spoke of Carpenter's ideas' (Schneider, The Consciousness of D. H. Lawrence: An Intellectual Biography xi). Moreover, Schneider implicitly criticizes Delavenay for asserting that Lawrence 'adopted uncritically the queer ideas he picked up from such men as Houston Chamberlain, Otto Weininger" and neglecting other demonstrably more important ones such as William James and Schopenhauer (Schneider, D. H. Lawrence: The Artist as Psychologist 2).[34]

Scherr's Bloomian approach also shows the limitations of a linear approach to a thinker, which seems to depend on what Thomas Kuhn called in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* the 'Whig interpretation' of historical progress by incremental steps (Kuhn). We are wedded to an idea of *linear* progress in which we are the terminus, the end point—an idea contested by Lawrence. Lawrence himself seems to advocate something that more clearly resembles a kind of *Zeitgeist*: 'recover the real background, put the book into natural relationship with its time and place and spirit, and it lives again with a fine new life' (A154:14). Or again in the foreword to *Fantasia of the Unconscious*: 'the metaphysic or philosophy may not be anywhere very accurately stated, and may be quite unconscious in the artist, yet it is a metaphysic that governs men at the time, and is by all men more or less comprehended, and lived' (FU 65:15). Lawrence also criticizes the museum in Florence in *Sketches of Etruscan Places* for removing all the Etruscan exhibits from their original context, neglecting differences in place and time, and amalgamating them together as if they were all the same. Ultimately, whether Lawrence had read Carpenter or not is a moot point since no writer or thinker operates in a vacuum but, on the contrary, in an environment where shared meanings and ideas circulate freely and openly (in Lawrence's period via discussions, societies, periodicals, books, church services and so forth). It is, in fact, impossible to know everything that Lawrence may have read, or what Lawrence may have gleaned from his many conversations with such academic and artistic figures as Middleton Murry, Bertrand Russell, Hilda Doolittle, Aldous Huxley, Samuel S.

[34] On the other hand, Cark Krockel's *D. H. Lawrence and Germany: The Politics of Influence* (2008) and Stewart Smith's far more recent *Nietzsche and Modernism: Nihilism and Suffering in Lawrence, Kafka and Beckett* (2018), which devotes a chapter to Lawrence, are far better examples of the usefulness of studies of influence.

Koteliansky, and many others. Doubtless, it is for this reason that Montgomery insists that his is not a study of influence:[35]

> Yet this is not a study in influence. There are too many difficulties in demonstrating direct and causal influence. Most of the ideas discussed here could have come from numerous sources, and the strands making up the web of Lawrence's thought are hopelessly tangled. (Montgomery 39)

Instead, Montgomery takes from Michael Bell the concept of 'explicatory parallels', by which he conveys the idea that the goal is not to establish any kind of linear link between one thinker and another but rather to use one to shed light on the other.

Most of Lawrence's non-fiction had been available in the rather unwieldy *Phoenix* (1936) and *Phoenix II* (1968), but the introduction to the later volume had established a division between Lawrence's "primary" and "secondary writings', and asserted that the main use of the second was to elucidate the novels and poems.[36] It was in this same spirit that Frank Kermode made a distinction between the major novels as art and 'the unqualified, uninspected dogmas of the treatise and letters' (Kermode). But the impetus created by the Cambridge Editions led to the first critical studies entirely devoted to his non-fiction being published towards the end of the 1980s and the early 1990s, with David Ellis and Howard Mills' book *D. H. Lawrence's Non-fiction: Art, Thought and Genre* (1988) and Michael Black's *The Early Philosophical Works: A Commentary* (1992). Both Ellis and Mills' book, and Black's, highlight the impact of the publication of the Cambridge Editions of Lawrence's work. Black also highlights the way in which the editorial process draws attention to the evolution through early drafts which helps 'to trace the relationships between the texts' (Black, The Early Philosophical Works 2). Though, ultimately, neither wished to upset the apple-cart, preferring to agree that the fiction remained the more important component of Lawrence's work,[37] both played an important role in drawing attention to the importance of the non-fictional in its own right, and in its great variety of forms. The earlier work by Ellis and Mills was innovative for their attempt to establish the non-fiction

[35] At first glance, Montgomery's book does indeed look like a study in influence. All the chapters link Lawrence to another thinker.

[36] 'The essays and sketches of D. H. Lawrence take on a particular importance in any view of his imaginative, primary writings. Because his major achievements, his fiction and poetry, are so often prophetic – that is, closely related to Lawrence's passionately held beliefs – the secondary work is of greater significance than is the case with most writers' (PH II ix).

[37] 'It is no part of our intention to suggest that there should be a simple reversal of the priorities which the division implies' (Ellis & Mills 5). Black adopts a similar line of reasoning: 'no-one writing on Lawrence now would want to reverse that corrective achievement' (Black, The Early Philosophical Works 101).

as important in its own right, and what they say about the negative definition of non-fiction is worth citing here:

> Towards the beginning of one of his non-fictional works—*Psychology and the Unconscious*—Lawrence points out that "The word unconscious itself is a mere definition by negation and has no positive meaning". Non-fiction is similarly a definition by negation and suggests how critically ill-equipped we are to deal adequately with that large part of Lawrence's work for which the methods and approaches developed during many years of novel criticism seem inappropriate. (Ellis and Mills 2)

Black suggested that the two different modes could be envisaged 'as if Lawrence, at different times, was looking at some objective from two different places in the landscape, and trying to advance towards it from the two different directions, over different kinds of terrain. The philosophical writings are neither a short cut nor an account of the other journey' ((Black, The Early Philosophical Works 104). Another important aspect they both addressed is T. S. Eliot's famous assertion that Lawrence had 'an incapacity for what we ordinarily call thinking' (*After Strange Gods* (1934), 58). On the one hand, Ellis and Mill pointed out that, in contrast to what Eliot had, rather snobbishly asserted, Lawrence's working-class chapel culture had, in fact, been extraordinarily rich.[38] This is confirmed by Ford Madox Ford (if he is to be believed) who stated that, 'before chapel, the group would 'be talking about Nietzsche and Wagner and Leopardi and Flaubert and Karl Marx and Darwin': at chapel, the sermon would discuss the same figures' (Nehls i.152). Indeed, Ellis and Mills maintain, Lawrence was not only exceptionally intelligent, but he was certainly no less proficient at 'what we ordinarily call thinking' than Eliot himself.

And yet, somewhat paradoxically, they follow F. R. Leavis's insistence in *Thoughts, Words and Creativity: Art and Thought in Lawrence* (1976) that Lawrence's thought was 'nowhere a philosopher's' and that the proper approach to Lawrence was to also treat his discursive writing as 'art-speech',[39] rather than as philosophical thought (Leavis 40-41). Despite their insistence on Lawrence's intelligence, they also maintain that Lawrence's non-

[38] A detailed description of this extraordinarily fertile environment is to be found in Worthen's biography *D. H. Lawrence: The Early Years* (1991) (Worthen, D. H. Lawrence: The Early Years 1885-1912 169-172).

[39] Leavis is perhaps referring to this quotation by Lawrence himself: 'And you can please yourself, when you read The Scarlet Letter , whether you accept what that sugary, blue-eyed little darling of a Hawthorne has to say for himself, false as all darlings are, or whether you read the impeccable truth of his art-speech' (SCAL 14:5); in other words, he is implying that what Lawrence thinks he is saying is not all that important.

fiction, at best, should be treated as 'thought-adventures'. The psychological books, for example 'can be recommended for what they are in themselves, as well as for what they reveal about Lawrence and his work. But one ought to be restrained from claiming too much for them, especially as regards lucidity and coherence' (Ellis & Mills 97). An almost entirely analogous position is maintained by Black:

> Lawrence's thought could not come out as propositions. Since he was a poet-novelist his mind worked in another way, such that the fullness of his thought could only be rendered by more immediate and complex uses of language than logic and analysis allow. (Black, The Early Philosophical Works 95)

Thus, despite their invaluable work in bringing fresh attention to Lawrence's non-fiction, they were unable, or unwilling, to view it as serious philosophical thought. Black describes three typical reactions to Lawrence's discursive writing: firstly, the 'honestly hostile, to throw the book across the room'; secondly, 'to be condescendingly superior from a position of incomprehension (as Eliot and Russell were)'; finally, to be 'damagingly supportive' (Black, The Early Philosophical Works 104). These classifications are interesting as any careful reading of the literature on Lawrence's non-fictional writing will yield numerous examples of the first two categories. In the above passage, Black himself may be said to have fallen into the second of the three. Certainly, some passages seem to prompt particularly visceral reactions, which are, at times, barely restrained: 'the reader who threw *Fantasia* against the wall at the beginning of the chapter 13 will ask why poetry or art should take the blame. The more moderate response involves noting just how keen Lawrence is to imagine cosmological activity as a quasi-scientific process […] it is important that in Lawrence's mind there is nothing at all fanciful or abstract about his "vibrations"' (Ellis and Mills 78). Or, discussing a key passage from *Psychology and the Unconscious*, Ellis declares that: 'the reader can pass this by with no more than the lift of an eyebrow…' (Ellis and Mills 76). Particularly revealing, however, is that Black did not seem to envisage a fourth category, that of taking Lawrence seriously as a thinker, and wondering whether any apparent incomprehensibility might not, in fact, be a result of one's own limitations. One notable exception would be the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze, who insists upon the sophistication of Lawrence's thinking: 'Lawrence does not say simple things, and it would be wrong here to think we have understood him immediately' (Deleuze, Nietzsche

and Saint Paul 39).[40] The sustained attention Deleuze paid to Lawrence over many years provides invaluable support for the claim that Lawrence was an original, complex thinker, whose value has hitherto been insufficiently appreciated.[41]

Perhaps surprisingly, after Ellis and Mills, and Black, very few (if any) full-length studies have been dedicated entirely to Lawrence's non-fiction. Lawrentian criticism from 2000 onwards has, broadly speaking, exemplified 'New Modernism' as described by Douglas Mao:

> Scholars committed to revitalizing the study of modernism in the 1990s were interested in more than re-examining canonical works and expanding the canon. They also wanted to study both new and old objects differently […] what was most centrally new in the new modernist studies was its openness to methods and values associated with other studies' approaches (Mao 3)

After the relatively rich decade of studies of Lawrence's thought from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s, the number of monographs devoted to Lawrence seems to have dropped off, with the notable exception of Jeff Wallace's excellent *D.H. Lawrence: Science and the Posthuman,* (2005). From this period on, the approach to Lawrence can probably be best described as thematic though as before, the overwhelming focus is on Lawrence's fiction. Some have focused on Lawrence's rapport with science, like Jeff Wallace's book (mentioned above) or Rachel Crossland's *Modernist Physics: Waves, Particles, and Relativities in the Writings of Virginia Woolf and D. H. Lawrence* (2018). Others have focused on places like Italy, like the collective volume *Lake Garda: Gateway to D. H. Lawrence's Voyage to the Sun* (2013), edited by Nick Ceramella, (with discussion of *Twilight in Italy*); or on America such as Lee M. Jenkins's *The American Lawrence* (2015), which asks if Lawrence can be seen as an authentic American voice. More recently, some work has been published on Lawrence and psychology, notably Turner's *D. H. Lawrence and Psychoanalysis* (2020) and Thalia Trigoni's illuminating *The Intelligent Unconscious in Modernist Literature and Science* (2021). Large collective volumes have also brought together Lawrentian specialists around particular themes such as the volume *Technology, and Modernity* (2020), edited by Indrek Männiste and the voluminous *Edinburgh Companion to D. H. Lawrence and the Arts* (2020), edited by Catherine Brown & Susan Reid. Recently too, Lawrence seems to be returning to the fore with an increasing

[40] The original reads: 'Lawrence ne dit pas des choses simples, on aurait tort de croire avoir compris tout de suite' (Deleuze, Apocalypse 16). The 'here' added by the translators is an inference from the text, whereas Deleuze could be understood as talking in a more general sense.
[41] I will be discussing Deleuze and Lawrence elsewhere, but particularly in chapter 8.

emphasis on ecology, with Terry Gifford's *Ecofeminism and Nature* (2023) and a forthcoming volume *Reading D. H. Lawrence in the Anthropocene.* Nonetheless, overall, whilst articles in periodicals and reviews continue to refer from time to time to Lawrence's non-fiction and thought, it seems to have been somewhat neglected since the heyday of the 1990s. Geoff Dyer's recent attempt to valorise Lawrence's non-fiction in *Life with a Capital L* may show, perhaps, that the trend is being reversed. Dyer notes that 'one way to rebalance the books is to extend the critical catchment area beyond the fictive straits of F. R. Leavis's 'great tradition' to include forms of writing that are considered ancillary or minor. If Lawrence remains a great writer today that is due in no small part because his enduring freshness and force is found in the travel books, in poems that were scarcely even poems, and in the scatter of his essays' (Dyer xi).

Searching for Clues: The Way Forward

In *Green Modernism* (2015), Jeffrey Mathes McCarthy asserts that today's Modernist criticism can do more by insisting 'on the modernist novel as an active participant in modernist society' and on its 'capacity to reinflect that culture and to revise the discursive construction in which it sits' (McCarthy 18) If the text is 'a site of conflict, a place where contending versions of society unfold, then books are social forces' (McCarthy 8). Likewise Douglas Mao agrees with Rita Felski in his introduction to *The New Modernist Studies*, that literary works must be read in ways that do not entomb them in reified historical periods and that remain alert to their capacity to make things happen' (Mao 11). Thus, what is at stake for the modern reader should not be neglected: 'both Felski and North urge a bringing to the fore of the ongoing power of texts, and of reactions to them, to affect the contemporary world' (Mao 11). Accordingly, McCarthy advocates thinking of texts as discourse, interaction between text and milieu, between text and reader. Discourse can help bridge the gap between the world constructed in a text, and the social, economic, cultural and political world to which it refers. If, as he asserts, 'modernist novels are discursive interventions in the social world that surrounds them', then surely this is all the more so for non-fiction? Indeed, in a comparative study, Richard M. Chadbourne suggests that it is this very bi-directionality which is the hallmark of the essay: 'the essay, finally is a unique vehicle of "thought", of the pondering of experience. Its author stands in a distinctive relation to his subject matter, which our international consensus suggests might best be described as "existential"' (Chadbourne).

So, can Lawrence's philosophy still talk to us today? Clearly, the problems confronting the Lawrence of the early twentieth century share much common ground with those of today,

rendering it easier ‘to discern meaning for our own moment in both texts *and* their contexts’ (Mao 12). In his introduction to *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism* Pericles Lewis characterizes the modernist period as being that of three crises (of representation, of liberalism, of reason)—all of which are relevant to Lawrence (Lewis). The famous letter to Garnett about character (2L 182) shows that Lawrence was heavily involved in thinking through the crisis of representation, but as will be shown, the traditional tenets of liberalism and reason were also in his line of sight. The crisis of liberalism involved a socio-political response to the problems of the Industrial Revolution, technology, standardisation, democracy, utilitarianism, rational autonomy, war; the crisis of reason was linked to the problem of the apparent and the hidden, of truth claims, of ethics, of the unconscious (what Ricœur called the hermeneutics of suspicion). All of these issues which pre-occupied Lawrence continue to preoccupy us to this very day. Seeing Lawrence’s discursive writing as a kind of bi-directional protest is a central concern for this study, and developing an adequate method to do so in practice is a fundamental part of it. For Lawrence’ philosophy to have agency, he needs to be translated into a more modern language. This means explaining, rather than paraphrasing, and it means introducing a new vocabulary. Citing Oscar Wilde, Saïd writes that criticism ‘treats the work of art as a starting point for a new creation’ (Saïd 21). In fact, Lawrence’s own approach relied on translating other texts into his own vocabulary. Thus, what is needed is a work of interpretation, like Lawrence’s own thought (as we will see) and involves continually asking the question: what does he mean by this? We must continually be looking for clues, for ‘a constant conversion of thought from static to dynamic’ (Saïd 21). This means an engagement with later thinkers, and contemporary thinkers; and not just those who were influential in Lawrence’s time. This is not, of course, to neglect the vital role of Arthur Schopenhauer, Henri Bergson, Friedrich Nietzsche, William James, Blaise Pascal, and others, without whom Lawrence’s thought would probably not have been possible, but also to recognize, as Michael Bell has shown, that subsequent thinkers like Martin Heidegger can shed valuable light on Lawrence’s thought. Thinkers closer to Lawrence’s time like Erich Fromm, Karl Jaspers, Thomas Kuhn, but also more contemporary work like Charles Taylor, or Hartmut Rosa’s R*esonance*, can all help to bring out the relevance of Lawrence’s thinking for the problems of our age.[42]

[42] Lawrence’s review of Trigant Burrow’s book provides a model for how this might operate (IR 331-336). The reader who reads both the original and Lawrence’s review cannot fail to appreciate his ability to assimilate someone else’s thought to his own without deforming it (Burrows himself was very pleased with Lawrence’s review.

In *D. H. Lawrence: The Early Philosophical Works*, Black asserts that critics must avoid 'the temptation to produce a rapid paraphrase or summary in which the ideas are extracted, while a few quotations give a sense of the 'style' or reproduce particularly good moments'. A recent passage affords an excellent example of the practice of using a few quotations to give a sense of this kind of "style":

> In his condemnation of the Cartesian mind-body dichotomy, Lawrence warned the readers that "[t]he mind as author and life is anathema" (PFU 43). Instead, he urged us to "descend too deep for our unpractised minds" (PFU 89), and acknowledge the existence of "a specific form of knowing that takes place at each of these [bodily] centres, without any mental reference at all. (Trigoni)

By employing a different approach, 'that fundamental falsification is avoided' (Black, The Early Philosophical Works 110). Paul Eggert argues that in the 1950s and 1960s, the procedures of New Criticism and other close-reading regimes 'tended, to yoke the criticism to Lawrence's own formulations. His participatory prose tended to deny the reader any critical distance' (Eggert 32). Today still 'when you read Lawrence, it is hard to separate yourself from him. His prose is what might be called *participatory*' (Eggert 32). Explaining rather than paraphrasing is one way of keeping a distance. In a manner of speaking, it is to adopt the approach Kant adopted towards Rousseau: 'I must read Rousseau so long that the beauty of his expressions no longer disturbs me, and only then can I first investigate him'.[43] Many approaches to Lawrence's thought have attempted to do the opposite: to strip away the thought and leave behind the poetical. Such is the approach, for example, of Howard Mills in his chapter on *Twilight in Italy* in *D.H. Lawrence's Non-Fiction* (1988), where he argues that 'the chapter's moments of transcendent unity and counterpoise are not metaphysical-cosmologico-ontological ideas but experiences' (Ellis & Mills 48). According to Mills, 'most exegeses of the book make it sound like sawdust interspersed with mumbo-jumbo' (Ellis & Mills 49).

Secondly, Black notes that many critics examining the non-fiction have engaged in a kind of cherry-picking. By commenting on the clearer passages whilst glossing over 'the less amenable' by pointing out 'in a generalising way' that 'Lawrence is engaged in deploying dualities or polarities', 'the thinking can be characterized without much engagement with it.

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[43] Kant says this in '*Bemerkungen* in den *Beobachtungen* über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen' (AA 20:30). Montgomery notes that A. C. Bradley's approach to Wordsworth's poetry which aims to spoil the poetry 'in order to show the skeleton of ideas in it' succeeds brilliantly (Montgomery 40).

The works can be given a rapid summary conveying what Lawrence seems to be saying: a set of concepts. This is inadequate' (Black, The Early Philosophical Works 106).[44] Any new approach must avoid this pitfall of skimming over the difficult passages and seemingly paradoxical statements. Such an example (taken out of context) of what Black is getting at can be seen in the following extract from Poplawski:

> … Lawrence's next major foray into the world of metaphysics was in 1917 with the essay 'The Reality of Peace'. This provides us with perhaps his most complete and explicit religious statement. Unequivocally, he affirms his belief in an unknown vital force that urges us from within to seek fulfilment of being and thereby to achieve a transcendent consummation of our lives in the timeless "fourth dimension". In the essay, Lawrence further synthesizes his previous metaphysical formulations, and in particular those aspects of Romanticism and vitalism remarked upon earlier: the relaxation of the egotistical will and lapsing way from the known "stable ego", the faithful surrender to a divine "correspondent breeze", and the apprehension of "another ego", a deeper core self that is in touch with the creative life force… (Poplawski 144)

The problem with this is that it does not really explain, but rather creates a sort of pastiche of Lawrence's habitual vocabulary, sometimes, but not always, in quotation marks ('fulfilment of being', 'the timeless fourth dimension', 'the egotistical will', 'stable ego', 'the creative life force').

Like Rousseau, whom he liked, Lawrence had a taste for paradoxical statements. These have often been simply dismissed as mere contradictions or as mysticism,[45] but it is argued here that the vast majority, if not all of these paradoxical statements, reward sustained attention.

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[44] To this he added three more: it must be borne in mind that certain passages may never have been intended for publication, such as 'those places in *Mr. Noon* where Lawrence is thinking that he may be only person who will ever read this…' (Black, The Early Philosophical Works 108). Moreover, the reader or critic should not expect 'rational propositions in a logical sequence' (Black, The Early Philosophical Works 110). And finally, the writings should be treated as a sequence, and 'allowed to illuminate each other' (Black, The Early Philosophical Works 106).

[45] James C. Cowan agrees with Francis Ferguson, whom he quotes as saying that 'Lawrence's gift was not for system-building, but for "voice, *daïmon*, inspiration, sensibility": Lawrence had many visions, but no consistent doctrine' (Cowan 16). Poplawski has a chapter entitled 'Lawrence against himself', but his incomprehension is apparent when he uses phrases like 'he seems to be asserting' (Poplawski 139). See also pp. 50, 115, 116,117, 138.

Thus, even closer attention will be paid to those statements which appear to be the most paradoxical, incoherent, or incomprehensible. Here are just a few examples:

- 'Men are less free than they imagine; ah, far less free! The freest are perhaps the least free' (SCAL 17:31).
- 'But what of Dido my unconsciousness has, I could not tell you. Something, I am sure, and something that has come to me without my knowledge…' (STH 11:14).
- 'The great laws of the universe are nothing more than the fixed habits of the living unconscious' (PATU 18:10).
- 'The queer cowy mystery of her is her changeless cowy desirableness' (RDP 339).
- 'And, therefore, since the living really sway the universe, even if unknowingly; therefore there is no one universal law, even for the physical forces' (FU 153:7).

Faced with these kinds of statements, we can either hurl the book across the road like Ellis's frustrated reader, or (and this will be the approach adopted here) we can try to elucidate them.

Previous critics have analysed Lawrence's philosophy by analysing the novels, but this approach is fraught with difficulty. Can fictional characters be taken as expressing the point of view of their author? Is Rupert Birkin in *Women in Love* actually a faithful representation of Lawrence, or is he a parody of him as Tiverton points out?[46] Can Mellor's outburst about the world in chapter XV of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* be taken as a reflection of Lawrence's standpoint, when it is clear that it is partly motivated by his resentment that Connie is intending to spend the summer without him in Venice?[47] Even if there are a few passages, in *Mr. Noon* or *Kangaroo*, for example, which clearly read like stand-alone philosophical reflections, these are few and far between. On the other hand, the essay, which I take as paradigmatic of non-fiction, 'is the form in which the author usually speaks in his own name and takes the reader into a dialogue of confidence, but not necessarily in autobiographical fashion…' (Chadbourne). As Wendall V. Harris notes in his 'Reflections on the Peculiar status of the Personal Essay', the personal essay is an invitation to the reader to participate in an individual way of looking at things, or of 'pursuing fresh thoughts of one's own for which the unique mental organization has somehow been a catalyst' (Harris 936), 'the writer of the personal essay puts an arm around the reader and says "let's be off together"' (Harris 946). If Lawrence's thought is to be

[46] Tiverton cites the example of Birkin's letter, which is read out mockingly by Halliday. The letter clearly resembles the vocabulary Lawrence often uses in his essay, but is grossly exaggerated: 'Lawrence has here produced a perfect self-parody' (Tiverton 4).
[47] 'She felt he was bitter now partly because she was leaving him, deliberately going away to Venice' (LCL 218).

understood in any kind of meaningful way, there is a need for a new emphasis on those forms that have been relatively neglected hitherto: essays, articles, reviews, introductions travel fiction, and literary criticism.

Saïd notes that for Lukacs, the essay expresses 'a yearning for conceptuality and intellectuality, as well also as great ultimate questions like what is life or man or destiny' (Saïd 20). In other words, they are concerned with 'significance'. This search for meaning explains the importance of the word 'clue' in Lawrence's non-fiction. Lawrence is a veritable detective, always on the look-out for glimpses of understanding:

> We hear His strange calling, the strange calling like a hound on the scent, away in the unmapped wilderness. And it seems great fun to follow. Oh, great fun, God's own good fun (RDP 192:40).

Not only are there more than 100 uses of the word 'clue', but it is a word that often occurs in passages that seem particularly important, because they are often characterized by considerable intensity. Jessie Chambers recalls in her memoirs that, 'on a Sunday evening when for the moment he and I were alone, he took up a Bible and said with a defiant look: 'if the Bible gives me a clue, then I shall enter the ministry'. He opened the Bible at random but the message was inconclusive' (Chambers 85). The word clue is used polysemically by Lawrence to indicate some kind of revelation of truth, or as an orientation for future action, which can be discovered, as can be seen in the appendix. Lawrence is seeking the clue to the cosmos, the clue which holds all things together, the clue to the outer universe, the clue to love, the clue to being, the clue to what is missing inside men; he seeks the clue to the soul, the clue to faith, the clue to the future, the clue to Russian Literature, the clue to Freud, the clue to Edgar Allan Poe—but the clue is always hidden. For Lawrence, then, the world is a place which is full of meaning—if only we are able to unlock its secrets, and this is what Lawrence sets out to do.

Summary and 'Introduction to *The Dragon of the Apocalypse* by Frederick Carter'

The incredible richness of Lawrence's thought is apparent in a short 'Introduction to *The Dragon of the Apocalypse* by Frederick Carter' which Lawrence wrote in 1930, shortly before the end of his life.[48] In this little text—despite it being only 11 pages long— can be

[48] Due to the unwieldiness of the full title, I will hereafter shorten the title in this section to 'Introduction to the Dragon'.

found the majority of concerns highlighted in my chapters. It is a very distinctive, very personal review in a characteristic Lawrentian style of Carter's attempt to explain the *Book of Revelation*, a book in itself which fascinates Lawrence. In it Lawrence recounts the story of the reception of the first version of Carter's book in Mexico. Called to the post-office in Chapala to fetch a parcel, he is confronted by a suspicious post-master, who (having seen the astrological engravings that accompanied the manuscript) wants to know if it is a book of magic, obliging Lawrence to reassure the concerned post-master that it is only a book about the history of magic. And, after the book is finally released, Lawrence's first comment about the book gives a good flavour of Lawrence's mindset. The book he says 'was nearly all astrology, and very little argument. It was confused: it was, in a sense, a chaos. And it hadn't very much to do with St. John's Revelation. But that didn't matter to me' (A 45:31). Lawrence's reading, like his thought, is unconventional, he is not looking for arguments but for meaningful experiences: 'I don't care *what* a man sets out to prove. So long as he will interest me and carry me along. I don't in the least care whether he proves his point or not…' (A 50: 26). Thus, in the introduction to the second edition (the review which has come down to us), he even mentions how he urged Carter to return to the original version rather than the tighter argument of the second. 'No, says Carter, 'it isn't *sound*' (A47:9). But it is clearly not academic soundness that Lawrence is looking for: 'it matters so little to us who care more about life than about scholarship, what is correct or what is not correct. What does "correct" mean, anyhow?' (A 50:15), he asks. The 'Introduction to the Dragon' highlights the centrality of the notion of interpretation in Lawrence's non-fiction, and is a perfect example of the manner in which Lawrence adapted his reading to suit his needs. Containing personal revelations, like the angst his early scientific reading had caused him, and his early exposure to the Bible at Sunday School and in Chapel, the introduction shows how Lawrence's early experiences left their traces in his work. In addition, it shows his interest in myth, symbols and allegory, his concern with the nature of knowledge, his disillusion with the society of his day, and the extent to which he was prepared to look back to ancient wisdom to find a way out of what he considered to be the terrible impasse of modern society. But above all, it shows his preoccupation with existential concerns, and the need to find meaning in the world to combat 'our own unbearable emptiness' (A 53:14), as he describes it here.

It is this search for meaning which constitutes the subject of the first part ('Searching for Clues') of this study of Lawrence's thought. The first chapter ('The Clue is Missing inside Men') looks at the bedrock of Lawrence's thought: what was it, to employ Bergson's terms,

which Lawrence refused to accept? What was the focal point around which his early thought revolved? We look at the way he strived to overcome the spiritual and intellectual crisis of his youth, his double-edged reaction to nihilism, his ultimate rejection of scientific materialism, and the first outlines of his philosophy. Lawrence reveals something of the impact that this scientific reading had on him in 'Introduction to the Dragon' when he writes: 'I well remember my first real experience of space, reading a book of modern astronomy. It was rather awful, and since then I rather hate the mere suggestion of illimitable space' (A 46:31). In fact, what Lawrence is seeking is some kind of transformative experience, a meaningful experience, an experience which 'renews our strength and our vitality, makes us feel stronger and happier' (A 47:14). Lawrence's discussion of the *Book of Revelation* in 'Introduction to the Dragon' is typical in many respects of Lawrence's hermeneutic approach. What Lawrence likes about *Revelation* is that it was probably written by many different writers at different times, so that it contains multiple meanings, and even, Lawrence observes, 'meanings behind meanings' (A47: 36). The 'Introduction' provides a perfect example of the way in which Lawrence likes to look beneath the surface, trying to find significance in every aspect of life, whether it be from texts like the *Apocalypse*, or from our fellow humans, from animals or trees, from places or objects. Thus Lawrence finds in *Revelation* that there must be 'a submerged astrological meaning' because 'the hints are too obvious and too splendid' (A56:10) for it to be otherwise. Likewise Lawrence finds in Carter's book, 'the sense of being the macrocosm, the great sky with its meaningful stars and its profoundly meaningful motions' (A 46:37). As we can see, Lawrence's philosophy is above all a hermeneutic one.

In Chapter Two (The Clue to the Cosmos'), I show how Lawrence came to grips with his loss of faith, and developed an alternative vision of life, which allowed him to affirm the world in a meaningful way. The vital part played by both William James and Arthur Schopenhauer in this transformation are examined in detail to show how, under their guidance, he came to reconcile the one and the many, and develop a new conception of the cosmos. Thanks to these two philosophers Lawrence manages to reconcile his sense of the importance of one's own individuality with the kind of cosmic unity he alludes to in the 'Introduction to the Dragon': 'the human consciousness is really homogeneous. There is no complete forgetting, even in death. So that somewhere within us the old experience of the Euphrates, Mesopotamia between the rivers lives still' (51:26). In this chapter, we look at what religion came to mean for Lawrence, of which another hint is given in Lawrence's 'Introduction to the Dragon' when comparing his early biblical upbringing with his reading of the bible in middle age, he writes

that ‘nothing delights me more than to escape from the all-too-moral chapel meaning of the book, to another wider, older, more magnificent meaning’ (A 55:17). In general, Lawrence seeks an enlarged sense of meaning, and develops, as we will see, a kind of polytheistic pantheism. We also look at the important distinction for Lawrence between the third and fourth dimensions, between existence and being, a distinction which we find once again in ‘Introduction to the Dragon’: ‘it is not a mere experience of what we know: an extension that becomes awful, then appalling. It is the entry into another world, another kind of world, measured by another dimension’ (A 46:26).

One fundamental question for Lawrence, which is dealt with in chapter 3 (‘The Straight Course is Hacked out in Wounds, Against the Will of the World’), is how change occurs? How does anything new arise? There must be something divine in the world, rather than nothing, since in every present moment we see the welling up of the new, the unknown, the unpredictable. This is the great source of all life. Yet man has become afraid of the unknown, finding that greater certainty can be achieved by looking to the past and seeing what has happened previously: ‘when men became poor in life, then they became anxious about their fortune and frightened about their fate’ (A 52:21). Lawrence likens this distinction to the difference between *knowing* (looking back to the past, seeking to control everything) and *being* (living engaged in the present moment, and accepting the unpredictability of life), and laments that man has lost the courage to really *be.* In this chapter we also look at the important distinction Lawrence starts to draw between the world as it is in itself, and the mental conception which man has of it. As Lawrence observes in his ‘Introduction’ man always sees the world as it suits him to see the world:

> How gibbering man becomes, when he is really clever, and thinks he is giving the ultimate and final description of the universe! Can’t he see that he is merely describing himself, and that the self he is describing is merely one of the more dead and dreary states that man can exist in? When man changes his state of being, he needs an entirely different description of the universe, and so the universe changes its nature to him entirely (A 53:34)

The classical scientific model based on regularities and straight lines is finally rejected by Lawrence, in favour of a more chaotic disordered and unpredictable way. As Lawrence says, reason is ‘as slippery as a fish by nature. She had as leave give her kiss to an absurdity any day, as to syllogistic truth. The absurdity might turn out truer’ (A 50:40).

Thus, Lawrence comes to reject the very basis on which modern humanity has conceived the world, and, as I argue in the second part ('Human, all-too-Human) much of his non-fictional writings are intended to show that mankind has ended up in an impasse. For Lawrence, man has turned the world into a thing of horror! The anthropomorphic vision of the world, and Nietzsche's influence, is examined in chapter 4 ('The Anthropomorphic Vision') which details Lawrence's view that our perception is by no means as self-evident as we think it is. For example, according to Lawrence in the 'Introduction', the world for the Chaldeans, or for the Babylonians was a quite different world to ours, and very different again to the vision of a donkey. There is nothing kodak-like about vision, as Lawrence asserts in 'Introduction to the Dragon': 'we describe the universe as we find it: mostly void, littered with a certain number of dead moons and unborn stars, like the backyard of a chemical works. Is our description true? Not for a single moment…' (A 54:2). Lawrence believes that it is our tendency to form mental abstractions, or 'thought-forms' as he calls it here, which has been the main factor in the deterioration of the human condition. As for many other Modernists, abstractions are a major target for Lawrence.[49] A distinction is made between bodily experience, and mental abstractions. In 'Introduction to the Dragon' Lawrence insists on the simplicity of the donkey, which is able, unlike humans, to merely like the experience of eating carrots, without ever having the *idea* of a carrot. Moreover, it has simply no notion of the Spanish word for carrot *sanahorias*, nor does it know, or need to know, unlike humans that a carrot belongs to the class of the *umbelliferae*. As far as Lawrence is concerned, 'thought-forms' actually diminish experience, so that we end up seeing the sun as nothing more than 'a blazing ball of gas', or the moon as 'dead globes of extinct volcanoes'. His use of biblical language (when he describes thought-forms as 'sodom-apples') implies (possibly unconsciously) that he thinks abstractions are actually sinful: 'we are starved to death, fed on the eternal sodom-apples of thought-forms. What we want is complete imaginative experience, which goes through the whole soul and body' (A 50:30).

Having thoroughly rejected the modern anthropomorphic conception of the world, Lawrence engages in a search for other possible visions, whether it be via his travels, in the worlds of other individuals, or in the worlds of the past. Chapter 5 ('Looking for Other Worlds') is about this search for 'some new sort of world' (A 50:13), of which Carter's world is for Lawrence a perfect example: 'what does it matter if it is confused? What does it matter if it

[49] For more discussion of the importance of mental abstractions in Modernism, see *The Matrix of Modernism* (Schwartz).

repeats itself? What does it matter if in parts it is not very interesting, when in other parts it is intensely so, when it suddenly opens doors and lets out the spirit into a new world, even if it is a very old world' (A 54:25).[50] Many critics have argued that Lawrence travelled for psychological reasons, but in fact his travelling was a means of seeking other, better worlds than the one we are currently living in. There are for Lawrence, as many worlds as there are points of view, since as I argue in that chapter, his outlook is a relativistic, perspectival one. Lawrence's interest in the past is not about going back to the past (the impossibility of which Lawrence insists upon, on numerous occasions), but about openness to other worlds, even when that means openness to the distant past. Too often, Lawrence finds, our minds are closed, and we are blind to alternative possibilities. Lawrence's reproach to his generation in 'Introduction to the Dragon', therefore, is that 'we imagine that we are better than the man of the past' (A 53:14). As is detailed at the end of chapter 5, in his later writings, Lawrence discerns three 3 phases of consciousness, of which we see an example in the 'Introduction to the Dragon'. Lawrence believes a great split has taken place, so that it is now virtually impossible for us to know the stars as the Chaldeans did:

> surely one of the greatest imaginative experiences the human race has ever had was the Chaldean experience of the stars, including the sun and moon. Sometimes it seems it must have been greater experience than any God-experience […] And sometimes it seems as if the experience of the living heavens, with a living yet not human sun, and brilliant living stars in live space must have been the most magnificent of all experiences, greater than any Jehovah or Baal, Buddha or Jesus. (A51:10)

According to Lawrence, this consciousness has now been lost. But, Lawrence adds, 'that was man's fault, not the heaven's. Man always deteriorates' (A 52:15).

Chapter 6 ('Modernity, a Shrieking Failure') continues to look at Lawrence's dismay at what he considers to be the total bankruptcy of modernity. As he expresses it in *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*, modernity is 'a shrieking failure'. It is a mechanical world, with mechanical behaviours, with machines having come to dominate man, and it is increasingly a world based on quantity rather than quality. Furthermore, modern man has been cut off from direct experience by technology and science (by the telescope, for instance, without which we would never have known that the sun has blazing spots, or the moon craters). As a result, the

[50] Perhaps unsurprisingly after comments like these, Carter chose not to use Lawrence's introduction.

emptiness of modern humanity has come to be characterized by fake feelings, empty pursuit of sensation, a sense of meaninglessness, and a pursuit of accumulation as a means to fill the void. This sense of the barrenness of modern life is prevalent in 'Introduction to the Dragon' where Lawrence writes, 'we know everything in terms of our own deadness' (A 53:21), and hopes that if we are able to 'discover a new vision in harmony with the memories of old, far-off, far, far-off experience that lie within us' (A54:18), then maybe we can 'vivify our impulses in a new direction' (A 54:21).

In my third part ('The Clue to the Future'), I take a look at the solutions Lawrence proposes for the future. Lawrence advocates a new way of being and knowing, leading ultimately to a liberation from the constraints of this anthropomorphistic world which, for him has gone badly awry. In Chapter 7 ('A Philosophy of Being'), I look at the importance for what Lawrence calls here in 'Introduction to the Dragon', 'living connexions' (A 55:25), and I show that Lawrence is proposing a philosophy of being, destined to replace the current model of possession and accumulation. It is a search for resonance, for relations, for a closer contact with the cosmos and with all other people, creatures and things. Lawrence's vision for the future is founded upon embodied experience, the importance of which the 'Introduction to the Dragon' makes clear, as he asks: 'while we are warm and well and "unconscious" of our bodies, are we not all the time ultimately conscious of our bodies' (A 51:18). For Lawrence, those who taught mankind to deny the bodily life on earth in favour of achieving fortune after their deaths, are responsible for diminishing our lives. This repudiation of the physical body, affirms Lawrence, 'was accepted by all men, and has been the creed till our day, Buddha and Jesus alike. It has provided us with a vast amount of thought-forms, and landed us in a sort of living death' (A 52:24). I look in detail in this chapter at the body's interaction with its circumambient environment, something which interests Lawrence throughout his writing career, but to which he particularly devotes much time and effort between 1917 and 1921.

In chapter 8 ('Liberation'), I discuss the importance of the concept of freedom for Lawrence, something which surprisingly, given its centrality to Lawrence's thought, has been little discussed by critics. Freedom for Lawrence means many things, including the freedom to live authentically. What is generally taken to be someone's 'personality' is considered by Lawrence to be essentially false and socially induced. One's authentic self is something far more complicated, since it is the objectification of the great will of the cosmos.[51] Lawrence

[51] What this means will be clarified in chapter 2.

argues, for instance in his 'Introduction to the Dragon' that 'memories of Chaldean experience still live within us, at great depths, and can vivify our impulses in a new direction' (A 54:20). For Lawrence, the *Apocalypse* still has value as a text because the far-off experiences described in Carter's book can still touch something within us, and afford us clues as to what direction we might take. Freedom for Lawrence also means also the freedom to know and understand in a different, non-scientific way, like the symbols Lawrence describes in the 'Introduction' as an example of the kind of dynamic, corporeal knowledge he has in mind: 'symbols are organic units of consciousness with a life of their own, and you can never explain them away, because their value is dynamic, emotional, belonging to the sense — consciousness of the body and soul, and not simply mental (A 48:32). A new way of knowing can be a religious experience for Lawrence, since this is what gives meaning to the world, and frees us from our own feelings of emptiness and nullity. Lawrence's theory of knowing is in many ways close to Spinoza's, to such an extent that Deleuze used Lawrence to illustrate Spinoza's three types of knowledge in his lectures on Spinoza at Vincennes. Deleuze equates Spinoza's second and third type of knowledge with relationality, and uses examples of the relationship between man and the sun very similar to one found here in the 'Introduction', where Lawrence argues for the establishment of a real relationship with the sun rather than what we have today: 'not the spotted ball of gas that browns you like a joint of meat, but the living sun, and the living moon of the old Chaldean days' (A 52:28). In other words, as he puts it in 'Introduction to the Dragon', it is about how to confront 'my own nothingness in front of the vast void of astronomical space' (A 47:4). Lawrence sees modern humanity as entrapped: 'science extends space *ad infinitum*, and we get the terrible space of limitlessness, we have a secret sense of imprisonment.' (A 46:8), But here Lawrence sees the possibility of liberation into a world of imagination, a world of real freedom, with 'the sense of being the macrocosm, the great sky with its meaningful stars and its profoundly meaningful motions' (A 46:38); it is, in other words, 'a great imaginative world where we feel free and delightful' (A 50:7).

Finally, in my concluding chapter ('The Fourth Way'), I look at the political implications underlying all of Lawrence's non-fiction. Until recently, Lawrence has been treated as politically naïve, and at best advocating utopian solutions which have no practical usage. But with the increasing awareness of the implications for the planet of Lawrence of our current ways of living, the time is ripe for a fresh look at Lawrence's politics. Modern liberalism has decreed that 'there is no alternative' possible, but Lawrence saw many years ago, that new alternatives really did need to be envisaged, and that other worlds were possible. I suggest that

Lawrence is far less politically naïve than has been proposed, and reconsider his political thought, by considering some more recent political theories.

Overall, we can see that Lawrence is searching for a new way of living, and above all a more meaningful one. We see in the final lines of this little text, unpublished in his lifetime, a demonstration of the extent to which the idea of searching for clues and meaning is fundamental to Lawrence's thought.

> Hints, we have only hints from the outside. But the rest is within us, and if we can take a hint, it is extraordinary how far and into what fascinating worlds the hints can lead us. The orthodox critics will say: Fantasy! Nothing but fantasy! But then, thank God for fantasy, if it enhances our life (A 56:3)

In *Searching for Clues*: *The Philosophy of D. H. Lawrence*, I employ a similar approach to the one used by Lawrence in his own life—looking for hints and clues in his non-fiction in order to help elucidate some of the seeming paradoxes of Lawrence's thought, and to show the breadth and scope of his philosophy. In 2013, Paul Eggert could still talk of 'a stalemate' in Lawrence criticism:

> I thought for some years that the biographical and bibliographical scholarship that was coming out of the Cambridge editions of the complete works of Lawrence—a magnificent archive in itself—would source a fundamental change in thinking. But we have not seen it yet […] a breakthrough is not going to happen without some heavy lifting being done. Without a methodological broadening, I fear that study of Lawrence's works will continue to be consigned to the long period of marginalisation within literary studies in Anglophone universities into which it subsided in the 1980s and 1990s. (Eggert 33)

Breaking the stalemate can only be achieved, as Eggert suggests by engaging in a methodological broadening out, and hence, for the first time, setting out Lawrence's philosophy in a systematic, comprehensive and, above all, comprehensible manner. Black in *D. H. Lawrence: The Early Fiction* wrote as follows: 'we do have some seventy years of writing about him. He is taking shape, and the shape is surprisingly consonant with the idea of system' (Black, The Early Fiction 16). Since then, however, no attempt has been made to build on

earlier work, and to set out Lawrence's philosophical system. Writing in 1990, M. Elizabeth Wallace argued that:

> If we focus on Lawrence's thoughts *about* thought, particularly in the context of modern theories of knowledge, we can see how he attempted to revise our notions of 'what we ordinarily call thinking' […] if he succeeded, then the very terms of the argument may need to change. We must not discount Lawrence's thought because our own theories of knowledge are inadequate. (M. E. Wallace 104)

Thus, in a certain manner, M. Elizabeth Wallace threw down the gauntlet back in 1990, and this work is an attempt to accept that challenge.

Part 1: Searching for Clues

Chapter 1: 'The clue is missing inside men': Lawrence's hermeneutics

In the introduction it was pointed out that the frequency with which Lawrence uses the word 'clue' shows that Lawrence's approach is a hermeneutic one. The aim of this chapter is to emphasize that interpretation lies at the very heart of his philosophy, and was a direct response to the existential period of doubt which afflicted him in his early twenties. For the rest of his life the answers formulated by a young Lawrence remained a vital aspect of his thought. Some of the earlier critics of Lawrence highlighted this obvious existential dimension to Lawrence's thought and art, with George A. Panichas, declaring, in *Adventure in Consciousness: The Meaning of D. H. Lawrence's Religious Quest* (1964), that: 'as a religious seeker Lawrence was fiercely preoccupied with the universal problems of human existence' (Panichas 16), and the Catholic priest Father Tiverton noting, in his book *D. H. Lawrence and Human Existence* (1951), that Lawrence expresses the Christian-existentialist theme of 'engagement'.[52] Interestingly, Tiverton found him closer to what he called 'the Christian or near-Christian' school of existential writers, Marcel, Berdyaev, Buber, Jaspers—who believe that communion *is* possible' (Tiverton 137). Indeed, the idea that Lawrence was on a religious quest was a staple of much criticism.[53] The idea that there was a religious dimension to Lawrence's thought is undoubtedly correct, as we will see, but Lawrence was certainly not religious in any conventional sense and ultimately, it is just as pertinent to view Lawrence's quest as a quest for meaning. That his concerns were not merely religious, is apparent, for example, in the following extract from the essay 'Him with his Tail in his Mouth', in which he points out the impasse in which we have found ourselves:

> We only know that, continuing in the way we are going, the river of life grows feebler and feebler in us, and we lose all sense of vital direction. We begin to take vitamins. We become idiotic. We cunningly prepare our own suicide. This is the philosophic problem: to find the way ahead. (RDP 311:14)

[52] Tiverton's book was prefaced with yet another rather unsympathetic commentary on Lawrence by T. S. Eliot. Despite some grudging praise 'this is why Lawrence's work needs to be examined from a new perspective', it is also full of barbs: 'he was a man of fitful and profound insights, rather than of ratiocinative powers'; 'wrong he often was (I think) from ignorance, prejudice, or drawing the wrong conclusions in his conscious mind from the insights which came to him from below consciousness […] To me, also, he seems often to write badly…'; 'for Lawrence was an ignorant man in the sense that he was unaware of how much he did not know' (Tiverton vii - viii). Tiverton himself was far more sympathetic to Lawrence.

[53] See Clark, Schneider, Poplawski, Worthen, amongst many others.

As we will see, Lawrence did indeed see the answer to 'the philosophic problem' as a kind of religious conversion, as a rebirth in fact, but it is a conversion that could just as easily be envisaged in secular terms, as he makes clear in 'The Reality of Peace': 'This fact of conversion, which has seemed, in its connexion with religion, to smack of unreality, to be, like the miracles, not quite credible, even if demonstrable, is a matter of fact essentially natural and our highest credit' (RDP 32:15).

Ultimately, Lawrence is rejecting two things, but two things which are related together by the problem of meaning. Firstly, he refuses to accept that the current way of life is a healthy one: as we see in the above quotation, it is not only unhealthy, but it is suicidal: 'We are prisoners inside our own conception of life and being. We have exhausted the possibilities of the universe, as we know it' (IR 234:12).[54] Secondly, he repudiates all kinds of pessimistic nihilism and insists that we must search for a new meaningful way of existence. His refusal, therefore, takes on a double-edged aspect since whilst it is a refusal of the meaninglessness of modern society, it also entails a refusal to fall into hopelessness and pessimism, and thus necessarily involves a search for new meaning and an affirmation of the world.

1.1. The meaning crisis

1.1.1 Nihilism, Modernity and the crisis of meaninglessness

Even if modern technological, mechanical and scientific achievements seem to have improved our lifestyles beyond all measure, a sense of dissatisfaction remains. On the face of it everything seems to be going swimmingly, as Sebastien Junger argues in his recent book *Tribe: On Homecoming and Belonging* (2016):

> There's no use arguing that modern society isn't a kind of paradise. The vast majority of us don't, personally, have to grow or kill our own food, build our own dwellings, or defend ourselves from wild animals and enemies. In one day we can travel a thousand miles by pushing our foot down on a gas pedal or around the world by booking a seat on an airplane. When we are in pain we have narcotics that dull it out of existence, and when we are depressed we have pills that change the chemistry of our brains. We understand an enormous amount about the universe, from subatomic particles to our own bodies to galaxy clusters, and we use that knowledge to make life even better and even

[54] 'All that remains is to telephone to Mars for a new word of advice', he adds.

> easier for ourselves. The poorest people in modern society enjoy a level of physical comfort that was unimaginable a thousand years ago, and the wealthiest people literally live the way gods were imagined to live.
>
> And yet… (Junger 108)

The 'and yet' is testimony to the fact that for many, perhaps for everybody, material and physical comforts are just not enough for fulfilment. The current system conceals hidden costs to the global ecosystem, to the psyche, to the community, because 'people need to feel authentic in their lives and they need to feel connected to others', and yet 'society seems to emphasize extrinsic values over intrinsic ones' (Junger 22). This seems to be what Lawrence is getting at in the essay 'Reflections of the Death of a Porcupine', when he says that 'the clue is missing inside men':

> To men the sun is becoming stale, and the earth sterile. But the sun itself will never become stale, nor the earth barren. It is only that the *clue* is missing inside men. They are like flowerless, seedless fat cabbages, nothing inside. (RDP 360 :38)

For Lawrence this emphasis on extrinsic values rather than intrinsic ones is a result of the self-preservation drive gone wrong (something that will be returned to later). As early as in the pre-war essay 'The English and the Germans' (1912), he claims that:

> We are in life, but we do not live. Thence the despair which looks out of so many English eyes. "Is there any value in living?" they have asked, and their own souls have been forced to answer "No". The great creed in the English heart today is, "Let us forgo the things we want, for we can do without them." It is not money, not position, not security our souls want; and these are almost the only things the nation lives for. We want freedom to love, freedom to worship the things our deepest nature approves of. (TI 8:24)

And only a few years later, in a remarkable passage, Lawrence asserts that maybe the only real benefit of the war is that it has shown us that we cannot be intrinsically driven by self-preservation after all:

> Does not the war show us how little, under all our carefulness, we count human life and human suffering, how little we value ourselves at bottom, how we hate

> our own security? We have many hospitals and many laws and charities for the poor. And at the same time, we send ourselves to be killed and torn and tortured, we spread grief and desolation, and then, only then, we are somewhat satisfied. For have we not proved that we can transcend our own self-preservation… (STH 16:15)

Meaninglessness is also the consequence of the collapse of the beliefs and frameworks that had conferred sense on peoples' lives, resulting in the kind of suffering which Nietzsche was instrumental in articulating. In his study *Modernism and Nihilism* (2011), Shane Weller outlines the importance of Nietzsche, whose importance lay 'in no small part in his having made of nihilism arguably the key philosophical concept of the first half of the twentieth century' (Weller 12). Nietzsche, he asserts, sees Western civilisation as 'caught in the grip of debilitating and demoralizing nihilism in which our most fundamental conceptions of the world are no longer tenable and believable. Nihilism is thus a condition which affects the metaphysical and moral languages through which we fabricate an understanding of the world and on which we base our acting in the world' (Weller 26).[55]

Famously, Nietzsche's Zarathustra declared in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* that 'Gott is tot'; his point being not that this event was a desirable one, but that it left mankind bereft of the kind of frameworks that had hitherto guided it.[56] Nietzsche rightly notes the vacuum left behind by the collapse in Christian values and the subsequent relativism of values: 'the most extreme form of Nihilism would be the view that *every* belief is false; every considering-something-true, is necessarily false because there simply is no *true* world. Thus a *perspectival appearance*, whose origin lies in us…' (Nietzsche, TWP 14). As Stewart Smith convincingly argues in *Nietzsche and Modernism* (2018), Nietzsche's philosophy can be seen as a response to the suffering and disorientation engendered by this collapse of long-established values.[57] Thus, Smith argues that, for Nietzsche, suffering is 'inextricably bound up with the pathos of nihilism, the feeling that life is not worth living.' (Smith 24), and that 'Lawrence's work can be similarly apprehended in terms of its depiction of responses to suffering' (Smith 70). Nietzsche was

[55] Weller points out that there are a number of different ways of defining nihilism: a political nihilism (as in Dostoevsky's novel *The Demons*) like Bakunin's passion for destruction, moral nihilism (amorality, moral relativism or pure egoism), epistemological nihilism (there is no absolute truth), cosmic nihilism (the meaningless of the cosmos, of which Schopenhauer's will is an example) and finally existential nihilism, the idea that human existence is pointless and absurd (of which Schopenhauer is again a good example). However, he points out that Crosby takes the underlying one to be the latter, existential nihilism, meaninglessness (Weller 11).

[56] In *Nietzsche and Modernism* Stewart Smith rightly points out that Nietzsche was not always negative about Christianity, as can be seen in *Will to Power.*

[57] Including a chapter on *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.

clearly an important figure for Lawrence, and as Deleuze had noted, the traces of this influence are obvious.[58] Lawrence observes, in his 1924 essay 'On being Religious', that 'man has lost his Great God, and there remains only the Gap, and images and hollow words' (RDP 191:34); adding that 'for the moment, we are lost. Let us admit it. None of us knows the way to God' (RDP 192:25). And like Nietzsche, Lawrence utterly refuses the kind of Schopenhauerian pessimism which sees the world as meaningless and absurd, and which manifests itself as a feeling of ennui, or boredom as in 'Hymns in a Man's Life' (1928):

> Now the great and fatal fruit of our civilization, which is a civilization based on knowledge, and hostile to experience, is boredom. All our wonderful education and learning is producing a grand sum-total of boredom. Modern people are inwardly thoroughly bored. Do as they may, they are bored. They are bored because they experience nothing. And they experience nothing because the wonder has gone out of them. And when the wonder has gone out of a man he is dead. He is henceforth only an insect. (LEA 131:22)

Lawrence's non-fiction abounds with references to the ennui, meaninglessness, exhaustion, and depression which modern civilisation has engendered; and of course, the need to revivify such a moribund society.

And yet, Lawrence rejects both Russian nihilism with which he was very familiar and what he called French nihilism too. In 1927 he was lambasting Russian nihilism in his review of Rozanov's *Solitaria*, praising Rozanov for the glimpses of 'what we have got from no Russian, neither Tolstoi nor Dostoievsky nor any of them, a real, positive view on life' (IR 317:27), whilst criticizing Russians for 'a spurting, gamin hatred of civilization, of Europe, of Christianity, of governments, and of everything else' (IR 318). Russian nihilism, he asserts, is merely 'a Mary Mary quite contrary. It is largely tiresome contrariness' ((IR 316:25). French nihilism, too, is the target of Lawrence's wrath. In 1926, in the first version of the 'Introduction to *The Memoirs of the Duc de Lauzun'* [The Good Man],[59] he blames the French concept of the good man (*l'homme de bien*) for destroying our capacity for responsiveness: 'our capacity for feeling anything is going numb, more and more numb, till we feel we shall soon reach zero, and pure insanity' (IR 89:1). The *homme de bien* of Rousseau and Diderot, he argues, has produced 'our great industrial civilization, and the huge thing, gone idiot, is now grinning at us

[58] We will return to the links between Deleuze and Lawrence in due course.
[59] References in square brackets after the title, refer to the titles that were originally given in the first *Phoenix.*

and showing its teeth' (IR 88:27). As a result, 'there is nothing to *worship*' (IR 88:17). In a second version, he proclaims that: 'there is only one sin in life, and that is the sin against life, the sin of causing inner emptiness and boredom of the spirit. Whoever and whatever makes us inwardly bored and empty-feeling, is vile, the anathema' (IR 95:14). Thus, Lawrence eventually came to reject pessimism because it 'left nothing to *worship*', but in 1906 he had been in the throes of despair. Tracing how this crisis came about, and how he managed to get over it, is key to establishing the starting point of Lawrence's philosophy.

1.1.2 Double-edged nihilism: 'And once we are driven right on to nihilism we may find a way through' (PFU 190:38)

Perhaps the philosopher the most associated with nihilism was Friedrich Nietzsche, whom Lawrence happened upon at a crucial juncture of his life, as can be seen in an obviously autobiographical story 'A Modern Lover', based on his early experiences, in which the main character, again called Cyril, after detailing the main influences of his youth (including Schopenhauer), mentions the two most important ones that came afterwards: 'since then had come only Nietzsche and William James' (Love Among the Haystacks and Other Stories 33:21).[60] There has been some debate about the extent to which Lawrence was influenced by Nietzsche,[61] though Jessie Chambers mentions that Lawrence 'found Nietzsche' in the Croydon library (Chambers 120), and we know from the library records that at that time (in 1911), it had in its catalogue a wide-ranging selection of Nietzsche's works: *Beyond Good and Evil*, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, *Twilight of the Idols*, *the Future of Educational Institutions*, *Human-All-Too-Human*, *Will to Power* and *The Gay Science* (Sagar, D. H. Lawrence Handbook 69).[62] Montgomery in his chapter on Lawrence and Nietzsche also notes that to his wife and the other

[60] As mentioned in my introduction, I am wary of making judgements of Lawrence's philosophy, based on what his fictional characters say. Nonetheless, there is every reason to believe, based on what we know of his reading, that this particular reference must be autobiographical. On the other hand, when Michael Bell suggests, in his chapter on Nietzscheanism in *A Concise Companion to Modernism,* that based on the character of Gerald in *Women in Love,* Lawrence's understanding of Nietzsche's Will to Power, the *Wille zur Macht* seems to be relatively superficial, I don't think this can quite be justified: 'Lawrence is critiquing only the popular conception of Nietzscheanism. It could be that this apparent confusion was quite conscious on Lawrence's part because the reductive popular conception was the significant cultural fact, but it is more likely that Lawrence had himself imbibed the common view' (Bell, Nietzcheanism: "The Superman and the all-too-human" 68).

[61] Bell notes the massive dissemination of Nietzsche's ideas, partly via the journal *The New Age* that we know Lawrence read (Bell, Nietzcheanism: "The Superman and the all-too-human" 62), but he is of the opinion that Lawrence's relationship to Nietzsche is elusive, even antagonistic (Bell, Nietzcheanism: "The Superman and the all-too-human" 68).

[62] Colin Milton's book *Lawrence and Nietzsche: A Study in Influence* (1987) is useful but ultimately limited, rather neglecting primary sources and depending too heavily on a secondary source, Morgan's *What Nietzsche Means.* Two more recent books which touch on the relationship between Nietzsche's nihilism and Lawrence, Shane Weller's *Modernism and Nihilism* and Stewart Smith's *Nietzsche and Modernism* have already been discussed earlier.

Von Richthofen sisters, Nietzsche was a demi-god (Montgomery 74).[63] Furthermore, as mentioned in the introduction, Deleuze in his introduction to Lawrence's *Apocalypse* suggested that the latter could never have been written if Lawrence had not read Nietzsche's *Antichrist*.[64] And in *The Consciousness of D. H. Lawrence: An Intellectual Biography*, Schneider writes that 'Lawrence's thought corresponds so closely on so many counts to Nietzsche's that it is obvious the German philosopher was one of Lawrence's greatest passions' (Schneider, The Consciousness of D. H. Lawrence: An Intellectual Biography 57). Interestingly, too, when Lawrence was searching for a title for his philosophy, his first thought was to name it after one of Nietzsche's' works (*Daybreak* or *The Dawn, Morgenröte*), telling Lady Ottoline Morrell in 1915 that: 'I have begun again my philosophy — *Morgenrot* is my new name for it' (2L 315) and again to Koteliansky: 'I wish I could think of a nice title — like *Morgenrot* in German — or — I don't know' (2L 295).[65] His next thought was to name it '*Le Gai Savaire*' or '*Le Gai Saver*' (2L 300), another obvious reference to Nietzsche's *The Gay Science* (*Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*), which as we will see was very important for Lawrence.[66] All of these show the considerable importance of Nietzsche for Lawrence.

Nietzsche's nihilism was double-edged. It was certainly not just negative, since he also sought a way to affirm the world. In *Will to Power* Nietzsche defines two types of nihilism, an active and a passive form:

> Nihilism. It may be two things: — A. Nihilism as a sign of enhanced spiritual strength: active Nihilism. B. Nihilism as a sign of the collapse and decline of spiritual strength: passive Nihilism. (Nietzsche, TWP 17)

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[63] Nonetheless, he makes the rather astonishing claim that 'it is impossible to tell which of Nietzsche's works Lawrence actually read, or if indeed he read any. He rarely refers to Nietzsche by name and almost never mentions specific works. His references are usually to concepts, like the will to power or eternal recurrence […] Sometimes Lawrence's comments on Nietzsche are so inaccurate and perverse that one wonders if he knew anything of Nietzsche at first hand' (Montgomery 73). This rather bizarre remark can be usefully counteracted, amongst other things, by Gilles Deleuze's remarks in his introduction to *Apocalypse* and Schneider's comments (above).

[64] 'We can assume that Lawrence would not have written his text without Nietzsche's *Antichrist* […] it is not that Lawrence simply imitates Nietzsche. Rather, he picks up an arrow, Nietzsche's arrow, and shoots it elsewhere, aims it in a different direction…' (Deleuze, Nietzsche and Saint Paul 37).

[65] Morgenrot and Morgenröte are both acceptable variants in German.

[66] Moreover, another letter to Koteliansky in early 1916 suggests a continued interest in interpreting and reflecting on Nietzsche's enigmas. Referring to *Thus Spake Zarathustra*'s 'Three metamorphoses of the spirit do I designate to you: how the spirit became a camel, the camel a lion, and the lion at last a child', Lawrence writes: 'I understand Nietzsche's child. But it isn't a child that will represent the third stage: not innocent unconsciousness; but the maximum of fearless adult consciousness, that has the courage to submit to the unconsciousness of itself' (Quest for Rananim 70).

The passive form of nihilism is essentially meaninglessness (the form we have been discussing); but 'active nihilism at its most extreme is in fact a form of affirmation (*Bejahung*), the overcoming of nothingness requires affirmation of life' (Weller 36). The destruction of all existing beliefs and values is a precondition for the elaboration of a new world since active nihilism is a 'lust for destruction that purifies humanity' (Gillespie 179). For, although for Nietzsche, the loss of the Christian framework, the death of God, was in fact, a disaster for mankind, it was at the same time a blessing in disguise because it paved the way for the creation of new values. As Weller points out, the same applied for Bakunin: 'the passion for destruction is a creative passion, too' (Weller 23). Of necessity this active nihilism is also a violent force of destruction which is directed against values that can no longer be sustained. Thus, for Nietzsche, nihilism is in fact a double-edged sword. It is both a crisis of meaninglessness, to be repudiated, but also the opportunity for the destruction of the old world, and the rebirth of a new one from the ashes. This same ambivalence is very much present in Lawrence, as can already be seen in one of his earliest pieces of non-fictional writing 'Review of Georgian Poetry 1911-1912 [The Georgian Renaissance].[67] In two successive paragraphs, each mentioning three important early influences on Lawrence (Nietzsche, Flaubert and Hardy), Lawrence first portrays nihilism in a passive sense as something destructive, leaving life without meaning; and then as something, totally different, as a liberating force for renewal. The comparison perfectly illustrates this double-edged approach to nihilism (fundamental to his idea of rebirth). Firstly, Lawrence writes:

> This collection is like a big breath taken when we are waking up after a night of oppressive dreams. The nihilists, the intellectual, hopeless people — Ibsen, Flaubert, Thomas Hardy — represent the dream we are waking from, it was a dream of demolition. Nothing was, but was nothing. Everything was taken from us. And now our lungs are full of new air, and our eyes see it is morning, but we have not forgotten the terror of the night. We dreamed we were falling through space into nothingness, and the anguish of it leaves us rather eager. (IR 201:5)

And secondly, welcoming the release from the old forms, a liberation from the prison-house of faith and belief:

[67] Edited by Edward March, this was an anthology of Georgian verse, which Lawrence reviewed (despite the fact that it included one of his own poems).

> The last years have been years of demolition. Because faith and belief were getting pot-bound, and the Temple was made a place to barter sacrifices, therefore faith and belief and the Temple must be broken. This time art fought the battle, rather than science or any new religious faction. And art has been demolishing for us: Nietzsche, the Christian religion as it stood; Hardy, our faith in our own endeavour; Flaubert, our belief in love. Now, for us, it is all smashed, we can see the whole again. We were in prison, peeping at the sky through loop-holes. The great prisoners smashed at the loop-holes, for lying to us. And behold, out of the ruins leaps the whole sky. It is we who see it and breathe in it for joy. God is there, faith, belief, love, everything. We are drunk with the joy of it, having got away from the fear. In almost every poem in the book comes this note of exultation after fear, the exultation in the vast freedom, the illimitable wealth that we have suddenly got. (IR 201:17)

There is, therefore, in Lawrence a sense for both the necessity for destruction, and for the joy of a renewed affirmation of life. Destruction for Lawrence, as for Nietzsche, is the *sine qua non* for the creation of something new: 'I have a wicked delight in smashing things which I think I can make better' (1L 103), he writes in a letter to Blanche Jennings.

Man must figure out the way forward. Everybody knows that our civilisation is going to collapse, Lawrence asserts in 'On Human Destiny', but how should one react? Most people give it no thought: 'they know our civilisation has got to smash, sooner or later. So they say: "Let it! But let me live my life first." Which is all very well, but it's a coward's attitude' (RDP 206: 33). Human destiny should not be, he feels, about sacrificing the future for the now, but about seeking a new way forward, since 'as a thinking being, man is destined to seek God and to form some conception of Life' (RDP 208:35). From an early age, he set about establishing a new framework that would enable, on the contrary, an affirmation of life.

1.1.3 From personal crisis to conversion

Lawrence seems to have experienced a sentiment of meaninglessness in his early twenties when he suffered from a severe spiritual and mental crisis. Lonely and dispirited, Lawrence fell into a state of depression, as has been well-documented by Worthen, Poplawski, Schneider and many others:

> It appears that 1906 was a crucial year for Lawrence in that it brought to a head several years of questioning and doubt in the form of an almost inevitable crisis of faith. (Poplawski 47)

Lawrence was bitterly disappointed with the quality of the teachers at the college he attended, recalling bitterly on the 4th of May 1908 to Blanche Jennings (a socialist and suffragette he had briefly met at Alice Dax's) that he had lost his 'reverence' during that period (1L 49), and again in another letter, a few months later, where he alluded to the depths into which he had plunged during that period:

> I came to feel that I might as well be taught by gramophones as by those men, for all the interest or sincerity they felt. I doubted them, I began to despise and distrust things; I lost my rather deep religious faith; I lost my idealism and my wistfulness… (1L 72)[68]

Lawrence grew lonely, finding few people with whom he could share his intellectual preoccupations, and nothing hopeful to cling onto. He wrote in the earlier letter to Blanche Jennings, 'I was sore, frightfully raw and sore because I couldn't get the religious conversion, the Holy Ghost business, that I longed for' (1L 49), and as Jessie Chambers affirmed, 'he seemed to be groping for something that he could lay hold of as a guiding principle in his own life' (Chambers 112). The key to ascertaining the nature of this guiding principle is to be found in two early letters to Reverend Reid,[69] the first of which reveals some of the doubts engendered by his reading of 19th century 'materialism' (the phase which he described in the letter quoted in the introduction as 'a torturing crude monism'). The second letter not only manifests the first clear statement of his definitive loss of faith, but also the first inchoate intimations of his new faith—still religious, but no longer Christian.

In the first letter, Lawrence wrote to Reverend Robert Reid on the 15th of October 1907, asking him what he thought of materialists like Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer, Ernst Haeckel, Ernst Renan, J.M. Robertson, Robert Blatchford, whom he says have 'seriously modified my religious beliefs' (1L 36). He also asks Reid what the orthodox attitude for Non-

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[68] Lawrence goes on to assert, with an element of bravado, that he is no longer concerned with other people, God or his young dreams, nor with 'battling against the world's inertia and contrariness. Hurray!'. But it doesn't really ring true. He seems to be trying to project an image of insouciance and carelessness. And, as will be seen, this was certainly not the case.

[69] The Reverend Reid was a very important figure in their religious community, and to the Lawrence household; he would regularly pay visits to Lawrence's mother.

Conformist Churches was towards such questions as the Miracles, the Virgin Birth, the atonement, the Divinity of Jesus, Evolution, the origin of sin and with Heaven and Hell. Writing of the impossibility of sustaining 'a rationalist attitude in a nebulous atmosphere of religious yearning', his criticisms of the mysticism of John Campbell's *New Theology* (1907), show that he considered himself to be a rationalist. Moreover, as a result of his reading of *The Rise of the Dutch Republic*, there is now a historical dimension to his criticisms: he writes that he 'is staggered by the astounding difference between the accepted doctrines of various ages', and the fact that 'change has always originated in a people antagonistic to the Church' (1L 37). In other words, Lawrence's interest in scientific materialism was clearly and inextricably linked to the loss of his religious faith. Yet however much the first letter had revealed the first cracks, the process had evidently evolved much further just three months later when Lawrence wrote another heartfelt and very important letter to Reverend Reid. And this time his loss of faith is clearly broached:

> I have been brought up to believe in the absolute necessity for a sudden spiritual conversion; I believed for many years that the Holy Ghost descended and took conscious possession of the 'elect' – the converted one; I thought all conversions were, to a greater or lesser degree, like that of Paul's. Naturally I yearned for the same, for something the same. That desire was most keen a year ago, and during the year before that, when I had to fight bitterly for my authority in school. (1L 39)

This idea of conversion was important for Lawrence, and he was in the process of working out a new, more secular alternative. Furthermore, what he had witnessed in a particularly deprived district of Nottingham had evidently shocked him greatly:

> I have now only to state my position with regard to Christianity. At the present moment I do not, cannot believe in the divinity of Jesus. There are only the old doubts, in the way, the old questions. I went through the lowest parts of Sneiton to Emily's to dinner when she lived in Nottingham—it had a profound influence on me. 'It cannot be', I said to myself, 'that a pitiful, *omnipresent* Christ died *nineteen hundred years* ago to save these people from this and yet they are here.' Women, with child,—so many are in that condition in the slums—bruised, drunk, with breasts half bare. It is not compatible with the idea of an *Omnipotent*, pitying Divine. And how too, shall I reconcile it to a

> belief in a *personal* God. I cannot be a materialist—but Oh, how is it possible that a God that speaks to all hearts, can let Belgravia go laughing to a vicious luxury, and Whitechapel cursing to a filthy debauchery– such suffering, such dreadful suffering and shall the short years of Christ's mission atone for it all? (1L 40)[70]

Alongside the admission that materialism would not supply the answers he was looking for, the reference to the contrasting London districts of Belgravia and Whitechapel demonstrates a growing awareness of the flaws of modern society, inextricably linked (at least at this stage) to a rejection of the Christian dogma. Continuing the letter he writes:

> Cosmic harmony there is—a Cosmic God I can therefore believe in. But where is the human harmony, where the balance, the order, the 'indestructibility of matter' in humanity? And where is the *personal, human* God? Men – some – seem to have been born and ruthlessly destroyed; the bacteria are created and nurtured on Man, to his horrible suffering. (1L 41)

Confirming the existential nature of Lawrence's crisis, Jessie Chambers contends that, at this time, 'his dominant feeling seemed to be a sense of hopelessness' (Chambers 112). According to Jessie Chambers Lawrence had 'tried to fill up a spiritual vacuum by swallowing materialism at a gulp. But it did not carry him far' (Chambers 112). Lawrence clearly threw himself into his scientific reading, and his later writings still bear the traces of this period, though he clearly found little solace in these readings, as can be seen in certain of his allusions to this period in his life, like the one already cited from the 'Introduction to Fredrick Carter's *Dragon of the Apocalypse*': 'it was rather awful and since then I rather hate the mere suggestion of illimitable space' (A 46:33), or in *Study of Thomas Hardy*, 'the horrific space of the void' (STH 18:16); 'no man can endure the sense of space, of chaos, on four sides of him. It drives him mad' (STH 58); 'like a loose speck blown at random' (STH 58:24). Or again in *Apocalypse,* 'the astronomers' vast and unthinkable stretches of space, tight, because it is only a continuous extension, a dreary on and on, without any meaning' (A 76:31). And as some of the materialist writers themselves admit, science turns out to be profoundly destabilizing. Towards the end of *The Riddle of the Universe*, Haeckel himself conceded that:

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[70] Lawrence contrasts Belgravia, a central London district, known in the late 19th Century for its opulence (satirized by Trollope's for its greed and dishonesty in many novels such as *The Way We Live Now* (1875)) with Whitechapel which was, by contrast, famed for its slums, poverty and prostitution.

> Many of us certainly view with sharp regret, or even with a profound sorrow, the death of the gods that were so much to our parents and ancestors. We must console ourselves in the words of the poet:
>
> > "The times are changed, old systems fall,/And new life o'er their ruins dawns."
>
> The older view of idealistic dualism is breaking up with all its mystic and anthropistic dogmas; but upon the vast field of ruins rises, majestic and brilliant, the new sun of our realistic monism. (Haeckel 1901, 381-382)

Lawrence had studied this kind of monism and found it wanting. As Worthen points out, it is the dilemma of the early twentieth century man, learning from his reading to believe in rational knowledge, but at the same time 'finding the scientifically explained and ordered universe utterly inadequate in his understanding of man's emotional needs and beliefs, his fears and particularly of his religious experience. What place for reverence or awe, for humility, for guilt and responsibility in such a universe?' (Worthen, D. H. Lawrence: The Early Years 1885-1912 182). In other words, where was meaning to be found?

In a manner, very reminiscent of Pascal's fear of the void,[71] Lawrence tells Blanche Jennings that 'when you come to think that we are such transitory little dots, it is no wonder we are sometimes lonely. Religion, work, love all link us to an eternity – the one of singing, the other of influencing, the last of being' (1L 62). Similar sentiments are expressed in the essay 'The Crown': 'without God, without some kind of immortality, not necessarily life-everlasting, but without *something* absolute, we are nothing' (RDP 300:23). It is for this reason that Lawrence's search for meaning includes some sort of conception of eternity. Sewed into the hem of Pascal's coat was found, after his death, a little fragment known as the *Memorial*, the written record of a mystical vision which was so important to Pascal that he wrote it down so as never to forget it. The opening lines include the following:

> God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob
> Not of the philosophers, and of the learned
> Certitude, certitude. Feeling. Joy. Peace.

[71] 'When I consider the short duration of my life, swallowed up in an eternity before and after, the little space I fill engulfed in the infinite immensity of spaces whereof I know nothing, and which know nothing of me, I am terrified. The eternal silence of these infinite spaces frightens me….' (Pascal, Pensées 61 (205)). Lawrence specifically refers to Pascal in the 'Foreword' to his volume of poetry *Pansies*.

God of Jesus Christ. (Pascal, Greater Shorter Works of Pascal 117)

Like Pascal, Lawrence felt that meaningfulness was not to be found in science, though unlike Pascal his religion was not the religion of Jesus Christ. He was to form his own version, which would keep God, but take out the Christianity. For in fact, though he never seemed to have a mystical vision like Pascal, he had thought his way through to his own particular form of conversion.

It is clear from the letters already cited that the idea of conversion was important to Lawrence, and that the conversion of St. Paul constituted some form of model for his expectations, but this conversion never came. At least, not in the form he had expected, as can be seen from the continuation of the letter to Reid, of which the first part was cited earlier. Instead, Lawrence's conversion was a philosophical one, he had formulated to himself a mode of being in which meaning could be found without the existence of any kind of personal God.[72]

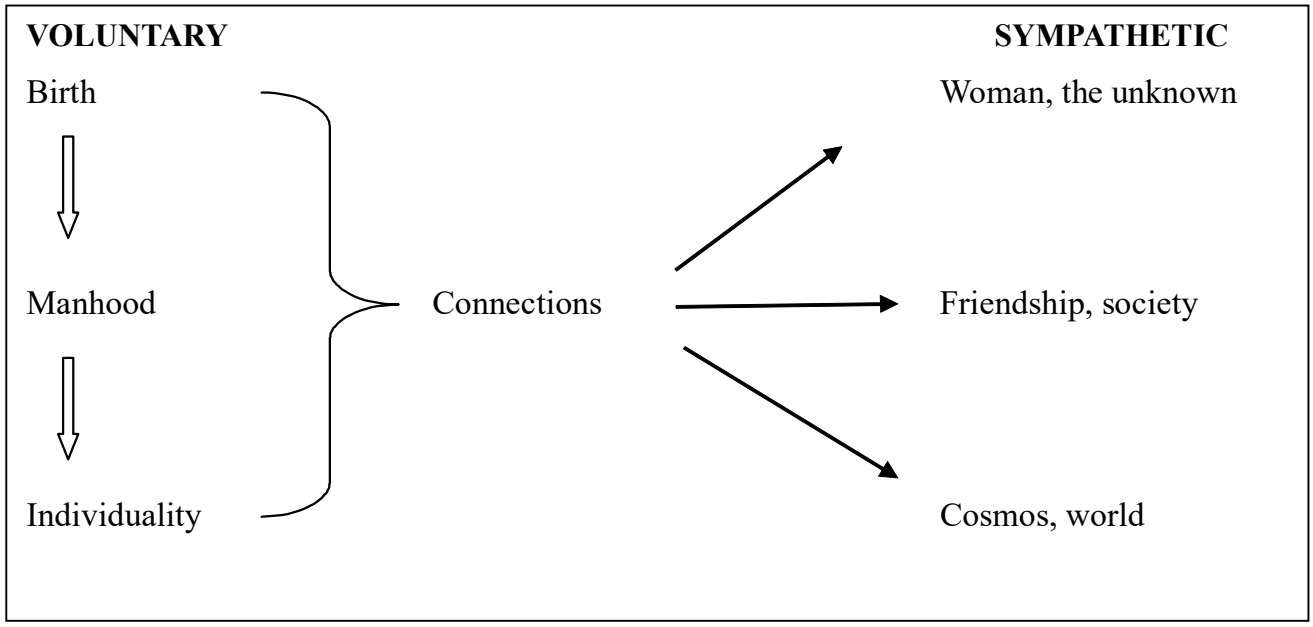
> Now I do not believe in conversion, such conversion. I believe that a man is converted when he first hears the low, vast murmur of life, of human life, troubling his hitherto unconscious self […] Most are born again on entering manhood, then they are born to humanity, to a consciousness of all the laughing, and the never-ceasing murmur of pain and sorrow that comes from the terrible multitudes of brothers. Then it appears to me, a man gradually formulates his religion, be what it may. A man has no religion who has not slowly and painfully gathered one together, adding to it, shaping it; and one's religion is never complete and final, it seems, but must always be undergoing modification. (1L 39-40)

This constituted the first premises of the answer he had found.

[72] Haeckel specifically refers to St. Paul in *The Riddle of the Universe*, as a blend of two philosophies: 'The plastic Oriental imagination and the critical Western reason often admirably combine and complete each other. That is visible in the Pauline teaching, which soon obtained a greater influence than the earliest Christian notions. Hence it is not incorrect to consider Paulinism a new phenomenon, of which the father was the philosophy of the Greeks, and the mother the religion of the Jews. Neoplatonism is an analogous combination' (Haeckel 313).

1.2. Affirmation of the world: The Rudiments of Lawrence's Philosophy

The rudiments of Lawrence's early philosophy, represented in diagrammatic form below, was arrived at during his period of personal crisis and conversion, and this relatively simple model remained the key to his philosophy until the very end of his life.



There are two main tendencies in the world. One is the assertion of the individual will (Nietzsche's will to power), the *voluntary* because it involves the assertion of a drive towards being, a will to live.[73] It is a will to be, and to become, what I am, in as much as I am a part of the whole with my own identity, in distinction to all that is not-me in the universe around me. The second tendency is the *sympathetic* mode, a drive towards achieving oneness with the world, which is on the contrary, a will to feel that I am part of a whole. The *voluntary* is power, the individual drive for life and *sympathy* is love, as he makes clear in *Studies in Classic American Literature*: 'the clue, the connecting mystery, is love, sympathy, St. Paul's "charity" (SCAL 359:31). Lawrence would still be asserting the centrality of these two tendencies in the world, which he had identified from an early age, much later at the end of 1929, in the unpublished 'Fragment 1' of the *Apocalypse*, when he wrote: 'love and power are the two divine things in life. This is what Nietzsche meant' (A 165:1).[74] Lawrence feels that both are

[73] It is important to understand that the word 'will' in Lawrence is employed in two different senses: here Lawrence does not mean the mental act of deciding something in advance and then executing it, something which he criticizes.
[74] See also the final chapter of *Aaron's Rod*.

necessary for humanity: we need to feel distinct, separate, but no individual can exist in total isolation. It is these connections that give meaning to our life, we need to establish relationships: between man and woman, between man and his fellow man, between man and the cosmos. As he writes in 'A Propos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*' (1929): 'relationship is threefold. First, there is the relation to the living universe. Then comes the relation of man to woman. Then comes the relation of man to man. And each is a blood-relationship, not mere spirit or mind' (LCL 331:32).[75]

1.2.1 Becoming an individual

'We are born unfulfilled", Lawrence writes, in 'Reality of Peace': 'I issue from the womb. Thenceforth I extricate myself into singleness" (RDP 51:40). Similarly in the letter to Reverend Reid, cited above, he states that 'A man is first born unto himself—for the happy developing of himself" (1L 39), and that most—though not all—are 'born again on entering Manhood" (1L 40). This then is our first aim—to become an individual, and once we have become an individual, to stay one.

For Lawrence, this primary struggle to become an individual is of momentous importance. In *Movements in European History*, Lawrence points out that genuine individual freedom did not even arise until the end of the Middle Ages. Prior to the Reformation, men 'had no faith in their own being" (MEH 175:23) and it was only the individualism of Luther that fully liberated mankind. Historically, then, it was only at that time that individual men and women gained the freedom to 'believe as their soul prompts them, freedom to think as their mind sees well, freedom to act as their heart desires: beautiful flexible freedom of human men and women' (MEH 182:22). Moreover, Daniel Schneider in his biography of Lawrence convincingly shows how important the struggles for personal freedom were in Lawrence's early life: freedom from 'the narrowness and coercion of the school system' (Schneider, The Consciousness of D. H. Lawrence: An Intellectual Biography 11), freedom from his father's desire for him to find a job and bring in some money (Schneider, The Consciousness of D. H. Lawrence: An Intellectual Biography 24), freedom from his mother's desire for them all to become respectable members of the bourgeoisie (Schneider, The Consciousness of D. H.

[75] This template is also asserted by Keith Sagar, though to my mind, his way of expressing it is a little misleading. For Sagar, there are four Lawrences: the individualist, Lawrence the married man and Priest of Love, Lawrence the Utopian Socialist, and Lawrence the Pantheist. In his first book, Sagar saw these as consecutive phases for Lawrence, but in this later essay he thinks 'it is probably more accurate to speak of these not as consecutive phases, but as coexisting, from his adolescence onwards' (Sagar, Art for Life's Sake 185).

Lawrence: An Intellectual Biography 22),[76] freedom from Lawrence's realisation that 'his mother's insistence on respectability, "success" and conformity was the deepest threat to his personal development' (Schneider, The Consciousness of D. H. Lawrence: An Intellectual Biography 23). Later too, 'in his work as a teacher and in his relationships with women he was fighting a battle for freedom: he was struggling to break with convention and to "trespass" into a new way of life' (Schneider, The Consciousness of D. H. Lawrence: An Intellectual Biography 31). And then, 'his desire to escape from the classroom was paralleled by his intense desire for another freedom: freedom from his Victorian prudency and his sexual inhibitions' (Schneider, The Consciousness of D. H. Lawrence: An Intellectual Biography 35). Thus, extricating oneself into singleness was vitally bound up for Lawrence with the issue of personal freedom, freedom from the ties and constraints of family, tradition and culture. As we have seen, this unmistakeably manifested itself in the 1912 Introduction 'The Georgian Renaissance': the sense of liberation from the past, from religion (the pot-bound faith and belief), from Victorian notions of love, the 'exultation in the vast freedom, the illimitable wealth we have suddenly got' (IR 201:30), the 'joy we have in being ourselves' (IR 203:22).

So, a child is 'born uncreated', a mere 'mixed handful of life' as it issues from the womb (RDP 51:38). Lawrence protests strongly about those who say that the children are the future (as for example in *Twilight in Italy)* since the child has not yet become an individual. As he writes in the essay 'Education of the People' (1920), 'an infant is a new clue to an as-yet-unformed human being, and its little mind is a pulp of undistinguished memory and cognition' (RDP 117:40):

> A little child has one clue to itself, central within itself. It is new pulp, busy with differentiation towards the great goal of fulfilled being. Instead of worshipping the child, and seeing in it a divine emission which time will stale, we ought to realise that here is a new little clue to a human being. (RDP 118:6)

In other words, the tendency to idealize the innocence of children is a misguided one. And becoming a full individual is not given to everyone.

The first task, then, is to become an *authentic* individual, but this is by no means easy, and Lawrence insists, on a number of occasions, as in the last chapter of *Apocalypse* or the

[76] Particularly when she obliged him to work as a clerk, an experience that Lawrence found humiliating, and which is fictionalised in *Sons and Lovers*.

letter to Reid, that many people never truly become individuals, and even that *pure* individuality is not possible:

> No man is or can be a pure individual. The mass of men have only the tiniest touch of individuality: if any. The mass of men live and move, think and feel collectively, and have practically no individual emotions, feelings or thoughts at all. They are fragments of the collective or social consciousness. It has always been so. And will always be so. (A 146:23)

This problem of the authenticity of the individual preoccupied Lawrence throughout his life, and there is a lot more to be said about it (I will be returning to this topic in chapter 8). Nonetheless, it is easy to see how Lawrence's attachment to individual freedom implied a rejection of traditional religious, social and cultural beliefs, corresponding in this way to the kind of destructive nihilism epitomized in Nietzsche.

So far, this might suggest that for Lawrence the self was a 'disengaged self' to use the term of Charles Taylor—but this would be misleading. The self as Lawrence understands it is not some kind of autonomous entity, cut off from its surroundings, but the dynamic product of a permanent and ongoing relationship with other people and with its surrounding environment. As George J. Zytaruk explains: 'the achievement of individuality, Lawrence believes, is dependent upon the establishment of a multiplicity of relationships' (Zytaruk 241). The conscious self needs to be seen as the mere epiphenomenal awareness of these relationships. In the words of Father William Tiverton: 'it is in the relatedness of the self with the other-self, and of the self with the sub-self—trees, horses, snakes, rocks, seed and flower—that the human unconscious can meet the conscious mind and so the self becomes aware of the self" (Tiverton 126)—"the self is a relation that relates itself to itself" as Kierkegaard puts it in *The Sickness unto Death* (Kierkegaard, The Sickness Unto Death 43).[77] This is also the point Deleuze makes in the introduction to his wife's translation of *Apocalypse* when he fleshes out the distinction Lawrence makes between the *âme* (soul, the unconscious self) and the *moi (*conscious self). Whereas the conscious self (*moi*) is just an image ('le moi n'est pas une relation, c'est un reflet'), the 'soul', the real, individual, unconscious self is, in fact, the sum of all its relations ('ce qui est individuel, c'est la relation, c'est l'âme'). He is referring to what Lawrence expresses at the very end of *Apocalypse*:

[77] See chapter 8.

> My soul knows that I am part of the human race, my soul is an organic part of the great human soul, as my spirit is part of my nation. In my own very self, I am part of my family. There is nothing of me that is alone and absolute except my mind, and we shall find that the mind has no existence by itself, it is only the glitter of the sun on the surface of the waters. So that my individualism is really an illusion. (A 149:22)

'Stop thinking of ourselves as an ego', writes Deleuze (Deleuze, Nietzsche and Saint Paul 51). We should treat life as if it were something flowing, with each life 'a set of flows in relation with other flows, outside of oneself and inside of oneself' (Deleuze, Nietzsche and Saint Paul 51).[78] Deleuze is also referring to the article Lawrence wrote in 1929 for *Vanity Fair* 'We Need One Another' where Lawrence emphasizes that, alone, I am nothing:[79]

> As a fixed object, even as an individuality or a personality, no human being, man or woman, amounts to much. The great I AM does not apply to human beings, so they may as well leave it alone. As soon as anybody, man or woman, becomes a great I AM, he becomes nothing. Man or woman, each is a flow, a flowing life. (LEA 300:19)

Thus, individual freedom is in itself insufficient for leading a fulfilled life. In 'We Need One Another', Lawrence drives home the point: 'what are you, when you've asserted your grand independence, broken all the ties, or 'bonds,' and reduced yourself to a 'pure' individuality? What are you?' (LEA 297:18). If you end up 'cut off from the most vital human contacts, the danger is that you are left just simply next to nothing' (LEA 297:23). This is what Lawrence must have realized during the personal crisis he experienced in his early twenties, and it was this that incited him to develop the rudiments of a philosophy that would provide a basis for the rest of his life.

1.2.2 Finding meaning, making connections, communion.

If the *voluntary* drive to assert one's individuality involved a radical critique of traditional structures, the *sympathetic* drive is, on the contrary, an attempt to affirm life and to construct a more meaningful way of life. Indeed, it is the encounter with the other which helps

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[78] 'Cesser de se penser comme un moi, pour se vivre comme un flux, un ensemble de flux, en relation avec d'autres flux, hors de soi et en soi' (Deleuze, Apocalypse 37).

[79] Deleuze had access to a French translation of Lawrence's essays and other non-fictional writings in the volume *Eros et les chiens*, Edition Bourgois, 1969, which included the article 'We Need One Another', to which he specifically refers in a footnote (Deleuze, Apocalypse 37), (Deleuze, Nietzsche and Saint Paul 189).

to define who we are. Without this sympathetic drive, the voluntary drive becomes mere egotism, and a denial of the reality of the interconnectedness of the world.[80] This was the very essence of Lawrence's conversion. To be fulfilled, Lawrence argues, we need genuine sympathy between man and woman, between man and his fellow man, and thirdly between man and the physical world. The words Lawrence employs for the realization of this interconnection are manifold, oneness, togetherness, unity, amongst many others, but their religious nature is made manifest by the fact that they are often linked by Lawrence to the concept of eternity or the absolute. In December 1908, he writes again to Blanche Jennings, articulating the idea that:

> Somehow, I think we come into knowledge (unconscious) of the most vital parts of the cosmos through touching things. You do not know how I feel my soul enlarged through contact with the soft arms and face and body of my Hilda Mary – who is 9 months old today. I know my phraseology is vague and impossible. But there must be some great purposeful impulses impelling through everything to move it and work it to an end. (1L 99)

Lawrence's belief that there must be some form of cosmic unity, expressed in the second letter to Reverend Reid, has already been highlighted. Lawrence clearly has himself in mind when he tells Blanche Jennings that a religion of some sort is 'absolutely necessary to many who would drop and never recover without it' (1L 57).

The very first piece of non-fictional writing which has come down to us in 'Art and Individual' (1908), originally a presentation at a debating society,[81] provides valuable insights into the nature of Lawrence's 'conversion', since in it he discusses and defines what religious sympathy actually entails for him:

> When this extended sympathy is directed to the history (origin) and destiny of mankind, when it reverentially recognizes the vast scope of the laws of nature, and discovers something of intelligibility and consistent purpose working through the whole natural world and human consciousness, the religious interest is developed and the individual loses for a time the sense of his own

[80] In *Studies in Classic American Literature* Lawrence chastises Walt Whitman for not knowing that sympathy means 'feeling with, not feeling for' (SCAL 158:33).
[81] Lawrence started attending this society, the 'Eastwood Debating Society', in 1908. It was organized by the socialist Wille Hopkin and his wife, with whom Lawrence grew friendly as he looked for new intellectual outlets (Worthen, D. H. Lawrence: The Early Years 1885-1912 178).

> and his day's importance, feels the wonder and terror of eternity with its incomprehensible purposes. This, I hold it, is still a most useful and fruitful state. (STH 224:28) [82]

This is very important for understanding Lawrence's early philosophy since it makes the key points that the discovery of 'intelligibility' and 'consistent purpose' in the world and in human consciousness, leads to a feeling of reverence and wonder, which help to put the narrowness of our individual lives into perspective, and to give us some sort of contact with the idea of eternity. Furthermore, in an aside, Lawrence admits his own belief that 'we are ourselves almost unconscious agents in a great inscrutable purpose, and it gives us relief and pleasure to consciously recognize that power working out in things beyond and apart from us' (STH 225:19). Of course, this echoes the 'great purposeful impulses impelling through everything' mentioned earlier in a letter to Blanche Jennings.

In the second version of the same essay, he states that the role of both art and religion (which are closely related in Lawrence's thinking) is to make visible 'a great underlying purpose', which, he says, is the 'germ of the God-Idea' (STH 138:12). Art's mission, he states in the very first version of 'Art and the Individual' (1908), is 'to bring us into sympathy with as many men, as many objects, as many phenomena as possible. To be in sympathy with things is to some extent to acquiesce in their purpose, to help on that purpose'. This is why, 'we want, we are forever trying to unite ourselves with the whole universe… and with each other' (STH 228:14). Thus, communion with the world occurs when we realize that there is something much bigger than us, a purpose, an eternity; it is something which in the wartime essay 'Life', he expresses as follows: 'when he comes into his own, man has being beyond life and beyond death; he is perfect of both. There he comprehends the singing of birds and the silence of the snake' (RDP 15:16). Thus, in the phenomena of space and time, we may perceive something of eternity. This explains why, as he wrote to Reid, man must continuously forge his own religion. Getting into relation is to search for these moments of transcendence and

[82] Lawrence explicitly states his debt to the German psychologist Herbart (and thus perhaps, implicitly, to the concept of purposiveness expressed in Kant's *Critique of Judgement*.) 'Sympathy', he told his audience, 'is in some measure harmony and unity and in harmony and unity there is the idea of consistent purpose, is there not' (STH 227:15).

transfiguration, that can occur at any moment, and give a glimpse into something not just relative, but absolute.[83]

Lawrence doesn't specifically mention communion with a woman in his letter to Reverend Reid, perhaps in deference to its future recipient, but he does mention it in 'The Reality of Peace' where he writes: 'and then I set out to meet the other, the unknown of womanhood' (RDP 52:1), and again in the letter to Blanche Jennings, where he places it second after religion in importance, 'then love is next precious, love of man for a woman' (1L 57). In Lawrence's case, the real encounter came when he eloped with Frieda Weekley (born Frieda von Richthofen, an aristocratic German woman who just happened to be married to one of his professors at his college). Rebuking his friend Koteliansky, who did not like her, he wrote in a letter on the 3rd of December 1914: 'You don't know that a woman is not a man with a different sex. She is a different world. Your world is all of one hemisphere.' (2L 238). What Lawrence means by this relationship between man and woman is briefly touched upon by Deleuze when he writes the following: 'a worshipper of the sun, Lawrence nonetheless said that the sun's glimmer on the grass is not enough to make a relation' (Deleuze, Nietzsche and Saint Paul 51). Deleuze is referring to a line in 'We Need Each Other' when Lawrence states the relationship between man and woman is about much more than sex. A real relationship between man and woman is in fact 'a living contact', and their relationship is no more about sex 'than the sunshine on the grass is sex' (LEA 299:7). This is because sex, like the gleam of the sun on the grass is a kind of contact, but a superficial one. Sex is only one flow among many, including the flow of 'chastity', 'infinite flows between the two beings', and 'an infinite range of subtle communication which we know nothing about' (LEA 301). What the relationship is really about is the encounter with the unknown, as Lawrence often makes clear. In *Study of Thomas Hardy*, for instance, he writes: 'facing the other way into the unknown, conscious of the tug of the goal at his heart, he hails the woman coming from the place whither he is travelling, searches in her for signs, and makes his God from the suggestion he receives, as she advances' (STH 61:18).

In *Fantasia of the Unconscious* Lawrence wrote that 'the best thing I have known is the stillness of accomplished marriage, when one possesses one's own soul in silence […] and has left off craving and raving and being only half one's self' (PFU 158:16), but that this is only a preparation for the effort 'to make, with other men, a little new way into the future' (PFU

[83] This distinction between the relative and the absolute, as well as Lawrence's references to eternity, will be discussed in the next chapter.

158:23). In the letter to Reverend Reid, he refers to being born again to humanity as being born into 'a consciousness of all the laughing, and the never-ceasing murmur of laughter, pain and sorrow that comes from the terrible multitudes of brothers' (1L 40). What he calls the 'universality of fellowship and communion' in 'The Reality of Peace' (RDP 52:5) remains an abiding concern for Lawrence throughout. Perhaps in part as a reaction against the loneliness he had suffered from in his youth, there is in Lawrence a clear yearning for a greater solidarity—the kind alluded to by Junger in *Tribe*, when he discusses the difficulties that soldiers have in returning to society after having known the unconditional camaraderie of military life. Lawrence recalls a similar kind of solidarity in the article 'Nottingham and the Mining Countryside' (1929), noting that his father would never stay away from the pits, even when injured: 'he loved the contact, the intimacy, as men in the war loved the intense male comradeship of the dark days' (LEA 290:6). For Lawrence, modern civilisation is gradually killing this solidarity off. What Lawrence feels is lacking is the spark of exchange, the kind of commingling which he finds on market-day in Mexico: 'nothing but the touch, the spark of contact. That, no more. That, which is most elusive, still the only treasure. Come, and gone, and yet the clue itself' (MM 55:16).

Like Sebastien Junger, Lawrence is fascinated by the social bonding of American Indian tribes, with both of them quoting the same lines from Hector de Crèvecoeur.[84] According to Junger, 'Crevecoeur seemed to have understood that the intensely communal nature of an Indian tribe held an appeal that the material benefits of western civilisation couldn't necessarily compete with' (Junger 10). A rekindling of the man-to-man relationship for Lawrence is also bound up with the idea of a positive kind of work, that of influencing our fellow man, which he mentions in letters to Blanche Jennings (1L 62), stating that 'a passionate attachment to some work which will help the procession somehow is a safety against the loneliness of not wanting to laugh at the farce, and of having no one with whom to weep' (1L 58). All this ties up, too, with his well-known plans to establish a kind of utopian society called 'Rananim', of which the first known formulation is to be found in a letter to his friend Koteliansky dated 3rd of January 1915.[85] In George J. Zytaruk's collection of letters to Koteliansky which he named *The Quest for Rananim*, Zytaruk writes:

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[84] 'There must be in their (the Indians') social bond something singularly captivating, and far superior to anything to be boasted of among us' (SCAL 40:29); Benjamin Franklin also told a friend that children who had been brought up by Indians could never be persuaded to go back to Western society (Junger 2).

[85] Emphasizing the idea of destruction and re-birth, the letter included Lawrence's own illustration of a phoenix rising from the ashes.

> I wish to emphasize that the kind of human relationship which Lawrence envisaged for the inhabitants of *Rananim* existed between Lawrence and Koteliansky. The mutual trust, dependability, generosity, frankness and integrity which characterized their relationship, judged by any standard, is indeed worthy of admiration. Although Lawrence often despaired over his failure to establish his Utopia, saying: "That *Rananim* of ours, it has sunk out of sight" […] I think the letters we can read here indicate that the spirit of *Rananim* in fact existed between the two men, and that to a large degree their quest for *Rananim* had been achieved. (Quest for Rananim xxxv)

Lawrence also mentions this type of relationship in the first draft of 'Art and the Individual'. Under the category of the *sympathetic* Lawrence includes two types of relationships, the social and the religious. The social is described in the following terms: 'growing comprehension of the incorporation of the individual in the great social body whose interests are large beyond his personal feelings. He is a unit, working with others for a common welfare, like a cell in a complete body' (STH 224:22).

1.2.3 Need for balance: never one without the other

The growth into individuality, together with the realisation of these three relationships always remain central to Lawrence, though his emphasis on one or another varies widely. Sometimes he appears to focus mainly on the relationship with the cosmos, as in *Apocalypse*. At other times, he focuses almost entirely on the relations between male and female as in *Study of Thomas Hardy*, or between men as in *Studies in Classic American Literature*. On occasions, he seems to focus almost entirely on the struggle to become an individual, almost as if he had forgotten the relationships, as in 'Education of the People', or inversely, he criticizes excessive individualism. Perhaps it is, therefore, not entirely surprising that the reaction of many was to simply assert, as did Fjågesund, that he had a 'strongly inconsistent mind' (Fjågesund 26). Poplawski, for example, accuses Lawrence of a basic paradox in his metaphysical reasoning (Poplawski 52), and of 'vacillating between, on the one hand, an over emphasis of the importance of the individual and of individuality and individual self-sufficiency, and on the other hand an attempt to undermine and negate such an importance' (Poplawski, 50).

However, it should be clear by now that the key for Lawrence is balance. Whenever he finds any kind of imbalance, he attacks that exaggeration, as he makes clear in a letter: 'Christ himself is always going against the Holy Spirit. He must *insist* on the love, because it has been

overlooked. But insistence on the one is not to be interpreted as negation of the other. In his purest moments Christ knew that the Holy Spirit was both love and hate – not one only' (2L 408). This is the message of the wartime essay 'Love' (1917):

> There must be both. In the duality lies fulfilment. Man must act in concert with man, creatively and happily. This is greatest happiness. But man must also act separately and distinctly, apart from every other man, single and self-responsible and proud with unquenchable pride, moving for himself without reference to his neighbour. These two movements are opposite, yet they do not negate each other. (RDP 12:6)

Likewise, love between man and woman has to respect the individuality of both partners, there can be no merging into oneness. This, then, is why he criticizes Whitman (whom he admired greatly) for wanting to pass himself off as all humanity: 'I AM HE THAT ACHES WITH AMOROUS LOVE. Walter, leave off. You are not HE. You are just a limited Walter. And your ache doesn't include all Amorous love, by any means' (SCAL 149:2). Likewise, if there is an over-emphasis on the individual, as in modern societies, at the expense of solidarity and relationship, this is equally problematic for Lawrence, as he makes clear in 'A Propos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*':

> Individualism has triumphed […] The sense of isolation, followed by the sense of menace and of fear, is bound to arise as the feeling of oneness and community with our fellow-men declines, and the feeling of individualism and personality, which is existence in isolation, increases. (LCL 332:23)

Therefore, the key to an affirmation of the world is to be found in the ongoing establishment of meaningful relationships between the individual, humanity and the world.

1.3 Hermeneutic Lawrence: Searching for Meaning

1.3.1 The Ennui of Modernity: 'the young are becoming afraid of their own emptiness' (LEA 318)

Lawrence's starting point is a total rejection of the meaninglessness of the modern world. Kierkegaard, whom Lawrence knew of, and quite liked, illustrated this in *The Present Age* by the example of a grandfather clock which had gone wrong.[86] Although it struck every

[86] Kierkegaard, and any possible link to Lawrence, will be discussed in more detail in chapter 8.

hour, it only ever struck once, so that: 'it did not strike twelve times at twelve o'clock and once at one o'clock, but struck once all through the day at regular intervals. It went on striking all day long but never gave a definite time.' (Kierkegaard, The Present Age 18). Like the clock, the present age, for Kierkegaard 'leaves everything standing but cunningly empties it of significance' (Kierkegaard, The Present Age 14). Similar concerns are also to be found in Lawrence in the essay 'Nobody Loves Me' (1929):

> Now in the grey intervals in the life of the modern young one fact emerges in all its dreariness, and makes itself plain to the young themselves, as well as the onlooker. The fact that they are empty: that they care about nothing and nobody: not even the Amusement they seek so strenuously […] As a matter of fact, the young are becoming afraid of their own emptiness. (LEA 317-318)

Modernity, in other words, is characterized by what Max Weber famously called 'disenchantment', but by what Lawrence himself calls '*ennui*'.

Re-creating a meaningful world from a world in crisis—a phoenix rising from the ashes of modern civilisation—requires one to distinguish between deeper and shallower meanings, as he expresses it in 'A Propos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*', where he makes it clear that higher emotions are all types of love (sympathy)—genuine desire, love for one's fellow beings, and love of God:

> By higher emotions we mean love in all its manifestations, from genuine desire to tender love, love of our fellow-men, and love of God: we mean love, joy, delight, hope, true indignant anger, passionate sense of justice and injustice, truth and untruth, honour and dishonour, and real belief in anything: for belief is a profound emotion that has the mind's connivance. All these things, today, are more or less dead. We have in their place the loud and sentimental counterfeit of all such emotion. (LCL 312:1)

Some sort of foundation on which to build one's interpretations is provided by the assumption that, on the one hand, fulfilment stems from both becoming authentically individual, and also, on the other hand, from forming authentic relationships with a partner, with fellow men, and with the cosmos. Thereby, Lawrence was able to see every individual experience as part of a

whole, and thus constantly relate the part and the whole together.[87] On the other hand, for the scientific world, as Lawrence is well aware, the question of meaning is hardly a question at all. As Zimmermann puts it, 'our modern culture tends to think that real knowledge consists in quantification, that is, in the scientific numerical description of things in the world. On this account, objective truth requires an impersonal, theoretical stance towards things' (Zimmermann 8).[88] Such a viewpoint is totally unsatisfactory for Lawrence.

Lawrence's search for clues is about searching for a basis for how best to live. As Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor argues powerfully in *Sources of the Self*: *The Making of the Modern Identity* (1989), 'doing without frameworks is utterly impossible for us; a vital part of our self-identity is knowing where we stand on certain issues and for that we need a framework' (Taylor, Sources of the Self 27). A person who lives without any kind of moral framework could only be a person who was profoundly disturbed:

> The portrait of an agent free from all frameworks rather spells for us a person in the grip of an appalling identity crisis. Such a person wouldn't know where he stood on issues of fundamental importance, would have no orientation in these issues whatever, wouldn't be able to answer for himself on them. If one wants to add to the portrait by saying that the person doesn't suffer this absence of frameworks as a lack, isn't in other words in a crisis at all, then one rather has a picture of frightening dissociation. (Taylor, Sources of the Self 31)

But as Lawrence puts it in 'Education of the People', man is 'a creature of beliefs and of foregone conclusions' (RDP 114:36). All individual understanding is mediated by historical, social, cultural and personal contexts; by the pre-conscious social, cultural, personal, political and historical factors which Heidegger calls 'forestructures'. As Jens Zimmermann notes in *Hermeneutics: A Very Short Introduction*: 'after Heidegger […] pre-understanding or preconceptions are deemed an essential, intrinsic part of interpretation […] Any pretensions to presuppositionless interpretation, of approaching texts or whatever it is we interpret without

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[87] Lawrence is close to Zimmermann's description of Schleiermacher's: 'in Schleiermacher's hermeneutic circle of understanding, every great artistic, scientific, or religious insight provides a partial glimpse into the shared cosmic whole. In other words, we can attain knowledge of the universe or of God only though the particular thoughts of others, through concepts, through comparative religions and world views' (Zimmermann 27). The hermeneutic circle is also discussed in Heidegger's *Being and Time*.

[88] And yet without a prior experiential relation to things, scientific results would be meaningless since 'as the Scottish philosopher John MacMurray (1891-1976) pointed out, 'if we did not know what water is by drinking it and boiling it in our kettles, the scientific statement that water is H_2O would be merely a meaningless noise' (Zimmermann 12). Lawrence often uses this example of the description of H_2O as water to make a similar point, as we will see later.

bias, must be given up' (Zimmermann 38). In fact, writes Zimmermann, 'after Heidegger, the enlightenment ideal of reading without prejudice, formulated by Descartes, Kant, and others, is not just undesirable but impossible, since access to whatever we want to interpret is only granted through presuppositions' (Zimmermann 38). This is the kind of thing Lawrence is getting at in 'Education of the People':

> Without formulating or putting into any conscious expression what our idea of a man or a woman, a white man and a white woman, *is*, we still have a large, potent idea, accumulated in our psyche through course of ages. And according to this *idea* of what we ourselves are, and of what our neighbour is, we take up our attitude to the world, and we model all our behaviour. (RDP 114:25)

For the most part, we are barely conscious of their operation, since we are thrown into the world in which social and cultural patterns have often already been established,[89] but developing an awareness of these fore-structures helps us to relinquish our attachments to how we currently know and understand the world (McManus Holroyd), something of which Lawrence is quite aware: 'here we are, then, born and swaddled in fixed beliefs, no matter how we may deny our beliefs, with lip-denial. There they are, in our very tissue. And they are not to be ousted save by new beliefs' (RDP 114:32).

Lawrence's basic philosophy gave him some kind of foundation, hermeneutic if not epistemological, for life; since, as he writes in *Study of Thomas Hardy*: 'man in viewing the world must view it in light of a theory' (STH 93:35). As Zimmermann affirms, what is meaningful is never entirely arbitrary:

> Our construction of meaning is ultimately a hypothesis, that is a well-reasoned guess […] At the same time, however, such an educated guess is not at all a merely arbitrary conjecture. For the text in itself holds all sorts of clues that provide the boundaries and possibilities for the meaning we construct. (Zimmermann 65)

[89] In a speech in 2005, the now-deceased American writer David Foster Wallace expressed it with a short story: 'There are these two young fish swimming along and they happen to meet an older fish swimming the other way, who nods at them and says "Morning, boys. How's the water?" And the two young fish swim on for a bit, and then eventually one of them looks over at the other and goes "What the hell is water?". He goes on to explain that: 'The point of the fish story is merely that the most obvious, important realities are often the ones that are hardest to see and talk about' (D. F. Wallace).

Because this search for meaning is so fundamental to his philosophy, Lawrence can be situated in the tradition of hermeneutic philosophy which runs from the 19th Century with Schleiermacher, Dilthey and Nietzsche through to the 20th century with Heidegger, Gadamer and more recently Charles Taylor. Prior to Schleiermacher (1768-1834), the art of interpretation was thought to concern mainly written texts, and hermeneutics had been at best a system of rules—grammatical, historical, esthetico-rhetorical and material— which worked together in an interpretative act (Dilthey 240). However, there was a growing realisation that interpretation was fundamental to human identity, for in fact, 'hermeneutics is the art of understanding and of making oneself understood […] One is engaged in hermeneutics whenever one tries to grasp the meaning of something' (Zimmermann 2). McManus Holroyd claims that 'the opportunity to engage in hermeneutic understanding is likely to arise when individuals undergo any experience that serves to disrupt the ordinary, taken for granted aspects of existence' (McManus Holroyd). True understanding results from the encounter with what is radically different, with 'abysmal otherness'[90] and requires 'a stance of openness' since the inquirer must be prepared to surrender 'what he or she currently knows, and it is in this surrender that the inquirer has the potential to be transformed' (McManus Holroyd). In other words, any transformative experience always involves a risk, the risk of the unknown.[91]

The inevitable result of no longer experiencing any sense of wonder about the mystery of life, is that life has lost its meaningfulness. Material needs have been satisfied but not existential ones, as Lawrence highlights in *Mornings in Mexico*:

> Our corn doesn't fail us: we have no seven years' famine, and apparently need never have. But the other thing fails us, the strange inward sun of life; the pellucid monster of the rain never shows us his stripes. To us, heaven switches on daylight, or turns on the shower-bath. We little gods are gods of the machine only. It is our highest. Our cosmos is a great ennui. And we die of ennui. A subtle dragon stings us in the midst of plenty. *Quos vult perdere Deus, dementat prius*. (MM 84:13)[92]

[90] According to Gadamer, a new enlarged perspective is the result of the mediation between the alien and the familiar (Zimmermann 48).
[91] An obvious example is parenting; no matter what we are told, one can never know what it will be like without taking the plunge (McManus Holroyd), (Paul).
[92] This Latin phrase which means 'he who the Gods would destroy, he first drives mad', is frequently used by Lawrence. It will be discussed further in Chapter 6, in the discussion of what Lawrence means by sensationalism.

Lawrence gradually sees the Western mechanical way[93] winning out against the Indian way as a result of the imposition of obligatory schooling on Indian children: 'the young Indians who have been to school for many years are losing their religion, becoming discontented, bored, and rootless. An Indian with his own religion inside him *cannot* be bored. The flow of the mystery is too intense all the time, too intense, even, for him to adjust himself to circumstances which really are mechanical' (MM 94:16). The problem of *ennui*, then, is due to the loss of this state of wonder.[94] Elise Brault-Dreux points out the extent to which boredom is thematized in Lawrence's work, noting that boredom in Lawrence is a 'disease of time' and, at least in part, a failure to be in the here-and-now (Brault-Dreux, Modern Boredom: Subjective Distortions of Time in D. H. Lawrence's Work 2).[95] But boredom in Lawrence is also very much associated with the sentiment that existence has become meaningless.

1.3.2 A world full of meaning: 'Underneath is everything we don't know and are afraid of knowing' (MM 175)

In the essay 'New Mexico', Lawrence asserts that 'the know-it-all state of mind is just the result of being outside the mucous-paper wrapping of civilisation. Underneath is everything we don't know and are afraid of knowing' (MM 175:30). Ultimately, Lawrence's 'conversion' is the concretisation of the belief that there is an underlying, often concealed, divine significance to the world: accordingly, the world can be seen as a set of meaningful signs to be interpreted. Thus, when discussing the ancient science of augury (interpreting the flights of birds as significant signs) in one of his latest books, *Sketches of Etruscan Places* (1928), Lawrence suggests that such an approach is just as valid as modern economics or psychological sciences:

> If you live by the cosmos, you look in the cosmos for your clue. If you live by a personal god, you pray to him. If you are rational, you think things over. But it all amounts to the same thing in the end. Prayer, or thought, or studying the

[93] What Lawrence means by a mechanical way will also be examined later.
[94] Heidegger says that: 'after this questioning was abandoned and everything was left to calculating experience, slowly and in certain places, something like the imminent irrelevance and meaninglessness of all beings flare up' (Basic Questions 168).
[95] Following Jankélévitch she affirms 'that boredom is 'a disease of time', rooted in the notion of becoming, and deriving alternately from a sense of 'being and of not being''. In the first place, she contends, modern boredom is caused by an overload of stimuli leading to a disconnect with the external world. Secondly, due to a dissociation with the present moment or, in other words, a failure to be in the here-and-now. And thirdly, she argues that boredom may result as a consequence of someone being too self-absorbed and too self-centred to appreciate existence as potentially exciting (Brault-Dreux, Modern Boredom: Subjective Distortions of Time in D. H. Lawrence's Work n.p.).

> stars, or watching the flight of birds, or studying the entrails of the sacrifice, it is all the same process, ultimately: of divination. All it depends on is the amount of *true*, sincere, religious concentration you can bring to bear on your object. An act of pure attention, if you are capable of it, will bring its own answer. (SEP 61:38)

Paying attention is, in other words, the act of looking for the significance in the phenomena one encounters in the world. An early example of this mindset can clearly be seen in his first novel, *The White Peacock*, in a remarkable scene, where, stumbling suddenly upon a field of snowdrops, the characters immediately want to know what the flowers stand for:

> "What do they mean, do you think?" said Lettie in a low voice, as her white fingers touched the flowers, and her black furs fell on them. "There are not so many this year," said Leslie. "They remind me of mistletoe, which is never ours, though we wear it," said Emily to me. "What do you think they say — what do they make you think, Cyril?" Lettie repeated. "I don't know. Emily says they belong to some old wild lost religion. They were the symbol of tears, perhaps, to some strange hearted Druid folk before us." "More than tears," said Lettie. "More than tears, they are so still. Something out of an old religion, that we have lost. They make me feel afraid." (WP 129:21).[96]

Similarly, in the San Gaudenzio chapter of *Twilight in Italy* (1915), Lawrence writes something almost identical:

> In the autumn the little rosy cyclamens blossom in the shade of this west side of the lake. They are very cold and fragrant, and their scent seems to belong to Greece, to the Bacchae. They are real flowers of the past. They seem to be blossoming in the landscape of Phaedra and Helen. They bend down, they brood like little chill fires. *They are little living myths that I cannot understand*. (TI 154:1, my italics)

Like most of Lawrence's non-fictional writing, the passage is concerned with interpreting the mystery of the surrounding world, and finding there the partially concealed presence of the divine. Thus, the Christmas rose flowers rise up from the rocks, and Lawrence says they are

[96] Although, I confine myself primarily to analysing Lawrence's non-fictional texts, I will make occasional exceptions. This passage, for instance, provides a particularly good example of Lawrence's hermeneutic approach to the world.

'heaps of confident, mysterious whiteness in the shadow' (TI 154:26), 'it is almost uncanny to see them. They are the flowers of darkness, white and wonderful beyond belief' (TI 154:33). Thus, the snow on the mountains is 'so bright that it is almost frightening. What can be so fiercely gleaming when all is shadowy? It is something inhuman and unmitigated between heaven and earth' (TI 154:34). Thus, the afterglow of the evening is 'a huge incandescence of rose, hanging above and gleaming, as if it were the presence of a host of angels in rapture. It gleams like a rapturous chorus, then passes away' (TI 155:4). In other words, the tremendous power and intensity of the passage comes from this sense of a hidden mystery being revealed in every moment. Indeed, Lawrence's entire world is a world in which everything is potentially a sign. Every encounter, every experience, every book review, every introduction, indeed every book read, is treated as a potential source of revelation, and thereby facilitating the search for the kind of meaning that would enable a new world to be created from the ruins of the present one. Consequently, Lawrence is exactly the opposite of Fjågesund's 'prophet of doom', precisely because he devotes all his energies to a refusal of nihilism and to the search for meaning.

In *Mapping Literary Modernism* Ricardo J. Quinones alludes to a general tendency in Modernism where, 'events are not discrete in themselves, but like hieroglyphs, allude to deeper processes' (Quinones). Lawrence's writing engages in all sorts of interpretation, including textual, but goes far beyond this, looking for signs in literally everything he comes across or reads about, whether it be flowers or trees, animals or humans, the Etruscan Tombs or the Book of Revelation, historical and artistic figures like Shelley or Alexander Pope, Plato, or Francis of Assisi, Lenin or Ceasar, Flaubert or Wordsworth, Lloyd George and Woodrow Wilson, whether it be works of art or novels, places or events. Thus Shelley, whom Lawrence mentions on numerous occasions, comes to stand for what Lawrence calls in the first unpublished fragment of Apocalypse a 'spiritist' (A 167:18), or as he says in 'Apocalypsis II' the perfect example of when 'the Mind says that Sweet Reason shall rule, and the body cries its glad assents. And that is Shelley' (A 198:27).[97] And Alexander Pope, whose famous 'know then thyself, presume not God to scan/ The proper study of mankind is man', comes to stand, for Lawrence, for the anthropomorphism of the epoch,[98] whereas Flaubert and Dostoevsky stand for nihilism, and Woodrow Wilson stands for the kind of abstract, false ideals that Lawrence rejects: 'each of these leaders [Wilson, Karl Marx, Bernard Shaw] has wanted to abstract him

[97] See also TI 121; STH 71; SCAL 180:2, SCAL 192:2, SCAL 194:13; A165:19, A167:18, A198:27.
[98] See RDP 169; TI 120.

away from his own blood and being, into some foul Methuselah or abstraction of a man' (PFU 141:17).[99] Likewise, as he studies the little pictures of cattle in 'A Chapel among the Mountains' (1914) he notes that 'standing there so hieroglyphic, the animals had a symbolic power. They did not merely represent property. They were the wonderful animal life which man must take for food' (TI 33:38). Or at the Etruscan Tombs, when Lawrence writes 'there is a mystery and a portentousness in the simple scenes which go deeper than commonplace life. It seems all so gay and light. Yet there is a certain weight, or depth of significance that goes beyond aesthetic beauty (SEP 49:16). Or again at the Round Dances of the Indians in *Mornings in Mexico*, where Lawrence writes 'what are they doing? Who knows? But perhaps they are giving themselves again to the pulsing, incalculable fall of the blood, which for ever seeks to fall to the centre of the earth, while the heart like a planet pulsating in an orbit, keeps up the strange, lonely circulating of the separate human existence' (MM 63:36). Lawrence's non-fiction is replete with countless examples of this search for a universal significance in everything he comes across—not for fixed meanings, but for hints of something more profound than can be superficially observed.[100] Lawrence was well aware that 'all texts and non-texts are strange and inaccessible' (McManus Holroyd).

Lawrence's critical reading, too, employs the same approach. As Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) observed, the fact that people are not aware of their presuppositions means, that the ultimate goal of the hermeneutic process can be 'to understand an author better than he understood himself' (Dilthey 244)—exactly what Lawrence is arguing when he writes: 'this is the clue to Edgar Allan Poe, and to the art that succeeds him' (SCAL 229:18). Poe is the clue for Lawrence because he represents that necessary break-down which civilisation must go through before it can be born again. Likewise, what Crevecoeur thinks about nature is less important than what his artistic vision shows us about nature; Benjamin Franklin's writings help us see where society has gone wrong; Fenimore Cooper reveals something profound about friendship; *Moby Dick* symbolizes the hollow triumph of the mental over our deepest nature (SCAL 146); Whitman shows us both the way forward, and his failure to quite take the right direction; and so on and so forth. The apparent meaning is never as important as the clue it might carry about the author's deeper, often unconscious intentions.[101] This was what

[99] 'The best souls in the world make some of the worst interpretations — like President Wilson' (K 296:39).
[100] Lawrence says of the round dance 'it has no name. It has no words. It means nothing at all' (MM 63:30). It clearly has some sort of significance, but it is vain to try to fix it in words.
[101] Early possible titles that Lawrence considered for *Studies in Classic American Literature* included 'The Transcendent Element in American Literature', 'Essays on the Mystic Import of American Literature', which give a better idea of the underlying theme of the work. The first version was published in *The English Review* between

Lawrence meant when he famously wrote ‘Never trust the artist. Trust the tale’ (SCAL 14:26), for classic American literature was to be read as a source of possible clues about how to achieve freedom and re-invent society, just as the Bible and the Etruscan tombs were to be interpreted to see if any past wisdom could be gleaned from them which might help to reinvigorate society. In the next chapter, we will look at how Lawrence came to read the cosmos in a meaningful way, by the light of the thought of Schopenhauer and William James.

November 1918 and June 1919; the second Benjamin Franklin essay was published in December 1918 (SCAL xxxvi). The whole first version was first published integrally under the title *The Symbolic Meaning* in 1961. All the versions are now available in the 2003 Cambridge Edition.

Chapter 2: 'The clue to the cosmos'

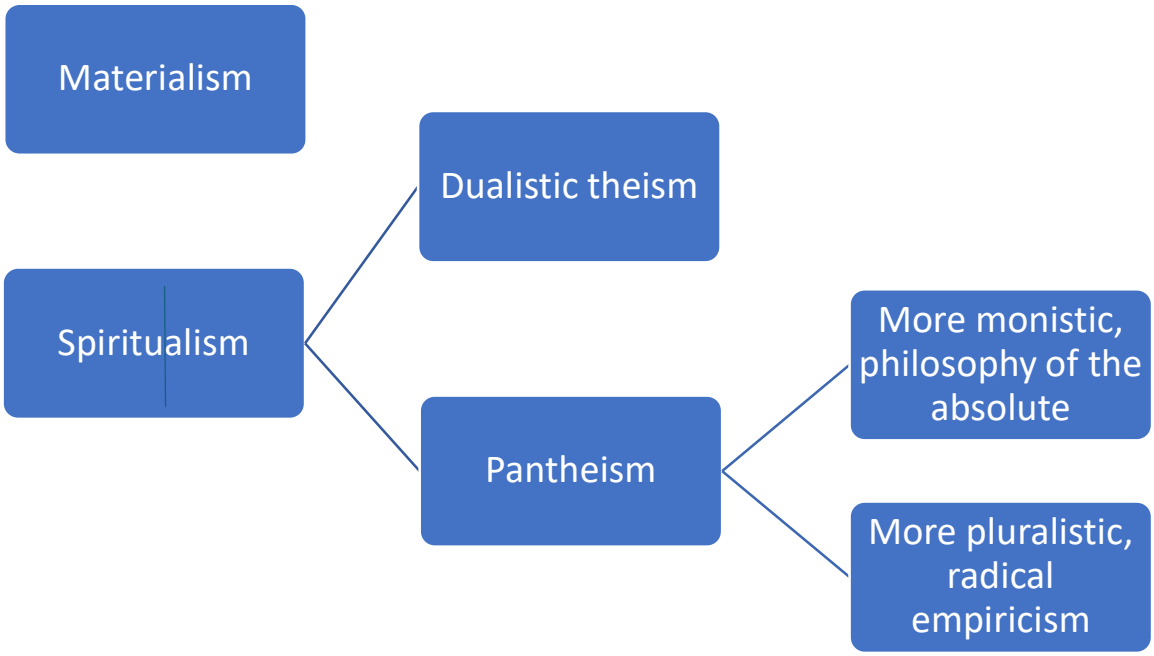
For Lawrence, then, the way to combat the feeling of *ennui* so characteristic of modern times, is to look for meaning. Things, people and the world are invested with a significance that one might catch a glimpse of—if one pays careful enough attention to them. How Lawrence came to see the world in this way is the subject of this chapter. This will entail establishing how, having lost his faith in a Christian God, Lawrence developed a new religious vision of his own, a *pluralistic pantheism*.[102] By looking at the intellectual underpinnings of Lawrence's vision, we will see that Lawrence's philosophy is fundamentally a very concrete and physical one. The following pages should also demonstrate conclusively that many of the apparent incoherencies and contradictions in Lawrence's writings stem from a misunderstanding of his philosophy.

The most important texts in Lawrence's development were undoubtedly William James's *A Pluralistic Universe*, and Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation*, and a detailed analysis of the arguments in these texts is crucial for countering many of the charges of inconsistencies and ambiguities commonly brought against Lawrence. Roger Ebbatson, for example, declares that the flow and recoil of Lawrence's positions renders any definition of his position in terms such as pantheism inappropriate (Ebbatson 28). In a way, this confusion is understandable because on the one hand Lawrence himself rarely defines his terms, and on the other, the seemingly contradictory criticisms he makes of pantheism, sometimes positive, sometimes negative (of Wordsworth's pantheism, or Emerson's, for example), provide grist to the mill for those critics who are convinced Lawrence is a brilliant but flawed thinker. Nonetheless, an understanding of the nuances of James's philosophy renders statements such as this, as well as others that might also seem obscure, far more comprehensible, enabling us to understand, for instance, what he might mean in the essay 'Him with his Tail in his Mouth' (1925), when he claims that 'the Greeks, being sane, were pantheists and pluralists, and so am I' (RDP 313:20).

[102] Throughout, the term *pluralism* or *pluralistic* is used in the Jamesian sense that will be discussed in this chapter, and not in the more modern sense, viz. the toleration of diverse opinions, though as we will see in the final chapter, the two are not necessarily incompatible.

2.1. Lawrence and James's *A Pluralistic Universe*

The importance of James for Lawrence has already been touched upon in the first chapter when we discussed the letter to his former teacher 'Botany Smith', in which he credits Smith with helping him to overcome a 'crude torturing Monism' and replace it with a 'crude but appeasing pluralism'.[103] John Worthen briefly discusses James's probable influence in his biography *The Early Years*, suggesting that Smith may have recommended *Pragmatism*, and mentioning that Lawrence probably came to know *A Pluralistic Universe* from a review which appeared in the English review (Worthen 180), but there is no detailed discussion of the latter work, which, as the upcoming analysis will show, was vitally important for Lawrence's thought.



In *A Pluralistic Universe* James draws an initial distinction between world views. To begin with, there are two main possibilities: it can be *materialistic* (a world-view he swiftly rejects), or it can be *spiritual*. He then proceeds to divide the latter category (spiritual) into two further categories: *dualistic theism*, or *pantheism*. But there are also, according to James, two different types of pantheism: on the one hand, a more monistic version, a philosophy of the absolute, and on the other hand, his own preferred version, which he names *pluralism*, or

[103] It also seems likely that Lawrence is describing his own experiences, via the autobiographical Cyril in *White Peacock*: 'as I worked with my friend through the still mornings we talked endlessly. I would give him the gist of what I knew of chemistry, and botany, and psychology. Day after day I told him what the professors had told me; of life, of sex and its origins; *of Schopenhauer and William James*' (WP 59:7, my italics).

radical empiricism. These distinctions (summed up in the diagram above) to which Lawrence also subscribes, are essential if we are to understand Lawrence's philosophy. Over the following few pages, I will explain the different categories in more detail and show to what extent they are pivotal to Lawrence's philosophy.

2.1.1 Materialism

There is no definitive definition of materialism, and James himself does not provide one, but it is generally considered to be a type of monism because it maintains that there is only physical substance (matter), and entirely rejects the possibility that there can be anything spiritual at all. But the young Lawrence who exclaims in his letter to Reverend Reid that he has lost his faith in a personal god, still refuses the idea that the world can be merely physical. For him, a world without some sort of God would be an empty world without any meaning, which is why he proclaims: 'I cannot be a materialist' (1L 40). What Lawrence found appeasing, then, in James's philosophy was the latter's belief in the possibility of deeper religious experiences. Indeed, James's pluralism affirmed that it was possible to reject materialism and yet to maintain a meaningful spiritual worldview—and all this without resorting to the idea of a personal God which Lawrence had already rejected: 'I do not believe in a Godhead even – not a Personal God - but the sound of Christianity does not rile me' (1L: 99). Instead, in *A Pluralistic Universe*, James lays out a philosophy of immediate experience in which there is a place for the intuition of 'these deeper reaches that are familiar to evangelical Christianity […] of new ranges of life succeeding on our most despairing moments […] possibilities that take our breath away, of another kind of happiness and power, based on giving up our will and letting something higher work for us […] a world wider than either physics or philistine ethics can imagine' (PU 149). According to James, these experiences, by affording a broader view of creation (PU 149), show that our normal experiences contain only a fragment of what is actually available to real human experience, and hint at experiences which can open out the 'strangest possibilities and perspectives' (PU 150), going far beyond anything that logical understanding and abstractions can afford (PU 150). Bearing in mind the basic tenets of Lawrence's philosophy which we have already discussed, it is easy to see why such sentiments would have appealed to Lawrence.

Right from the outset, James is dismissive of materialists, whom he describes as small band of cynics: 'most of our existing materialists are such because they think the evidence of facts impels them, or because they find the idealists they are in contact with too private and tender-minded; so rather than join their company, they fly to the opposite extreme. I therefore

propose to you to disregard materialists altogether for the present, and to consider the sympathetic party alone' (PU 20). James employs the same term as Lawrence, sympathy, to describe the sense that 'the believer is continuous, to his own consciousness, at any rate, with a wider self from which saving experiences flow' (PU 150), even suggesting that not to demand intimate relations with the universe is a sure sign that something is wrong with you (PU 20). As we have seen, Lawrence was equally dismissive of materialism, and one thing that always remains a constant for Lawrence is the search for the spiritual.[104] Lawrence extends the term further than James does, to include not only its philosophical aspect, but also its economic one, since he considers that a system which is geared only towards the accumulation of more matter, neglecting the spiritual side of life, is spiritually bankrupt. Thus, Kate's reflections in 'The Plumed Serpent' probably resonate with Lawrence's own sentiments when she equates materialism with nihilism, and wonders whether this nihilism was not the real reason for the attraction of the American continent: 'did this account for the great drift to the New World, the drift of spent souls passing over to the side of Godless democracy, energetic negation? The negation which is the life-breath of materialism' (PS 78:4). In Lawrence's diagnosis of the evils of the current system in 'Education of the People', he proclaims that, 'obviously a system which is established for the purposes of pure material production, as ours today, is in its very nature a mechanism, a social machine' (RDP 111:18).[105] As a consequence, in 'Twilight in Italy', Lawrence is astonished that John and the Italians in exile are sucked into 'the cold material insentience of the northern countries and of America'.[106]

Materialism had been premised on a model of machines and the mechanical, something of which Lawrence was well aware. Early modern philosophy (particularly the British philosopher Hobbes) had advocated a mechanical understanding of the universe. Hobbes was a mechanical realist who held that only the physical was real and believed that everything could

[104] In the essay 'New Mexico', having said that he 'had looked over all the world for something that would strike *me* [*him*] as religious', Lawrence says that it was there that he had experienced his first real religious experience (MM 177-8).

[105] In the poem 'Tragedy' he expresses the fear that the material world is stifling all spontaneous life:

> 'When I think of the great tragedy
> of our material-mechanical civilisation
> crushing out the natural human life
> then sometimes I feel defeated' (CP 508).

[106] See also Birkin's conversation with Gerald in *Women in Love*: '"You've got to start with material things," said Gerald. Which statement Birkin ignored. "And we've got to live for *something*, we're not just cattle that can graze and have done with it," said Gerald. "Tell me," said Birkin, "what do you live for?" Gerald's face went baffled' (WL 56).

be explained by mechanical models. In the opening lines of *Leviathan* he argues that men are basically types of machines, and can therefore be explained in mechanistic ways:

> NATURE (the art whereby God hath made and governs the world) is by the art of man, as in many other things, so in this also imitated, that it can make an artificial animal. For seeing life is but a motion of limbs, the beginning whereof is in some principle part within; why may we not say, that all *automata* (engines that move themselves by springs and wheels as doth a watch) have an artificial life? For what is the *heart*, but a *spring*; And the *nerves*, but so many *strings*; and the *joints*, but so many *wheels*, giving motion to the whole body such as was intended by the artificer? (Hobbes 7)

Hobbes was often accused of atheism, but as can be seen in the above citation, he did not deny the existence of God. He did, however, deny that there could be anything non-physical. And for Lawrence, as we have seen, this kind of mechanical explanation was anathema: 'against this automatism, this degradation from the spontaneous-vital reality into the mechanic-material reality, the human soul must always struggle' (PFU 42:34). For there to be any meaningful existence, there must be an element of unpredictability.

Deistic thinkers like Voltaire could also be considered as materialists in some sense (despite their belief in God as a creator of the universe) since they believed that once God had set up the universe, no other intervention was needed.[107] Similarly, scientists like Boyle and Newton continued to advocate a mechanical model for the explanation of the universe, and the deterministic model of classical science remained dominant until the nineteenth century.[108] This is what Lawrence describes in 'The Two Principles' (1917) when he writes:

> We do not suggest that God disappeared between the two great valves of the cosmos once these were created. Yet this is the modern, scientific attitude. Science supposes that once the first forces was in existence, and the first motion set up, the universe produced itself automatically, throwing off life as a by-product, at a certain stage. It is such an idea which has brought about the materialization and emptiness of life. (SCAL 262:21)

[107] The mathematician Laplace is even said to have told Napoleon that there was no need for the hypothesis of God's existence in his system.
[108] Deists should really be included in the next section on dualistic theists, but as they have a materialistic way of thinking, Lawrence seemed to class them as materialists (once the universe has been set up, it operates by itself).

Lawrence, therefore, seems to consider deism as another kind of materialism, and since, for Lawrence, materialism is synonymous with emptiness, he can claim that it is the very idea that matter is primary which 'has brought about *the materialization and emptiness of life'* (my italics). Benjamin Franklin, often considered to be a deist as well, is frequently the target of Lawrence's ire, for conceiving of a God 'who is a maker and an employer, whose one business is to look after the smooth running of the established creation, particularly the human part of it' (SCAL 181:33). Franklin's anthropomorphism, and his narrow emphasis on accumulation reflects his overly human conception of the Creator: 'the universe once set up, it has only to be kept running. For this purpose, it has an efficient manager in Providence. Providence sees that the business of the universe—is kept profitably going. The output of human life increases with each generation, and there is a corresponding increase in the necessities of life' (SCAL 182:4).

There are, therefore, strong reasons for contesting Wallace's argument in *D. H. Lawrence: Science and the Post-Human*, that the description of Lawrence as a *homo religiosus* by Worthen and Schneider has been overdone, and that his suggestion that Lawrence 'started from, and continually aspired towards the possibility of, a materialist knowledge, even as he was apt to condemn materialism-as-mechanism in its popular, non-dialectical sense' (Wallace 235). This assertion is misleading because all of Lawrence's efforts were whole-heartedly devoted to seeking confirmation that the world contained something beyond the mere physical. In the essay 'On Being Religious' (1924), Lawrence wrote: 'the real problem for humanity isn't whether God exists or not. God always is, and we all know it. But the problem is, how to get at Him' (RDP 189: 37). Therefore, like James, Lawrence comprehensively rejects the viability of materialism as a world view.

2.1.2 Dualistic theism

Having summarily rejected materialism, and suggested that some kind of spiritualism is the only acceptable *Weltanschauung*, James also goes on to reject the first sub-category of spiritualism, which is *dualistic theism*, the belief that there exists a God who is separate to the world. James speaks of theism, in terms which must surely have resonated with Lawrence, as an old-fashioned conception which had become almost unthinkable for a generation that had known evolutionary theories and the rise of socio-democratic ideals.[109] James declares that 'the

[109] 'An external creator and his institutions may still be verbally confessed at church in formulas that linger by their mere inertia, but the life is out of them, we avoid dwelling on them, the sincere heart of us is elsewhere' (PU 18).

theological machinery that spoke so livingly to our ancestors, with its finite age of the world, its creation out of nothing, its juridical morality and eschatology, its relish for rewards and punishments, its treatment of God as an external contriver, an "intelligent and moral governor", sounds as odd to most of us as if it were some outlandish savage religion' (PU 18). James even goes so far as to imply that the belief in an external creator (when compared to more holistic notions) is actually rather a childish notion, which has been rightly rejected by other civilizations:

> God as intimate soul and reason of the universe has always seemed to some people a more worthy conception than God as external creator. So conceived, he appeared to unify the world more perfectly, he made it less finite and mechanical, and in comparison with such a God an external creator seemed more like the product of a childish fancy. I have been told by Hindoos that the great obstacle to the spread of Christianity in their country is the puerility of our dogma of creation. (PU 18)

Furthermore, this notion of an external creator, conceived of as some sort of monarchical figure, whom one must mechanically obey, who fixes what is to be held as true *per se* and absolutely, a God who 'throws off the universe and is in no sense implicated by it', a God whose isolation and separateness is insisted upon, ultimately leaves the human subject outside of the deepest reality (PU 16): 'God and his creatures are *toto genere* distinct in the scholastic theology, they have absolutely *nothing* in common […] there is a sense, then, in which philosophic theism makes us outsiders and keeps us foreigners in relation to God' (PU 16). Consequently, according to James, this kind of vision of God, needs to be replaced by a more organic one, by 'the vision of God as the indwelling divine rather than the external creator, and of human life as part and parcel of that deep reality' (PU 19). In a contemporary article (1935), the theologist M. B. Foster argued that 'whether God is in the world or out of it, makes a great difference not only to the conception of God but to the conception of the world' (Foster 440)

Lawrence also rejects the idea that there can be a God, a demiurge, who is an external creator and ruler of the universe, as we see, for instance, in *Mornings in Mexico*, when he discusses the religion of the Indians:

> The Indian does not consider himself as created, and therefore external to God, or the creature of God. To the Indian there is no conception of a defined God. Creation is a great flood, for ever flowing, in lovely and terrible waves. In

> everything, the shimmer of creation, and never the finality of the created. Never the distinction between God and God's creation, or between Spirit and Matter. (MM 66:11)

It is clear from his tone, and the characteristically Lawrentian description of creation as a flow and a shimmer, that Lawrence is endorsing their world view, and consequently, rejecting the dualistic division of spirit and matter. Here then is the idea of separation which is so important (as we will see) for Lawrence. Numerous other examples in Lawrence's work are not hard to find. For example, Lawrence also repudiates theism in *Apocalypse*, arguing that the most ancient traces of *Revelation* show that before the idea of a God as creator was invented by man (A131:8), there was 'no room for the intrusion of the god idea. It was not till the individual began to feel separated off, not till he fell into awareness of himself, […] and knew himself apart and separate, that the conception of a God arose, to intervene between man and the cosmos' (A131:35). Lawrence argues that there had been a more ancient age during which the dualistic notion of an external creator had not existed: 'away behind all the creation myths lies the grand idea that the cosmos *always was*, that it could not have had any beginning, because it always was there and always would be there. It could not have a god to start it, because it was itself all god and all divine, the origin of everything' (A132:22). Lawrence makes it clear in *Studies in Classic American Literature* (while criticizing the motto from the mystic Joseph Granville used by Poe to preface the short story *Ligeia*), that he considers that the idea that 'God is but a great will pervading all things' is too anthropomorphic: 'because a man wants his own will, and nothing but his will, he needn't say that God is the same will, magnified *ad infinitum*. For me, there may be one God, but He is nameless and unknowable. For me, there are also many gods, that come into me and leave me again. And they have very various wills, I must say' (SCAL 68:18).

2.1.3 Idealistic pantheism

Like James, then, Lawrence rejects both materialism and dualistic theism, in favour of a more organic, pantheistic vision of an immanent, incarnated divine. But James effects a further division of pantheism into two different worldviews which proved to be fundamental for Lawrence's thought. James proceeded to carefully separate pantheism into two types: a more monistic form of pantheism which he terms *absolutism* or *monistic pantheism*, and a pluralistic form which he calls *empiricism*. In the interests of clarity, some of the differences

can be summarized in this brief preliminary schematic representation, which I will then proceed to explain:

Two pantheistic world views in *A Pluralistic Universe*	
Monism, philosophy of the absolute, rationalism	**Pluralism, radical empiricism**
The 'All-form'	The 'Each-form'
Identitätsphilosophie, God is one with his creation	'God is himself not the absolute, but is himself a part'
German Idealism, Hegel, Lotze, Bradley, Royce, Haldane, McTaggart, Transcendental Idealism, Emerson	Bergson, William James
The universe is ONE, unified, a block-universe	The universe is MANY, the sum of many parts
'The foreignness of all that is human, of the static timeless perfect absolute' 155-156	Things are with one another in various relations, but nothing includes everything or dominates everything 157
Infinite, absolute, static and eternal	Finite, relative, in time
The world is perfect and good, orderly and aesthetically pure	The world is faulty and messy
The world is an intellectual conception	The world is an assemblage of what is going on
We are detached, we see the world from an external viewpoint, as if we were readers of the great cosmic novel	We are actors in the universe, not the readers, but the personages in its drama
Disdain for the particular, the personal, the unwholesome	Redeems the nature of reality from essential foreignness

A Universe	A Multiverse

According to James, both the monistic form of pantheism (the philosophy of the absolute) and the pluralistic form of pantheism (radical empiricism) start from a similar premise, in that they both identify human substance with the divine substance (PU 20). Nonetheless, there is one extremely significant difference between them. While the philosophy of the absolute seeks first of all to grasp the *whole*, and insists that 'the divine only exists authentically when the world is experienced all at once in its absolute totality' (PU 24), pluralism (or radical empiricism) assumes, to the contrary, that it is impossible to know the whole of reality, but that understanding a *part* can help us to gain a clue as to the nature of the whole. For James, the philosophy of the absolute is a kind of rationalism, whereas pluralism is a kind of empiricism, since '*empiricism means the habit of explaining wholes by parts, and rationalism means the habit of explaining parts by wholes*' (PU 7, italics in the original text). Stated somewhat differently, it can be said that one form of pantheism starts with the whole world in its totality as its subject, while the other variant starts with the individual and his or her very particular experience of it. This is why James calls the first strain the *all-form*, and the second the *each-form*. Because the philosophy of the absolute deals with the world as one unified substance, James considers it more monistic than its pluralistic opposite. At the time James was arguing against the contemporary doxa. British Universities in particular had increasingly come to be dominated to idealistic philosophy[110]—and the only philosophers James really mentions as arguing for the pluralistic and empirical world view are Bergson, Fechner (though only inadvertently), and, of course, James himself. The philosophers of the absolute, on the other hand, whom he names, include Hegel, Lotze, Bradley (on whom T. S. Eliot wrote his doctoral thesis), Royce, Haldane (whom Lawrence mentions in *Fantasia of the Unconscious*), McTaggart, and the transcendental Idealists including Emerson.[111] As we will see, Lawrence also adds to this list the names of Walt Whitman and Wordsworth.

The monistic pantheists emphasize the totality of the universe and contend that if we understand the whole, we can understand the particular. Because everything is God, and

[110] James quotes a long citation from Professor Henry Jones describing the way in which, via Carlyle, idealism had been introduced into British Universities before concluding that 'the stream of German idealism has been diffused over the academic world of Great Britain. The disaster is universal' (PU 29).
[111] He quotes Professor Henry Jones complaining about the way in which a 'stream of German Idealism' had come to dominate British Universities (PU 29).

because this 'God' is identified with creation, James understands this as a kind of maximalist pantheism, '*Identitätphilosophie*, the immanence of God in its creation', but points out that its unity is illusory (PU 22). This is the same line of reasoning that Lawrence is criticising in the essay 'Democracy' (1919) when he writes (critically): 'we are all one, and therefore every bit partakes of all the rest. That is, the Whole is inherent in every fragment. That is, every human consciousness has the same intrinsic value as every other human consciousness, because each is an essential part of the Great Consciousness. This is the One Identity which identifies us all' (RDP 70). Lawrence is also alluding to this line of reasoning in the essay 'Climbing Down Pisgah' (1924)— though he also demonstrates that he fully understands its appeal, which he had no doubt experienced himself when he was younger—of the 'one Cosmic Soul, or Spirit, of which every individual is a broken fragment, and towards which every individual strives back, to escape the raw edges of his own fragmentariness, and to experience once more the sense of wholeness' (RDP 225:13).[112] As James highlights, there remains an obvious attraction to this kind of philosophy for someone committed to the idea that the world is spiritual: 'there is no doubt that most of us find that the bare notion of an absolute all-one is inspiring. "I yielded myself to the perfect whole", writes Emerson; and where can you find a more mind-dilating object' (PU 28). Lawrence, too, who had avidly read Emerson and Thoreau in his youth must once have felt its pull. In his 'Review of *Americans* by Stuart S, Sherman' (1923), he acknowledged both the appeal Emerson still had for him, and the appeal he had formerly had: 'I like Emerson's real courage. I like his wild and genuine belief in the Over-Soul and the inrushes he got from it. *But it is a museum-interest. Or else it is a taste of the old drug to the old spiritual drug-fiend in me*' (IR 225:17, my italics). Yet, the description in italics of Emerson as a 'museum-piece' shows that Lawrence had already moved well beyond this kind of position. Although it sounds good in theory (as Lawrence notes), it has really been found wanting for all the reasons that James sets out, and to which Lawrence also adheres. Both James and Lawrence feel that monistic pantheism ultimately leads to a feeling of alienation.

One of James's criticisms is that the abstract analyses effected to conceive the absolute lead to a sentiment of 'foreignness' (alienation). The purely verbal character of some of their reasoning leads him to compare them, at one point, with the Greek sophists who, for instance, denied that man could be good because man means man, and good means good, and the word *is* simply cannot be expected to link two such disparate meanings. Bradley, James says, revels in the same sort of argument (PU 37). Despite their ingenuity, the emptiness of their attempts

[112] Here Lawrence is criticizing Walt Whitman (a transcendental idealist) for his idealistic philosophy.

to justify their vision of the oneness of the universe is flagrant: 'if you say "parts", of *what* are they parts? If you call them a "many", that very word unifies them' (PU 36). It is interesting to compare Lawrence's observations on Plato's dialogues in 'Apocalypsis II':

> In some of the dialogues we see Socrates disgustingly false and tricky, tricking his opponents with arguments palpably specious and puerile, so that we wonder the opponent swallowed such stuff. Then we remember that argument, real dialectic was such a new thing on the face of the earth, that when the purest nonsense was arrived at logically, or with apparent logic, it was mutely accepted. (A196:30)

Similarly, James cites as an example Lotze's argument, a particularly ingenious one, but also a purely verbal one: '*call* your a and b distinct, they can't interact; *call* them one, they can […] If *a* and *b* are "one", and the one changes, *a* and *b* of course must co-ordinately change. What under the old name they couldn't do, they now have licence to do under the new name' (PU 31). Indeed, Lawrence is perhaps thinking of this verbal a + b argument in 'Pan in America' (1924), when his fictional resurrection of the Pan figure categorically rejects America's transcendental idealism (and, by implication, for Lawrence, the new American spirit):

> And then he crossed over to the young United States: I mean Pan did. Suddenly he gets a new name. He becomes the Oversoul, the Allness of everything. To this new Lucifer Gray of a Pan Whitman sings the famous Song of Myself: "I am All, and All is Me." That is: "I am Pan, and Pan is me."
>
> The old goat-legged gentleman from Greece thoughtfully strokes his beard, and answers:
>
> "All A is B, but all B is not A."
>
> Aristotle did not live for nothing. All Walt is Pan, but all Pan is not Walt. This, even to Whitman, is incontrovertible. So the new American pantheism collapses. (MM 157)

Ultimately, the One must always remain an unknowable, a purely abstract concept. We are not the whole and all we can know is our own little relative part of the world. For James, the absolute in Bradley's *Appearance and Reality* ends up as 'a metaphysical monster' (PU 26), and this sentiment of monstrosity is echoed by Lawrence in 'Climbing Down Pisgah' (1924),

when he asserts that the sense of oneness ultimately becomes utterly inhuman and impersonal. It is, he writes, 'all told, a gigantic cold monster. It is a machine. The moment you attain that sense of Oneness and Wholeness, you become cold, dehumanised, mechanical, and monstrous. The greatest of all illusions is the infinite of the spirit. Whitman really rang the same knell' (RDP 225:30). This is why Lawrence considers monistic pantheists to be idealists, because not only do they belong to the post-Kantian tradition of German idealism, but also they choose abstract ideas over reality.

As James notes, this discrepancy between what we really experience, and their absolutist world view, is another problem for monistic pantheists. Whereas the real world is faulty and messy (James calls it a 'sensible tangle' 25), the world imagined by the idealists is perfect and good, orderly and aesthetically pure; and it is hard to reconcile the two: 'Qua absolute the world is one and perfect, qua relative it is many and faulty' (PU 26). It is a question of whether the world more closely resembles what we would like it to be (the absolute view), or whether it more closely resembles the individual reality we actually experience (the relative view). In James's view, alienation arises as a result of the discrepancy between the two:

> Almost as great a bar to intimacy between the divine and the human breaks out in pantheism as that which we found in monarchical theism […] We humans are incurably rooted in the temporal point of view. The eternal's ways are utterly unlike our ways. "Let us imitate the All", said the original prospectus of that admirable Chicago quarterly called the 'Monist'. As if we could, either in thought or conduct! We are invincibly parts, let us talk as we will, I must always apprehend the absolute as if it were a foreign being. (PU 23)

James quotes Hegel's claim that 'good and absolute goodness is eternally accomplishing itself in the world' (PU 28), but Lawrence complains in his 'Review of *Americans*' that people are becoming sick and tired of this idea of 'GOODNESS': 'afterwards, it may be shown that it is eternally the same GOOD. But to us poor mortals at the moment, it emphatically isn't' (IR 224:10). However, the remarkable similarities between James and Lawrence are probably most obvious in the first version of 'Pan in America' (1924) (unpublished before the Cambridge version of 2009), where Lawrence's analysis of the 'American pantheists' (Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman) are clearly Jamesian:

> This one phrase, *Everything is God*, is the inspiration of practically all modern thought and feeling. *All is God*—and hence *All is Good*. Pantheism! But analyse it, and you will see that this rationalised monotheism, or pantheism, is still dualistic. Monotheism is bound to be pantheistic the moment you think about it. And pantheism is really a dilemma, with its *Everything is God*, and the rational corollary, *Everything is good*. Because everything is *not* good, no matter how we may rationalise. It is *not* good to kiss the leper, or embrace the syphilitic prostitute, or commit crimes: no matter how we rationalise (MM 200:23)

The vocabulary used (rationalised monotheism, or pantheism) confirms the extent to which Lawrence had internalised James's work. Recalling the horror Lawrence expresses in the letter to Reverend Reid about what he had seen in the slums of Sneiton (see chapter 1), it shows that, early on, Lawrence had already rejected this approach, which had proved unable to alleviate his suffering.

The important point, as far as Lawrence is concerned, is that, as living individuals, we experience parts, while the conception of the universe as a unified whole can only be a result of a mental construction, a 'human invention':

> It is all very well to talk about a Supreme Being, an Anima Mundi, an Oversoul, an Infinite: but it is all just human invention. Come down to actuality. Where do you see Being? — In individual men and women. Where do you find an Anima? — In living individual creatures. Where would you look for a soul? — In a man, in an animal, in a tree or flower. (RDP 72:31)

This is why Lawrence frequently says that this version of idealism has been invented by man—'there is no Oneness until you've invented it' (RDP 228:5)—and it is primarily a product of man's hubristic desire to know everything and be everything. He remarks that 'the One identity' is 'what you are when you imagine you're something hugely big — the Infinite, for example. And the consciousness is really capable of attaining infinity' (RDP 71:6).[113] This is his reproach to Wordsworth in the essay '…..Love was Once a Little Boy' (1925), that Wordsworth doesn't want to allow a primrose its own individuality: 'it must be identical with *his* soul. Because, of

[113] See also the 'Benjamin Franklin' chapter in the first version of *Studies in Classic American Literature*, where Lawrence says the desire to become infinite, to know everything and to be everything is an adolescent desire (SCAL 183:29).

course, by begging the question, there is but One Soul in the universe. This is bunk. A primrose has its own peculiar prim-rosy identity, and all the oversouling in the world won't melt it into a Williamish oneness' (RDP 335:1). The problem is that 'the chase of the All, the extension of the consciousness' is like chasing a bubble, and ultimately the bubble bursts, so that, according to Lawrence, it is 'better, far better to be oneself, than to be any bursting Infinite, or swollen One-identity' (RDP 71:32-38.). On the other hand, Lawrence points out in the essay 'New Mexico' that the religious world-view of the American Indian is a kind of pantheism, but that their kind of pantheism starts from individual beings, not with the world as a whole: 'All is god. But it is not the pantheism we are accustomed to, which expresses itself as "God is everywhere, God is in everything." In the oldest religion, everything was alive, not supernaturally but naturally alive' (MM 180:31).

The extent to which James's schema had penetrated his thought and extended to other domains, including even poetry, art and architecture, is clearly visible in some of Lawrence's earliest writings. Lawrence quickly came to consider that in modernity, materialism and idealism were inextricably linked (a theme which we will be returning to later) because they were both the over-cerebralized products of modern man. He claims in 'The Lemon Gardens' (in *Twilight in Italy*), for instance, that in modernity a new spirit had developed which claimed that 'everything that is, is consciousness' (TI 124:37). Lawrence particularly equates Shelley (one of his favourite targets, as we saw in chapter 1) with this cerebral desire to reject the body and become one with the spiritual whole: 'when I have submerged or distilled away my concrete body and my limited desires, when I am like the skylark dissolved in the sky yet filling heaven and earth with song, then I am perfect, consummated in the Infinite' (TI 121). In other words, it involves the elimination of the (bodily) self (TI 121:14). Lawrence also quotes (critically) St. Paul's, 'now I know in part; but then shall I know even as I am known' (TI 121:4),[114] which he clearly considers an exemplification of this desire to know everything, to know in full rather than 'through a glass darkly':

> When a man knows everything and understands everything, then he will be perfect, and life will be blessed. He is capable of knowing everything and

[114] The whole reference is 'For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as I am known'. Lawrence is particularly fond of this biblical line. Somewhat confusingly, he uses it in two very different senses: here, in a negative sense, because we cannot know in full, we can only know our little part of the world (this sense is also discussed in relation to Lawrence's dislike of abstractions in chapter 5). Later, in a positive sense, as a way of expressing an intuitive, religious way of knowing (discussed in chapter 8).

> understanding everything. Hence he is justified in his hope of infinite freedom and blessedness. (TI 121:5)

Similarly, in *Study of Thomas Hardy* (1914) he likens the historical construction of the medieval cathedrals to this same intellectualized desire to know everything, to be everything (and incidentally to praise the mental spirit and reject the body): 'through the Middle Ages went on in Europe this fight against the body', leading to 'the collective, stupendous emotional gesture of the Cathedrals, where a blind, collective impulse rose into concrete form […] that admits the existence of no other form, but is conclusive, propounding in its sum the One Being of All' (STH 65:29). But interestingly, Lawrence postulates that a pluralistic countertendency also manifests itself:

> There was, however, in the Cathedrals, already the denial of the Monism which the Whole uttered. All the little figures, the gargoyles, the imps, the human faces, whilst subordinated within the Great Conclusion of the Whole, still, from their obscurity, jeered their mockery of the Absolute, and declared for multiplicity, polygeny. (STH 66:1)

Here again the Jamesian vocabulary (monism, the Whole, the Absolute, the many), makes itself felt. Lawrence had indeed applied James's pluralism to virtually every domain.

2.1.4 Lawrence's Pluralism

James claims in *Pragmatism* that he considers the problem of the one and the many to be the most central of all philosophical problems (Pragmatism 59). As the world is both One and Many at the same time, the only viable solution is a sort of pluralistic monism (Pragmatism 11).[115] It is easy to see why this might have provided Lawrence with the kind of appeasing solution he was looking for. James's pluralistic empiricism put the emphasis on living reality, without denying that a meaningful dimension to life was possible. On the one hand, it meant advocating the breathtaking possibilities of giving up one's will in order to 'inhabit an invisible spiritual environment from which help comes, our soul being mysteriously one with a larger soul whose instruments we are' (PU 150). On the other hand, as James had remarked, the idealists' detachment from the physical world and even from life itself, had ultimately

[115] Moreover, James himself notes how difficult it was for monistic pantheists to avoid falling into dualism: 'the monists themselves writhe like worms on the hook to escape pluralistic or at least dualistic language, but they cannot escape it' (PU 100).

manifested itself in rationalism's disdain for the kind of concrete, everyday spirituality we really experience: 'it has always been a matter of surprise to me that philosophers of the absolute should have shown so little interest in this department of life, and so seldom put its phenomena in evidence' (PU 151). Instead, James insists that pluralism can restore to humans a sense of agency. While for the idealists the world is an intellectual conception and therefore static and fixed, for pluralists the world is a dynamic assemblage of everything that is going on: 'every end, reason, motive, object of desire or aversion, ground of sorrow or joy that we feel is in the world of finite multifariousness, for only in that world does anything really happen, only there do events come to pass' (PU 27). Thus, whereas the philosophers of the absolute see the world from an external viewpoint, as if they were the readers of a great cosmic novel, in pluralism we are not simply readers, but actual actors in the world, we are personages in its drama: 'pluralism, in exorcising the absolute, exorcises the great de-realizer of the only life we are at home in, and thus redeems the nature of reality from essential foreignness' (PU 27).

At the end of *A Pluralistic Universe* James writes: 'reality *may* exist distributively just as it sensibly seems to, after all. On that possibility I do insist' (PU 160). James's pluralistic world view is of a distributive model of the world. There is not one reality, but many; there is not one universe but a multiverse (PU 159). The universe becomes, therefore, a collective assemblage of many worlds. Each individual can only know his own 'circumambient universe' (an important term which Lawrence frequently employs and to which we will return later). Consequently, to employ the term Merleau-Ponty employs at the end of *The Phenomenology of Perception*, 'man is a knot of relations' (Merleau-Ponty 530).[116] This is why Lawrence says in the essay 'Him with His Tail in His Mouth': 'we live in a multiple universe. I am a chick that absolutely refuses to chirp inside the monistic egg' (RDP 312:33). It was an important realisation for Lawrence, as it enabled him to see that the individual perspective did not need to be abandoned in a world where relationships remained vitally important. Every individual being, despite remaining part of the whole, also becomes in his own way a God—even a humble chicken: 'in the fourth dimension, in the creative world, we live in a pluralistic universe, full of gods and strange gods and unknown gods; a universe where that Rhode Island Red hen is a goddess in her own right and the white cock is a god indisputable, with a little red ring on his leg: which the boss put there' (RDP 314:20). Lawrence's insistence that the ring on the cock's leg has been put there by the boss is to emphasize that one does not become a God because one

[116] 'L'homme n'est qu'un nœud de relations, les relations comptent seules pour l'homme' (*Phénoménologie de la perception*, Gallimard, 521).

has power over others (the boss, after all, has power over the cockerel), but by virtue of being utterly unique, and that, consequently, the cock is nonetheless a God in his own little world. An 'unfinished pluralistic universe' (PU 161) is, therefore, possible and it is not just a case, as Poplawski claims (in a footnote), of Lawrence having his cake and eating it, sometimes arguing for the one and sometimes for the many (Poplawski 175).[117] God in this conception ceases to be something absolute and becomes a series of parts, each in time, in their own environment, and having their own particular history (PU 155). James asserts that in a pluralistic system 'we are indeed internal parts of God and not external creations' (PU 155).

This is why pluralism is, in a sense, also a form of polytheism.[118] James, in fact, says as much, though he quickly sets the term aside because, as he says, 'the word "polytheism" usually gives offence, so perhaps it is better not to use it' (PU 151). But it is the position Lawrence expresses in one of his final pieces of writing in November 1929, 'Apocalypse, Fragment 1':

> We have been brought up to believe: If this God exists, One and Eternal, then none of the other gods exist, and all the rest is hollow.—But now, having really read the Bible as a book, not as a one-sided pronouncement, I realise the very truth of the Bible: if this God exists, One and Eternal, then all the other gods exist too. For all the gods are only "sides" of the One God. (A156:30)

And it is also the position he had assumed at the very end of one of his earlier pieces, the 1913 'Review of Georgian Poetry 1911-1912', in which he had declared: 'I worship Christ, I worship Jehovah, I worship Pan, I worship Aphrodite. […] I want them all, all the gods. They are all God' (IR 204:15). And it remained his position in 1925 in the essay 'The Novel':

> No god, that men can conceive of, could possibly be absolute or absolutely right. All the gods that men ever discovered are still God: and they contradict one another and fly

[117] Poplawski only briefly mentions James, and seems to have relied on Worthen for his opinions on Lawrence's pluralism, which he describes as 'a paradoxical pluralistic conception of religious experience that is simultaneously personal and universal, physical (or materialist), and spiritual, immanent and transcendent' (47). As I argue in this study, Lawrence's position is not dualistic in this manner, nor is it contradictory as Poplawski maintains.

[118] In a very recent book, Terry Gifford argues in *D. H. Lawrence: Ecofeminism and Nature* that at the time Lawrence was writing *The Plumed Serpent*, he was taking animism increasingly seriously (in turn enabling 'a more ecologically informed spiritual practice') (Gifford 149). Indeed, in *Apocalypse* we find him writing: 'To the ancient consciousness, Matter, Materia, or Substantial things are God. A pool of water is God. And why not? The longer we live the more we return to the oldest of all visions. A great rock is God. I can touch it. It is undeniable. It is God' (A 95:16). Nonetheless, as I hope to have shown, the seeds of this animism are already present in Lawrence's pluralism well before this period.

> down one another's throats, marvellously. Yet they are all God: the incalculable Pan. It is rather nice, to know what a lot of gods there are, and have been, and will be, and that they are all of them God all the while. ('The Novel', STH 187)

Lawrence's position, then, remained consistent throughout, but the essential point he is making is not about the names of the Gods, but about the fact that there are many facets to God. We ourselves can be Gods. But so can chickens, and other living creatures: 'If we look for God, let us look in the bush where he sings. That is, in living creatures. Every living creature is single in itself, a *ne plus ultra* of creative reality, *fons et origo* of creative manifestation. Why go further?' (RDP 73:7). When Lawrence declares in 'On Being Religious' (1924) that we must find God again because we are lost, but that he, Lawrence, is 'off on a different road' to find God (RDP 193:3), he is talking about the pluralistic route and not the idealistic one. The role that the spiritual dimension plays in Lawrence's understanding of the cosmos cannot be underestimated, and in 'Fragment 2' of *Apocalypse*, he calls God 'the clue which holds all things together' (A 190:26). Indeed, it is on the religious capacity for 'living understanding—not intellectual understanding' (RDP 108:3) that Lawrence proposes to base his theoretical educational system in 'Education of the People':

> … the implicit knowledge that life is unfathomable and unsearchable in its motives, not to be described, having no ascribable goal save the bringing-forth of an ever-changing, ever-unfolding creation: that new creative being and impulse surges up all the time in the deep fountains of the soul, from some great source which the world has known as God. (RDP 108:16)

In short, Lawrence's vision is a thoroughly religious one: 'the system is primarily religious, and only secondarily practical. Our supreme judges and our master professors will be primarily *priests*. Let us not take fright at the word. The true religious faculty is the most powerful and the highest faculty in man, once he exercises it. And by the religious faculty we mean the inward worship of the creative life-mystery' (RDP 108:11).

2.2 The Fourth Dimension: 'the world is red because of the poppy's red. Otherwise it would be a lump of clay' (STH 13:6)

In the following section, we will look at the great source from which new creative being surges up, which Lawrence calls the creative life-mystery, or *the fourth dimension*.[119] The cosmos in Lawrence is not synonymous with world, but with life (*phusis*): the impulse that drives the homogeneous into heterogeneity. What Lawrence found in James's pluralism, was grafted onto a conception of God that Lawrence had already absorbed from Schopenhauer: the concept of *the Will*,[120] and in this section we will show the obvious similarities between their systems. Lawrence's description, above, of the religious faculty as the capacity for grasping the creative-life mystery of an ever-changing, ever-unfolding creation shows that Lawrence does adhere to the post-Kantian idea that there is a hidden reality behind the appearances of the phenomenal world: 'our God is the Unnamed, the Veiled, and any attempt to give names, or to remove veils, is just a mental impertinence' (RDP 108:32). Kant's ideas are important for Lawrence (though only indirectly) since the latter followed, via Schopenhauer, the division elaborated between the phenomenal world (the world as it appears to us) and the world as it really is in itself. According to Kant, the thing-in-itself is unknowable to humans, we generate a world view based on our *a priori* judgements.[121] As we will see, Lawrence's creative dimension is the equivalent of the noumenal world, and lies outside of time and space.

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[119] The term the 'fourth dimension' is used by Lawrence in a double sense ('this too is the fourth dimension' RDP 361:14); it also refers to relationality, which we will be discussing in a later chapter.

[120] In this section, for the purpose of greater clarity, I will put Schopenhauer's *Will* in italics.

[121] Although there is no evidence to suggest that Lawrence had any detailed acquaintance with Kant's writings, he does show some knowledge of Kant and uses the term 'thing-in-itself' on a number of occasions. Nonetheless, most of his references to Kant are extremely negative, since he thinks Kant is overly concerned with the mental. In the essay 'Books' he declares that 'one cannot quite believe in Kant, or Spinoza. Kant thought with his head and his spirit, but he never thought with his blood' (RDP 198:10), going on to say that head and spirit have led men off track. In 'The Future of the Novel' (1922) he refers to him as 'that beastly Kant', criticizing him for being 'abstract-dry'. Famously, Kant remained a bachelor throughout his life, and Lawrence criticizes him in *Fantasia of the Unconscious* for not giving up some of his notoriously regulated life to a woman: 'And so it is one detests the clock-work Kant' (PFU 130:8). In the later essay 'We Need One Another' (1929) his reaction is more mixed. Lawrence concedes Kant's greatness, and yet makes the point that without others to read his works, his ideas would be worthless: 'isolate Immanuel Kant, and his grand ideas will still go on tick-tick-ticking inside his head, but unless he could write them down and communicate them, they might as well be the ticking of the death-watch beetle' (LEA 298:10). Furthermore, he also says that a man who has never had vital relationships with other human beings cannot be complete: 'we cannot feel that Immanuel Kant ever had a soul' (LEA 300:30). These references, often biographical, suggest that Lawrence's knowledge of Kant was fairly superficial, that he saw Kant as symptomatic of the modern obsession with the mental, and that, consequently, Lawrence's own references to the thing-in-itself are more likely to have been inspired by Schopenhauer. In *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*, for example, his distaste for the intellectualized Kantian version of the thing-in-itself is obvious, when he calls it 'that tiresome business of establishing the relation between the mind and its own ideal object, or the discriminating between the ideal thing-in-itself and the mind of which it is the content. We are spared that hateful thing-in-itself, the idea, which is at once so all-important and so *nothing*' (PFU 27:34). It is too abstract for him; he prefers a metaphysic which can be rooted in actual living creatures and the physical world itself, where 'we have no concepts to deal with, no static objects in the shape of ideas', where 'we are on straightforward solid ground; there is no abstraction' (PFU 27). Schopenhauer was, of course, himself, highly influenced by Kant, though of his purely logical categories, he only retained Kant's causality.

2.2.1 Phenomenon and noumenon

Lawrence's 'other dimension', the 'creative mystery', owes a lot to Schopenhauer's concept of the *Will*. Schopenhauer himself believed that he was building on the work of the most important and influential philosopher of the 19th century Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), who held that: 'in the world of sense, however deeply we enquire into its objects, we have to do with nothing but appearances' (Kant, Critique of Pure Reason 84). The world in itself is so chaotic and haphazard that we are bombarded by a plurality of impressions of all sorts—indeed, so many that without considerable processing and conceptual ordering by the mind, it would overwhelm our brains, and we would be able to make no sense of it at all:

> It is not that by our sensibility we cannot know the nature of things in themselves in any save a confused fashion; we do not apprehend them in any fashion whatsoever. If our subjective constitution be removed, the represented object, with the qualities which sensible intuition bestows upon it, is nowhere to be found, and cannot possibly be found. (Kant, Critique of Pure Reason 84)

In other words, people have to mentally construct a world because reality, as it is in itself, is unknowable to humans. The world as it appears to us is what Kant calls the *phenomenal* world, and it is composed both of the impressions we receive, and the concepts and intuitions we have to deploy to make sense of it:

> Our empirical knowledge is made up of what we receive through impressions and of what our own faculty of knowledge (sensible impressions serving merely as the occasion) supplies from itself. If a faculty of knowledge makes any such addition, it may be that we are not in a position to distinguish it from the raw material, until with long practise of attention we have become skilled in separating it. (Kant, Critique of Pure Reason 42)

On the other hand, Kant calls reality-in-itself the *noumenal* world, asserting that: 'what objects may be in themselves, and apart from all this receptivity of our sensibility, remains completely unknown to us. We know nothing but our mode of perceiving them—a mode which is peculiar to us, and not necessarily shared in by every being, though, certainly, by every human being' (Kant, Critique of Pure Reason 82).

Hence, a first level of mental processing (synthesis), is effected through our innate, *a priori* intuitions of time and space. These intuitions are *a priori* because they are not learnt through experience, but are hard-wired into our brains from birth. Since 'perceptions come together only in accidental order' (Kant, Critique of Pure Reason 209), the intuition of time explains how we can sort experience into an order of occurrence, conceive of duration and appreciate that things can occur simultaneously. In parallel, the intuition of space enables us to represent things as being outside of us, and alongside one another, which is necessary for us to perceive and experience the external world. A second level of mental processing is effected by means of logical categories, which also enables our minds to organize our experiences. Kant classifies these categories into four main kinds: quantity, quality, relation (including the idea of cause and effect), and modality. The precise detail is perhaps less important than the fact that, for Kant, time and space are not in the real world at all, but are actually in our brains. The real world, therefore, lies outside of space and time, and has no causality (cause and effect being merely a human category used to make sense of events). This helps us understand how Lawrence could have made the important distinction, which we will discuss shortly, between a world of *being*, outside of space and time, which is, therefore, the real world-in-itself, and the temporal and spatial world of *existence*, which is all we can represent to ourselves of the world.

Convinced that the thing-in-itself, *das Ding an sich*, is unknowable, Kant himself chose to focus on analysing how we represent objects, which he calls transcendental knowledge ('all knowledge which is occupied not so much with objects as with the mode of our knowledge of objects' (Kant, Critique of Pure Reason 59)). But many subsequent philosophers were dissatisfied with the idea of an unknowable thing-in-itself, one such philosopher being Schopenhauer who had a considerable impact on Lawrence's thought. Whereas Kant believed metaphysical knowledge could only be found in *a priori* concepts, Schopenhauer, on the other hand believed that our subjective knowledge of our bodies afforded a valuable insight into to the objective nature of the thing-in-itself: the body is the only gateway for going beyond phenomena towards the thing in itself and the clue to the whole world itself. This was also Lawrence's belief, though Lawrence's conception of the thing-in-itself was less pessimistic than Schopenhauer's, and more akin, as we have seen, to the miracle of life. As we will see, the essay 'Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine', in particular, shows to what extent Lawrence was indebted to Schopenhauer for his world view. Lawrence's references to the thing-in-itself are almost certainly inspired by his readings of Schopenhauer, rather than by any detailed knowledge of Kant.

2.2.2 Schopenhauer's Will, the thing-in-itself

In the second book of *The World as Will and Representation*, Schopenhauer sets out in detail his understanding that Kant's thing-in-itself is actually what he calls the *Will*, a force that drives all change and movement in the universe. Schopenhauer believed that Kant was right to maintain that 'time, space and causality do not belong to the thing-in-itself, but are only the forms of our knowing' (TWWR 113). The *Will* is really one and the same, and only appears to be plural due to what Schopenhauer calls the *principium individuationis*. Schopenhauer employs the metaphor of a magic lantern to make the point:

> … just as a magic lantern shows many different pictures, but it is only one and the same flame that makes them all visible, so in all the many different phenomena which together fill the world or supplant one another as successive events, it is only the *one* will that appears, and everything is its visibility, its objectivity; it remains unmoved in the midst of this change. It alone is the thing in itself… (TWWR 153)

This tallies with what Lawrence writes in 'The Two Principles': 'life can never be produced or made. Life is an unbroken oneness, indivisible. The mystery of creation is that new and indivisible being appears forever within the oneness of life' (SCAL 263:28). Schopenhauer specifies that this plurality is not to be found in the thing-in-itself: 'this plurality is directly conditioned by time and space, into which the will itself never enters' (TWWR 128). The *Will* is, therefore, that invisible force that generates all the visible changes we perceive in the universe. According to Schopenhauer, 'knowledge of the unity of the will as thing-in-itself, amid the endless diversity and multiplicity of the phenomena' affords us 'knowledge of that harmony, of that essential connection of all the parts of the world', revealing 'a true and sufficient insight into the inner being and meaning of the undeniable *suitability* or *appropriateness* of all the organic productions of nature' (TWWR 154). Thus, we find the 'cosmic harmony' which Lawrence told Reverend Reid he could believe in (despite being unable to find human harmony). This explains Lawrence's occasional hints that we can catch glimpses of this oneness, as in his twilight hill descent with the young walker Emil: 'it is as if the god Pan really had his home among these sun-bleached stones and tough, sun-dark trees. And one knows it all in one's blood, it is pure, sun-dried memory' (TI 222:8); or his sudden impression sense of déjà-vu in *Sea and Sardinia*: 'but that curious, flashing, black-and-white costume! I seem to have known it before: to have worn it even: to have dreamed it. To have

dreamed it: to have had actual contact with it. It belongs in some way to something in me — to my past, perhaps. I don't know. But the uneasy sense of blood-familiarity haunts me. I *know* I have known it before' (SS 63:16);[122] or again in a far later essay 'Nobody Loves Me' (1929):

> …we dimly realize that mankind is one, almost one flesh. It is an abstraction, but it is also a physical fact. In some way or other, the cotton-workers of Carolina, or the rice growers of China, are connected with me and, to a faint yet real degree, part of me. The vibration of life which they give off reaches me, touches me, and affects me all unknown to me. For we are more or less connected, all more or less in touch: all humanity. That is, until we have killed the sensitive responses in ourselves. (LEA 314:16)

For Schopenhauer, 'the inner being itself is present whole and undivided in everything in nature, in every living being […] true wisdom is not to be acquired by our measuring the boundless world […] On the contrary, it is acquired by thoroughly investigating any individual thing, in that we try thus to know and understand perfectly its true and peculiar nature' (TWWR 12). It is easy to see, therefore, how James's pluralism could easily be reconciled with Schopenhauer's vision.

Schopenhauer gives many examples of how this *Will* must operate in the non-human world. For instance, how does a one-year-old bird know it needs to build a nest for the eggs it hasn't had yet? What does the spider know of the prey it will catch in the web it spins? How does the larva of the stag beetle know that it will have to gnaw a hole twice as big if it is to be a male (so that its horns can pass through the hole)? (TWWR 114). For Schopenhauer, it is difficult to explain how such phenomena could ever take place without some force guiding them: 'in the actions of such animals the will is obviously at work as in the rest of their

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[122] All these references to oneness mention the blood, and in an interesting article by Robert Fraser (the similarity of the names is purely coincidental), he suggests that it was Frazer's work *Totemism and Exogamy* which must have inspired Lawrence to write the famous letter to Bertrand Russell in 1915: 'I have been reading Frazer's Golden Bough and Totemism and Exogamy. Now I am convinced of what I believed when I was about twenty—that there is another seat of consciousness than the brain and the nervous system: there is the blood consciousness which exists independently of the ordinary consciousness' (2L 470). Fraser points out a passage in which Frazer discussed the way the men of the kangaroo clan identified with their totem the kangaroo and in which a kangaroo man pointing to a photo of a kangaroo remarked 'that one is just the same as me; so it is a kangaroo'. This idea that everything is to be found in the blood seems to suggest that for Lawrence blood is inextricably associated with the oneness of the world (see later for further discussion of this point). Frazer added that 'all over the world primitive man believes that by absorbing the flesh and blood of an animal he acquires the qualities of that creature, and so far identifies himself with it. Examples of the belief are too well known to be cited. The same idea formed the basis of the blood covenant practised by many races' (Fraser 250-251). Poems like Lawrence's 'mosquito' seem to suggest similar ideas.

activities, but it is a blind activity, which is accompanied, indeed, by knowledge, but not guided by it' (TWWR 114). A particularly Schopenhauerian reference in Lawrence to the *thing-in-itself* is to be found in the essay 'Pan in America' where he describes a tree as a 'strong-willed, powerful *thing-in-itself*, reaching up and reaching down. With a *powerful will of its own* it thrusts green hands and huge limbs at the light above, and sends huge legs and gripping toes down, down between the earth and rocks, to the earth's middle' (MM 157:32, my italics). Schopenhauer argues that physical phenomena also pursue their ends, blindly (TWWR 118). Indeed, the *Will* operates blindly, within human bodies too, at least in part, since much of our activity is unconscious—in the form of digestion, circulation, secretion, growth and reproduction. But humans, being far more complex organisms, have acquired knowledge too, namely, the faculty of forming abstract concepts.[123]

2.2.3 Grades of Being: 'The living sway the universe'

Schopenhauer talks of the 'one and indivisible will which is the in-itself of all things, and whose graduated objectification is this whole visible world' (TWWR 138). This *Will* is itself groundless, i.e. not caused by anything. Lawrence generally calls this thing-in-itself , "Life", (and Schopenhauer himself sometimes talks of it as 'the vital force' (TWWR 142)). In Lawrence's words, it or the 'Holy Ghost' as he also calls it, (here in the form of the dandelion), leaves one form behind to seek another: 'the Holy Ghost leaves the clue of himself behind, in the seed, and wanders forth in the comparative chaos of our universe, seeking another incarnation. And this will go on forever' (RDP 360:26). The dandelion Lawrence imagines speaking would say: '*I like my incarnation! But this is not all. I will keep this incarnation. It is good! But oh! if I can win to another incarnation, who knows how wonderful it will be!*' (RDP 360:22). The *Will* represents a ubiquitous and timeless force of nature, which waits for 'the appearance of those circumstances under which it can manifest itself and take possession of a piece of matter, supplanting the forces that have hitherto governed it' (TWWR 136). The *Will*, therefore, reveals itself to be 'an endless striving', 'an eternal becoming, an eternal flux' (TWWR 164). For Schopenhauer, this strife takes the form of a continuous struggle between lower and higher forms. Every entity must be regarded as 'the phenomenon of a *Will*, which *Will* necessarily manifests itself as a striving' (TWWR 148, my italics).

Schopenhauer holds that the different grades of objectification, higher and lower ones depend not on the *quantity* of *Will* in each thing (the *Will* being indivisible), but on the degree

[123] This will be discussed in more detail in chapter 4.

of objectification, which could also be paraphrased as individuality. Plants have no individuality and the only differentiation between them results from environmental factors. By contrast, the higher forms are represented by the human species, in which the most individuality is to be found. Hence 'there is a higher degree of objectification in the plant than in the stone, a higher degree in the animal than in the plant; indeed the will's passage into visibility, its objectification, has gradations as endless as those between the faintest twilight and the brightest sunlight…' (TWWR 128). Compared with animals, for instance, who are more bound to the instincts of their species, man has a far more developed sense of sexual selection (TWWR 132). In the inorganic world all individuality completely disappears 'absolutely without deviation' (TWWR 132). The lowest grades of objectification are the universal forces of nature (gravity, elasticity, magnetism, chemical properties, fluidity and so forth). These universal forces remain themselves phenomena of the *Will*, but their more or less complete regularity means that we are able to talk of "Laws of Nature", whereas in fact these are just things that always happen in the same way, they are generalisations (TWWR 140). This explains why Lawrence describes them as habits, the 'settled habits' of the universe in 'Climbing Down Pisgah' (as already mentioned). It also explains why he asserts in *Study of Thomas Hardy* that 'in an unthinkable period long before chaos, life formed the habit we call gravitation. This was almost before any differentiation, before all those later, lesser habits, which we call matter or such a thing as centrifugal force, were formed' (STH 40:21). As a consequence, therefore, these forces of nature cannot be described as inert, in spite of the fact that they have very little heterogeneity and individuality, because there must still be something that makes them move, and which only the presence of the *Will* can explain. It is therefore an absurdity to attempt, as modern science tries, to explain life by reducing it to an amalgamation of forces because only life can explain forces and not the reverse: 'hitherto, the concept of *will* has been subsumed under the concept of *force*; I, on the other hand, do exactly the reverse, and intend every force in nature to be conceived as will' (TWWR 111, Schopenhauer's italics). Otherwise, Schopenhauer argues, we get absurdities like Lamarck asserting that 'heat and electricity would really be the thing-in-itself, and the animal and plant worlds its phenomenon' (TWWR 142). It is the 'vital force' (TWWR 142) that explains the forces of nature, and this life force is found most clearly in living beings.

Thus the degree of objectivation or differentiation is synonymous with the degree of individuality. Of which the universal forces like gravity, electricity and so on, have virtually none, whereas higher animals and, in particular (at least in theory), humans have far more. The

higher grades can only appear by subduing and assimilating the lower ones (TWWR 145); 'everywhere in nature we see contest, struggle and the fluctuation of victory […] every grade of the will's objectification fights for the matter, the space and the time of another' (TWWR 147).[124] This strife takes place on many levels. Insects lay their eggs in the larvae of other insects, mighty oaks are choked by climbing plants, and even on a smaller scale, water and carbon are converted by plants into sap and plants or bread into blood. On a larger scale, there is strife between the central body and other celestial bodies, resulting in the polarity between centripetal and centrifugal forces which I will shortly be turning to. Now let us compare Schopenhauer's ideas with Lawrence's 'Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine', in which Lawrence lists the ways in which higher and lower forms of life cascade down from green ferns to dandelion to butterfly to snake to cat and onward to man:

> The snake can devour the fiercest insect. The fierce bird can destroy the greatest reptile. The great cat can destroy the greatest bird. The man can destroy the horse, or any animal. One race of man can subjugate and rule another race. All this in terms of *existence*. As far as existence goes, that life-species is the highest which can devour, or destroy, or subjugate every other life-species against which it is pitted in contest. (RDP 357:27)

Lawrence notes the way in which the horses devour the alfalfa and the dandelions; the chickens relish devouring the great black beetles the Mexicans call 'Toro'; Timsy the cat pounces on the chipmunks (RDP 354): 'when one watches the horses in the big field, their noses to the ground, bite-bite-biting at the grass, and stepping absorbedly on, and bite-bite-biting without ever lifting their noses, cropping off the grass, the young shoots of alfalfa, the dandelions, with a blind, relentless, unwearied persistence, one's whole life pauses. One suddenly realises again how all creatures devour, and *must* devour the lower forms of life' (RDP 354:27).[125] In the end the higher forms always win out over the lower ones which explains why Lawrence can write so enigmatically in *Fantasia of the Unconscious* that 'the individual soul in the living sways

[124] Nonetheless, despite being subdued, the lower forms continue to struggle to express their inner nature. For example, the lower form of gravity will eventually overcome the raised arm of the higher form of man (TWWR 146).

[125] The description gives the impression, as Ellis notes, that it is about the 'unavoidable struggle for food and survival' (Ellis, Dying Game 1922-1930 254). Herbert in the 'introduction' to the Cambridge Edition calls the second half didactic, describing 'further examples of higher forms of life getting the upper hand over lower forms' (RDP xli). Poplawski argues that it implies 'certain individuals, and more important, perhaps, races, are in fact more vital than others' (Poplawski 118); and Wallace describes it as 'Lawrence's most uncompromising account of the struggle for existence'. But Lawrence is only talking here about life in the physical world.

the very sun' (FU 169:26). Lawrence puts more emphasis than Schopenhauer on the force of Life itself ('What do we mean by higher? Strictly, we mean more alive' (RDP 356:40)) but the idea of strife remains very much present.[126] Though there is a measure of harmony, it is only enough to enable a certain continuity to the world. It is a harmony that takes the form of constant strife between individuals. Indeed, it is exactly these kinds of astute observations of the strife in nature which Lawrence praises in the chapter on Hector John Crèvecoeur, where he approvingly notes Crèvecœur's astonishment that '"nothing exists but what has its enemy, one species pursue and live upon the other: unfortunately our king-birds are the destroyers of those industrious insects [the bees]; but on the other hand, these birds preserve our fields from the depredation of crows"' (SCAL 35:4). This insight is seen by Lawrence as a sign of his genius as an artist, whereas Crèvecœur really wanted 'Nature, sweet and pure': this strife is a blow to his 'romantic, idyllic idealism' (SCAL 197:17).[127] Indeed, for Lawrence, Nature with a capital N is merely a human construct, not a reality, whereas the cosmos is, to the contrary, very real.[128] Taken all in all, it seems clear that Schopenhauer's philosophy played a major role in Lawrence's understanding of the cosmos.

2.2.4 The fourth dimension: 'The clue to all existence is being. But you can't have being without existence' (RDP 359:15)

Schopenhauer's *Will* yields us an insight into Lawrence's vision of the cosmos, but in order to further pursue this investigation some discussion of terminology is necessary. First of all, it is important to note that, in philosophy, the word "eternity" can be used, and has been used, in two different senses. On the one hand, it can refer to something that endures for ever through time, *in* time, but on the other, it can allude to something which stands entirely outside of time, something which is *timeless*. Lawrence nearly always uses the word eternity in this latter sense of *timelessness*. Indeed in *Study of Thomas Hardy* he rails against the first meaning: 'vanity, and pathetic transience of mortality. All that is left us to call eternal is the tick-tack of birth and death, monotonous as time' (STH 10:33). Secondly, and relatedly, Lawrence draws a very important distinction between *being* and *existence*, a philosophical distinction dating all the way back to St. Thomas of Aquinas: essence (being) referring to what a thing *is* in itself,

[126] Jessie Chambers remembers him citing Tennyson's description of nature: 'he would tell me with vehemence that nature is red in tooth and claw' (Chambers 112).
[127] This last quote is from the first version which is more explicit than in the final version, though the sense is the same.
[128] See Jeffrey Mathes McCarthy's *Green Modernism: Nature and the English Novel, 1900 to 1930*, p. 31-33 where he asks whether nature is real or constructed? Lawrence thinks it is subjectively constructed. It is not clear to me where McCarthy himself stands on this issue.

and existence referring to the fact that a thing exists' (i.e. in time and space).[129] Lawrence calls the *existential* world in which we live the three-dimensional world. On the other hand, the world of *being* (the source of the ever-renewing new) is emphatically not in 3-dimensional space and time, it is timeless and in no particular place. Accordingly, when discussing Van Gogh's sunflowers in the first version of 'Morality and the Novel' he can say that Van Gogh's painting is 'a reality in the fourth dimension, the creative dimension, which is *neither up nor down nor across, but in between'* (STH 241:14, my italics), or again in the same essay, of a novel, 'it is there in that place of the fourth dimension, *where there is no forwards nor backwards nor higher nor lower, nor even better nor worse*' (STH 243:7, my italics). Lawrence himself makes it clear that he is aware of the distinction, when he comments that, 'we still find ourselves in the tangle of existence and being, a tangle which man has never been able to get out of, except by sacrificing the one to the other' (RDP 359:11). Here, Lawrence also makes it clear that everything must have both *being* and *existence*, just as the old man in the first chapter of *Study of Thomas Hardy* sees 'the flower in all its evanescence and its being' (STH 8:38)—*being* and *existence* are two modes of the same thing (though in different ways), which is why one should not be sacrificed to the other. Thus it follows, necessarily, as Lawrence writes in *Mornings in Mexico*, that the monkey, too, is also in another world, another dimension, a virtual world which we can never fully access:

> When you look at the monkey you are looking straight at the other dimension. He's got length and breadth and height all right, and he's in the same universe of Space and time as you are. But there's another dimension. He's different. (MM 16:19)

Lawrence makes it very clear in 'Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine' (1925) that the fourth dimension is not derived from any kind of mind-body dualism: it is just as material as the three-dimensional world of existence, only differently: 'being is *not* ideal, as Plato would have it: nor spiritual. It is a transcendent form of existence, and as much material as existence is. Only the matter suddenly enters the fourth dimension' (RDP 359:18).

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[129] The distinction between being and existence, a distinction which is central for Lawrence's philosophy, seems hitherto to have been neglected by Lawrentian scholars. Even such a sensitive critic as Jeff Wallace maintains that Lawrence's work 'is a philosophical oeuvre, in which the centrality of the contradictory is constantly evident. The ant is "more vividly alive" than the pine tree; the ant and the pine tree are alive in "different ways", and therefore "incomparable, incommensurable"' (Wallace 234). Yet Lawrence repeatedly draws attention to the fact that he is talking about them in two very different ways.

Although Lawrence only seems to start using the terms 'the fourth dimension', or 'the other dimension', in and around 1925, there is every reason to believe that it was not a new idea for him. Indeed, in a letter to Blanche Jennings in 1908 he wrote: 'I *do* know a fair amount about life. *Life has four dimensions, not two*. Probably I know more about the middle and the bottom sea than does many a many-leagued sailor' (1L 101, my italics). And though he twice added the phrase 'the other dimension' (RDP 304:17 and RDP 304:13) during the 1925 rewriting of the 'The Crown' (originally written in 1915), they replace, respectively, the phrases 'but heaven is not here, not there nor anywhere', and 'Timelessness is heaven', both of which already contain the notion of being outside of time and space. Richard O. Young, in one of the first articles to deal with Lawrence's concept of the fourth dimension suggests that for Lawrence writing about life meant depicting moments of heightened consciousness through human relatedness with the living universe, and states that Lawrence's answer 'from *Sons and Lovers* until his death' to the question of what heightens the consciousness 'was the same—the new heaven and earth of the fourth dimension' (Young).[130] For Lawrence, this fourth dimension is the source of all creation, in the sense that bubbling up in every moment, in every living creature, is the new, the virtual, the possible, the unpredictable. It is, therefore, the creative mystery which we discussed earlier, the source of all dynamic movement. In a rare use of Aristotelian vocabulary, Lawrence describes this creative dimension as *dunamis* (SCAL 333:29), a world of potential and virtual possibilities. This is confirmed in a passage in the little-known, unpublished fragment 1 of *Apocalypse*, which despite its length is worth quoting here in full:

> The cosmos brought forth all the world, and brought forth me. It brought forth my mind, my will, and my soul. Therefore there must be that in the cosmos which can bring forth all things, including mind and will and feeling. Therefore there must be that in the cosmos which contains the essence, at least, or the potentiality, of all things, known and unknown. That in the universe which contains the potentiality of all things, contains the potency also of thought and act and feeling and will, along with the rest. And this terrific and frightening and delighted potency I call Almighty God. I think of it, and am filled with fear—fear of my own crass

[130] Young also mentions the above letter, and provides further evidence from *Sons and Lovers* that Lawrence was thinking of the fourth dimension long before he explicitly used the term. (Young 32).

> presumptuousness,—and filled with a sense of delight and deliberation. If there is almighty God, I care about nothing else. (A 175:19)

This is probably Lawrence's clearest statement that the cosmos and God are effectively the same thing—potentiality. The cosmos is the source of all the power that puts life into the world, and takes it away.

For Schopenhauer's *Will*, the most important thing is the assurance of the reproduction and continuance of the species, but as Schopenhauer points out at the end of 'The Metaphysics of Sexual Love', it is possible for the individual to deny this *Will*, and tear himself away from this species-oriented approach (2 TWWR 560). Lawrence puns on the French verb *vivre* (live) and the English *survive* in 'Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine' to say that beings which merely survive are absorbed by those who are 'able to do more than survive, which can really *vive*, live' (RDP 357:22). The real aim of existence is to achieve the fullest incarnation possible, for each individual to become as close to perfection as possible—to achieve one's maximum being. Thus, he makes it clear that reproduction is not primary, but secondary. Procreation only enables the torch to be passed on to the next generation. Lawrence's descriptions of what constitutes fullness of being in living beings make for some of his most lyrical descriptions, such as in *Study of Thomas Hardy*:

> The final aim is the flower, the fluttering, singing nucleus which is a bird in spring, the magical spurt of being which is a hare all explosive with fullness of self, in the moonlight; the real passage of a man down the road, no sham, no shadow, no counterfeit, whose eyes shine blue with his own reality, as he moves amongst things free as they are, a being; the flitting under the lamp of a woman incontrovertible, distinct from everything and from everybody, as one who is herself… (STH 12:27)

Or again, in 'Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine', describing perfection as 'the dandelion in blossom, the tree in full leaf, the peacock in all his plumage, the cobra in all his colour, the frog at full leap, woman in all the mystery of her fathomless desirableness, man in the fullness of his power: every creature become its pure self' (RDP 362:6). Fulfilment is, therefore, represented by the flower, not the reproductive fruit; and for humans it is the authenticity of the self, not just the work that is done; whereas, for the

poppy, the ultimate aim is not producing its seed, but achieving the amazing redness of the flower (STH 12-13).

Schopenhauer criticizes science for only explaining how things work, not what they are. In other words, scientists simply ignore the forces that make everything move. Maths and natural science only show the connections and relations amongst the representations we make of the world, they only deal with the spatial, temporal aspect, which is quantitative, so that, 'we can never with their assistance penetrate into the inner nature of things' (TWWR 121). Mechanics, physics and chemistry teach us rules and laws, but 'there will always remain […] an insoluble residuum […] for in everything in nature there is something to which no ground can ever be assigned, for which no explanation is possible, and no further cause is to be sought. This something is the specific mode of the thing's action, in other words, the very manner of its existence, its being or true essence' (TWWR 124). This unexplainable something is what Lawrence calls 'excess'. This is the point of the fable of the old man and his "educated" grandson which Lawrence recounts at the beginning of *Study of Thomas Hardy*. Why is the poppy red? The educated grandson says it is red in order to attract pollinators, but the old man rejects this explanation as circular because it doesn't explain anything, moreover, red jam around his grandson's mouth would attract them just as much (STH 8-9). When the Grandson says that reproduction is always accompanied by excess (STH 9:4), the old man calls him a fool—this is getting things backward, as if the excess was just a bit of excess pastry that a mother might shape into a decorative rose and stick on top of a pie (STH 9:10)! The excess that accompanies reproduction is what causes the whole universe: 'the world is red because of the poppy's red. Otherwise it would be a lump of clay' (STH 13:6). It is, says Lawrence, 'the thing itself at its maximum of being […] If this excess were missing, darkness would cover the face of the earth' (STH 11:37).

Thus, it is the *excess* itself which is the most important, the excess meaning *being* or vitality. *Being* is the first aim, only after that need we think of reproduction. For Lawrence, this is the clue to a fulfilled life:

> Vitality depends upon the clue of the Holy Ghost inside a creature, a man, a nation, a race. When the clue goes, the vitality goes. And the Holy Ghost seeks for ever a new incarnation, and subordinates the old to the new. You will know that any creature or race is still alive with the Holy Ghost, when it can subordinate the lower creatures or races, and assimilate them into a new incarnation. No man, or creature,

> or race can have vivid vitality unless it be moving towards a blossoming. (RDP 360:40)

Being entails, therefore, becoming the perfect individual we were teleologically intended to be. If we achieve our potential, we have become something utterly new, distinct and incomparable, a new incarnation that has never existed before, and never will again. In 'Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine' he declares an 'inexorable law of life' that 'any creature that attains to its own fullness of being, its own *living* self, becomes unique, a nonpareil. It has its place in the fourth dimension, the heaven of existence, and there it is perfect, it is beyond comparison' (RDP 358:19). In other words, achieving fullness of being means becoming eternal in some manner. In *Study of Thomas Hardy*, Lawrence uses the example of Dido, arguing that there must be a sense in which Dido, though no longer in the three-dimensional world of existence, has achieved some form of eternity, just like a flower which blossoms (even a humble sow-thistle): 'what was Dido was new, absolutely new. It had never been before, and in Dido it *was.* In its own degree, the prickly sow-thistle I have just pulled up *is*, for the first time in all time. It is itself, a new thing […] its flower it issues something to the world that never was issued before. Its like has been before, its exact equivalent never' (STH 11:29). Lawrence's use of italics for *was* and *is* emphasizes that, in as much as they have achieved being, they can never disappear. It is in this sense that *being* can be described as qualitatively unique, and incomparable, and therefore uncountable, whereas existence is quantitative.[131] As someone unique and incomparable, Dido still remains somehow present in 'the roomy space of somethingness, called nothingness' (STH 11:20), viz. the fourth dimension. Lawrence is also careful to note on three different occasions (STH 10:23; STH 11:4; STH 11:19) that it is not her financial assets which contribute to her eternity; the accumulation of money, self-preservation, is the 'golden wall of money' (RDP 363:23) which humans use to maintain a sort of false sense of permanency. The issuing of something truly individual into the world is another sort of richness ('this richness of new being is richest in the flowering yellow disc of my plant' (STH 11:35)).[132] Unlike other beings, man does not only proceed by instinct but also has "knowledge". And unfortunately, as Schopenhauer points out, with knowledge 'arises the

[131] This is an important distinction in Lawrence, which will be returned to later.

[132] Black, in his close-reading of this passage calls it 'three or four pages of apparently free association'. He seems not to understand the reference to eternity; he contends that behind Lawrence's use of the phrase 'she is in the roomy space of somethingness, called nothingness', lies a refusal 'to consider that any real existence comes to an end' due to his belief in 'the physical concept of the conservation of matter': and, interestingly, he barely comments on, or even seems to notice, these mentions of money, financial assets, and the language of economics (Black, The Early Philosophical Works 152-155).

possibility of illusion and deception, whereby the previous infallibility of the will acting without knowledge is abolished' (TWWR 151). For Lawrence, this possibility of illusion and deception manifest itself in what he calls the 'ego' (the idea we have of ourselves, as opposed to what we really are), and other false ideas—most of us have got sidetracked from what would fulfil us, or we are scared to do so: 'we dare not fulfil the last part of our programme. We linger into activity at the vegetable, self-preserving stage' (STH 12:4). Thus, mere existence (or self-preservation), has been chosen rather than the pursuit of authentic being, so that Lawrence likens human beings to rotting cabbages, which rather than fulfilling themselves by flowering, rot away from their insides because they cannot be fulfilled. This is an important concept for Lawrence, and we will be returning to it in more detail in later chapters.

To sum up, although it may still seem obviously contradictory to state that something can simultaneously be destroyed and remain eternal, Lawrence certainly does not think it is so, (nor is he the only thinker to maintain such a position) for: 'even contradictory truths do not displace one another. Logic is far too coarse to make the subtle distinctions life demands' (RDP 357:5). And, thus, he can, and does, maintain, that a dandelion, although it may be destroyed in the world of existence, can still exist in another dimension in which it is eternal and will always continue to exist, in 'the fourth dimension', of *being*. It is in the fourth dimension, nowhere else. Because, in the time-space dimension, any man may tread on the yellow sun-mirror, and it is gone. Any cow may swallow it. Any bunch of ants may annihilate it' (RDP 358:13).

2.3 Centrifugal and Centripetal polarities: 'All existence is dual, and surging towards a consummation into being' (RDP 359:21)

2.3.1 Polarity: 'the polarized activity of the divine cosmos' (SEP 63:14)

Whilst discussing strife in the phenomenal world, Schopenhauer approvingly cites Kant's insight that matter is the result of a struggle of conflicting forces, repulsive and attractive (TWWR 149), and this sundering of a force into two qualitatively different and opposite activities he calls *polarity*. As a number of critics have noted (Montgomery, Schneider, Hough), polarity is an important concept for Lawrence as well. For Lawrence, as for Schopenhauer, the globe is kept in motion by 'a constant tension between centripetal and the centrifugal forces' (TWWR 148). This dualism is essential if we are to comprehend Lawrence's understanding of

the phenomenal world, and it plays a key role in his cosmology (which we briefly be discussing hereafter). Before proceeding further, it is important to be clear about what is meant here by dualism, since it has already been repeatedly stated that Lawrence is not a dualist! Indeed, as he makes clear, on a number of occasions (which we have already discussed, and to which we will be returning later), Lawrence is certainly not a dualist in the philosophical sense, meaning that he does not believe there are two substances in the universe, i.e. mind and body, spirit and matter.[133] What he does always maintain, however, is that everything in the universe consists of two opposing forces, centrifugal and centripetal (though he uses a wide array of terms to render the idea). In *Mornings in Mexico* we find, for instance, the following passage:

> There is the great living source of life: say the Sun of existence […] And emerging from this Sun are the great potencies, the invincible influences which make shine and warmth and rain. From these great interrelated potencies of rain and heat and thunder emerge the seeds of life itself, corn, and creatures like snakes. And beyond these, men, persons. But all emerge separately. (MM 81:38)

From this one source emerges the contraries of life, and from this emerge individual plants, animals and humans; it is clear, therefore, that the cosmos must be both the one and the many.

Graham Hough in *Dark Sun: A Study of D. H. Lawrence* (1956) puts together a table of this dichotomy,[134] but his table is too schematic, and some of the oppositions he posits are debatable, misleading or insufficiently defined (e.g., spirit versus soul, knowledge versus

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[133] Thus, in 'The Two Principles' Lawrence states that 'there is no utterly immaterial existence, no spirit. There is only living plasm and inanimate matter' (SCAL 263). Hough makes a similar point in *The Dark Sun*: it is a mistake to see the contrast as 'the old one of spirit and matter in which matter represents the natural world and spirit some supernatural reality set over against it. Lawrence's contrast is not of this kind. Both constituents of his dual reality are part of the natural world' (Hough 225).

[134]

Light	Darkness
Sun	Moon
Intellect	Blood
Will	Flesh
Male	Female
Love	Law
Spirit	Soul
Mind	Senses
Consciousness	Feelings
Moon	Sun
Knowledge	Nature
Motion	Inertia
The Son	The Father

(Hough 224)

nature, consciousness versus feelings). A simpler table is, therefore, produced here, to illustrate some of the overlap in Lawrence's categories.

CENTRIFUGAL	**CENTRIPETAL**
Voluntary	*Sympathy*
Power/wrath/hate	Love/tenderness (A160, 177)
Separation	Communion
Isolation	Togetherness
Repulsion	Attraction
Dissolution	Assimilation

Power and love, together with the voluntary and sympathy have already been discussed in an earlier chapter. They are important for his theories of the cosmos, of the body, and for his social and political ideas too. Essentially, as with so much in Lawrence, it is the balance between the two which counts. But the Schopenhauerian understanding that voluntary power represents a kind of *Will*, pushing objective forms into the phenomenal world helps to explain phrases like this one that we find in the description of nature in spring in the chapter 'San Gaudenzio' in *Twilight in Italy*: 'it is full Spring, full first rapture. Does it pass away, or does it only lose its pristine quality? It deepens and intensifies, like experience. The days seem to be darker and richer, there is a sense of *power* in the strong air' (TI 155:24, my italics). It helps to understand, too, why he can say of the cat Timsy in 'Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine' that 'the power is in her' (RDP 356:17). For Lawrence, power is not the will-to-dominate as Quinones points out: 'Lawrence was fascinated by power, but in each case he regards it as a derived force, not a directed force' (Quinones 178).

2.3.2 The Two Infinites: 'The creative mystery, which is in life, is utterly beyond control, beyond us, and before us. It is also beyond and before the whole material universe, beyond and before the great Forces' (SCAL 194)

These two principles can easily be linked to what Lawrence says about the two infinites. The first infinite, the past, is the one from which everything emerges; and the second is the one to which everything returns. Thus, a centrifugal force separates us from the great oneness, but a centripetal force sends us back again to this oneness again when we die. As we will see, Lawrence associates the first centrifugal force with the great life-giver, the sun; the second with the moon, principle of dissolution: 'all emerges out of the unbroken circle with its nucleus, the germ, the God if you like to call it so' (SEP 125:5). The oneness into which we all ultimately return he associates with the sea; it is for this reason that Lawrence says, 'we are all sea-born' (SCAL 120:28) as can be seen in his letter to his sister Ada:

> There still remains a God, but not a personal God: a vast, shimmering impulse which wavers onwards towards some end, I don't know what - taking no regard of the little individual, but taking regard of humanity. When we die, like rain-drops falling back again into the sea, we fall back into the big, shimmering sea of unorganised life which we call God. We are lost as individuals, yet we count in the whole. (1L 256)

Human consciousness, as he writes rather beautifully in 'The Proper Study' (1923) starts from a source from which 'it surges up in obvious mystery and Godliness, the human consciousness. And here is the God of the Beginning, call him Jehovah or Ra or Ammon or Jupiter or what you like' (RDP 171:26). Then all the individual consciousnesses wend their way through the world until they arrive once more at the end: 'from their various God-sources the streams of human consciousness rush variously down. Then begin to meander and to doubt. Then fall slow. Then start to silt up. Then pass into the great Ocean, which is the God of the End' (RDP 171:29). Thus, we are always poised midway between life and death. Likewise, in *Fantasia of the Unconscious* he states that 'existence is truly a matter of propagation between the two infinites. But it needs a third presence. […] Midway between the two cosmic infinites lies the third, which is more than infinite. This is the Holy Ghost Life, individual life' (FU 173:18). Schopenhauer mentions the mystic Jacob Boehme's saying that 'all the bodies of men and animals, and even all plants, are really half-dead', this is certainly an important theme for Lawrence, particularly in earlier writings such as *Twilight in Italy*, 'The Crown' (1915), and other wartime essays. For Lawrence, life is a journey: 'we travel across between the two great

opposites of the Beginning and the End, the eternal night and everlasting day, and the transit is a stride taken, the night gives us up for the day to receive us. And what are we between the two?' (RDP 256:36).

2.3.3 Cosmology: 'the two halves of the duality, the fiery and the watery' (SEP 63)

Lawrence's cosmological writings, which can be found mainly in *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, the first version of *Studies in Classic American Literature*, and *Sketches of Etruscan Places*, are generally acknowledged to be some of his most obscure and esoteric passages, but some sense can be made of them if we bear in mind the principle of the duality we have been discussing. Whether he was entirely serious about his cosmological theories is not something that can be definitively determined, but he did certainly develop these ideas in some detail in a number of places so there are some grounds for thinking he was serious about them.[135] I will, therefore, touch briefly on some of the ways in which this is manifested in Lawrence's work. Lawrence read Burnett's *Early Greek Philosophy* very attentively, on Bertrand Russell's recommendation. While it certainly didn't utterly transform his thinking, the influence of the Greeks, and especially Heraclitus, clearly seemed to crystallize Lawrence's idea with regard to the sea, the earth, the air and the sun, and more particularly with regard to what he calls the two *principles* of fire and of water.[136] Thales had thought that everything came from water, unlike Anaximander who explained the physical world by the opposites of warm and cold, moist and dry, but the latter also pointed out that *a third thing* is required, underlying the warring opposites — something which he called the *boundless,* or the eternal. According to Burnett, Heraclitus conceived of the world as being cyclical since everything comes from fire, but fire can become water and vice versa. Water evaporates into clouds; fiery thunder produces water from fire, hence the significance of lightning and thunder. One of Heraclitus's aphorisms is that 'it is the thunderbolt that steers the course of all things' (Burnett 135). This is possibly what Lawrence is referring to in the rather cryptic concluding lines to the essay 'Dana', when he says: 'we must know again the God Thoth […] For the sum of Thoth knowledge is

[135] The essay 'The Two Principles' lends weight to the idea that he thought of it in a mainly symbolic way. For example, he writes that, by water he means 'water most abstracted from fire, as fire in its purest must be abstracted from water' (SCAL 264:39), and then states that 'our material water, as our fire, is still a mixture of fire and water' (SCAL 265:5). In other words, there is no pure fire or water in the phenomenal world, only in the fourth dimension.
[136] The sun is not fire, he says too, but 'fire is the sudden sun-assertion, the release towards the one pole only' (FU, 173:4). The principle of water is not the same thing as pure water. Sea water, for example, gives off a dynamic energy 'The dynamic energy of salt water is something quite different from that of fresh water. And it is this dynamic energy which the sea gives off, and which connects it with the moon' (PFU 171:6). Phosphorus is far closer to water.

but the sum of knowledge of what happens to the scurvy-stricken boy, when he shudders with anguish smelling the earthy juice, and is filled with pain through all his fibres as the principle seeks him out […] in the turning of the stream of life, he must suffer. For the Hermes is the son of the Thunderer.' (SCAL 287).[137] Burnett includes Heraclitus's fragment: 'Homer was wrong in saying: "would that strife might perish from among gods and men!" He did not see that he was praying for the destruction of the universe; for if his prayer were heard, all things would pass away' (Burnett 136). The difference between Anaximander and Heraclitus (and this is where Lawrence is closer to the latter) is that, to employ Burnett's terms, 'Anaximander had treated the strife of opposites as injustice and what Herakleitos set himself to show was that, on the contrary, it was the highest justice' (Burnett 145).

Thus, the visible world is made up of contraries, but at the same time it is one, hence, writes Burnett: 'wisdom is not a knowledge of many things, but the perception of underlying unity of the warring opposites' (Burnett 143). Lawrence, says virtually the same thing in 'The Two Principles': 'between the great two valves of the primordial universe, moved "the Spirit of God", one unbroken and indivisible heart of creative being' (SCAL 260:33). In 'The Crown', for example, Lawrence writes that 'if the sea fell departed from the land, and the land from the sea' then there would be only 'utter nothingness', meaninglessness. What does he mean by this? Why would there be no sea without the land, and no land without the sea? Why do they need each other? Clearly, what interests Lawrence is the juxtaposition of the two and what that entails. We can find similar images elsewhere such as in *Apocalypse* where he writes the following: 'that I am part of the earth my feet know perfectly, and my blood is part of the sea' (A 149:21).[138] And in *Sea and Sardinia* as he leaves Sicily, Lawrence describes the sunrise as 'that long red slit between a dark sky and a dark Ionian Sea, terrible old bivalve which has held life between its lips so long' (SS, 10:25).[139]

Therefore, from the central mystery are born two principles, which are the principles of fire and water. The principles of fire and water are, as it were, the father and mother who together engender all living matter. Fire symbolizes life, light and creativity; water signifies dissolution, darkness and death. Both poles need each other to exist, as the two poles in electricity or magnetism, or the systole-diastole of a beating heart. Lawrence writes in 'The

[137] The Egyptian God Thoth is the equivalent of the Greek's Hermes Trismegistus, son of Zeus.
[138] Elise Brault-Dreux also notes the importance of this idea of the edge or the rim in Lawrence's last poems (Brault-Dreux, The Rim, the Edge, the End, the Level: When Poetry Breaks the Sea "to bits" in Last Poems).
[139] It is interesting to note the reference to the systole and diastole of the heart, so frequent in Lawrence's non-fiction—the idea of life suspended between the two contrasts.

Two Principles' that: 'every new thing is born from the consummation of the two halves of the universe, the two great halves being the cosmic waters and the cosmic fire of the First Day' (SCAL 263:19). Generally in Lawrence's non-fiction, the principle of death or destructiveness is associated with the sea ('the sea is a great disintegrative force. Its tonic quality is its disintegrative quality. It burns down the tissue' he writes (SCAL 322:31)), whereas the sun, the fiery principle, sometimes called the earthy principle is the creative principle, the principle of life (Lawrence refers to 'the earth, with its soul of inner fire' (SEP 57:16)). We see this, for example, in Lawrence's essay on *Dana,* in which the corrosive effect of the salty sea (the watery principle) on the boy with scurvy is counteracted by the earthiness of the onion (the fiery principle). Lawrence describes what had happened to the boy, and what ensues, in these terms: 'the watery principle in the body gradually assumes the overbalance, the excess, and starts the overthrow of the creative substance. And there is no remedy but fresh provisions and *terra firma*, as Dana says' (SICAL 287:7). In other words, the creative principle is found in the organic living substance of the earthly onion, which is opposed to the deathliness of the ocean.

Without *both* of these two elements, or principles, there can be no life. H. M. Daleski, in *The Forked Flame: A Study of D.H. Lawrence*, notes 'his insistence that the contending forces must retain their separate identities. The new whole which is created by establishing a relation between the opposites is not a fusing of the two into one but the complementing of the one by the other' (Daleski 21). In every living thing they are held in a tension. Thus, the Etruscans' tomb animal paintings (leopard and deer, lion and bull, cat and dove) represent 'the polarized activity of the divine cosmos' (SEP 63:14). Predator and prey need each other and symbolize the necessary balance of the two poles. The soul signifies the attainment of equilibrium between the two:[140]

> 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 the duality, the fiery and the watery. […] And in death it does not disappear, but is stored in the egg, or in the jar, or even in the tree which brings forth again. (SEP 63:16)

[140] This is why Hough is wrong to list 'soul' as one of the pair of oppositions. The soul is not one of the oppositions: 'the soul itself, the conscious spark of every creature, is not dual' (SEP 63:23).

The sea (which, as we see here, the Etruscans also represented by the egg, or jar, or tree) represents the origin and source of all things, to which we return when we die.[141] Hence, the images on the Etruscan tombs of the diver, the dolphins. The duck, as Lawrence points out, is important in the Etruscan paintings since he symbolizes the two-in-one, neither death nor life.

In conclusion, having looked at the fundamental influence of James and Schopenhauer, we are now in a much better position to understand Lawrence's philosophy, and to make sense of certain assertions which might previously have remained obscure. By following all these clues, we are, from now on, in a position to decipher an important essay like 'Climbing Down Pisgah', to which very little critical attention has hitherto been paid. We can now understand that Lawrence's '*homo sum*!' (I am a man!) is a sign of his pluralism, and his affirmation of the individual 'whirling in the midst of Chaos' (RDP 228:29). We now know that life for Lawrence is about its unpredictability: 'Homo sum! Adventurer from the first Adventurer' (RDP 228:24). We now know that he rejects monistic pantheism and idealism: '*Homo sum*! a demon who knows nothing of oneness or of perfection' (RDP 228:17). We now know that he rejects dualistic theism and the idea of an external creator: '*Homo sum*! a demon who knows nothing of any First Creator who created the universe from his own perfection' (RDP 228:18). We now know that life for Lawrence is about strife, and fighting to achieve one's being: 'like a bird he spreads his wings to surpass himself […] it is the joy forever, the agony forever, and above all, the fight forever. For all the universe is alive, and whirling in the same fight, the same joy and anguish' (RDP 228:30-36). We now know that the cosmos is produced by two opposing forces, balanced between birth and death: '*Homo sum*! a man who knows that all creation lives like some great demon inhabiting space, and pulsing with a dual desire, a desire to give himself forth into creation, and a desire to take himself back, in death' (RDP 228:20). Why Lawrence says in this same essay: 'of the thing we call human, I've had enough' (RDP 227:11), will be dealt with in part 2 of this study, but before this we need to look at Lawrence's hatred of linear thinking.

[141] See Elise Brault-Dreux's article on the sea in Lawrence's last poems: 'throughout Lawrence's work the sea appears as a beginning, an ever-obscure depth that mysteriously produces life. Yet, he repeatedly balances this birthing imagery with that of a sea whose jaws of darkness swallow life back to its depths' (Brault-Dreux, The Rim, the Edge, the End, the Level: When Poetry Breaks the Sea "to bits" in Last Poems n.p.).

Chapter 3: 'The Straight Course is Hacked out in Wounds, Against the Will of the World' (MM 49)

3.1 Life from the source, or the human taint?

The extract below from Lawrence's poem, 'The Primal Passions' illustrates many of the themes of this chapter, in which we look in greater detail at a pivotal idea in Lawrence's thought, the idea that there are really two worlds:

> If you will go down into yourself, under your surface personality
> you will find you have a great desire to drink life direct
> from the source […]
> Life from the source, unadulterated
> with the human taint. Contact with the sun of suns
> that shines somewhere in the atom, somewhere pivots the curved space,
> and cares not a straw for the put-up human figments. (CP 481)

In this poem, we see the idea of one world which is 'from the source', contrasted with another world of 'put-up human figments' and which is stained by 'the human taint'. We see on the one hand, the idea of the cosmos, so important for Lawrence, meaning divine (but not human) order, and, on the other, we see in his allusion to 'curved space', Lawrence's distaste for the straight lines of the humanly conceived scientific and linear world. Thus, there is a "real" world which is mysterious, chaotic, and somewhat unpredictable, *the central mystery*; but there also exists a world which is really just a simulacra, a merely human conception of a world— supposedly orderly and calculable, the world of which Nietzsche had said:

> We have arranged for ourselves a world in which we are able to live - by positing bodies, lines, planes, causes and effects, motion and rest, form and content; without these articles of faith no one could endure living! But that does not prove them. Life is not an argument; the conditions of life might include error. (Nietzsche, GS 117)

Nietzsche, in fact, characterizes the nature of the *real* world as 'for all eternity chaos not in the sense of a lack of necessity but of a lack of order, organization, form, beauty, wisdom, and

whatever else our aesthetic anthropomorphisms are called' (Nietzsche, GS 109).[142] It is the inscrutable, mysterious power of this real world, the world 'from the source', a world of which only occasional glimpses can be had, which is, for Lawrence, the only thing that can afford real meaning to life:

> We must abide by the incalculable impulse of creation; we must sleep in faith. It will seem to us we are nowhere. We shall be afraid of anarchy and confusion. But, in fact, there is no anarchy so horrid as the anarchy of fixed law, which is mechanism. (RDP 29:7)

Indeed, as Lawrence says in the essay 'Democracy' (1919): 'our life, our being depends upon the incalculable issue from the central Mystery into indefinable *presence*' (RDP 78:22). In other words, whatever it is that has 'created all creation', is the first great clue to the meaning of existence, since there must, after all is said and done, be an origin to all things.

3.1.1 Two very different worlds: 'the vital universe was never created from any Logos; but the ideal universe of man was certainly so invented' (RDP 69)

As we saw earlier in chapter 2, Lawrence follows Schopenhauer in drawing a distinction between a world as it appears to us and the world-in-itself. There are therefore, two worlds, one a putative calculable one which seems more or less to conform to mechanical and scientific laws and principles, and the other the world as it really is, unpredictable and ultimately unknowable. Schopenhauer asserted that maths and science only held good for the first one of the two, the calculable, phenomenal world, and could 'show us nothing more than connexions, relations of one representation to another' (TWWR 121). Maths 'gives us exhaustive knowledge of that which in phenomena is quantity, position, number, in short, spatial and temporal relation' (TWWR 121), as does aetiology (cause-and-effect). According to Lawrence's understanding, all of these are in what he describes as the third dimension of space and time, and causal thinking is a purely mental means of predicting what might happen in a world essentially characterized by regularities.[143] On the other hand, there always remains,

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[142] 'For Nietzsche, the cosmic order of modern cosmology is nothing but a human perspective imposed on an unending chaotic flux. One knows this flux only interpretively, on both rational and unconscious levels' (Babich 157). The same applies to science. (Babich 157).

[143] The kind of causality which is inherent to modernity is, broadly speaking, Aristotle's *efficient causality*. But from around the 17th century, there was a radical change in the way this causality was envisaged: whereas for Aristotle, causes are active initiators for events, in classical science they become passive and inactive nodes in a deterministic chain (Hulswit). Nietzsche claims that 'an intellect that saw cause and effect as a continuum, not, as we do, as arbitrary division and dismemberment—that saw the stream of the event—would reject the concept of cause and effect and deny all determinedness' (GS 113).

for Schopenhauer, something which 'withdraws from investigation', the thing-in-itself (TWWR 121), which is why the sciences of the three-dimensional world cannot give us knowledge of the inner nature of things. They explain 'only the *How*, not the *What* of the phenomenon' (TWWR 121). This inner nature of things is, of course, what Lawrence calls the fourth dimension, or *The Creative Mystery*. As the phenomenal world is merely man's representation of the world, Lawrence can also call it the *ideal world*, whereas the real world in-itself he calls the *vital world*. For Lawrence, the ideal world, the world as we know it, was quite simply invented by man, prompting him to say in 'Democracy': 'this is how the world, the universe, was invented from the Logos: exactly as man has invented machinery and the whole ideal of humanity. The vital universe was never created from any Logos; but the ideal universe of man was certainly so invented' (RDP 69:11).

Lawrence believes that effects cannot possibly be predetermined. In one particularly philosophical passage of the novel *Kangaroo* he writes 'there is always the unstable creative element present in life' (K 295), and in other works, he is at pains to emphasize, at every possible opportunity, the ultimate incalculability of the creative mystery, whether it be that 'life itself, the very God throbs incalculably' (MN 189:24'),[144] or the 'incalculable Pan' (STH 187: 40), or 'the incalculable and intangible Holy Ghost' (PFU 76:20), or the soul, which is 'forever sending forth incalculable impulses' (PFU 154:29). Thus, the present moment always involves the creation of something completely new, something that cannot have been merely contained in the past.[145] Consequently, Lawrence consistently characterises the physical world not in terms of natural *laws*, but in terms of *habits*, as in 'Climbing down Pisgah' where he writes:

> The vast demon of life has made himself habits which, except in the whitest heat of desire and rage, he will never break. And these habits are the laws of our scientific universe. But all the laws of physics, dynamics, kinetics, statics, all are but the settled habits of a vast living incomprehensibility, and they can all be broken, superseded, in a moment of great extremity. (RDP 228:37)

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[144] Lawrence also writes in the unpublished *Mr. Noon* that 'the great eternity of creation […] lies in the everlasting and incalculable throb of passion and desire' (MN 189:16).

[145] In the novel *Mr. Noon*, what Gilbert likes about plant morphology is that cause-and-effect doesn't work: 'what he loved so much in plant morphology was that given a fixed mathematical basis, the final evolution was so incalculable' (MN 35:24).

In other words, the world is characterized not by fixed laws of nature, but by what are now sometimes known as nomic necessities (*nomos* being Greek for customs), regularities which always occur, which could, theoretically at least, be modified. This can be easily compared with William James's *The Principles of Psychology Vol 1* where he writes: 'the laws of Nature are nothing but the immutable habits which the different elementary sorts of matter follow in their actions and reactions upon each other. In the organic world, however, the habits are more variable than this' (1PP 104). The equivalent in the world of man is described by Lawrence in *Study of Thomas Hardy* (1914), where he points out that man's strength is his ability to identify repetitive patterns and reproduce them:

> He can at will reproduce the movement life made in its initial passage, the movement life still makes, and will continue to make, as a habit, the movement already made so unthinkably often that rather than a movement it has become a state, a condition of all life: it has become matter, or the force of gravity, or cohesion, or heat, or light. These old, old habits of life man rejoices to rediscover in all their detail. (STH 40:7)

Lawrence believes that causal laws cannot possibly explain life. Nonetheless, because the basic forces of nature manifest very little deviation, the phenomenal world does remain more or less calculable, and mankind is accordingly able, to some extent at least, to predict and control the environment. The universe possesses, therefore, a double aspect: on the one hand, an aspect seemingly amenable to calculation and rigid laws, and on the other, an aspect which better reflects the reality of the world, since the universe is, in effect, to employ Hume's terms, not a world of laws, but a world of 'constant conjunctions'. The same principle is at play in one of his last works, 'Apocalypsis II', when he describes the world in terms of properties: 'the laws don't "govern" the universe. The "laws" of the universe are only the more subtle "properties" of things' (A 197:32). As Lawrence explains, it is because they always seem to work that man has assumed that there must be a great ruler who was fixed them (in other words, this is how the theistic position arises). Lawrence is striving to explain that as day follows night, matter always has certain properties, just as the ideas we have of the universe are simply properties which are always repeated. Our reasoning faculty (the logos) is merely a faculty for identifying and recognising these regularities. And we have taken these regularities to be permanent laws:

> The natural laws don't "govern", they are only, to put it briefly, the more general properties of Matter. It is just a general property of Matter that it occupies space. 4

> x 4 = 16 is not "reality": that is to say, it has no existence in itself. It is merely a permanent property of all things, which the mind recognizes as permanent: as sweetness is a property of sugar. Ideas are not Rulers or creators: they're just the properties or qualities recognized in certain things. The Logos itself is the same: it is the faculty which recognises the abiding property in things, and remembers those properties. (A 199:1)

Thus, even though the world gives us the impression that it can be quantified, analysed, explained and comprehended, this desire is, for Lawrence, like trying to pull open the bud of a plant to see what the blossom will be like (RDP 79:36): 'the flower of tomorrow is all beyond us. Only in the material-mechanical world can man foresee, foreknow, calculate, and establish laws' (RDP 80:3). In 'Climbing Down Pisgah' Lawrence writes:

> The Universe isn't quite a machine after all. It's alive and kicking. In spite of the fact that man with his cleverness has discovered some of the habits of our old earth, and so lured him into a trap; in spite of the fact that man has trapped the great forces, and they go round and round at his bidding like a donkey in a gin, the old demon isn't quite nabbed. We didn't quite catch him napping. He'll turn round on us with bare fangs, before long. (RDP 229:23)

By renaming 'laws' as 'habits', Lawrence is underscoring the limitations of the classical scientific laws which, until the nineteenth century had gone uncontested, but which were already starting to be called into the question.

3.1.2 Straight lines or swerving ones?

In *A Philosophical Essay on Probabilities*, the French mathematician, and follower of Newtonian classical physics, Laplace had said the following:

> We may regard the present state of the universe as the effect of its past and the cause of its future. An intellect which at a certain moment would know all forces that set nature in motion, and all positions of all items of which nature is composed, if this intellect were also vast enough to submit these data to analysis, it would embrace in a single formula the movements of the greatest bodies of the universe and those of the tiniest atom; for such an intellect nothing would be uncertain and the future just like the past would be present before its eyes. (Laplace 4)

For Laplace, 'all the effects of nature are only mathematical results of a small number of immutable laws' (Laplace 177). Laplace's determinism was a major target for Bergson, whose *Creative Evolution* (1907), Lawrence had probably read.[146] Bergson (whose aim was to show that the traditional view of science of a deterministic universe could not be right)[147] described classical science as the belief that the present moment contains nothing more than the past and that what we find in the effect was already contained in it, arguing that, on the contrary, there is always something entirely new in every moment which can never be deduced from the past:

> The essence of mechanical explanation, in fact, is to regard the future and the past as calculable functions of the present, and thus to claim that all is given. On this hypothesis, past, present and future would be open at a glance to a superhuman intellect capable of making the calculation. Indeed, the scientists who have believed in the universality and perfect objectivity of mechanical explanations have, consciously or unconsciously, acted on a hypothesis of this kind. Laplace formulated it with the greatest precision… (Bergson, The Creative Evolution 37)

When Bergson described this kind of conception of time as mechanical, he was referring to classical Newtonian physics, a tradition which Laplace represented perfectly. But since Laplace, the straight lines and regular curves of geometry which had been a fundamental part of classical physics were being increasingly superseded by modern maths and science. Sanford Schwarz notes that:

> Poincaré claims that Euclidian geometry is neither a transcript of the forms of external space, as traditionally assumed, nor is it a necessary a priori form through which the mind orders spatial experience, as it was for Kant; instead, Poincaré argues that Euclidian geometry is one useful 'convention' for organizing spatial relations. We should stop asking which geometrical system represents the actual order of the physical world. The question is simply meaningless. (Schwartz 15)

In other words, the regular lines and shapes of Euclidian geometry were merely convenient conventions, though ones which had worked well enough for classical science. Euclid's three-dimensional geometry, with its axioms, perfect circles, triangles, and regular lines was now

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[146] The relationship between Bergson and Lawrence will be returned to in more detail later on in this chapter.
[147] See the essay 'The Possible and the Real' (Bergson, The Creative Mind).

being challenged, and shown to be inadequate.[148] The philosopher Nietzsche had already maintained that the linear scientific model was just one perspective like any other, as Babette Babich points out: 'Nietzsche declares that mathematics 'would certainly not have come into existence if one had known from the beginning that there was in nature no exactly straight line, no real circle, no absolute magnitude' (Babich 147).

Indeed, writes Schwartz, by the 1920s the geometrical basis of classical physics, 'still reigned over the world of ordinary experience, but at the cosmic and molecular scale they no longer held sway. The world had to adjust to definitions of time and space that were unimaginable just one generation before' (Schwartz 16). Accordingly, Lawrence was writing in a context in which the geometrical, linear way of representing the world was being challenged, something which he himself describes in his essay 'The Novel' (1925): 'Ay! Ay! Ay! — Man handing out absolutes to man, as if we were all books of geometry with axioms, postulates and definitions in front. God with a pair of compasses! Moses with a set square! Man a geometric bifurcation…' (STH 184:31).[149] What is clear from Lawrence's enthusiastic praise of Einstein is that he is particularly pleased that 'now, the universe, according to the popular mind' (and by the popular mind, he seems to really mean himself) 'can wobble about without being pinned down. It is really, an anarchical conclusion […] We are glad to be driven from false, automatic fixities, anyhow' (PFU 190:33). By allowing the universe to deviate from the straight course that had been set by classical physics, a new way of thinking and living could be discovered.[150]

Lucretius famously gave his atoms a swerve, the *clinamen*, since if atoms travelled in perfectly straight lines, this would imply that the world was completely pre-determined, and, therefore, there could be no free-will.[151] The world was chaotic, a vision totally at odds with the linearity of someone like Laplace. When describing the world, Lucretius asks his pupil to imagine the world 'dancing right before your eyes', just as 'when you let the sun peep in a shuttered room/ Pouring fourth the brilliance of its beams into the gloom,/ And you'll see myriads of motes all moving many ways/ Throughout the void and intermingling in the golden

[148] Lawrence must have been familiar with Euclid. It seems quite possible that Siegfried's reflection in *The Trespasser*: 'as a boy he had experienced the same sort of feeling after wrestling for an hour with a problem in Euclid' (T 155), draws on Lawrence's own childhood experiences.
[149] Lawrence may well have been thinking about Blake's painting *The Ancient of Days, setting a Compass to the Earth* which depicts a Newtonian-like God figure designing the world with a pair of compasses.
[150] Einstein was still committed to the ideals of classical physics, but Lawrence discounts Einstein's equations, saying that: 'What I doubt is the equation formula. It seems to me, also, that the velocity of light through space is the *deus ex machina* in Einstein's physics' (PFU 190:20).
[151] There is no direct evidence to suggest that Lawrence had read Lucretius.

rays/ As if in everlasting struggle' (Lucretius 39 (I.112)). By making his atoms swerve, Lucretius introduces an element of unpredictability into the world:

> … when bodies fall through empty space
> Straight down, under their own weight, at a random time and place,
> *They swerve a little*. Just enough of a swerve for you to call
> It a change of course. Unless inclined to swerve, all things
> would fall
> Right through the deep abyss like drops of rain. There would be
> no
> Collisions, and no atom would meet atom with a blow,
> And Nature thus could not have fashioned anything, full stop. (Lucretius 42, (I. 216-223))

In like manner, Lawrence in a remarkable passage from *Mornings in Mexico* (1927), declares that 'the straight course is hacked out in wounds, against the will of the world':

> Strange that we should think in straight lines, when there are none, and talk of straight courses, when every course, sooner or later, is seen to be making the sweep round, swooping upon the centre. When space is curved, and the cosmos is sphere within sphere, and the way from any point to any other point is round the bend of the inevitable, that turns as the tips of the broad wings of the hawk turn upwards, leaning upon the air like the invisible half of the ellipse. If I have a way to go, it will be round the swoop of a bend impinging centripetal towards the centre. The straight course is hacked out in wounds, against the will of the world. (MM 49:33)

Lawrence's lines curving towards the centre are clearly a reference to the fourth dimension, as he makes clear elsewhere, in the essay 'Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine': 'this too is the fourth dimension: this state, this mysterious other reality of things in a perfected relationship. It is into this perfected relationship that every straight-line curves, as if to some core, passing out of the time-space dimension' (RDP 361:14). An early letter to Blanche Jennings suggests that he was already thinking in these kinds of terms at an early stage, since, having had his English criticized by Alice Dax, he tells his correspondent that to write well, he

must deliberately flaw his English, and exclaims: 'How can a woman whose feelings flow in such straight canals, follow me in my threadings, my meanderings, my spurts' (1L 53).

Thus, Lawrence was also reacting against the dominant scientific model. According to Ricardo J. Quinones in *Mapping Literary Modern*ism, Lawrence was just one of many Modernist writers to associate linear thinking with stale traditions: 'the first but not the final task of Modernism was to disrupt the temporal linearity that formed the basis of many nineteenth century preoccupations (history, bourgeois continuity, scientific causality and progress) [...] Modernists looked to leaps of experience, to juxtapositions that could be startling and unexpected' (Quinones 88).[152] Quinones contends that the Modernist period was characterized by a clash between two modes, a *predictive* and an *innovative* one (a distinction perhaps most clearly developed by Henri Bergson). By *predictive* (also called mechanistic), Quinones meant the 'standardization or the routinization of experience' (Quinones 42), a 'kind of repetitive sameness' (Quinones 32), committed to predicting and controlling events based on past experiences.[153] On the other hand, what Quinones calls the *innovative* (or the intuitive) is an emphasis on the now, and a disruption of linear ways of thinking about time. In the interest of self-preservation, Western man has preferred the predictive instead. By observing the regularities of nature, and identifying the apparent causal relationships, it has proved possible to control the universe and to render it safer and more accessible. Yet, it is the innovative mode which is considered by Lawrence to be the greater necessity for mankind. The predictive and the innovative can, therefore, be seen as a clash between two ways of life, between the old way (modernity) which Lawrence wishes to smash, and a new way (a rebirth of society).

3.1.3 The Chaos behind the apparent world: 'The whole is a strange assembly of incongruous parts, slipping past one another' (STH 196:32)

Lawrence's view of the reality of the physical world must have resembled the view he attributed to Melville who, Lawrence writes in *Studies in Classic American Literature*, was spell-bound by 'the strange slidings and collidings of matter' (SCAL 134:2). As we saw in chapter 2, implicit in Kant and his successors, was the idea that the real world, the *noumenal* world, is really chaotic: it is only the human mind which imposes order upon it and makes it

[152] Quinones mentions, amongst others, T. E. Hulme, Joseph Conrad, Thomas Mann, T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce.

[153] Quinones had previously written a book on time in the Renaissance period, during which the discovery of time 'led to practical decisions and mundane consequences, such as scheduling one's activities (the newly devised *emploi du temps*)'. It was, writes Quinones, 'a fervent discovery that lent itself to quantitative precision and an increased control over human life' (Quinones 37).

representable. The underlying reality is that of a chaotic flux, on which we impose a human framework which, although it seems to hold true, is probably nothing more than a mere semblance of order.[154] The mind provides the ordering of events in time, registers their duration, generates the ideas that there are objects outside of our bodies, that there are causes and effects, and so on.[155] It is hardly surprising in this kind of intellectual climate that Lawrence also subscribes to the view that the world is far less orderly than it appears. Lawrence, too, aims to grasp what lies behind the appearances: 'the clue hidden, as it always is hidden, in every revelation, underneath what is stated' as he puts it in the essay 'Aristocracy' (RDP 376:3). For Nietzsche, the antithesis of the phenomenal world is the 'formless, unformulable world of the chaos of sensations' (TWP 307). Without our categories, there is only chaos. Even the concept of things, Nietzsche argues, was invented by humans: 'how could we know that things exist? "Thingness" was first created by us' (TWP 307). Likewise, Lawrence himself puts scare quotes around the word 'things' in *Apocalypse*, and discussing the ancient way of seeing things, he underlines that we need to see things in their double aspect, both as God and as phenomenal world:

> … those things that move are doubly god. That is, we are doubly aware of their godhead: that which is, and that which moves is twice godly. Everything is a 'thing': and every 'thing' acts and has effect: the universe is a great complex activity of things existing and moving and having effect. And all this is god. (A 95:20)

Although Lawrence is talking here about the ancient consciousness, the way he writes (the inclusive we, and the tonality) makes it obvious that he is addressing his contemporaries.

The reality, as we learn in *Chaos in Poetry* (1928) is that man is merely a tiny part 'in the whirl of the vast chaos of god' (IR 112:33), 'the roving, uncaring chaos which is all we shall ever know of God' (IR 113:24), a chaos which is indifferent to the fate of mankind, and without any kind of human morality; it is unpredictable, indeterminable, 'incalculable' (IR

[154] Like Schopenhauer, Nietzsche further developed the idea between the apparent world and the world-in-itself. In 'Will to Power', he writes that 'appearance is an arranged and simplified world, at which our practical instincts have been at work' (TWP 306). Although 'it is perfectly true for *us*' (or, at least it seems so), this world is nonetheless a fiction. The phenomenal world feels real to us because we have logicized it so that there appears to be a 'continual recurrence of identical, familiar, related things' so that we feel that 'we are able to reckon and calculate' (TWP 307).

[155] Order and disorder, as Bergson makes clear in *The Creative Evolution*, are simply human categories. The notion of disorder merely expresses the disappointment of a mind which encounters a different order to the one it wanted to find (Bergson, The Creative Evolution 223).

115:1).[156] Other references to chaos are to be found in *Mornings in Mexico* where the cosmos can 'softly call him [man] into existence, out of the egg of chaos' (MM 83:19), or in *Twilight in Italy* 'the flesh makes a new order from chaos in begetting a new life' (TI 138:17). Man emerges from chaos and returns to it upon his death. Lawrence in *Sketches of Etruscan Place* asserts that for the Etruscans, the soul is 'that which gradually is produced out of chaos, like a flower, only to disappear again into chaos' (SEP 122:34). Consequently, chaos for Lawrence reflects, not a lack of order, but the reality of the cosmos before man has imposed its categories, its *logos*, upon it. It is the world *before* interpretation, the world-in-itself. Lawrence declares that 'man, and the animals, and the flowers, all live within a strange and for ever surging chaos. The chaos which we have got used to we call a cosmos' (IR 109). In other words, it is God itself (with or without a capital letter) in the sense of something absolute, the unknowable that can only be 'lit up by visions' (IR 109:19).

Thus, the physical world is a flux of constantly shifting relationships, in which, as Lawrence puts it in 'Why the Novel Matters' (1925): 'all things flow and change, and even change is not absolute. The whole is a strange assembly of incongruous parts, slipping past one another' (STH 196:32). This idea that the physical world is in continual flux is to be found early on in Lawrence's writings, such as in 'The Crown' when he asserts that 'matter is a very slow flux' (302:21), and we also see the same idea in 'Poetry of the Present': 'The living plasm vibrates unspeakably, it inhales the future, it exhales the past, it is the quick of both, and yet it is neither. There is no plasmic finality, nothing crystal, permanent' (CP 182). As early as 1915 in *Twilight in Italy,* when Lawrence describes the carved statues, he describes them in terms of their artistic opposition to the phenomenal world: 'there is no flux nor hope nor becoming, all is, once and for all' and again 'there is no becoming and no passing away' (TI 94).[157] What is important in Lawrence's descriptions is his insistence that the real world is dynamic. A good indication of the way in which Lawrence may have viewed things, objects, or people, is to be found in 'The Crown' where he states that 'our identity is no more than an accidental cohesion in the flux of time. The cohesion will break down and utterly cease to be. The atoms will return into the flux of the universe. And that unit of cohesion which I was will vanish utterly' (RDP 272:36)

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[156] For ease, I will always refer to this introduction using the name 'Chaos in Poetry'. The full-length title in the Cambridge Edition is "Chaos in Poetry": Introduction to *Chariot of the Sun*, by Harry Crosby.

[157] Emanuele Coccia contends that the matter constituting the world we live in—in spite of the difference between its various elements and its physical discontinuities—is also ontologically unitary and homogeneous, its unity is to be found in its fluid nature: it flows. The world is movement itself (Coccia 46).

To convey the idea of the human conception of the world which conceals its true nature, Lawrence, in 'Chaos in Poetry', employs the metaphor of an umbrella put up by man to avoid seeing any glimpses of this real nature of the world, 'between himself and the everlasting whirl' (IR 109), and this chaos is opposed to the hubris of man, 'his vanity and poisonous conceit' (IR 115:9) (he repeats the word 'conceit' on two other occasions), his 'all-of-a-pieceness which is the curse of the human consciousness', 'a world of conceit' (IR 115:17). This metaphorical umbrella is a mere 'contrivance and invention of our mind' (IR 113:9), 'our conception of the universe' (IR 113:4), and our 'Absolute Umbrella' (IR 113:2). Man has been frightened by chaos: 'when man became conscious, and aware of himself, his own littleness and puniness in the whirl of the vast chaos of God, he took fright, and began inventing God in his own image' (IR 112:31). This was, according to Lawrence, the greatest of errors, man has been trapped by his own conception of the world 'in a painted prison' (IR 110:29) and this needs to be reversed: 'this is the momentous crisis for mankind, when we have to get back to chaos' (IR 110:23). From Lawrence's perspective, modern man has lost contact with this dynamic world, and become separated from it, leading to the modern sensation of meaninglessness and *ennui*.

3.2 The Central Mystery

Lawrence's understanding of creation is a dynamic one: 'Power puts something new into the world', writes Lawrence in the essay 'Blessed are the Powerful' (RDP 327:39): 'it is the first and greatest of all mysteries. It is the mystery that is behind all our being, even behind all our existence' (RDP 327:25).[158] This power which has created all creation is 'never-pausing, never-ceasing life itself' (CP 183). Consequently, his philosophy is a philosophy of dynamic flux, a philosophy of the present, of which one of his clearest statements is to be found in 'Poetry of the Present':[159]

> Life, the ever-present, knows no finality, no finished crystallization. The perfect rose is only a running flame, emerging and flowing off, and never in any sense at rest, static, finished. Herein lies its transcendent loveliness. The whole tide of all life and all time suddenly heaves, and appears before us as

[158] We might note here, once again, that Lawrence distinguishes existence from being.
[159] His preface to *New Poems*, usually known as 'The Poetry of the Present' (1919), I will use the title 'Poetry of the Present'.

> an apparition, a revelation. We look at the very white quick of nascent creation. (CP 182)

And what applies to the world must also apply to ourselves; there is in us, too, a never-ceasing creation. This revelation of the miraculous quality of the never-ceasing coming-into-being is what Lawrence means by faith, a faith in that which has created all creation and continues to do so:

> The religious truth is the same now as it ever has been: that preceding all or knowledge or will or effort is the central creative mystery, out of which issues the strange and for ever unaccountable emanation of creation: that the universe is a bush which burns for ever with the Presence, consuming itself and yet never consumed. (SCAL 182:16)

It is this which should inspire in us a sense of wonder, as it did the ancient Greeks, and it is this which can afford meaning to our lives.

3.2.1 The Pure Present

Time for Lawrence is not linear. According to Shirley Bricout, 'Lawrence rejects the linear concept of time, opting instead for a cyclical conception, arguing that "our idea of time as a continuity in an internal straight line has crippled our consciousness cruelly"' (Bricout, "Postponing Destiny": The Wheels of Time in D. H. Lawrence's Apocalypse.).[160] But whilst Lawrence does indeed reject linear time, his vision of time is not exactly cyclical either, at least not in any real sense. Instead it is an idea of time as *becoming*: 'the immediate moment is not a drop of water running downstream. It is the source and issue, the bubbling up of the stream' (CP 183). Lawrence metaphorically describes the immediate present as a welling up, like a spring, a source of 'life surging itself into utterance at its very well-head' (CP 183), 'the source and issue, the bubbling up of the stream' (CP 185), 'the dark, powerful source whence all things rise into being' (STH 28:15) and ourselves as 'the little unfathomable well-head that bubbles forth into being and doing […] the fountain-head of everything: the quick of the self' (RDP 73:20), 'a fountain that is always playing, leaping, ebbing, sinking, and springing up' (STH 31:27). The view that the present moment is an unceasing flux, may again have originated with William James, who asked: 'where is it, this present? It has melted in our grasp, fled 'ere we could touch it, gone in the instant of becoming' (Writings 1878 -1899 266). For James, time is

[160] The reference is from *Apocalypse* (A 97:2).

a kind of dynamic flux and the concept of the present is, 'an altogether ideal abstraction'. Whether or not the present '*does* exist can never be a part of our immediate experience' (Writings 1878 -1899 266). James derived this notion of what he called 'the specious present' from E. R. Clay from whom he quotes at length in the first volume of *Principles of Psychology*. Clay claimed that what is denoted by the present, is 'delusively given as being in a time that intervenes between the past and the future. Let it be named the specious present […] Time, then considered relatively to human apprehension, consists of four parts, viz., the obvious past, the specious present, the real present, and the future. Omitting the specious present, it consists of three… nonentities—the past which does not exist, the future, which does not exist, and their coterminous, the present; the faculty from which it proceeds lies to us in the fiction of the specious present' (1PP 609). Taken to its logical conclusion, any notion of time conceived of by humans can only be a mere abstraction, and the reality of change and time must remain a mystery.

Accordingly, the central mystery is the pure present, and living well means remaining firmly in the quick of life. In the first version of the travel sketch 'The Spinner and the Monks',[161] (while suggesting, incidentally, that he might once have actually thought about becoming a monk himself), Lawrence contrasts the monks pacing up and down below him who are 'either in the past or the future, in the death of the tortured body, in the death of the glorified soul, but never here' (TI 57:23), with the old spinner lady who seems 'so perfectly the *present*. She certainly does not look before and after, and pine for what is not. Nor do the flowers […] And as for the monks, I'm so glad I escaped being one myself' (TI 58:1). This is the reason why Lawrence says Walt Whitman's free verse affords us another important clue; it is 'the insurgent naked throb of the instant moment […] the most superb mystery we have hardly recognized: the immediate, instant self. The quick of all time is the instant. The quick of all the universe, of all creation, is the incarnate, carnal self. Poetry gave us the clue: free verse: Whitman. Now we know' (CP 185).[162] Alluding to 'Poetry of the Present', Michael Bell writes:

> … the strict impossibility of experiencing the pure present does not of itself mean that any attempt to achieve it is without value. What is at stake is a psychological disposition it helps to define and which is quite readily understood in its general intention. One of the most notable expressions of this insight was a thought

[161] Of which the revised version is included in *Twilight in Italy.*
[162] Free verse, according to Lawrence, frees us from static cliches and stereotypes, artificial conduits and canals, hackneyed associations, habits, 'static abstraction, abstracted from life' (CP184-5).

> experiment in Friedrich Nietzsche's essay *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life*. Nietzsche reflected on the way human awareness of time is open to an excessive and damaging preoccupation with past and future: the past as an object of nostalgia or regret and the future of anxiety or longing. So he proposed the diagnostic experiment of asking whether any individual would be willing to live the same ten or twenty years over and over again. Most people, he says, would regard the prospect with horror but for anyone living absolutely in the present it would not matter […] in this matter, as in others, Lawrence can be seen as testing out Nietzschean insights in more practical ways. (Bell, Lawrence, the "pure present" and les années de pèlerinage 2)

Nonetheless, whilst Lawrence is committed to the notion of a pure present, he takes care to differentiate himself from the conventional view of eternal recurrence, which the unpredictability of every moment renders impossible: 'Nietzsche talks about the Ewige Wiederkehr. It is like Botticelli singing cycles. But each cycle is different. There is no real recurrence' (IR 72:34). For Lawrence, there can never be sheer repetition of the past because the present is always unpredictably new. According to Lawrence in 'A Propos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*', Augustine claimed that God created the universe new every day and 'every dawn dawns upon an entirely new universe' (LCL 323:9). And what applies to the world must also apply to mankind: 'the soul of man and the soul of woman is new in the same way, with the infinite delight of life and the ever-newness of life.' (LCL 323:9). Thus, it is that in the opening chapter of *Mornings in Mexico,* Lawrence, when describing the way the parrots imitate a human voice (for example their imitation of the Mexican worker Rosalino calling the dog Corasmin), insists on the fact that the imitation is never quite the same, something new must always be added: they 'whistle exactly like Rosalino, only a little more so' (MM 12:8).

James' description of felt time as 'a *duration*, with a bow and a stern, as it were—a rearward—and a forward-looking end' closely resembles (though in a more condensed way) Lawrence's statement in *Study of Thomas Hardy* that man is 'facing both ways, like Janus, face forward, in the quivering, glimmering fringe of the unresolved, facing the unknown and looking backward over the vast rolling tract of life which follows and represents the initial movement' (STH 40:32). The present moment is therefore an ever-shifting tension between the two great infinities. This corresponds to what Lawrence claims in 'Poetry of the Present', where he implies that past and present are in fact, little more than emotions: 'the past and the future

are the two great bournes of human emotion, the two great homes of the human days, the two eternities' (CP 184), with the past representing the 'sweet poignant ebb of remembrance and regret', the future representing 'the full, yearning flow of aspiration', both contrasted with the pure present: 'the living plasm vibrates unspeakably, it inhales the future, it exhales the past, it is the quick of both, and yet it is neither' (CP 182). Lawrence also alludes to this in *Study of Thomas Hardy*, explaining that when he asserts that all forms of utterance are either 'the declaring of the God seen approaching' (future), 'the rapture of contact' (present) or 'the anguished joy of remembrance' (past) (STH 61:40).[163] The religious effort, forward-looking is the effort to conceive that which the human soul lacks, and therefore yearns (the yearning for eternity felt vaguely in the present moment).

This, then, is the way of the world, the continual creation of the new, without which there could be no living, changing world, 'the mystery of the inexhaustible, forever unfolding creative spark' (CP 182), never fully revealed. As Lawrence writes in the first version of *Studies in Classic American Literature*, this mystery is:

> … within the living body of the universe, and within the living soul of man, central and omnipresent, in the fingers and lips and eyes and feet, as in the heart and bowels, and in the marshes as in the stars, lies the Presence, never to be located, yet never to be doubted, because it is *always* evident to our living soul, the Presence from which issues the first fine-shaken impulse and prompting of new being, eternal creation which is always Now. All time is central within this ever-present creative Now. (SCAL 182:28)

This sense of mystery, of the *Presence* of something undefinable, is a vital part of any meaningful relationship with the world. The central mystery of all life and change cannot ever be fully known, it will always remain a mystery. Nonetheless, some of its key characteristics are revealed to us: its temporal dimension, its flowing nature, its unpredictability which makes it the source of the renewal of all creation and all life. Paul Poplawski's book *Promptings of Desire* (1993) explains that, 'there is a vital life-force operating throughout the universe that gives form, direction and meaning to all life. Although this force is inscrutable and obscure in

[163] These three temporalities correspond to "religion, religious art and tragic art" (STH 62:2), with religion representing the present, religious art the aspiration for the future, and tragic art as looking back to past experience.

purpose, it manifests itself in the purposiveness of living things—in the harmonious processes of nature and the inherent creativity of human beings' (Poplawski 53).[164]

3.2.2 Lawrence and Bergson's Philosophy of Change

At times, Lawrence's language and thought seems so similar to Bergson's that it appears likely that he was influenced in some way (although this may be partly due to the strong influence Schopenhauer had on Bergson, and the constant interchange between Bergson and William James). Bergson was probably the most famous philosopher of his era, and it hardly seems likely that Lawrence could have been unaware of his ideas. As Sanford Schwartz writes: 'Bergson's ideas about art, intuition, and experience enjoyed an enormous vogue in the early twentieth century. They were especially popular during the half-decade before the outbreak of World War I—the formative years of the Modernist movement in England.' (Schwartz 30). Lawrence does actually refer to Bergson's idea of the *élan vital*,[165] but in a well-known letter in 1913 to Arthur McLeod, he writes: 'the Bergson book was very dull. Bergson bores me. He feels a bit thin' (1L 544),[166] to which Ginette Katz-Roy commented:

> That is very ungrateful of him. He probably read "The Perception of Change," a lecture given at Oxford in 1911 and, I think, "Life and Consciousness," another lecture given at the University of Birmingham and published in The Hibbert Journal in 1911, a magazine which we know he read at the time (Letters I 359). These two texts abolish the distinction between past, present, and future and show that our consciousness embraces a part of a continuum, a portion of time which is very close to what Lawrence calls the "incarnate Now" in his preface to New Poems… (Katz-Roy 152)

Moreover, as Gillies points out, John Middleton Murry with whom Lawrence was close at that time, was a strong advocate of Bergson's ideas in the 1910s, and all of his early writings about intuition (a topic which we will be discussing in chapter 8) were influenced by Bergson's ideas (Gillies 60). Katz-Roy also argues that Lawrence may well have read Murry's article 'Bergson and the Avant-Garde' in *Rhythm* (Katz-Roy 152). And, with Lawrence, we cannot, of course, be certain from his own comments that Bergson had *always* bored him. In any event, it seems

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[164] But if Poplawski correctly elucidates one strand of Lawrence's thought, he rather neglects the opposition Lawrence posits between this right way of thinking and its counterpart, a wrong way of thinking, which Lawrence also analyses extensively in his writings.

[165] For instance, in Chapter 1 of *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, and chapter 16 of *Apocalypse*; but they are merely brief allusions and Lawrence does not go into any detail.

[166] It is not known which book he had been sent.

highly likely that Lawrence had read *Creative Evolution*, by far and away Bergson's most famous book at that period, but it is quite likely that he had read a little book published in 1911 by H. Wildon Carr called *Henry Bergson: The Philosophy of Change*—an extremely short and concise summary of Bergson's views.[167] The close similarities between what Carr writes and Lawrence's prose suggest that he may have read this book at some point. Carr declares, for instance, that 'the main task of philosophy is to do what science cannot do—comprehend life. The impetus of life, the springing forward, pushing, insinuating, incessantly changing movement of life has evolved the intellect to know the inert world of matter, and has given to matter the appearance of a solid, timeless existence spread out in space. Reality is not solid matter, nor thinking mind, but living creative evolution' (Carr 18).

Another aspect of Bergson's thought which, as we have seen, is crucially important for Lawrence is the fact that the future can never be predicted. Key to Bergson's philosophy is the notion that every instant is utterly new and unpredictable. As he explains in the opening lines of 'The Possible and the Real', there always remains an unknowable quality to events,:

> I should like to come back to a subject on which I have already spoken, the continuous creation of unforeseeable novelty which seems to be going on in the universe. As far as I am concerned, I feel I am experiencing it constantly. No matter how I try to imagine in detail what is going to happen to me, still how inadequate, how abstract and stilted is the thing I have imagined in comparison to what actually happens! The realization brings along with it an unforeseeable nothing which changes everything. (Bergson, The Creative Mind 107)[168]

Lawrence certainly agrees— 'it is this unpredictable novelty which is the source of all life. Each individual being, whether flora or fauna, is a creation of this newness, an emergence of something greater than the sum of its parts, an 'excess' (STH 11). In the same way, the newly born child is always already something more than the sum of its parents:

> The nature of the infant is not just a new permutation-and-combination of elements contained in the natures of the parents. There is in the nature of the

[167] In the footnotes to the 1st volume of Lawrence's correspondence this book is incorrectly identified as a translation of Bergson's work (1L 544). It is in fact, a succinct summary of Bergson's views, which, as Carr mentions in his preface, Bergson himself had proof-read before its publication, and for which he suggested the title (Carr).

[168] This talk was given in 1930, so Lawrence couldn't have known it, but the idea here is to be found in Bergson's earlier work, such as *Creative Evolution* which we know Lawrence had read.

> infant that which is utterly unknown in the natures of the parents, something which could never be derived from the natures of all the existent individuals or previous individuals. There is in the nature of the infant something entirely new, underived, underivable, something which is, and which will forever remain, causeless. And this something is the unanalysable, indefinable reality of individuality. (PATU 16)

Lawrence insists on the fact that the child born is never the mere combination of the parents because there must always be something *new*; just as when a poppy flowers, so that 'something is, which was not' (STH 18:37).

Bergson's philosophy is a philosophy of flux. In *Henri Bergson: A Philosophy of Change*, Carr explains that Bergson saw life as 'an unceasing becoming' (Carr 18), or as 'a flowing, a real becoming, a change that is continuous undivided movement' (Carr 23), and he explains that for Bergson, 'the solid things which seem to abide and endure, which seem to resist this flowing, which seem more real than the flowing, are periods, cuts across the flowing, views that our mind takes of the living reality of which it is a part, in which it lives and moves…' (Carr 19). Bergson, as Carr emphasizes, had shown in *Time and Free Will* that Zeno's paradoxes were only paradoxes because it assumed that time could be divided up indefinitely into moments, like points on a line.[169] This seems to be exactly the point Lawrence is making in the following passage from the article 'Do Women Change' (1928),[170] where he writes:

> Life is not a question of points, but a question of flow. It's the flow that matters. If you come to think of it, a daisy even is like a little river flowing, that never for an instant stops. From the time when the tiny knob of a bud appears down among the leaves, during the slow rising up a stem, the slow swelling and pushing out the white petal-tips from the green, to the full round daisy, white and gold and gay, that opens and shuts through a few dawns, a few nights, poised on the summit of her stem, then silently shrivels and mysteriously disappears — there is no stop, no halt, it is a perpetual little

[169] One example is the paradox of the flying arrow. Zeno says that movement is impossible, because at every point of its course, it must be at rest, and 'if the arrow is motionless at every moment of its flight, then it is always motionless' (Carr 31). Carr explains it as follows: 'the flight of the arrow is an indivisible movement. We, looking at the course of the flight, represent it as a line along which we can make as many divisions as we choose. We say that the arrow passed over that course, and that it might have stopped at any point […] but the divisions in the course are not divisions in the movement. If the arrow had stopped at any point of its course, its flight, the movement, would have ended' (Carr 32).

[170] A later version of this article also appeared in *Vanity Fair* in 1929.

> streaming of a gay little life out into full radiance and delicate shrivelling, like a perfect little fountain that flows and flows, and shoots away at last into the invisible, even then without any stop. (LEA 154:10).

As Carr writes, 'nothing is immobile. Immobility is purely an appearance' (Carr 31).[171] According to Aristotle, a later follower of Heraclitus, Cratylus, said it was already saying too much to say you can step into the same river once, and he even ended up refusing to speak at all due to his belief that language unnaturally fixes what is really in constant flux. He concluded that to 'seek truth would be to chase a flying bird' (Aristotle, The Metaphysics 101 (1010a)).[172] But as can be seen from the following passage taken from Lawrence's lyrical 'Poetry of the Present' (1919),[173] truth for Lawrence *is* the flying bird, since truth is the revelation of the creative source in the immediate now:

> The bird is on the wing in the winds, flexible to every breath, a living spark in the storm, its very flickering depending upon its supreme mutability and power of change. Whence such a bird came: whither it goes: from what solid earth it rose up, and upon what solid earth it will close its wings and settle, this is not the question. This is a question of before and after. Now, *now*, the bird is on the wing in the winds. (CP 185)

In Plato's dialogue, *Meno*, Socrates claims that to have true knowledge, things have to be fastened down, bound down like the statues of Daedalus, which were said to be so realistic and life-like that they were attached with chains to prevent them from running away (The Dialogues of Plato 60). Parmenides and Plato posited the superiority of static, fixed knowledge, of permanency and stability, which Lawrence totally rejects:

> There must be mutation, swifter than iridescence, haste, not rest, come-and-go, not fixity, inconclusiveness, immediacy, the quality of life itself, without denouement or close. There must be the rapid momentaneous association of things which meet and pass on the for ever incalculable journey of creation:

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[171] This is in keeping with the philosophy of the epoch. *Process philosophy* (sometimes also called *event ontology*)—which may be said to have commenced with Heraclitus, but included Bergson, William James and Alfred North Whitehead—was 'based on the premise that being is dynamic and that the dynamic nature of being should be the primary focus of any comprehensive philosophical account of reality and our place within it', positing that only events in time exist, not things (Sebit n.p.).

[172] A quite different view to the Heraclitean one was presented by Parmenides, for whom the constant flux of the phenomenal world led him to posit that there must be two worlds, a 'world of seeming' (life on earth, the phenomenal world), and 'a world of being' (the real world) and dismiss the former as an illusion.

[173] Introduction to the American Edition of *New Poems*, originally written for *Look! We Have Come Through!*

> everything left in its own rapid, fluid relationship with the rest of things. (CP 183)

In modernity we tend to search for stability, fixity and definiteness, but, if the world is constantly changing, and constituted of a multiplicity of flows, then the majority of the divisions we apply to it need to be reconsidered: movement and rest, subject and object, and so on.

3.3 Lawrence's Conversion: 'a submission and allegiance given to the new which approaches us' (RDP 30)

3.3.1 Knowing and Being

Lawrence makes a distinct separation between *being* and *knowledge*. *Knowing* is making use of our knowledge of the past by 'discovering the motion life has made, to be able therefrom to produce the motion it will make' (STH 45:3).[174] *Being* means accepting the mysterious, unpredictability of every new moment. Hence, for Lawrence, man's thinking is essentially twofold since 'man is given up to his dual business, of *being*, in blindness and wonder and pure godliness, the living stuff of life itself, unrevealed; and of *knowing*, with unwearying labour and unceasing success, the manner of that which has been, which is revealed' (STH 40:35, my italics). In general, we get the impression that we first of all decide what to do before we actually do it, and only subsequently carry out what we have chosen to do, but in the first version of 'The Spirit of Place' in *Studies in Classic American Literature*, Lawrence asserts the opposite: 'the life mystery precedes us. Our simplest spontaneous movement precedes all knowing and willing. Secondly, and afterwards we are conscious, we have voluntary control. Our knowledge is always secondary, and subsequent to our being, which is an issue of the creative unknown' (SCAL 175:14). We cannot decide in advance what we want to do and to be, or at least, we should not try to do so:

> We are moved, we *are*, and then thirdly, we *know*. Afterwards, fourthly, after we know, then we can *will*. And when we *will*, then we can proceed to make or construct or fabricate—even our own characters. But we can never construct or fabricate or even change our own *being*, because we have our being in the central creative mystery, which is the pure present, and the pure

[174] But it remains the wrong way of thinking since 'we know that, in life, the new motion is not the resultant of the old, but something quite new, quite other…' (STH 45:3).

> Presence, of the soul—present beyond all knowing and willing. Knowing and willing are external, they are as it were the reflex or *afterwards* of being. (SCAL 181:13)[175]

Thus, if we do have a measure of free will, it is to choose whether to yield to our deepest impulses or to resist them, to 'choose between submitting the will, and so becoming a spark in a great tendency, or withholding the will, curling up within the will, and so remaining outside'. By letting our innate self express itself, we participate in the creative mystery itself. If we neglect it, or try to tell it what to do, we fall, once again, into meaninglessness.

This distinction which Lawrence draws between knowledge and being is analogous to the classical distinction between *synthetic* and *analytic* knowledge. *Synthetic* knowledge involves an addition of knowledge from outside: through an encounter with something previously unknown, whether it be a woman, a stranger, a book, another culture, the world of living beings—as in *Study of Thomas Hardy* when he says 'it seems as if the great aim and purpose in human life were to bring all life into the human consciousness' (STH 41:19).[176] To transform ourselves positively, we must confront the unfamiliar, the alien, as he emphasizes in the wartime essay 'Life' (1917): 'How do we become new? How is it we change and develop? Whence comes the newness, the further being, into us? What is added unto us, and how does it come to pass? There is an arrival in us from the unknown, from the primal unknown whence all creation issues' (RDP 16:32). The synthetic involves going beyond the original terms, to incorporate something learnt from experience, from outside. If we allow it to teach us something new, to modify and transform us, then this is synthetic. *Analytical* knowledge, on the other hand, is internal and backward-looking, merely recycling previously known information; it involves no personal transformation and no enlargement of the consciousness. Analytic knowledge is merely 'separating, setting apart, investigation, research' (RDP 281:16), 'reducing down that which is himself to its simpler elements, reducing the compound back to its parts' (RDP 281:36). It corresponds to the kind of knowledge Lawrence describes in a letter to Bertrand Russell on the 25th of February 1915, in which he tells Russell that in the absence

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[175] This passage recalls James's description of an encounter with a bear (commonly known as the James–Lange theory). James contests the common-sense idea that first we see the bear, then we feel fear, and then we run. James writes: 'my thesis on the contrary is that the bodily changes follow directly the PERCEPTION of the exciting fact, and that our feeling of the same changes as they occur IS the emotion' (James, Writings 1878 -1899 352) He says we are afraid of the bear because we run, rather than we run because we are afraid. In 'On Being a Man', he calls this the 'widdishins' (anti-clockwise) way of being a man (RDP 219:3).

[176] As he points out in *Studies in Classic American Literature*: 'It is a radical passion in man, however, the passion to include *everything* in himself, grasp it all' (RDP 71:39), but we must not lose our identity in the process.

of the unknown, a man can only 'take that which is already known, hold it to himself, and say "this is good – or true – and this is not good, not true". But this is only the sifting or re-stating of that which is given, it is not the making of a new movement, a new combination' (2L 295).[177] Lawrence takes the example of the most extreme idealist philosopher Bishop Berkeley, who argued that the only thing we can know for certain is what is in our consciousness. For Lawrence, this way of thinking is egoism, it is really a way of avoiding any contact with the Other, and consequently it can lead to no real advance in understanding. These distinctions are summarized in the table below:

Knowing	**Being**
Predictive mode (expecting the same patterns to repeat themselves in the future as they have done in the past)	Spontaneity, innovative mode (the same pattens are never repeated in exactly the same manner)
Mode of Self-Preservation	Mode of self-transformation
Analytic (no addition of the new from the outside, re-arrangement of the internal)	Synthetic (addition of the new from outside)
Inertia	Creation
Safety, security	Risk, danger
Status quo (money, frameworks, democracy, ideas etc.)	
Repetition of the Same	Seeking what is different, the Other, alterity
Static	Dynamic
Self-satisfaction, no desire to develop.	Desire to enlarge oneself
Egoism	Openness to others

[177] Lawrence goes on to say: 'I wrote a book about all these things – I used to call it *Le Gai Savaire*. I want now to re-write this stuff and make it as good as I can…' (1L295).

Uniformity	Self-transformation
The self is static	The self is constantly being created anew
Knowledge by classification, labelling, redefinition	Knowing through openness to the other, letting oneself be challenged and disturbed
The world is determined by fixed laws and regularities	There are nomic necessities (habits of the world), but there is nothing guaranteed about them. There is always the possibility of the unpredictable happening
Mathematical, quantitative	Qualitative
The present moment contains nothing more than the past, and what we find in its effect was already contained in its cause	

In 'On Being a Man', Lawrence sets out three basic ways of knowing (of which the first two are analytic, the third is synthetic). If, instead of seeking out the unknown and the unfamiliar (though it may well disturb us), we merely fix a label on it, or convert it into other terms that we already know, i.e. we define it, then these are analytical. Instead of living in the moment, knowledge is being used to look backwards, in order to try to control the future:

i. *Labelling*: If we merely stick a label on something or someone, there is no extension of knowledge beyond what we already know.
ii. *Building on what we already know*: This amounts to understanding something or someone in one's own terms. There is some exposure to the outside world, but with little risk to our own self, thus it is a safe option. We can easily extend our knowledge by building on what we already know: 'People go to Spain, and "know" Spain. People study entomology, and "know" insects. People meet Lenin and "know'" Lenin. Lots of people "know" me. And this is how we live. We proceed from what we know already

to what we know next' (RDP 214:26). But we are still staying basically the same. We are not letting ourselves be modified in any way. [178]

iii. *Disturbance*: encountering the other in its radical alterity. This form of knowing (of a radically different nature) is really encountering the new, the unknown; thus, it constitutes a disruption, but a disruption that allows a real contact with the outside in such a way as to radically transform us.

The distinctions resemble those of Francis Bacon's ant, spider and bee analogy. In *Novum Organon*, Bacon also describes three ways of knowing. There are the *dogmatic reasoners* who resemble spiders spinning webs out of their own substance, relying entirely on the mind; the *men of experiment* who like ants only collect and use, laying what they gather undigested and unaltered in the mind, and the *true philosophers* who, like bees, gather materials but transform and digest it. (Bacon 79).[179] Consequently, the third type is very different to the others in that it involves an 'extension of the consciousness' (STH 41:21) through the encounter with the new. Though it involves a risk—the things one discovers rather than the things one tells oneself are 'usually rather bitter to begin with' (RDP 198:4)—, it is the kind of experience which by disrupting everyday existence has the potential to be a transformative experience. Lawrence illustrates these three types of knowledge with a description of an encounter with a black man in a train.[180] In accordance with the three types of knowledge, we could either label him as a black man (a 'nigger' to use Lawrence's terms, who is using the terms of this epoch) and thus have done with him (*first type*). Or one could try to see him in our own terms, 'try to track him down in terms of my own knowledge […] as I understand any other kind of individual' (RDP 215:12) *(second type*). Or, thirdly, 'I can admit that my blood is disturbed',[181] to which one can either resist, or 'allow the disturbance to continue, because after all, there is some peculiar alien sympathy between us' (RDP 215:18) (*third type*). Similarly, for a European meeting a Native American Indian, it is possible, firstly, just to label, to accept the stereotype without seeking to know any further, or, secondly, one might try to define them in one's own

[178] For example, if we look up a word in a dictionary, it might just refer us to another term, and if we then look up this second term, it refers us back to the first one. This is circular, and does not add anything new.

[179] Lawrence may have known about Francis Bacon's distinctions. According to Jessie Chambers Lawrence had, at the least, read Bacon's essays (Chamber 101), and he also mentions Bacon in *Studies in Classic American Literature*, where he compares him to Hawthorne's Chillingworth, calling him 'a magician on the verge of modern science, like Francis Bacon' (SCAL 94:22).

[180] The important idea is that it is a foreigner, someone with whom one is radically unfamiliar, Lawrence says it could be an Arab, a negro or even a Jew. Ironically, for a modern reader, Lawrence's example is in itself disturbing since it is now so alien to our way of thinking.

[181] The fact that Lawrence claims that this third type of knowledge is felt in the blood is not without importance, something which will be returned to later.

terms, or thirdly, really try to encounter them in their radical alterity, by accepting the disturbance that this creates. It is the sort of experience Lawrence describes in the essay 'Indians and an Englishman' (1922): 'I shall never forget that first evening when I first came into contact with Red Men, away in the Apache country. It was not what I had thought it would be. It was something of a shock. Again something in my soul broke down, letting in a bitterer dark, a pungent awakening to the lost past, old darkness, new terror, new root-griefs, old root-richnesses' (MM 116:29). These ways of knowing do not, however, merely apply to people, they can also apply to animals, plants, works of art, and even past civilisations.

Allowing ourselves to encounter what is really new and different means experiencing a state of wonder when confronted with the miracle of life, rather than yielding to the wearisome repetition of the same. At any given moment, we can choose either to embrace the new, or to remain safe in our known selves, since the new is always present to us, unless we reject or deny it: 'the unknown has ingress into me because, whilst I live, I am never sealed and set apart' (RDP 17:7). Hence, in the essay 'Life', Lawrence compares it to waiting for a visit from the spirit of creation:

> Out of the unknown darkness of the forest, in the eternal night of the beginning, comes the spirit of creation towards me […] Above all, I must have no fear. I must watch and wait. Like a blind man looking for the sun, I must lift my face to the unknown darkness of space and wait until the sun lights on me. It is a question of creative courage. […] Once the new has entered into my spirit, from the beginning, I am glad. No one and nothing can make me sorry any more. For I am potential with a new fulfilment, I am enriched with a new incipient perfection. Now no longer do I hover in the doorway listlessly, seeking for something to make up my life. The quota is made up in me, I can begin. (RDP 18:9)

The religious tone of the passage is clear, and clearly associated with the notion that meaning is to be found in the encounter with the unknown—not to mention the notion of courage (which we will be returning to shortly). Lawrence felt he had himself experienced the limitations of mere knowledge, finding it insufficient as a basis for fulfilled life. Thus, there is an obviously autobiographical note to *Study of Thomas Hardy* when he discusses the limitations of knowledge, particularly in the allusion to the second birth:

> And yet we believe that only the Uttered Word can come into us and give us the impetus to our second birth. Give us a religion, give us something to believe in, cries the unsatisfied soul embedded in the womb of our times. Speak the quickening word, it cries, that will deliver us into our own being. (STH 44:22)[182]

Knowledge (the uttered word), which he equates a few lines later with the consumer society, is not the answer to the crisis of existence, but, complains Lawrence, 'the fools do not know this. They think the fruit of knowledge is found only in shops. They will go anywhere to find it, save to the Tree' (STH 44:29).[183]

3.3.2 Wonder and Techne

As mentioned in the introduction, the similarity between Heidegger and Lawrence was first pointed out by the Modernist critic Michael Bell. Discussing the snowdrop scene from *The White Peacock* which was alluded to earlier, Bell suggests that the sense of significance arises not simply from the emotional projection of the characters, but also from 'the sense that there may be something more than mere projection at stake', a consequence of 'Lawrence's sense of sheer being in the world, his response to its otherness and to Being in the sense Heidegger later identified and defined' (Bell, D. H. Lawrence: Language and Being 21). In their recent book *All Things Shining*, the Heideggerian philosophers Hubert Dreyfus and Sean Dorrance Kelly, articulate a basic distinction set up by Heidegger between *technē* on the one hand, and wonder on the other, maintaining that: 'the intense and meaningful world of Homer's Greeks evidently shone with sacred force. Our technological world, by contrast, seems impoverished and dull' (Dreyfus and Kelly 222). Recognizing that we cannot return to Homer's world, they do assert, however, that we can find meaning by 'developing the skills for responding to the manifold senses of the sacred that still linger unappreciated at the margins of our disenchanted world.' (Dreyfus and Kelly 222). Heidegger worked through very similar problems to those which Lawrence was dealing with, and his later philosophy in particular has much in common with Lawrence's vision.

The early Greek philosophers, particularly the pre-Socratics like Thales, Anaximander, Heraclitus, Anaxagoras and Empedocles were concerned with the problem of how things came

[182] 'So when I am young, at eighteen, twenty, twenty-three, when the anguish of desire comes upon me […] I send forth all my calls and call hither and thither…' (STH 41:14).
[183] As we will see, the tree is one of Lawrence's metaphors which stands for the central mystery of life.

to be and how it was that change could even occur in the phenomenal world. In other words they were fascinated by the process which they called *phusis*. The ancient Greek word *phusis*, which has misleadingly evolved into our word for physics, was a process, not a state; and is also badly translated by the word nature, since for the Greeks it was a dynamic concept, as the classical scholar F.M. Cornford made clear in *From Religion to Philosophy* (1912):

> Statically conceived, Nature means the system of all phenomena in time and space, the total of all existing things; and the 'nature' of a thing is its constitution, structure, essence. But it has never lost its other, dynamic side—the connotation of force, of primordial, active, upspringing energy—a sense which, as its derivation shows, is original. (Cornford 72)

The modern-day understanding of nature tends to be the first one, a static one, whereas for both Heidegger and Lawrence, the second one, the dynamic notion of upspringing energy is essential. In 'The Question Concerning Technology' Heidegger describes *phusis* as 'the arising of something from itself' (Heidegger, Question Concerning Technology 10),[184] explaining that what is brought forth by means of phusis is like 'the bursting open of a blossom into bloom' (Question Concerning Technology 10). *Phusis* is what makes something *present:* 'occasioning has to do with the presencing [*Anwesen*] of that which at any given time comes to appearance in bringing-forth. Bringing-forth brings hither out of concealment into unconcealment' (Question Concerning Technology 11). Lawrence's understanding of *phusis* (which as we have seen, he also sometimes calls *presence)*, as an inscrutable, mysterious, ongoing process is very similar to Heidegger's, though Lawrence doesn't employ the Greek term. Thus, in the essay 'Democracy', Lawrence argues as follows:

> You can have life two ways. Either everything is created from the mind, downwards; or else everything proceeds from the creative quick, outwards into exfoliation and blossom. Either a great Mind floats in space: God, the Anima Mundi, the Oversoul, drawing with a pair of compasses and making everything to scale, even emotions and self-conscious effusions; or else creation proceeds from the for ever inscrutable quicks of living beings, men, women, animals, plants. (RDP 76:36)

[184] For Heidegger, there are three types of bringing-forth: *phusis, poiēsis* and *technē.* Heidegger carefully distinguishes *poiēsis* which is also a a kind of bringing-forth from itself (by a poet, an artist or an artisan for example) from *physis*. Physis is a higher sense of *poiēsis* because the bringing-forth is internal, as opposed to being brought about externally by someone (Question Concerning Technology 10).

If the world has been created by some kind of separate God figure, then it would not be an ongoing creation. If, on the other hand, life just wells up itself in all living creatures, as Lawrence comes to believe, then it implies continuous novelty.

The mystery of what brings forth things is what Heidegger calls 'the Being of beings', and in *Basic Questions of Philosophy* he makes it clear that the early Greeks were interrogating the origin of thing, asking what miracle is it that causes beings to move and to live, whereas for modern man 'our basic position towards beings is not any more, and never again will be, that of the first beginning' (Basic Questions 159). Heidegger claims that the fundamental disposition of the ancient Greeks was wonder, and refraining from employing any kind of religious terminology, he asserts that 'thoughtful questioning is not the intrusive and rash curiosity of the search for explanations; it is the tolerating and sustaining of the unexplainable as such' (Basic Questions 148). For Heidegger, the truth experienced by the Greeks is far more than mere astonishment or surprise, it is a sort of transcendence, achieved when 'what is most usual of all and in all, i.e., *everything*, becomes the most unusual' (Basic Questions 144):

> As disposed in wonder, he can perceive nothing else than beings as beings. That is to say, as moved by wonder, man must gain a foothold in the acknowledgement of what has erupted, and he must see it in a productive seeing of its inscrutable disclosure, and must experience and sustain ἀλήθεια, unconcealedness, as the primordial essence of beings. For what we must above all come to know is that ἀλήθεια, unconcealedness, is for primordial Greek thinking the essence of Being itself. Unconcealedness means an emergent coming forth, a coming to presence in the open. (Basic Questions 146)

This sense of wonder at the Being of beings (what Lawrence calls the Central Mystery) is important for Heidegger since it approaches what is most essential to man: 'that which frees—the mystery—is concealed and always concealing itself' (Question Concerning Technology 25). Lawrence also describes wonder as the most primordial state,[185] as can be seen in the essay 'Hymns in a Man's Life':

[185] Lawrence was interested in the concept of wonder very early on. Jessie Chambers recalls him discussing it: "'I think *wonder* is one of the finest words in our language,' he said, 'and yet the French have no word for it. You'd have to say *merveille* or *étonnement*—not the same at all'" (Chambers 105).

> When all comes to all, the most precious element in life is wonder […] The one universal element in consciousness which is fundamental to life is the element of wonder. You cannot help feeling it in a bean as it starts to grow and pulls itself out of its jacket. You cannot help feeling it in the glisten of the nucleus of the amoeba. You recognize it, willy-nilly, in an ant busily tugging at a straw; in a rook, as it walks the frosty grass. They all have their own obstinate will. But also they all live with a sense of wonder. Plant consciousness, insect consciousness, fish consciousness, all are related by one permanent element, which we may call the religious element inherent in all life, even in a flea: the sense of wonder. That is our sixth sense. And it is the *natural* religious sense. (LEA 130:31).

But this state of wonder has been lost to modern man: 'deny it as we may, knowledge and wonder counteract each other. So that as knowledge increases, wonder decreases'. Fundamentally our civilisation is 'based on knowledge, and hostile to experience' (LEA 131). Both Heidegger and Lawrence think that our loss of wonder has led to a sort of distress, or disorientation. Both also believe that 'the question that will, one day or another, betray itself as the question of who we ourselves are' (Basic Questions 163). Furthermore, both Heidegger and Lawrence consider that the problem of *phusis*, the question of how being arises, has ceased to be a topic of any interest for us: 'for centuries, the Being of beings, which was for the Greeks the most wondrous, has passed as the most obvious of everything obvious, and is for us the most common: what everybody already knows. For us, who is supposed not to know what he means when he says the stone *is*, the sky *is* overcast?' (Basic Questions 159).

Heidegger contrasts the disposition of the early Greeks towards wonder, with the modern outlook, based on *technē,* which rather than being based on openness is based on control.[186] According to Heidegger, *Technē* and *phusis* do actually have something in common, since they both entail the bringing forth of something, the difference being that, in the former case, what is brought forth is produced externally by man (Question Concerning Technology). Hence, *Technē* is a mind-set engendered by mankind, a sort of know-how which employs human ideas. According to Heidegger, one of its earliest manifestations occurred in Plato, in whom beings became objects of representation conforming to ideas (Basic Questions 156): 'Socrates and Plato already think the essence of something as what essences, what comes to

[186] Heidegger makes it clear that in its essence, *technē* is not the same thing as technology (which is not intrinsically a bad thing).

presence, in the sense of what endures' (Question Concerning Technology 30). Consequently, *Technē* has prevented man from experiencing 'the call of a more primal truth' (Question Concerning Technology 28). What is new about *technē*, according to Heidegger, is that it morphed into a desire to control nature, centred around an anthropocentric view of the world. Nature was to be ordered, challenged, summoned to action, in short, exploited by man for his ends: 'nature reports itself in some way or other that is identifiable through calculation and that it remains orderable as a system of information' (Question Concerning Technology 23). A framework (Gestell) has been imposed, an emphasis on ordering rather than revealing, and instead of looking for the Being of beings in nature, everything must now be made available for use. Man becomes a stockpiler of objects and resources, and 'exalts himself to the position of Lord of the Earth' (Question Concerning Technology 27), and in this manner, even though nature has been ensnared, so has man too, forced into a framework (enframed) where in the modern era: 'man everywhere and always encounters only himself' (Question Concerning Technology 27). The pattern imposed upon man, the framework into which he has been forced threatens to sweep man 'into the danger of the surrender of his free essence' (Question Concerning Technology 32).[187] It is, therefore, also a question, as it is for Lawrence too, of fundamental freedom.[188] It is easy to see how such a mind-set corresponds to the predictive outlook already described in Lawrence, who preaches the 'courage to yield up our way, rather than work things out mathematically and mechanically' (RDP 29:24).

3.3.3 Lawrence's conversion and courage: 'the highest quality in man is pure courage' (STH 243)

In the previous chapters we discussed Lawrence's conversion, and in the essay 'The Reality of Peace' (1917), Lawrence gives a statement which I believe can be taken as a résumé of his own 'conversion':

> We dare to gloat on the crucifixion, but we dare not face the mortal fact of the conversion from the accepted world, to the new world which was not yet conceived, that took place in the soul of St Paul on the road to Damascus.
>
> It is a passage through a crisis greater than death or martyrdom. It is the passage from the old way of death to the new way of creation. It is a transition

[187] The way in which Lawrence considers modernity to have tried to control the environment will be returned to in greater detail in the second section of this work.
[188] I look at Lawrence's understanding of freedom in chapter 8.

> out of assurance into peace. It is a change of state from comprehension to faith. It is a submission and allegiance given to the new which approaches us, in place of defiance and self-insistence, insistence on the known, that which lies static and external.
>
> Sappho leaped off into the sea of death. But this is easy. Who dares leap off from the old world into the inception of the new? (RDP 30:29)

Some years later, in the draft version of 'Morality and the Novel' (1925), Lawrence further elaborates on this statement when he writes: 'the highest quality in man is pure courage, the courage to meet life, and establish the new relationship. Meeting death is not so very important, since we shall have to meet it, willy nilly. But about meeting life itself, we have a choice. And the choice depends on our courage' (STH 243:10). Rather than focusing on death (the crucifixion), he believes, we should be focusing on resurrection, we should be taking the courageous leap into the unknown.

Confronting the unknown means accepting that we cannot control everything, and that we have to take risks instead of taking the safe option. Moreover, it takes courage even to refrain from just doing what everyone else does. If we live as we should, according to Lawrence, then there is always 'the element of danger. Man is always, all the time, and forever, on the brink of the unknown' (IR 233). This is why Lawrence describes the third type of knowledge, understanding, as a thought-adventure, a term which he repeatedly uses in 'On Human Destiny', 'Books', 'On Being a Man', and elsewhere. In *Study of Thomas Hardy* he says we need 'some new courage to let go the securities, and to be, to risk ourselves in a forward venture of life' (STH 17:20). Without courage, life becomes meaningless as he explains in his 'Introduction to *Mastro-Don Gesualdo*, by Giovanni Verga':

> Ordinary people don't have much sense of heroic effort in life; and by the heroic effort we mean that instinctive fighting for more life to come into being, which is a basic impulse in more men than we like to admit; women too. Or it used to be. The discrediting of the heroic effort has almost extinguished that effort in the young, hence the appalling "flatness" of their lives. It is the parents' fault. Life without the heroic effort, and without belief in the subtle, life-long validity of the heroic impulse, is just stale, flat and unprofitable. (IR 150:12)

In his book *The Courage to Be*, Paul Tillich points out that although courage is usually considered to be merely an ethical concept, a moral quality, it can also be taken as an ontological act. Courage in this sense, the courage to be, is the 'self-affirmation of one's being', however much the realities of one's existence may conflict with one's essential self-affirmation (Tillich 5).[189] There is, therefore, a duality in the meaning of courage: there is the courage of war (an ethical quality) and the courage of self-affirmation (an ontological concept). In Lawrence, this distinction is an important one, too. It is this distinction which creates the radicality of the wartime essay 'The Reality of Peace', whose importance for Lawrence has already been discussed. It formed part of a series which probably also included 'Love', Life', and 'The Whistling of Birds',[190] and Lawrence seemed to consider that these essays had a significance which went far beyond the merely aesthetic, telling Catherine Carswell in a letter on the 7th of March 1917 that he had written several short articles called 'The Reality of Peace', and saying 'they are very beautiful, and I think, very important. Something *must* be done with them. They are a new beginning' (3L 100), and again, two days later, in another letter, 'we must think *hard* about their publication. *We must begin now to work for a new world, a creative peace*' (3L 102, his italics).

In 'The Reality of Peace' (1917) Lawrence writes as follows: 'there is a far sublimer courage than the courage of the indomitable will. It is not the courage of the man smiling contemptuously in the face of death that will save us all from death. It is the courage which yields itself to the perfectest suggestion from within' (RDP 29:27). When Lawrence posits the soul acting within us 'unfolding us according to our own nature', it corresponds to what Tillich describes vis-vis the stoics: 'stoic courage presupposes the surrender of the personal centre to the Logos of being; it is participation in the divine power of reason […] The courage to be is the courage to affirm our own rational nature, in spite of everything in us that conflicts with its union with the rational nature of being-itself' (Tillich 14). Subsequently, Lawrence goes on to develop this distinction by referring to the Red Indians (as we will see later, Lawrence's understanding of Indians was very different at this stage to his later position, and was no doubt based on his reading of early American classics):

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[189] He argues that in the early Middle Ages, courage was a valued characteristic of the nobility, of which there two types, one for the nobleman who showed *hohen Mut*, representing the kind of courage possessed by a soldier, another called *Tapferkei*t which pertained to courage as strength of mind, united with wisdom and meaning being 'capable of conquering whatever threatens the attainment of the highest good' (Tillich 8).

[190] There is some doubt about what these seven essays were called, and whether the series did include the three mentioned above or not. See Michael Herbert's introduction to the Cambridge Edition (RDP xxvii).

> … a man may smile serenely amid the most acute pains of death, like a Red Indian of America. He may perform acts of stupendous heroism. But this is the courage of death. The strength to die bravely is not enough. Where has there been on earth a finer courage of death and endurance than in the Red Indian of America? And where has there been more complete absence of the courage of life? (RDP 29:38)

Despite devoting a whole chapter to this essay, Black rather glosses over this passage, and fails to explain why Lawrence suddenly refers to American Indians in a manner that seems somewhat out of place in an essay written during the Great War. Instead, since Black's approach is to suggest that the first section 'like all of Lawrence's philosophical writing, is secretly directed by an image-chain' (Black, The Early Philosophical Works 409), he takes up Lawrence's references to gliding down 'the river of peace', and 'faith, like sleep', in order to assert that 'we are in the realm of mysticism' (Black, The Early Philosophical Works 405), and prolongs as follows (rather arbitrarily): 'so in his sleep, Lawrence is gliding down-river, as in a canoe, perhaps. Strange thing! He has become a pathfinder or Mohican or deerslayer, some solitary gliding down a North American stream' (Black, The Early Philosophical Works 405).[191] In reality, the reason why he uses the example of the American Indians seems fairly obvious—he is writing in the middle of the war, and hopes to get his writings published. It would clearly have been exceedingly difficult at that time to directly criticize the kind of courage on the frontlines that was being vaunted on a daily basis. Part of the radicality of the essay, which Black misses entirely, is that Lawrence is trying to advance an entirely different form of courage, the ontological courage to *be* rather than the moral courage of fighting in a war. That this is the correct interpretation is also confirmed by an essay, written much later, called 'On Being a Man' (1924), in which the Indians are now replaced with the real target, the heroes of the Great War. '…they never really *did* fight, as men. As heroes, as martyrs, as saviours saving Belgian babies from the bayonet, etc etc: as all this they fought and died. But as men, as the old Adam of red earth, they never fought' (RDP 219:32). Furthermore, Lawrence insists, the fact that they fought from 'their self-conscious known selves', rather than as 'thought-adventurers', only succeeded in making the world safe for 'the cowardice of modern man' (RDP 219). Lawrence's reproach is that they fought from the past, from what they already knew ('they crept like tame cats back to their warm corners, pretended that everything was the

[191] This seems to me to be a good example of the limitations of Black's method; on the next page, he then falls into the trap of the very thing he had warned against, namely, paraphrasing with the addition of a few quotations.

same as before, and howled if it wasn't' (RDP 221:23)), rather than drawing from the experience some sort of clue for a way forward, a new way of living:

> Out of the strange revulsion of the days of horror, there should have resulted a fierce revision of existing values, and a final repudiation of the non-valid. From the previously unknown passion, and the fierce repudiation of false values should have ripened the seed of a whole new way of experience, the clue to a whole new era. (RDP 221:15)

This brings us back to the idea that there must be a destruction of existing values and the creation of new ones. Both for ourselves and for society, we must destroy the stale, mechanical repetitive return to the known, and instead move forwards towards the new, the unknown. Only then will we be more in tune with the unpredictability of the central mystery, which wells up in every instant: 'man must risk himself' (RDP 213:10). Lawrence was not only seeking to redefine the notion of courage, but also the entire notion of war and peace. In other words, what was needed was not just putting an end to the war, which would to all intents and purposes, change nothing, but a total reset of the whole way of thinking, to a way of thinking which, as far as Lawrence was concerned, would ultimately have rendered the war impossible. For Lawrence, the war should have been the occasion for a great mind-set, but instead, as soon as it was over, everyone just went back to doing exactly the same thing as they did before.

In *The Courage to Be*, Paul Tillich maintains that self-affirmation for Nietzsche ('the affirmation of life and of the death which belongs to life') is actually the same thing as virtue (Tillich 28), a point also underscored by Lawrence in the first 'Benjamin Franklin' essay when he asserts that the 'modern virtue is machine-principle, meaning the endless repetition of certain sanctioned motions. The old *virtus* meant just the opposite, the very impulse itself, the creative gesture, drifting out: incalculable from human hands' (SCAL 185:38). But all this takes courage: 'All we can do is to know in singleness of heart which is our road, then take it unflinching':

> …instead of producing our flower, instead of continuing our activity, satisfying our true desire, climbing and clambering till, like the poppy, we lean on the sill of all the unknown, and run our flag out there in the colour and shine of being, having surpassed that which has been before, we hang back, we dare not even peep forth, but, safely shut up in bud, safely and

> darkly and snugly enclosed, like the regulation cabbage, we remain secure till our hearts go rotten, saying all the while how safe we are. (STH 15:32).

Nietzsche in *Will to Power* distinguishes between two paths, two futures for mankind, which are broadly the same as Lawrence's. It is the choice between '(1) the consistent growth of mediocrity, (2) conscious distinction, self-shaping' (WP 500); or, elsewhere he writes: 'I distinguish between a type of ascending life and another type of decay, disintegration, weakness' (WP 457). Like Nietzsche, Lawrence sees the affirmation of the self as a continually surpassing of oneself. In *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, life itself says 'I am that *which must ever overcome itself again and again*' (TSZ 138). Nietzsche's will to power is a will to the greatest possible affirmation, to more life (Tillich 28-29). The affirmation of the self is not selfishness; it is the encounter with the Other which allows the self to be transformed, to add on to itself, to surpass itself. For Lawrence, self-affirmation is exactly the opposite of selfishness. Describing Spinoza, Tillich describes the way in which self-love and love of others are interdependent: 'perfect self-affirmation is not an isolated act which originates in the individual being but is participation in the universal or divine act of self-affirmation, which is the originating power in every individual act' (The Courage to Be 23).

3.3.4 The War: Phoenix or Porcupine

Sometime during, or after the War, Lawrence came to the realisation that society was not going to collapse of its own accord, as he had thought, and realised that it would be necessary for someone to actually kill it off. For someone of his independent mind-set, with the added complication of being married to a German wife, the war was an event Lawrence was inevitably opposed to. And yet, at first Lawrence seemed unable to decide whether the war was unequivocally a bad thing or not. On the one hand, he felt that, regardless of what people thought they were fighting for, perhaps the war was only the inevitable consequence of the rottenness of civilisation, and a necessary evil before a new world would rise from the ashes like a phoenix. In this respect, it could be performing a necessary role. The ambivalence was evident in the early phase of the war, in the 1915 version of 'The Crown', for example:

> Almost all war, except rebellion, is based upon the great principle of reduction, corruption, disintegration; and at the same time, is based upon the universal will to preserve the achieved form, the great achieved form, consciousness, conception of the self, which dominates humanity, and which is bounded and defined by the envelope of nullity (RDP 473)

Thus, Lawrence could write in 1915 that 'it is no war for the freedom of man from militarism or the Prussian yoke; it is a war for freedom of the bonds of our own cowardice and sluggish greed of security and well-being; it is a fight to regain ourselves out of the grip of our own caution' (STH 16:26). In other words, putting an end to the existing dead forms of life was more important to Lawrence than putting an end to the fighting.[192] And yet, he soon started to realize (as mentioned earlier) that no changes would actually result from all the fighting, that no-one would learn from the debacle and that as soon as the hostilities came to an end, everything would just continue as it had before.

The Germans were fighting for aristocracy, the British for democracy (RDP 296:24), and, as far as Lawrence was concerned, both were dead-forms. He quickly came to believe that both the war parties were fighting for something that was not worth fighting for, they were fighting, *de facto*, for a continuation of their respective status quo. And it seems clear that one of the catalysts for this growing realization was Lawrence's argument with Bertrand Russell. Russell and Lawrence first met in 1915. Both were opposed to the war, and at first, they got on well, and agreed to put on a course of public lectures together. In early July Russell sent Lawrence a synopsis of his lecture, entitled 'Philosophy of Social Reconstruction'. Lawrence was obviously disappointed and made no bones about saying so to Russell, telling him that his lectures were mere social criticism, not the radical proposals of social reconstruction he claimed they were. In effect, Lawrence told Russell to go back to the drawing board, and come up with something better: 'you must dare very much more than you have done here—you must dare be positive, not only critical' (D. H. Lawrence, Letters to Russell 78). An examination of the manuscript shows the extent of Lawrence's disagreement with Russell.[193] Lawrence scribbled comment after comment, mostly negative, in the margins ('Do, get these essays ready, for the love of God. But make them more profound, more philosophical'; 'Don't dwell on children so much'; 'No no no, don't talk about interest in others. What you mean is…'; 'why do you use moral when you only mean 'well-behaved''; 'This is not good'; 'I think this is best', and so forth). At one point, he even scrawls 'no! no! no! no! no!' over the middle of a page (Letters to Russell 89), and in the accompanying letter he heavily underlined the word 'must' 15 times in 'you *must* work out the idea of a new state' (2L 366). The exchange is analysed by

[192] Lawrence assumed, possibly correctly, that there would have been no war if the existing bases of life had been healthier.

[193] A page of the manuscript, and a transcription of all the comments and marks Lawrence jotted onto Russell's manuscript can be found in Harry T. Moore's *D.H. Lawrence's Letters to Bertrand Russell* (Letters to Russell 75-96).

Mark Kinkead-Weekes in his biography *Triumph to Exile 1912-1922*, who postulates that what really riled Lawrence was the fact that Russell describes the European civilisation as 'the most wonderful upward movement to history' and wished the war to end as quickly as possible so that the march of progress might continue. Kinkead-Weekes writes:

> To Lawrence, who believed that the war had come about because of a rottenness within supposedly civilised people and who was looking for a radical revolt against the past and a new kind of world, such complacency, and such lofty dismissal of all he had so passionately argued, was the final evidence that Russell would neither look inside himself as Lawrence had done, nor work for a new world with him… (Kinkead-Weekes, D. H. Lawrence: Triumph to Exile 1912-1922 262)[194]

Russell, who resented Lawrence's criticisms, reacted badly and they fell out, with Lawrence sending a violent letter to Russell, in which he accused him of being a liar, full of repressed desires, and secretly craving war: 'you are like a soldier who might jab man after man with his bayonet, saying 'this is for ultimate peace' […] you are too full of devilish repressions to be anything but lustful and cruel. I would rather have the German soldiers with rapine and cruelty, than you with your words of goodness. It is the falsity I can't bear' (2L 392).[195] Rather remarkably, they still continued to write to each other for a while longer, but as Russell's later attacks on Lawrence showed, the rift was never really healed. Furthermore, as Black and Herbert have both pointed out,[196] Russell is clearly Lawrence's target in certain lines of the earlier version of 'The Crown': 'these are our advanced minds, crying for peace and universal brotherhood. For peace and universal brotherhood are indeed completely amorphous nullity within the envelope, within the fixed, established form' (RDP 474). Russell is a target in 'The Reality of Peace' (1917) too, and we can safely infer that Lawrence included him in the category of the 'living dead': 'for many who are born and live year after year, there is no such thing as coming to blossom. Many are saprophyte, living on the dead body of the past. Many are parasite, living on the old and enfeebled body politic…' (RDP 40:36).[197] By contrast, Lawrence must have been talking of himself when he talks in the first version of 'The Crown'

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[194] What I have been arguing in this chapter is not that Lawrence would have wished Russell to look inside himself, but, on the contrary, that he would have wanted him to look outside himself.
[195] Russell proved he was not a pacifist by principle when he supported the war against Germany in the 1930s.
[196] '…for which he evidently had Bertrand Russell in mind' (RDP xxxviii), (Black, The Early Philosophical Works 371).
[197] A saprophyte is a vegetal organism, fungus or bacteria, capable of feeding itself on rotting organic matter.

of some small minority, 'some few, who would burst the envelope, destroy the accomplished form, escape into the freedom of the great uncreated universe which surrounds this sack of nullity, this withered, null womb, wherein we are enclosed' (RDP 474). Bursting the envelope of egoism, there would be no looking back to the past. As he writes in 'The Crown':

> If we have our fill of destruction, then we shall turn again to creation. We shall need to live again, and live hard, for once our great civilized form is broken, and we are at last born into the open sky, we shall have a whole new universe to grow up into, and to find relations with. (RDP 294:28)

The old forms have to be destroyed, for new connections to be made.

In 1925, a collection of Lawrence's essays was published under the name of one of its essays, *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine,* a title chosen by Lawrence himself.[198] In this essay, Lawrence recounts a rather shocking episode in which he claims to kill (the first time he has ever killed a living being) a porcupine. It is, as David Ellis remarks in his biography *The Dying Game*, a 'disturbing episode, graphically evoked with Lawrence's power of telling detail' (Ellis, Dying Game 1922-1930 254):

> He was dead. And in the moonlight, I looked down on the first creature I had ever shot. "Does it seem mean?" I asked aloud, doubtful. Again Madame hesitated. Then: "No!" she said resentfully. And I felt she was right. Things like the porcupine, one must be able to shoot them, if they get in one's way. One must be able to shoot. I, myself, must be able to shoot, and to kill. For me, this is a *volte-face*. I have always preferred to walk round my porcupine, rather than kill it. (RDP 353:31)

But there is some debate as to whether Lawrence did actually kill the porcupine. Michael Herbert in the introduction to the Cambridge Edition of *Reflections on the Death of the Porcupine* claims that the facts do seem to suggest that he really did shoot it (RDP xl). But Mabel Dodge Luhan later claimed that it was her husband who shot the porcupine, which might well suggest, as I believe it is, that the act of killing the porcupine is purely a symbolical one, contrived by Lawrence as a way of communicating a change in his mentality. In any event, the whole scene certainly seems to be invested with some kind of particular significance. Few, if

[198] See the letter to David Jester on the 12th of August 1925: 'I will call it, if you don't mind, after one of the longest essays, *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine and Other Essays*' (5L 284).

any, critics seem to have asked why Lawrence wanted this essay to feature as the title essay, rather than the more famous 'The Crown', for example.[199] And yet in the very last essay of the collection 'Aristocracy', on the very last page, Lawrence reveals the significance of the porcupine, and we learn that for him, it stands for all the negative aspects that have been so far alluded to in this chapter, and that we are about to turn to in greater detail: the modern form of idea-driven democracy, the stale, predictive mode of backward-looking knowledge, the mode of money and self-preservation, the desire for the preservation of the status quo, the fear of change; in short, everything that people like Bertrand Russell had come to signify for Lawrence:

> The cactus had a rose to fight for. But what has democracy to fight for, against the living elements, except money, money, money! The world is stuck solid inside an achieved form, and bristling with a myriad spines, to protect its hulking body as it feeds: gnawing the bark of the young tree of Life, and killing it from the top downwards. Leaving its spines to fester and fester in the nose of the gay dog. (RDP 376:20)

Lawrence had lost faith in the ability of society to reform itself from within, whether through self-destruction or by any other way. The only way forward was to destroy it: 'things like the porcupine, one must be able to shoot them, if they get in one's way'—the porcupine had won out over the phoenix. In the next three chapters, I look at Lawrence's attempt to bring down modernity.

[199] The publishers had wanted to make 'The Crown' the leading essay in the book (5L 284).

Part 2: Human, all too Human: ‘Man has turned the world into a thing of horror. What we have to do is to face the fact’ (IR)

Chapter 4: The Anthropomorphic Vision: 'Living as we do entirely in the light of the mental consciousness, we think everything is as we see it and as we think it. Which is a vast illusion' (RDP 135:25)

The penultimate chapter saw Lawrence complaining that, 'of the thing we call human, I've had enough'! This second section of the study looks at Lawrence's relation to the world of modern man in greater detail. In Lawrence's review of the book 'Gifts of Fortune', which we will be looking at in chapter 5, he writes: 'man has turned the world into a thing of horror. What we have to do is to face the fact' (IR 289:21). In his non-fiction, Lawrence did, indeed, try to face the fact that man has turned the world into a thing of horror, as will be made clear. As we saw in the first part, Schopenhauer had warned that with knowledge 'arises the possibility of illusion and deception, whereby the previous infallibility of the will acting without knowledge is abolished' (TWWR 151). As Schneider points out in an article 'Alternatives to Logocentrism in D. H. Lawrence', Schopenhauer had 'established to Lawrence's satisfaction that the world as Idea is an illusion, a human fiction that does not correspond to the *Ding an sich*' (Schneider, Alternatives to Logocentrism in D. H. Lawrence 36). Lawrence's subsequent acquaintance with Nietzsche and James, as well as his own experiences, only consolidated this belief; and he concluded that the seductive power of our mental capacity had led us to a state of *ennui*—man had lost contact with living reality. Rather than concentrating on particular things, concrete realities, humans and other living beings, plants, objects, planets and so on, things that actually exist in the physical world, mankind had got lost in abstract representations of ideas, laws, numbers, logical propositions and so on: all things that only exist in the imagination. Lawrence considers this over-emphasis on mental concepts to be not only a major error—indeed Lawrence accuses modern man of worshipping his own mind as he would worship a god (A200:1)—but also the major cause of the feeling of meaninglessness experienced by modern man, describing it as not only a painful state of imprisonment but also an existential state 'of being nothing and being nowhere, and at the same time, being conscious and capable of extreme discomfort and *ennui*' (A 200:5). Ultimately, as he writes in 'A Propos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*', the world of abstractions is an existentially empty world of nothingness: 'such abstraction is neither bliss nor liberation, but nullity' (LCL 330:40).

For Lawrence, this was also an issue of human freedom,[200] and his writings are full of images of entrapment, like that of a donkey turning around a gin,[201] or the frequent recourse to the metaphor of the nail, or the pin, or the peg which holds something down.[202] Lawrence declares that philosophy, religion and science—in other words all the main domains of human theoretical knowledge—are all busy 'nailing things down', religion with its 'nailed-down one God' and *Thou Shalts*, philosophy with its fixed ideas, and science with its laws—'they all of them, all the time, want to nail us on to some tree or other' (STH 172:24). And this also extends to cultural and political aspects, such as in *Studies in Classic American Literature*, where he claims that Americans have ended up trapped by the abstract ideas of freedom and equality (a theme which will be dealt with in greater detail later on): 'the people are all pinned down by some social pin, and buzzing away in social importance or friction, round and round on the pin. Never real human beings. Always things pinned down, choosing to be pinned down' (SCAL 49:32).

In this second part, therefore, we will first of all be looking at the illusion and deception mankind has visited upon itself, since as Lawrence writes in 'Education of the People' (1920), 'living as we do entirely in the light of the mental consciousness, we think everything is as we see it and as we think it. Which is a vast illusion' (RDP 135:25). The illusions are predominantly the way in which we perceive the world, and the formation of abstractions, universals and mental concepts. The following chapter of this section will discuss the possibility of other conceptions, of other worlds and world views. It will look first of all at the way in which Lawrence's desire for alternatives was bound up with his incessant travelling, and subsequently at the pluralistic multiplicity of the multiverse, and Lawrence's relativistic views, before finally sketching out the broad outline of the great historical split which Lawrence felt must have taken place in ancient times. The final chapter will look at Lawrence's dissection of modernity. As we have seen, Lawrence had already rejected modernity in his letter of 1908 to Reverend Reid (discussed in chapter 1), when he said he could find no 'human harmony' in the terrible slums of Sneiton, and talked of Belgravia (usually associated with greed, dishonesty and hypocrisy) and Whitechapel (associated with slums, poverty and prostitution)—so that at the end of 1919 he could write in *Psychology and the Unconscious*: 'the whole of life is one long, blind effort

[200] Lawrence's understanding of freedom will be examined in greater detail in chapter 8.
[201] See for example, *Sea and Sardinia*, when setting off on a 'humanless sea' (SS 49:24): 'not to be any more like a donkey with a log on its leg, fastened to weary earth that has no answer now' (SS 49:36).
[202] The metaphor may have been suggested by the way James describes an entomologist studying an insect on a pin in the chapter 'Conception' (Writings 1878 -1899 230).

at an established polarity with the outer universe, human and non-human; and the whole of modern life is a shrieking failure. It is our own fault' (PFU 41:11). Modernity for Lawrence refers, as we will see, to what he calls the *philosophico-scientific consciousness*, which he dates as far back as Galileo, and even to late classical Greek and Roman culture and thought. He considers that our way of conceiving of the universe—'the tight little cage of our universe'—is profoundly unhealthy, and prevents us from living meaningful lives: 'it is only a continuous extension, a dreary on and on, *without any meaning*' (A 76:29, my italics).

4.1 Perception: Does our Vision really Work like a Kodak Camera?

4.1.1 'The mode of vision is manifold' (PFU 122:3)

Lawrence felt that the modern mental consciousness had profoundly skewed our vision of the world. In 1925, Lawrence, on medical advice, returned to the Kiowa ranch in New Mexico where he was greeted by a depressing pile of mail, which included a review by Edwin Muir in *The Nation,* published on the 11th of February 1925. The review seemed to particularly irritate Lawrence, who writes in the essay 'Accumulated Mail' (1925): 'never did I feel so baffled, confronting myself in my worst moments, as when I read this "elucidation" of myself' (RDP 241:7). In it, Muir criticised Lawrence's fictional characters for not being 'realistic' enough saying: 'we should not know any of them if we met them in the street, as we should know Anna Karenina, or Crevel, or Soames Forsyte' (the latter reproach must have been particularly galling for Lawrence and may well explain why Lawrence wrote an essay on Galsworthy's characters in 1927). Lawrence's reply (probably before spitting on it, or wiping his nose with it, and putting it into the fire as Ellis suggests in *The Dying Game* (Ellis, Dying Game 1922-1930 249)) was furious: 'Does nothing exist beyond that which is recognizable in the street? — How does my cat recognize me in the dark? — Ugh, thank God there are more and other sorts of vision than the kodak sort which Mr. Muir esteems above all others' (RDP 243:9). A short while later, Lawrence started work on another essay 'Art and Morality' which delved deeply into the idea of perception. Undoubtedly Lawrence was annoyed that self-satisfied people like Muir were so sure that their vision of the world was the right one. As we have seen, Lawrence had long since concluded that the reality of the world was quite different to the modern conception of it, a conception which he had summed up as follows in his 'Review of "A Second Verse Anthology, edited by C. W. Stork"' (1923): 'the world is what it is, and the chimerical universe of the ancients was always child's play. The camera cannot lie. And the eye of man is nothing but a camera photographing the outer world in colour-process. This

sounds very well' (IR 233:37). The irony here is, of course, quite palpable since Lawrence neither shares this modern attitude of condescension towards the ancients, nor does he think that vision functions like a camera. Indeed, Lawrence doubts whether the object supposedly reflected in the retina really is photographic at all. A child, he argues, sees not a photographic image of someone but a sort of hieroglyph: 'two eyes, a nose, a mouth of teeth, two straight legs, two straight arms' (STH 164:12). In other words, our modern form of perception is learnt, not innate. Furthermore, perception is always interpretative, relative from person to person, and from living creature to living creature, so that, for instance, 'the eye of the spider photographs images unrecognizable to us and the eye of the horse photographs flat ghosts and looming motions' (IR 234:3). Perception is also rooted in culture and historical traditions, so that, as he says in *Apocalypse*, we no longer see the sun 'as the old civilisations did' (A 76:14). Consequently, modernity equates to just one certain type of vision, the philosophico-scientific one: 'we are at the phase of scientific vision. This phase will pass and this vision will seem as chimerical to our descendants as the medieval vision seems to us' (IR 234: 2). As a result, he considers it sheer arrogance to consider that the modern way is the only possible way of seeing, and he expends considerable effort in showing that is the case, starting with the idea that we see the world as a camera does. As we will see, Lawrence's understanding of perception is extremely sophisticated, and needs to be broken down into its various aspects.

Perception as interpretation (apperception): Although perception had long been considered as the passive registering of a picture on the mind, like an imprint upon a wax tablet, philosophers and psychologists came to make distinctions between perceptions, apperceptions[203] and conceptions. In his psychology books James makes it clear that perception is always already a kind of interpretation, based in grand part on our prior 'character, habits, memory, education, previous experience, and momentary mood' (EW 308). With the phenomenal world constituting 'an indistinguishable, swarming continuum', the first role of the senses is to translate this chaotic, interrelated flux into terms that we can register: 'our senses make for us, by attending to this motion and ignoring that, a world full of contrasts, of

[203] For example, in *New Essays on Human Understanding*, Leibniz distinguishes between perception and apperception, pointing out that we can perceive without apperceiving (apperception is derived from Descartes's *apercevoir* meaning to notice; it therefore means to pay attention to, to become aware of). We may not notice perceptions because they are too small, too numerous or insufficiently distinctive from each other. When we face the ocean, we believe we hear only one sound, the roaring of the sea, the crashing of the waves onto the rocks, but instead, what we actually hear is hundred upon thousands of tiny waves, each making its own noise, yet each one too small to be individually perceived; the plurality of the sensations has to be synthesized for us to register them. Leibniz points out that habits affect our perception since those who live next to a mill, or a waterfall, for instance, will stop noticing the movement or the sound though, clearly, they continue to be bombarded by all the same sensations. Habitual, cultural or traditional factors can also affect the way in which we apperceive objects.

sharp accents, of abrupt changes, of picturesque light and shade' (EW 169). Secondly, out of all these sensations, the mind 'picks out certain ones as worthy of its notice and suppresses all the rest' (EW 169). Ignoring certain things is, therefore, an important part of perception. The multiplicity of sensations that assails us means that, unlike a camera,[204] we pay attention only to the most salient features:[205]

> The sum total of our impressions never enter into our experience, consciously so-called, which runs through this sum total like a tiny rill through a broad flowery mead. Yet the physical impressions which do not count are there as much as those which do… (James, EW 210)

Hence, James does not really believe that there can be such a thing as perception without apperception, the only possible exception being, perhaps, a newly born baby: 'No one ever had a simple sensation by itself. Consciousness, from our natal day, is of a teeming multiplicity of objects and relations, and what we call simple sensations are results of discriminative attention, pushed often to a very high degree' (James, 1PP 224).[206] Lawrence is clearly aware of these distinctions since he sometimes refers to them in his writings, such as in 'Education of the People' in which he affirms that 'neither perception nor apperception, nor conception, nor any form of cognition, such as is recognized by our psychology, is to be ascribed to the infant mind. And yet there is consciousness, and even cognition: here, as in the mindless animals' (RDP 119:12). In other words, we can, to some extent, choose how we perceive (PFU 102-3).

Ways of seeing: 'The mode of vision is not one and final. The mode of vision is manifold' (PFU 122:3), remarks Lawrence in *Fantasia of the Unconscious* (1921). Unlike snakes we don't perceive infra-red. Unlike honeybees we cannot perceive ultra-violet. Unlike dogs we are unable to hear certain high-pitched sounds. There are plenty of things which must be *objectively* there but that we can never perceive. In the words of Fritjof Capra in *The Web of Life*, 'There is a material world, but it does not have any predetermined features […] There are no objectively existing structures; there is no pre-given territory of which we can make a

[204] Though James does not say this himself, it logically follows from what he says.
[205] Our habits of attention determine the way we select what is important to us, such that an entomologist will notice moths, beetles and insects in ways that ordinary people do not and four people back from the same European tour will all have had, depending on their interests, four very different experiences (Writings 1878 -1899 171)
[206] This would be 'pure experience': James thinks all perception is really apperception (i.e. interpretation), but he doesn't like the word: 'the process we have been describing as perception is, at this rate, an apperceptive process. So are all recognition, classing, and naming; and passing beyond these simple suggestions, all farther thoughts about our percepts are apperceptive processes as well. I myself have not used the word apperception, because it has carried very different meanings in the history of philosophy' (Writings 1878 -1899 307)

map—the map making itself brings forth the features of the territory' (Capra 271). Indeed, as Thomas Nagel famously emphasized in '*What's it like to be a bat'*, not only is it impossible to imagine the world perceived by a creature which navigates in darkness using high frequency sound waves, but we cannot even know what it is like to be another human being (Nagel). In his non-fiction (and in his other works) Lawrence seems fascinated by the way in which imagining the world in other terms—as a child, a cow, a tiger, a dog, a tortoise and so on might see it—could provide a clue, or an insight, into the ultimately unknowable reality of the world. In 'Chaos and Poetry' he asserts that: 'to the animals, all is chaos, only there are a few recurring motions and aspects within the surge', whereas man must fix 'some wonderful erection of his own [mental conceptions] between himself and the wild chaos' (IR 109:31). If we are to perceive the real nature of the world more clearly, then we must see more like the animals, or children, or primitive man, since our world vision has been totally deformed. When he employs the word '*naiveté*' positively in 'Chaos in Poetry',[207] he is alluding to the possibility of cognition without the intrusion of mental concepts. Hence, in his annotations to the transcript of Ouspensky's book *Tertium Organum*, he reacts angrily to what he sees as Ouspensky's anthropomorphisms by commenting that, 'the animal sees the world as a kind of *deeps* from which things emerge, start, or sink: it sees *flux* not surface. That is, it *doesn't* really *see*, and surfaces have never become defined to it […] the animal *sees* emotionally—sees only ghosts and presences—animism—but it sees in strange emotional complexes' (Tedlock 212-213).[208]

Concepts: James explains that conceptions involve seeing sameness where there is in fact difference. We feel that the sky always gives the same kind of blue, and the grass the same kind of green, and yet, James comments, 'the grass out of the window now looks to me the same green in the sun as in the shade, and yet a painter would have to paint one part of it dark brown, another part bright yellow, to give its real sensational effect. We take no heed as a rule, of the different way in which the same things look and sound and smell at different distances and under different circumstances. The sameness of the *things* is what we are concerned to ascertain' (EW 155). Similarly, the subjective impressions of seeing a brick which, depending on the light, might appear pinker or bluer than it really is, are ignored in favour of what the mind decides 'shall be held more real and valid than all the rest' (EW 170).The concept *red* in

[207] Schopenhauer describes animals as naïve, in comparison with men (as we 'see the will-to-live more naked' in animals; man on the other hand is more capable of knowledge and hence of dissimulation (TWWR 156)).
[208] The annotations were made to a book donated by Mabel Dodge Luhan to the Taos Public Library. William York Tindall had argued that Lawrence was influenced by Ouspensky's book, but the annotations suggested, in the contrary, that he disagreed with much of its content.

itself, independently of any particular object in which it inheres is a mental abstraction. But a conception of the idea of red is not necessary to perceive the redness of an object, and this is probably what Lawrence means when he implies in 'Art and Morality' that colour is learnt: 'colour also, which primitive man cannot really *see*, is now seen by us, and fitted to the spectrum' (STH 164). Lawrence even suggests in *Fantasia of the Unconscious* that children intuitively recognise the artificiality of mental concepts: 'most of a child's questions are, and should be, unanswerable. They are not questions at all. They are exclamations of wonder, they are remarks half-sceptically addressed. When a child says, "why is grass green?" he half implies. "Is it really green, or is it just taking me in?" And we solemnly begin to prate about chlorophyll. Oh, imbeciles, idiots, inexcusable owls!' (PFU 123:31). Concepts are, in other words, a way of thinking symbolically or abstractly. For the same reason, Lawrence in his annotations to Ouspensky objects to the latter's claim that we analyse sensations into concepts, or that we combine concepts like weight, mass, density and so on into the sensation of a solid: 'that's not true. That is a mental abstraction too. We *do* sense the solid, even in mere touch. We don't *analyse* the sensation into concepts of weight, etc.' (Tedlock). James in his unabridged psychology book, suggests that mental concepts 'form an essentially discontinuous system, and translate the process of our perceptual experience, which is naturally a flux, into a set of stagnant and petrified terms' (1PP 468). In other words, they become stale *idées fixes* and clichés. James was particularly negative about conceptions, and this must have contributed to Lawrence's way of thinking. In language very reminiscent of Lawrence's—particularly with regard to the static nature of concepts—James affirms in *Psychology: Briefer Course* that:

> Each act of conception results from our attention's having singled out some one part of the mass of matter-for-thought which the world presents, and from a holding fast to it, without confusion […] Each conception thus eternally remains what it is, and never can become another […] amid the flux of opinions and of physical things, the world of conceptions, all things intended to be thought about, stands stiff and immutable, like Plato's Realm of Ideas. (James, EW 229)

Likewise, concepts for Lawrence, are mental constructs, and not a reflection of the reality of things.

Pre-reflective cognition and idealisation: For Lawrence, there is a pre-reflective, primary sense of cognition which in some way precedes the apprehension by the senses, or is

at least, prior to any visual apprehension. Even newly-born children, as we have seen, must still have some form of contact with the world before they begin to 'make sense' of it through the sense organs. Lawrence says as much on the opening page of the first version of the essay 'Nathaniel Hawthorne' where he specifically states that there are two fields of consciousness: there is a primary consciousness which works sub-consciously, through the nerves and the blood and the hind brain: 'what we call "instinct" in creatures such as bees, or ants, or whales, or foxes, or larks, is the sure and perfect working of the primary mind in these creatures. All the tissue of the body is all the time aware. The blood is awake, the whole blood-system of the body is the great field of primal consciousness' (SCAL 241:13). Thus:

> When a bee leaves its hive and circles around to sense the locality, it is attending with the primary mind to the surrounding objects, establishing a primary rapport between its own very tissue and the tissue of the adjacent objects. (SCAL 241:21)

And there is a second (ideal) type which is located in the brain, and which is what we call mental consciousness (by ideal he means, of course, that it forms ideas or concepts). He repeats an almost identical point in *Fantasia of the Unconscious*: 'the primal consciousness is pre-mental, and has nothing to do with cognition. It is the same as in the animals. And this pre-mental consciousness remains as long as we live the powerful root and body of our consciousness. The mind is but the last flower, the *cul de sac*' (PFU 79). Perceptions are interpretations, and Lawrence thinks we are making the wrong ones. Thus, Lawrence argues in 'Education of the People' (1920), idealisation (the formation of mental concepts) is in fact a secondary form of conscious activity, a subsidiary one (RDP 120:37). Primary cognition involves dynamic emotional and volitional acts: 'Mental activity, final cognition, ideation, is only set up secondarily from the perfect interaction and inter-communication of the primary affective centres, which remain all the time our dynamic first-minds' (RDP 120). Before trying to get a baby to *notice*, to make it *perceive*, it should learn to be in contact with the physical universe.

The problem with mental concepts is that they take us away from the reality of the world which is that of a dynamic, chaotic perpetual movement, and substitute for it, a static human idea. This explains why, in 'Hymns of a Man's Life', he equates increased mental knowledge with a reduction in wonder:

> One has been forced to learn about orbits, eclipses, relative distances, dead worlds, craters of the moon, and so on. The crescent at evening still startles the soul with its delicate flashing. But the mind works automatically and says: "Ah, she is in her first quarter. She is all there, in spite of the fact that we see only this slim blade. The earth's shadow is over her." And, willy-nilly, the intrusion of the mental processes dims the brilliance, the magic of the first apperception. It is the same with all things. The sheer delight of a child's apperception is based on wonder; and deny it as we may, knowledge and wonder counteract one another. So that as knowledge increases wonder decreases. (LEA 131:3)

This way in which mental concepts diminish the sense of wonder, which we have already looked at in chapter 3, is a fundamental part of Lawrence's thought.

Hidden aspects and relations: the mind forms conceptions when, as James asserts, it chooses between what he calls the *true* form and *perspective* views. He believes that there is always something undisclosed and hidden in an object (broadly equivalent to what the German phenomenologist Edmund Husserl later called 'horizons'). Thus, a table is conceived of as square, even though the perspective we actually see, may not suggest squareness. James declares that if he pictures a table 'that picture is not the table. It is not even like the table as the table is for vision, when rightly seen. It is a distorted perspective view of three of the sides of what I mentally perceive (more or less) in its totality and undistorted shape…' (EW 296). This is clearly the point Lawrence is making in *Introduction to these Paintings* in 1929, when he points out that perception only sees the front of an apple, whereas 'the intuitive apperception of the apple is so *tangibly* aware of the apple that it is aware of it *all round*, not only just of the front [. . .] The true imagination is forever curving round to the other side, to the back of presented appearance' (LEA 212:24). We never in fact see the whole object—though we think we do. The use of the phrase 'curving round', may well indicate that Lawrence is thinking of the fourth dimension since, as was discussed in chapter 3, 'it is into this perfected relationship that every straight-line curves, as if to some core, passing out of the time-space dimension' (RDP 361:14). As Lawrence points out in 'Art and Morality' (1925), the true nature of an apple can only be found in the sum of all its various relationships, of which Lawrence gives some possible examples: 'to an urchin, to a thrush, to a browsing cow, to Sir Isaac Newton, to a caterpillar, to a hornet, to a mackerel who finds one bobbing on the sea' (STH 166:25). What

an apple is depends on the perspective of who is posing the question.[209] To fully represent an object, it would be necessary to account for every perspective, including that of a mackerel in the sea. And of course, this is impossible. In other words, something in the object always escapes. Lawrence says that 'the apple, like the moon, has still an unseen side' (STH 167:17). Something always escapes. Contrary to what we tend to believe, we do not see things as they actually are.

4.1.2 What is an apple? Lawrence on Cézanne and Etruscan Art

In his essay 'Art and Morality' (1925), Lawrence asks why on earth Cézanne's apples should have disturbed people so much? How could a painting of half a dozen apples, a pitcher and a tablecloth have aroused such moral indignation? The answer, Lawrence believes, is that Cézanne's paintings go against the grain of our habits of perceiving. The habit we have slowly formed is 'the habit of seeing just as the photographic camera sees' (STH 164:3). If the apples had been 'humanised', as Lawrence puts it, as in the painting 'A Plate of Apples' (1907),[210] which Lawrence might have seen in London's Tate Gallery, by more conventional painters like Fantin-Latour, then they would not shock in the same manner. Unlike Fantin-Latour, Cézanne has sinned because they do not conform to what has been sanctioned by culture and tradition. For Lawrence, Cézanne's apples are a great achievement because they reveal *more* than the kodak camera ever could. They show that an apple is not just like the kind of apple we find in Fantin-Latour's paintings, which he describes as 'nailed-down apples' (STH 168:20). Fantin-Latour's apples, to the contrary, deny that there is a hidden side to objects, they deny that there is anything 'underneath what is stated'. Real art, on the other hand, reveals things (like the apple) in all of their different relationships (the bellyache, the knock on Newton's head, the internal view of the caterpillar — the apple is all of these things).



Figure 1: A Plate of Apples, Fantin-Latour

[209] We return to this question in chapter 5.
[210] It was bequeathed in 1907.

This is what Lawrence means when, in a later essay on Cézanne, 'Introduction to these Paintings' (1929), he says that Cézanne was 'far too inwardly proud and haughty to accept the ready-made clichés that came from his mental consciousness' (LEA 209:38). Lawrence argues that Cézanne was seeking to represent reality in a way that was *truer* to life—difficult in a world where there is photography. Yet, Cézanne manages to render 'the mysterious *shiftiness*' of the material world, deliberately leaving his lemons to shrivel up 'so that he *could* see the gradual flux of change' and, also fighting 'the cliché, which says that the inanimate world *is* static, and that walls are still'. As Claudia Tobin points out, 'Lawrence's concept of 'appleyness' is intimately related to something he defines as Cézanne's "intuitive feeling that nothing is really *statically* at rest"' (Tobin). So, Lawrence feels that Cézanne's walls which 'twitch and slide', and chairs which 'bend and rear up a little', and cloths which 'curl like burning paper' feel intuitively true of the material world (LEA 213-214).[211] Cézanne, Lawrence believes, wishes to get away from the mental world of conceptions, and get closer to the reality of things and Lawrence admires him because he feels that they are fighting the same combat: 'we can see what a fight it means, the escape from the domination of the ready-made mental concept, the mental consciousness stuffed full of cliches that intervene like a complete screen between us and life' (LEA 215:9). As Jane Costin comments in her article on Lawrence and Cézanne: 'we need to value our world more and our anthropocentric perspective needs to change. And this is precisely what Lawrence is arguing for' (Costin).



Figure 2: La table de cuisine, Cézanne, Musée d'Orsay

We can also see all this at work in a revealing passage from *Sketches of Etruscan Places*, in which Lawrence describes the Etruscan horses he sees in *The Tomb of the Baron* and

[211] It is difficult to establish which particular painting Lawrence is referring to. Jane Costin suggests that he was referring to *Le Compotier*, which was discussed in Roger Fry's book on Cézanne, which Lawrence had certainly read (Costin), and both Costin and Tobin note Virgina Woolf's description of a Cézanne painting with 6 apples in it (though it in fact has 7) (Tobin). Lawrence may have seen the painting shown here, which has walls, chairs and cloths, in Paris which Lawrence visited more than once.

compares them to more contemporary depictions of horses by more modern painters like Velasquez or Rubens or the contemporary French painter Rosa Bonheur:[212]

> These archaic horses are so perfectly satisfying *as* horses: so far more horse-like than those of Rosa Bonheur or Rubens or Velasquez, though he comes nearer to these; so that one asks oneself, what, after all is the horsiness of a horse? What is it that a man sees, when he looks at a horse? What is it, that will never be put into words? For a man who sees, sees not as a camera does when it takes a snapshot, not even as a cinema-camera, taking its succession of instantaneous snaps; but in a curious rolling flood of vision, in which the image itself seethes and rolls; and only the mind *picks out* certain factors which shall *represent* the image seen. (SEP 127:26)



Figure 3:Tomb of the Baron

Lawrence, therefore, insists that vision does not take snapshots like a camera, nor even cinematically by a series of snapshots laid together. Instead, vision is an extremely dynamic, continuous process, 'a curious rolling flood of vision, in which the image itself seethes and rolls'. Here he is once again repeating the same criticisms he had made in the 'Art and Morality' essay, in which he denies the commonplace idea that we see things as they really are: 'as for us, we have our Kodak-vision, all in bits that group or jig. Like the movies, that jerk but never move. An endless shifting and rattling together of isolated images, "snaps," miles of them, all of them jigging, but each one utterly incapable of movement or change, in itself. A kaleidoscope of inert images, mechanically shaken. And this is our vaunted "consciousness," made up, really, of inert visual images and little else: like the cinematograph' (STH 168:10). Lawrence's phraseology closely echoes James' in *A Pluralistic Universe*: 'All these abstract concepts are but as flowers gathered, they are only moments dipped out from the stream of time, snap-shots taken, as by a kinetoscopic camera, at a life that in its original coming is

[212] Velasquez (1599-1660), Spanish Baroque painter, an inspiration for much late nineteenth century realist painting. Rosa Bonheur (1822-1899), well-known for her paintings of animals.

continuous' (James, Writings 1902 - 1910 735-736).[213] Thus, it is the conscious mind which intervenes in the dynamic process, and '*picks out* certain factors which shall *represent* the image seen'. The modern way in which we represent the world is by abstraction, and rather than adding something to our vision, it actually takes something away.[214]

Modern civilisation for Lawrence is possessed of a very special type of blindness. Not only do we see selectively by ignoring certain elements, but we are also severely limited by our habits and conventions: if we do not know what we are looking for, we may be, quite literally, unable to see it.[215] This is why he affirms in *Sketches of Etruscan Places* that it is so hard for modern artists (as in his illustrated book by Fritz Weger *Etruskische Malerei*) to properly grasp Etruscan art—'these Etruscan paintings, not being in our convention, are very difficult to copy' (SEP 52:7). Similarly, he argues that the female head in the Tomb of Orcus is generally considered to be a superior type of art simply because it conforms to the better-known Greek-Roman canon: 'it belongs to the classic Convention, and men can only see according to a Convention. We haven't exactly plucked our eyes out, but we've plucked out three-fourths of their vision' (SEP 131:8). As Lawrence visits the Etruscan tombs, he becomes somewhat exasperated with a young German scholar, who, though he is very nice and helpful, pointing out certain details to Lawrence, is only able to see in the modern, scientific and rational way. Faced with a picture of a horse coming to drink at a water trough in *The Tomb of the Bulls*, he can only see it in literal terms:

[213] It is difficult to know where this idea came from. It could just as easily have come from Bergson, who employs the same image. Carr writes, 'the intellect is cinematographical. The illustration which this descriptive term recalls is perhaps the happiest of any which Bergson has used. The cinematograph takes views of a moving scene; each view represents a fixed position, and when the views are arranged side by side on the film and passed across the screen in rapid succession they present to us a moving picture' (Carr 30).

[214] We will be coming to this shortly.

[215] An instructive example of this phenomenon can be found in chapter 5 of Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions.* Kuhn discusses the discovery of oxygen in the 1770s. At this time, nearly all scientists believed that there existed an invisible fluid called phlogiston which gave off heat when something was burnt. The British scientist Joseph Priestly actually succeeded in isolating oxygen but blinkered by his preconceived ideas, he was unable to recognize it for what it was. He thought he had succeeded in removing the phlogiston from the air. Meanwhile, the French scientist Lavoisier also managed to separate oxygen but concluded that it must be pure air. Lacking the concept, neither was able to perceive what they had actually seen. (Kuhn)

> This picture has a curious charm, and is evidently symbolical. I said to the German: what do you think it means? — Ach, nothing! The man on the horse has come to the drinking trough to water his horse: no more! — And the man with the sword? Oh, he is perhaps his enemy. — And the black faced lions? — Ach, nothing! Decorations of the fountain. (SEP, 121:13)

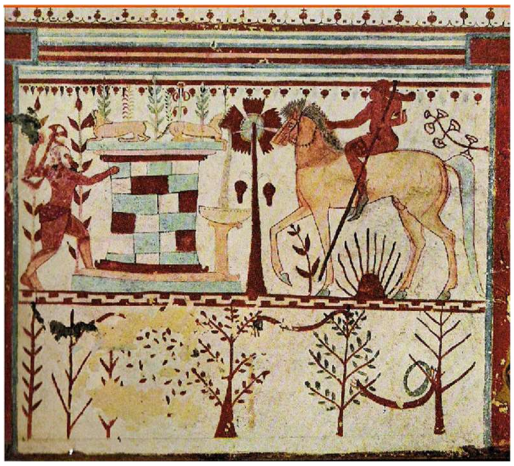

Figure 4: Tomb of the Bulls

Lawrence, of course believes it simply must signify something, but 'the young German will have none of this. He is a modern and the obvious alone can have true existence for him. A lion with a goat's head as well as its own head is unthinkable. That which is unthinkable is non-existent, is nothing, So, all the Etruscan symbols are to him non-existent and mere incapacity to think. He wastes not a thought on them' (SEP 123:9). The problem as Lawrence comprehends it is that the conventions which determine our perceptions are often too close to us for us to be able to see them. Echoing Lawrence, Maturana and Varela write in *The Tree of Knowledge* that: 'we do not see what we do not see, and what we do not see does not exist' (Maturana and Varela 242). Our conventions need to be examined and reconsidered if we are to see differently. For Maturana & Varela 'tradition is not only a way to act, but also a way to conceal. Tradition consists of all those behaviours that in the history of a social system have become obvious, regular, and acceptable. Since they do not require reflection to be generated, they are invisible unless they fail' (Maturana and Varela 242).

Lawrence is also convinced that we are far too over-reliant on the sense of sight. In his annotations to Ouspensky's book, Lawrence scribbles in the margins that 'sight is the shallowest of the senses, & our whole intellectual system is based too much on sight', reproaching Ouspensky for arguing 'from the eye' (Tedlock): 'supposing we had all of us been born blind' he speculates in 'Art and Morality', 'and had to get our image of a red cow by touching her, and smelling her, hearing her moo, and "feeling" her. Whatever should we think of her? Whatever sort of image should we have of her, in our dark minds? Something very different, surely!' (STH 164:31). As the Etruscans reveal, the reality of a horse cannot be

reduced to a description such as that solicited by Gradgrind in Dickens's *Hard Times*.[216] For what makes for the essence of a horse? What constitutes its *horsiness*?

> We have made up our minds to see things *as they are:* which is camera vision. But the camera can neither feel the heat of the horse, his strange body; nor smell his horsiness; nor hear him neigh. Whereas the eye, seeing him, wakes up all our other sensual experience of him: not to speak of our terror of his frenzy, and admiration of his strength. The eye really "sees" all this. It is the complete vision of a child, full and potent. But this potent vision in us is maimed and pruned as we grow up, till as adults we see only one dreary bit of the horse, his static, external form. (SEP 127:36)

Hence, the experience of the horse entails much more than the purely visual. Not only does the real experience of a horse involve the sensation of his heat, his foreignness, his smell, the sound of his neighing, but it is also influenced by other past associations in our mind, of fear and admiration, for example. This is why Lawrence feels that a child, unburdened by mental conceptions, sees a horse more clearly than an adult. Their vision is not yet that of the camera. As James suggests, a child's vision is learnt, not innate: 'infants must go through a long education of the eye and ear before they can perceive the realities which adults perceive. Every perception is an acquired perception' (EW 296). Thus, we see that Lawrence, probably following James, sees perception as something that gets ever further away from pure experience as it becomes increasingly mental, rigid and conceptual, a problem that has only been exacerbated in the modern philosophico-scientific era. This is symptomatic for Lawrence of a more general problem, the modern tendency to anthropomorphize the world.

4.2 Lawrence's criticisms of anthropomorphism: 'The puerility, the puppyish conceit of modern white humanity is almost funny' (RDP 371:34)

[216] The opening scene of Dicken's *Hard Times* starts with the teacher Gradgrind asking a circus-girl ('girl number 20' for him) to define a horse in terms which are both static and external. The model reply he is looking for, is: 'Quadruped. Graminivorous. Forty teeth, namely twenty-four grinders, four eye-teeth, and twelve incisive. Sheds coat in the spring; in marshy countries, sheds hoofs, too. Hoofs hard but requiring to be shod with iron. Age known by marks in mouth' (Dickens 16).

4.2.1 Nietzsche's human, all-too-human: 'We describe the universe as we find it […] Is our description true? Not for a single moment…' (A54:2)

The Gay Science and *Thus Spake Zarathustra*,[217] together with *Will to Power*, seem to have played the greatest role in consolidating Lawrence's critique of the anthropomorphism of man. Schneider in his two books on Lawrence outlines a number of similarities between Lawrence and Nietzsche: the idea of surpassing oneself, the idea of a duality of opposing forces which needs to be balanced, nihilism, a criticism of ideals and of democracy. To which can be added Nietzsche's pragmatism, his perspectivism, his analyses of cause and effect, mechanical and scientific thinking, indeterminacy, the meaninglessness of quantity, and many other ideas, all of which, as we will see, seem to have marked Lawrence's thought.[218] Nonetheless, it was, above all, Nietzsche's criticisms of modern man, building on those of Schopenhauer and James, which really pushed him to reflect on the nature of the man-made world. Nietzsche insisted that we only believe the world is orderly, calculable and predictable because we want it to be so:

> Whatever has *value* in the present world has it not in itself, according to its nature — nature is always value-less—but has rather been given, granted value, and *we* were the givers and granters! Only we have created the world *that concerns human beings*! But precisely this knowledge we lack, and when we catch it for a moment, we have forgotten it the next: we misjudge our best power and underestimate ourselves just a bit, we contemplative ones. We are *neither as proud nor as happy as we could be*. (GS 171)

Lawrence follows a very similar line of argument in his 'Introduction to *The Dragon of the Apocalypse* by Frederick Carter', mentioned in the introduction, asserting that modern man's description of the world is little more than our most convenient way of interpreting it:

> The Chaldeans described the cosmos as they found it. Magnificent. We describe the universe as we find it […] Is our description true? Not for a single moment, once you change your state of mind: or your state of soul. It is true for our present deadened state of mind. Our state of mind is becoming

[217] These two books, having been written at a similar period in Nietzsche's life, share many themes, and indeed certain passages are duplicated in both books.
[218] It is of course difficult to attribute all of these uniquely to Nietzsche, since he shared much common ground with Schopenhauer, and even James's work often pivots around similar themes.

> unbearable. We shall have to change it. And when we have changed it, we shall change our description of the universe entirely. (A 54:1)

This is to say that the world currently represented by humankind—which we take as the only real one and as a faithful representation of the real world—is just one possible variant, and by no means any truer than the others. In Nietzsche's words, 'we have produced a conception in order to be able to live in a world, in order to perceive just enough to endure it' (TWP 306).

Believing that there is a major disconnection between what life really is, and what we want it to be, one of Lawrence's most central preoccupations is, therefore, to analyse the ways in which the anthropomorphism of mankind might be denaturing the reality of life.[219] In the first version of 'Henry St. John de Crêvecoeur', he draws the distinction we have indicated previously, between Crèvecœur the authentic artist, who can't help seeing Nature as it really is, and Crèvecœur the anthropomorphic man (Lawrence calls this version 'Crêvecoeur the idealist'), who wants it to be something it is not—so that this latter Crèvecœur embodies the human desire for the world to be something other than what it really is: 'it is life according to Man, not man according to Life' (SCAL 195:19). In other words, the less natural Crèvecœur (the idealist) gets it backwards. Lawrence clearly identifies this anthropomorphic Crèvecœur with the transcendental idealists (the monistic pantheists of the last chapter) because ultimately, Lawrence says, he refuses to sacrifice this wishful thinking for the reality of life:

> Crêvecoeur wanted this kind of knowledge. But to have it he must forfeit all his fraternity and equality, his belief in the world of pure, sweet goodness, in the oneness of all things, and above all, he must forfeit his own *will*, which insists that the world shall be so, because it is easiest so. And he will die rather than forfeit his fixed will, and his fixed intentions. He *will* have life according to his prescription, come what may. And life actually *is not* according to his prescription. So he eschews life… (SCAL 201:35)

For the same reason, one of Lawrence's major targets is Frazer, the author of the well-known book *The Golden Bough*, whom Lawrence ruthlessly attacks for his anthropomorphising tendencies on at least three occasions.[220] In 'Aristocracy' he clearly has Frazer in mind when

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[219] We can only imagine what we already know, and we imagine everything from our point of view. This is why, he argues, in 'Education of the People' (1920) we imagine Martians with long ears and horns. In reality, we are just imagining ourselves dressed up (RDP 135:37).

[220] As mentioned earlier, Lawrence was positive about Frazer at first; in the famous letter to Russell on blood-consciousness (see earlier), he reveals he had been reading Frazer (D. H. Lawrence, 2L 470); and mentions him

he writes, 'and all you can do now is to twiddle-twaddle about golden boughs, because you are empty, empty, empty, hollow, deficient, and cardboardy' (RDP 372:32). Calling him variously 'an idiot', 'a twaddler', 'a cheap-jack', 'a dyspeptic fool', and a 'stuffy little human fool sitting in a chair and wearing lambs-wool underwear' (RDP 372:1), (one can almost hear him spitting feathers), Lawrence rants and raves at Frazer, for trying to explain every religious mystery in purely anthropomorphic terms:

> Do you imagine the great realities, even the ram of Amon, are only symbols of something human? Do you imagine the great symbols, the dragon, the snake, the bull, only refer to bits, qualities or attributes of little man? It is puerile. The puerility, the puppyish conceit of modern white humanity is almost funny. (RDP 371:31)

Thus, for Lawrence, Frazer is the quintessential example of exactly the kind of deadened state of mind he rejects. In *Apocalypse* he writes: 'if you are dead in the old feeling-knowing way, as so many moderns are, then the dragon just "stands for" this, that, and the other — all the things it stands for in Frazer's *Golden Bough*: it is just a kind of glyph or label, like the gilt pestle and mortar outside a chemist's shop' (A142:29).[221] As far as Lawrence was concerned, we needed to stop seeing the universe as if it had been merely put there for humans' use.

4.2.2 'Man has made an enormous mistake. Mind is not a Ruler, mind is only an instrument' (A199:6)

Humanity's real mistake, therefore, for Lawrence, is its hubris, and this insidious attempt to gain mastery over the cosmos dates back at least, as far as Lawrence can see, to the Greeks and the Romans:

> The old religion of the profound attempt of man to harmonize himself with nature, and hold his own and come to flower in the great seething of life, changed with the Greeks and Romans into a desire to resist nature, to produce a mental cunning and a mechanical force that would outwit Nature and chain her down completely,

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as a useful source in the foreword to *Fantasia of the Unconscious* (PFU 62:26). But this early enthusiasm clearly waned.

[221] See also 'Pan in America': 'This is Pan, the Pan-mystery, the Pan-power. What can men who sit at home in their studies, and drink hot milk and have lamb's-wool slippers on their feet, and write anthropology, what can they possibly know about men, the men of Pan?' (MM 162:1).

> completely, till at last there should be nothing free in nature at all, all should be controlled, domesticated, put to man's meaner uses. (SEP 130)

Schopenhauer had also maintained that mankind had used ideas to control his environment; 'there came into existence thoughtfulness, surveying the future and the past, surveying the future and the past, and, as a consequence thereof, deliberation, care, ability for premeditated action independent of the present, and finally the fully distinct consciousness of the decisions of one's own will as such' (TWWR 151),[222] but, as we saw previously, this came at a cost: with knowledge 'arises the possibility of illusion and deception, whereby the previous infallibility of the will acting without knowledge is abolished' (TWWR 151). James, too, had a similar point of view: 'by means of concepts cut out from the sensible flux of the past, we can re-descend upon the future flux, and, making another cut, say what particular thing is likely to be found there; and, […] in this sense, concepts give us knowledge, and may be said to have some theoretic value' (PU 121). And, like Schopenhauer, James sees the limitations of this kind of knowledge:

> in the deeper sense of giving *insight* they have no theoretic value, for they quite fail to connect us with the inner life of the flux, or with the causes that govern its direction. Instead of being interpreters of reality, concepts negate the inwardness of reality together. (PU 121-122)

In other words, Lawrence's most important influences, Schopenhauer, James and Nietzsche all agreed on this point, so it is hardly surprising that Lawrence follows the same line of reasoning.

In *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*, Lawrence writes that ideas have become 'an instrument for the subduing of the universe' (PFU 42:3). The knowledge of forces (and natural laws) had been wrongfully used to gain mastery over life:[223] 'life is not a Force. It is, and will ever remain, a mystery, a limit to our presumption. All attempt to subject life, and its inherent creative mystery, to the will of man, and to the laws of Force is materialism and ultimate death' (SCAL 194:26). The idea that the mind should only be used as an instrument, but never be allowed to take over everything, occurs so frequently in Lawrence's non-fiction that it could

[222] We find here, therefore, the distinction between knowledge and being which we encountered in the previous chapter.
[223] As we saw previously, Schopenhauer said that forces cannot explain, only life can explain forces.

be described as something of a mantra—as the following list of extremely similar phrases demonstrates:

- 'This is the use of the mind — a great indicator and instrument. The mind as author and director of life is anathema' (*Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*, (PFU 43:29))
- 'The mind should *not* act as a director or controller of the spontaneous centres' (*Fantasia of the Unconscious*, (PFU 154:25))
- 'To make the mind the absolute ruler is as good as making a Cook's tourist-interpreter a king and a god, because he can speak several languages' (*Fantasia of the Unconscious*, (PFU 155:12)).
- 'The intellect is one of the most curious instruments of the psyche. But, like the will, it is only an instrument. And it works only under pressure of the will. By willing and by intellectualising we have done all we can, for the time being' ('Blessed are the Powerful', (RDP 322:11))
- 'The mind is an instrument' ('Aristocracy', (RDP 369:11))
- '… the goal of life is not the idea, the mental consciousness is not the sum and essence of a human being' ('Education of the People', (RDP 118:38))
- 'Man has made an enormous mistake. Mind is not a Ruler, mind is only an instrument' ('Apocalypsis II', (A 199:6))

In an important passage in *Twilight in Italy*, Lawrence contrasts the Italian races (as he sees them), and the Northern European races. At the time of the late Middle Ages, or the Renaissance, Lawrence believes the Italians had achieved a sort of balance between the body and the mind: 'out of a strong, primitive, animal nature, towards the self-abnegation and the abstraction of Christ. This brought about by itself a great sense of completeness' (TI 116:2).[224] But for some reason, they lapsed back into a more physical mode, a kind of revelling in the bodily senses, to such an extent that anything that was not to do with their own senses seemed to them to be unimportant, 'something which is nothing' (TI 117:17). On the other hand, the Northern European races from the reformation onwards forsook the body in favour of the mental. They decided that the body was not important; what was important was to free oneself from the body ('when I am all that is not-me, then I have perfect liberty, I know no limitation.

[224] Thus, Lawrence is not suggesting that the modern, sense-obsessed Italian model he is depicting here is the perfect one. Botticelli, for instance seems to him to have greater balance between the two than the later Michael Angelo, who is a sign of this lapsing backwards to the physical flesh.

Only I must eliminate the Self' (TI 121:13)), to know everything that is outside, the Not-Me. For these Northern Europeans there were two ways of mentally analysing the Not-Me and using this analysis to dominate the whole: either intellectually (as did the idealist pantheists described by James, like Lotze or Bradley, who tried to conceptualize the world as a whole and then analyse it down into separate concepts); or, mechanically, by analysing the laws of nature, 'the physical forces and the secrets of science' (TI 124:37). But both options (idealism and empiricism) remain purely mental. They had lost sight of the concrete, the living reality of individual beings, and could see only the emptiness of the abstracted mental world. The Italian, on the other hand, had hitherto remained, through centuries, largely indifferent to the Northern purposive industry 'because it has seemed to him a form of nothingness' (TI 117:19), though as we will see, Lawrence saw this was starting to change.

Lawrence's frequent use of the words mind or idealism might give the impression that he is a dualist, but—it bears repeating due to the frequent misrepresentation of Lawrence's thought—Lawrence does not believe that any kind of mental substance exists apart from the physical.[225] When Lawrence refers to the mental, he is not referring to a separate substance, but to actual physical operations of the brain.[226] Likewise, the earlier version of 'Pan in America'[227] clearly demonstrates that Lawrence's philosophy entails no division of body and mind: 'this faun and nymph business was the first step into the Spirit and Matter split. The nymphless spring of water was matter spiritless' (A 201:27). In fact, the neutral substance for Lawrence is the incalculable throbbing which begets all life, and which we experience in our waking lives so that Lawrence, writing in 'Apocalypsis II', asserts that 'everything is based on sense-experience […] Spirit, as far as it is *experience*, is only a more subtle form of sense-experience' (A 197:13) and again, 'man is real, and Mind is a property of man' (A 199:25),

[225] Lawrence does sometimes use the term 'dualism' when referring to the twofold tendencies of love and power, but he means something quite different in these cases. His opinion is, in fact, more akin to James's *neutral monism*, by which it is meant that there is *only one substance*, but that this is *neither* matter or spirit but something common to both thought and senses (James frequently uses the phrase 'matter or thought' to indicate that they are of the same nature).

[226] This has sometimes caused confusion. Trigoni, for instance, despite the fact that this runs counter to her own argument of the intelligent unconscious, writes that: 'the main problem that arises from monist readings is that they fail to account for such radical forms of dualism as expressed, for example, in Lawrence's insistence that "my great religion is a belief in the blood, the flesh, as being wiser than the intellect. We can go wrong in our minds. But what our blood feels and believes and says, is always true"' (Trigoni 68).

[227] As Jeffrey Mathes McCarthy notes in his chapter on 'Pan in America' in *Green Modernism*, the early version which remained for many years an unpublished manuscript, is different in many ways to the published version.

meaning that mind must be real too.[228] So mind is not a substance for Lawrence, but a faculty which humanity uses, and unfortunately… misuses too.

Indeed, for Lawrence, the modern form of pantheism in the shape of Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman and the transcendentalists, as well as Wordsworth, had fallen into the trap of rendering everything in terms of the mental, transforming everything into an 'Oversoul', so that someone like Whitman—as he notes in the early version of 'Pan in America'—despite claiming to 'sing the body electric', is in fact resurrecting the spirit, in spite of himself, by redeeming 'the flesh and its functions into pure consciousness, into spirituality' (MM 200: 17); in other words, he spiritualises matter by 'making it into a term of consciousness' (MM 201:2), and transforming everything into mental consciousness.[229] This was already Lawrence's position in 1913 in his introduction to the volume of Georgian poetry:

> I look at my hands as I write and know they are mine, with red blood running its way, sleuthing out Truth and pursuing it to eternity, and I am full of awe for this flesh and blood that holds this pen. Everything that ever was thought and ever will be thought, lies in this body of mine. This flesh and blood sitting here writing, the great impersonal flesh and blood, greater than me, which I am proud to belong to, contains all the future. What is it but the quick of all growth, the seed of all harvest, this body of mine? (IR 203)

Like Nietzsche's Zarathustra who declares: 'I am body entirely, and nothing beside; and soul is only a word for something in the body' (TSZ 61), Lawrence writes at the end of *Apocalypse*: 'there is nothing of me that is alone and absolute except my mind, and we shall find that the mind has no existence by itself, it is only the glitter of the sun on the surface of the waters' (A 149:25).

As Schopenhauer argued the body is the only access we have to the reality of the world and no matter how hard we try to 'get at the inner nature of things from *without*', we only end up going around in circles (TWWR 99). Since, via our bodies, we ourselves are rooted in the

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[228] See also *Mr. Noon*: 'This angel business, this spirit nonsense! Even spirits, such as really exist, are potent sensual entities' (MN 189:31); or 'Democracy': 'Spirit is merely our mental *consciousness*, a finished essence extracted from our life-being, just as alcohol, spirits of wine, is the material, finished essence extracted from the living grape'. The living self is not spirit (RDP 77:22). Our 'living self' (our real self) is not the same thing as the conception that we have of ourselves.

[229] According to Lawrence, they also conflate 'all is God' with 'all is good', such that 'Spirit is all good, or God, and Matter is just negative, not-God' (MM 200:39).

world, we have a clue to the world's inner nature.[230] 'The creative mystery (to use Lawrence's term) manifests itself in living beings, and when Lawrence refers to the sensual he is usually referring to this manifestation of the creative mystery in the body. Lawrence defines what he means by sensual in 'New Mexico': 'I use sensual to mean an experience deep down in the senses, inexplicable and inscrutable' (MM 178:5).[231] Hence as Lawrence writes in the first version of the Hawthorne chapter in *Studies in Classic American Literature*: 'the only form of worship is *to* be: each man to be his own self, that which has issue from the mystery, and takes form as an inscrutable self' (SCAL 243:2). Rather than being derived from the essential desires issuing spontaneously from the body, the world of ideas is, to the contrary, something extraneous and contrived, a fact which needs to be acknowledged if any real progress is to be made by mankind: 'we must discriminate between an ideal and a desire. A desire proceeds from within, from the unknown, spontaneous soul or self. But an ideal is superimposed from above, from the mind; it is a fixed, arbitrary thing' (RDP 78:15).[232]

This distinction between a mental idea and a bodily desire corresponds to what Bergson called the distinction between the *intuition* and the *intellect*. Bergson himself gives a striking example of the former in *Creative Evolution* where he discusses parasitic wasps, including one particular variety which must successively sting the caterpillar (in which it is to lay its egg), in each of its nine nervous centres, before seizing hold of its head and chewing it only enough to paralyse the caterpillar, without killing it (Bergson, The Creative Evolution 172). How did the wasp know how to sting the caterpillar in this way? Obviously, such a feat cannot have been learnt, it must be a case of purely intuitive, instinctual knowledge operating at some pre-conscious level. Lawrence himself instances the bee as an example of this kind of intuitive pre-consciousness (already cited in chapter 4): 'when a bee leaves its hive and circles around to sense the locality, it is attending with the primary mind to the surrounding objects, establishing a primary rapport between its own very tissue and the tissue of the adjacent objects' (SCAL 241:21); likewise the singing of a lark 'is direct expression from the whole primary or dynamic mind […] a process of rapid *physical* thought takes place, act of the primary, not the cerebral

[230] Payne's translation describes the body as a 'a key to the inner being of every phenomenon in nature' (TWWR 105), but other translations use the word clue (possibly the version Lawrence consulted may have used the latter translation).

[231] Clearly, sensual for Lawrence does not have the sexual undertones implicit in its contemporary usage.

[232] Lawrence says almost exactly the same thing, but with perhaps even greater clarity, in one of the philosophical passages of *Mr Noon*: 'Let us confess our belief: our deep, our religious belief. The great eternity of creation does not lie in the spirit, in the ideal. It lies in the everlasting and incalculable throb of passion and desire. The ideal is but the iridescence of the strange flux. Life does not begin in the mind: or in some ideal spirit. Life begins in the deep, the indescribable sensual throb of desire, pre-mental' (MN 189:16). Unfortunately, Lawrence laments, 'our era has landed in the *cul de sac* of the spirit and the ideal' (MN 189:37).

mind: the sensational, not the ideal consciousness' (SCAL 241:20). In fact, Lawrence states, 'all thought, and mental cognition is but a sublimation of the great primary, sensual knowledge located in the tissues of the physique' (SCAL 241:31). The examples chosen by Lawrence are closer to the examples given by Carr, where he asserts that 'in the insect communities of bees and ants instinct is so perfect and so supreme as the guiding principle of their activity, that intelligence, if they possess it, must lie on a lower plane, will be manifested only in emergencies where instinct fails' (Carr 44).

Other instances of the pre-conscious include the awareness of one's own existence which Lawrence discusses in *Fantasia of the Unconscious*: 'under the navel, is your first and deepest seat of awareness. There you are triumphantly aware of your own individual existence in the universe. […] There you *are*, and you know it. So stick out your tummy gaily, my dear, with a *Me voilà*. With a *Here I am*! With an *Ecco mi*! With a *Da bin ich*!'(PFU 74:26).[233] This primal awareness is also the blood-conscious which he describes in another much-discussed, previously mentioned letter to Bertrand Russell: 'now I am convinced of what I believed when I was about twenty—that there is another seat of consciousness than the brain and the nervous system: there is the blood consciousness which exists independently of the ordinary consciousness' (2L 470).[234] What we experience via the nerves and the brain, in other words, the *stream of consciousness* which he describes in the essay 'Introduction to Pictures', is merely epiphenomenal: 'the nerves and brain are the apparatus by which we signal and *register* consciousness. Consciousness, however, does not take rise in the nerves and brain' (LEA 170:14). Consequently what we mentally experience is subsidiary to the physical consciousness which we experience throughout the entirety of the body: 'it takes rise elsewhere: in the blood, in the corpuscles, somewhere very primitive and pre-nerve and pre-brain. Just as energy generates in the electron. Every speck of protoplasm, every living cell is *conscious*. All the cells of our body are conscious' (LEA 170:16). And when this physical awareness is particularly intense, the body is in what is nowadays called *a state of flow*:[235]

> And all the time, they give off a stream of consciousness which flows along the nerves and keeps us spontaneously alive. While the flow streams through

[233] The similarity to Heidegger's deliberate use of the word *Dasein* to signify existence, and being there, is obvious.
[234] In a number of texts, Lawrence postulates that the seat of this awareness is to be found in the *solar plexus*.
[235] 'Flow in positive psychology, also known colloquially as being in the zone or locked in, is the mental state in which a person performing some activity is fully immersed in a feeling of energized focus, full involvement, and enjoyment in the process of the activity. In essence, flow is characterized by the complete absorption in what one does, and a resulting transformation in one's sense of time' (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flow_(psychology)).

> us, from the blood to the heart, the bowels, the viscera, then along the sympathetic system of nerves into our spontaneous minds, making us breathe, and see, and move, and be aware, and *do* things spontaneously, while this flow streams as a flame streams ceaselessly, we are lit up, we glow, we live. (LEA 170:20)[236]

The blood-consciousness is, therefore, the deepest understanding, and as he writes in 'A Propos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*', knowing and being are one and undivided in the blood (LCL 324:30), meaning that in the blood are united the phenomenal world and the world of God, the third and the fourth dimensions. Thus the blood of the primary consciousness provides a far greater awareness of the reality of the world.

Lawrence wishesm, therefore, to inverse Plato's denigration of the body as he makes clear in 'Introduction to Picture' (1928) where he declares: 'Oh lofty human spirit, how sordid you have made us! What a viper Plato was, with his distinction between body and spirit, and the exaltation of the spirit, the self-aware-of-itself' (LEA 169:31). The body, Lawrence points out, often knows what is best far better than the mind, or we would never drink too much alcohol or over-eat. Thus, the body, he observes, does not like getting drunk, 'think how it reacts, how it vomits, how it tries to repudiate the excess of drink, how utterly wretched it feels when its sane balance is overthrown' (LEA 168:30); but the mind of man finds in drink some relief, escape, or a sense of licence, so it forces the body to do what is bad for it. A perfect example is to be found in 'Introduction to These Paintings' where he declares: 'I am not going to accept mere mental asseverations. The mind can assert anything, and pretend it has proved it. My beliefs I test on my body, on my intuitional consciousness, and when I get a response there, then I accept' (LEA 208:26).Indeed, Lawrence claims that for four thousand years, religion, science and culture have all been waging a war on the body:

> The queen bee of all human ideas since 2000 B.C. has been the idea that the body, the pristine consciousness, the great sympathetic life-flow, the steady flame of the old Adam is bad, and must be conquered.

If Plato tried to show in the allegory of the cave that we live in a world of illusion, 'of sights and sounds' and that the real world was situated in the mental realm of ideas, Lawrence does a

[236] William James's chapter 'Stream of Consciousness' in the briefer psychology course, is much more focused on thought. On the other hand, the preceding chapter of James's book, briefly describes the way in which external stimulations, or emotions can cause changes in the blood supply (Writings 1878 -1899 133).

similar thing except that he tries to show, to the contrary, that the mental realm is the illusory world.[237] Thus, the clue for Lawrence to a better life is more bodily relationality, more emphasis on *being in touch*:

> Touch, the being in touch, is the basis of all consciousness, and it is the basis of enduring happiness. Thought is a secondary form of consciousness, Mind is a secondary form of existence, a getting out of touch […] Man, poor man, has to learn to function in these two ways of consciousness. When the man is *in touch*, he is non-mental, his mind is quiescent, his bodily centres are active. (A 199:31)

In the essay 'New Mexico' (1928) Lawrence describes it as a religious experience: 'for religion is an experience, an uncontrollable sensual experience, even more so than love: I use sensual to mean an experience deep down in the senses, inexplicable and inscrutable' (MM 178:3). Many years after his death Frieda described Lawrence in these terms: 'to me his relationship, his bond with everything in creation was so amazing, no preconceived ideas, just a meeting between him and a creature, a tree, a cloud, anything. I called it love, but it was something else - *Bejahung* in German, "saying yes"' (Byrne 376).

4.3 Abstractions: 'The Greeks began the cutting apart business' (RDP 316)

Somewhat surprisingly, given the prominent place it plays in his non-fiction, relatively little seems to have been written about Lawrence and abstraction. Nonetheless, Lawrence's mistrust of mental representations and of abstractions is an unmistakable hallmark of his non-fictional work: 'Why force abstractions and kill the reality, when there's no need?' he writes in *Fantasia of the Unconscious* (PFU 122), vehemently bemoaning the tendency to make children produce clay representations of their home areas in *Fantasia of the Unconscious*: 'the attempt to make a child focus for a whole view — which is really a generalization and an adult abstraction — is simply wicked. Yet the first thing we do is to set a child making relief-maps in clay, for example: of his own district. Imbecility!' (PFU 122). Lawrence's language, by its very excess, shows to what extent he considers abstract thinking to be harmful. An abstraction, he writes elsewhere, is 'an invention of the human mind', an abstraction is also 'a lie' (STH

[237] Lawrence even develops, very obviously, his own version of the cave allegory in 'Education of the People' (IR 135:27), which I discuss in more detail later.

87:21). Jeff Wallace in his useful book *D. H. Lawrence: Science and the Posthuman* includes a postscript on abstractions, but although he does mention that abstraction was a key term in Lawrence's vocabulary (J. Wallace, D. H. Lawrence: Science and the Post-Human 235), there are very few details about Lawrence's views himself, and little analysis of the important role it played in his thinking. However, an analysis of the non-fiction reveals scores of uses of the term, or analogous ones, in key passages. Thus, abstractions seem to be anathema to Lawrence, and a particular target of his wrath (a catalogue of many of Lawrence's references to abstractions is attached as an appendix). Our capacity for abstract thinking, whatever its advantages may have been, has led us astray—it has induced in us a false idea of the reality of the world: 'there is the sensual consciousness, enormous and potent: and then there is Mind. Mind is the function of abstraction from sensual experience, and in abstraction is established another world of reality' (A 197:21).

A light-hearted example, presumably taken from Lawrence's own experience, of the 'deadly breach between actual living and this abstract caring' (LEA 97:14) is to be found in a newspaper article, 'Insouciance', which Lawrence wrote for *The Evening News* in 1928.[238] While he simply wants to quietly observe the scene before him, they insist upon talking to him about abstract concepts like right and wrong, politics, fascism and abstract liberty. Whereas Lawrence protests that, before their chatter 'there was a direct sensuous contact between me, the lake, the mountains, cherry trees, mowers, and a certain invisible but noisy chaffinch in a clipped lime tree', he complains that 'all this was cut off by the fatal shears of that abstract word Fascism, and the little old lady next door was the Atropos who cut the thread of my actual life this afternoon. She beheaded me, and flung my head into abstract space' (LEA 97:15), prompting an annoyed Lawrence to lament that modern people like these elderly ladies 'certainly never live on the spot where they are. They inhabit abstract space, the desert void of politics, principles, right and wrong, and so forth. They are doomed to be abstract. Talking to them is like trying to have a human relationship with the letter x in algebra' (LEA 97:9). The following section will look at what Lawrence meant by abstractions, why it constituted such an important axis of reflection for him, and the diverse ways in which he developed the concept.

4.3.1 James and Lawrence

In *A Pluralistic Universe*, James claims that Bergson's influence was pivotal in getting him to see that intellectualism was the problem, not the solution: 'theoretic knowledge, which

[238] Published under the title 'Over-Earnest Ladies'.

is knowledge about things, as distinguished from living or sympathetic acquaintance with them, touches only the outer surface of reality' (PU 123). Bergson, he says, has turned the traditional Platonic doctrine upside down, asserting that intellectual knowledge is actually the most superficial kind of knowledge (PU 124). Instead, Bergson advocates turning 'face towards sensation, that flesh-bound thing which rationalism has always loaded with abuse—This, you see, is exactly the opposite remedy from that […] which our idealistic contemporaries prescribe' (PU 124-125). Bergson is therefore advocating a philosophy of the body, rather than a philosophy of mind, a stance which perfectly reflects Lawrence's emphasis on the sensuous and the intuitive, as opposed to the intellectual.[239] James' writings explain how Lawrence came to identify conceptions, abstractions, universals, idealism and intellectualism, all under the umbrella term of the mental or the Mind (with a capital M).[240] The influence of James on Lawrence's philosophy is clearly visible in the unpublished fragment 'Apocalypsis II' when he writes 'all our consciousness starts with sensual experience, call them perception or what you will, and ends with abstractions from this experience, conceptions or idea or whatever we like' (A197:8). For James, intellectualism had come to have an increasingly vicious side to it, starting with Socrates's and Plato's insistence that a thing has to have a *definition* (PU 109), so that (now that anything deviating from that definition is excluded), it has ultimately become a tyranny: 'it is but the old story, of a useful practice first becoming a method, then a habit, and finally a tyranny that defeats the end it was used for' (PU 109).[241] Concepts are tyrannical because: 'the essence of life is its continuously changing character; but our concepts are all discontinuous and fixed. […] When we conceptualize, we cut out and fix, and exclude everything but what we have fixed. A concept means *that-and-no-other*' (PU 125). Lawrence clearly adheres to this line of reasoning as, for instance, in 'Education of the People' (1920), he calls the abstract knowledge taught in schools 'bullying idealism, which will allow nothing except in terms of itself' (RDP 96:8).[242] Elsewhere, in 'Introduction to these Paintings' (1929),

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[239] Lawrence's philosophy is fundamentally a philosophy of the body, and as such he shares much with another existentialist, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, particularly with the latter's book *The Phenomenology of Perception*. Both reject the tendency to see the body as an object directed by the mind, like some sort of ghost in the machine. Both seek to break down the division between inside and outside, self and world. Neither deny that the mind exists, but both maintain that it is just something different. Both maintain that there is an interdependence between the self and the surrounding objects, that man is a network of relations.

[240] This artificial world is what Lawrence in 'Democracy' calls, the 'ideal world', by which he certainly does not mean that it is the best possible world, but, rather, that it is the world as it is mentally conceived by modern mankind (and thus very far from being the best possible!)—the world of *our* ideas.

[241] This reference may explain why in *Fantasia of the Unconscious* Lawrence describes love (PFU 84:19) or benevolence (PFU 91:22) as bullying.

[242] Lawrence's 'ideal bullying'—imposing a definition of a word like 'love' in such a way as to not allow for any alternative way of conceptualising it—will be examined further in chapter 6..

he even states that teaching that water is H_2O is a kind of bullying: '… so many modern scientists likewise work with the mind alone, and *force* the intuitions and instincts into a prostituted acquiescence. The very statement that water is H_20 is a mental *tour de force*. With our bodies we know that water is *not* H_20, our intuitions and instincts both know it is not so' (LEA 207:38).

Lawrence can, of course, see why mankind had become beguiled and intoxicated by abstractions. In *Apocalypsis II*, when he tries to imagine the feelings the early Greeks must have had, he declares: 'we can understand the terrific delight of the early Greeks when they really found out how to think, when they got away from the concrete and invented the abstract, when they got away from the object itself and discovered laws and principles' (A195:17). But he also judges that it was at this moment that the first great split[243] between man and the cosmos was engendered: 'man and the cosmos came out of touch, they became, in a sense, enemies. Man set himself to *find out* the cosmos, and at last to dominate it' (A 196:14). Seeking to explain how the vast change in world-view (when mankind learned to abstract from the concrete) might have come about, he posits that a pivotal shift started in around 600 B.C. with the ancient Greek discovery of maths. Before this time, Lawrence claims, there was no such thing as a number in itself; there was no abstract 7 in itself, just 7 concrete objects (pebbles for example). With Pythagoras's arrangement of 7 pebbles into patterns like triangles or squares came the abstract idea of arithmetic, the laws of number. Thereafter, man came to ask whether the cosmos might not also be subject to laws. Thus, before 600 B.C. says Lawrence, the cosmos (including the totality of all things; the sun, the moon, the stars, the animals, water, rock, etc.) was the ruler of man, but afterwards things were inversed: 'there was a new wild instinct on earth: to prove that all the great Rulers were subject to One Rule' (A196:10), Henceforth, the cosmos was to be subject to laws, and would therefore no longer be the ruler of mankind. From that point on, writes Lawrence, 'it was the dominion of man over the cosmos, through the collective effort of Mind' (A 196:13).

4.3.2 'An idea is an abstraction from reality, a generalization' (RDP 73)

John Michael Greer *Dark Age America: Climate change, Cultural Collapse and the Hard Future Ahead* contends that 'human beings use abstractions to understand the world in much the same way they use tools to shape the world […] but both processes can become pathological when they are used not to adapt to reality but to evade it' (Greer 187). Modern marketing in

[243] This will be discussed in the next chapter.

particular, he argues, uses this kind of abstract ideas to manipulate people: 'the goal of the operation is to keep you away from immediate experience, in a haze of abstractions, so that a deliberately distorted mediation can be put in its place' (Greer 187). There are around a hundred references to abstractions in Lawrence's non-fiction (see appendix 3), which show the extent to which he pursued his analysis of the problem of intellectualisation in the modern world, but to gain a better understanding of what he meant, we will briefly focus here on some of the more salient examples of Lawrence's usage: focusing on abstract ideas, abstract concepts, and universals.

Abstract ideas call upon the power to *think* things, qualities or relations, or whatever other element there may be, as isolated and abstracted from total experience (1PP 473). Lawrence often cites mathematical knowledge as a particularly good example of abstract thinking. He cites the 2 x 2 = 4 mathematical formulae in 'Return to Bestwood'; 'what is the good of saying these things, to men whose whole education consists in the fact that twice two are four? — which, being interpreted, means that twice tuppence is fourpence. All our education, the whole of it, is formed upon this little speck of dust' (LEA 24:14). And in *Fantasia of the Unconscious* he declares: 'I don't want my child to know that five fives are twenty-five, any more than I want my child to wear my hat or my boots. I *don't* want my child to *know*. If he wants five fives let him count them on his fingers' (PFU 123:25). The same goes for the 'average'—there is no such thing as he protests furiously in 'Democracy'; it is just a figment of man's imagination.

Abstract concepts are things like joy, love, truth, peace, justice, and so on, which only really exist in people's minds.[244] Thus, Lawrence says that 'the unconscious is never an abstraction, never to be abstracted. It is never an ideal entity. It is always concrete' (PFU 38:23), and similarly for life he reiterates, 'life is inconceivable as a general thing. It exists only in living creatures' (PFU 15:31). Lawrence was primarily interested in the particular, as we see in the essay 'Democracy': 'the actual living quick itself is alone the creative reality. Once you abstract from this, once you generalize and postulate Universals, you have departed from the creative reality, and entered the realm of static fixity, mechanism, materialism' (RDP 77:3).

[244] We have already looked at the concept of colour when discussing perception. The abstract colour white is properly speaking, according to James, a particular, or a 'floating adjective'. Another example Lawrence gives of an abstract quality is *Moby Dick*: 'Melville keeps up his disquisition about "whiteness". The great abstract fascinated him. The abstract where we end, and cease to be. White or black. Our white, abstract end!' (D. H. Lawrence, SCAL 139:1)

Other example of abstract concepts include the monistic pantheist (idealist) idea of the good, which (as we have seen) Lawrence rejects, or the concept of nature. For Lawrence, Nature (with a capital N), particularly the Romantic idea of it, is just another man-made concept: 'this Nature-sweet-and-pure business is only another effort at intellectualizing. Just an attempt to make all nature succumb to a few laws of the human mind' (SCAL 34:27). This is why in the Crèvecœur essay he actually writes the word in capitals:

> NATURE. I wish I could write it larger than that. NATURE. Benjamin overlooked NATURE. But the French Crèvecoeur spotted it long before Thoreau and Emerson worked it up. Absolutely the safest thing to get your emotional reactions over is NATURE. (SCAL 33:7)

This modern conception of Nature is, therefore, not a statement of reality, but a mental fabrication of modernity. Furthermore, it proves to be just another instance of mankind's desire for things to be as it wants them to be rather than as they actually are: 'Nature, babies, dogs are *so* lovable, because they can't answer back', he writes in '….Love was once a Little Boy' (RDP 336:21). By contrast, the *cosmos* is no abstraction, it is indeed something real for Lawrence, it is life itself: 'what is our petty little love of nature—Nature!!—compared to the ancient magnificent leaving with the cosmos, and being honoured by the Cosmos' (A 76:24). For the American Indians, the cosmos is 'all the rippling of this untellable flood of creation, which, in a narrow sense, we call Nature' (MM 67:5), and for the Etruscans their vision was that of 'the complex vitalities of what we feebly call Nature' (SEP 27:37).[245] Treating nature, too, as a kind of larder, a never-ending source of abundance for human consumption is part of the modern consumer model, the mode of *having* which will be discussed in the next section.[246]

Universals, on the other hand, are things considered as a totality: 'a universal or general conception is of an entire class, or of something belonging to an entire class, of things' (1PP 473), as when, for example, all men considered as a totality become the universal Man. In *Psychology: Briefer Course*, James asks, 'why, from Socrates downwards, philosophers should have vied with each other in scorn of the knowledge of the particular, and in adoration of that of the general, is hard to understand, seeing that […] the things of worth are all concretes and singulars' (EW 232). James argues that getting to know individual things probably requires

[245] Lawrence's notion of cosmos is discussed further in chapter 7.
[246] In a phrase which is particularly striking in this day and age of ever-increasing climatic instability, he points out that 'nature seemed to be behaving quite nicely, for a while. She has left off' (SCAL 34:24).

even more complicated brain processes than are required for knowing universals, and that therefore 'the traditional Universal-worship can only be called a bit of perverse sentimentalism, a philosophic "idol of the cave"' (EW 232). Generalizing means that, like the two elderly ladies in 'Insouciance', we neglect the reality of the particular in favour of non-existent universals. Unsurprisingly, as a pluralist, Lawrence claims in 'Education of the People' (1920) that the universal is not greater, but lesser than the individual: 'the One is more than many. The Japanese know that one flower is lovelier than many flowers. Alone, one flower lives and has its own integral wonder. Massed with other flowers, it has a being-in-common, and this being-in-common is always inferior to the single aloneness of one creature' (RDP 138:1). Similarly, he claims in the same essay that it is no good saying there is a being-in-common of a rabbit since 'having met a rabbit or two, we have seen quite clearly, that each separate rabbit was a separate, distinct rabbit-individual, with a specific nature of his own' (RDP 120:7).

The same principle can be seen to apply to men and women, and people in general. He seems to be making this very point in the preface to the play 'Touch and Go', when he discusses the problematical meaning of a term like 'A People's Theatre'. Lawrence thinks that to talk of *the people* is meaningless. The *people* must consist of actual individuals, of 'men who are somebody, not men who are something' (Plays 364:20) , and not just 'the people smelted into oneness' as he describes them in *Democracy*, (RDP, 73:24). The same goes, in 'Twilight in Italy' for Alexander Pope's 'know then thyself, presume not God to scan. The proper study of mankind is Man'. He points out that Pope is not talking about individual men, but about 'the abstract Man' (TI 120:33). According to Pope, the only thing worth studying is the *idea* of Man as a whole, the *theoretical* man and not the actual man.[247] For Pope, the particular is forsaken in favour of an imaginary whole.

One of Lawrence's personal complaints, as we will see in the discussion of *Sea and Sardinia* is that people treat him like an abstraction, they put labels on him, rather than treating him as an individual person. This is a reproach he makes of the character Jude in *Study of Thomas Hardy*, for not recognizing that Sue, 'had a being, special and beautiful. Why must not Jude recognize it in all its specialty […] why must Jude, owing to the conception he is brought up in, force her to act as if she were his "ordinary" abstraction, a woman? She was not a woman. She was Sue Bridehead, something very particular' (STH 122:15). The need to pay attention

[247] The act of putting King Charles to death, was the act of putting to death the non-mental, the body: 'they destroyed, symbolically, for ever, the supremacy of […] the Me of the flesh, of the senses' (TI 120:16).

to the individual thing, and the refusal of abstraction, is a fundamental part of Lawrence's philosophy, and a way of accessing God. In *Apocalypse*, as Shirley Bricout argues, 'Lawrence insists on the absence of abstract thought, on the concreteness of everything which enables the artist to find God in plants, in beasts and also in objects' (Bricout, Biblical Aesthetics 99). Mental abstractions are, for Lawrence, always static, 'What is the idea, or the ideal, after all? It is only a fixed, static entity, an abstraction, an extraction from the living body of life' (RDP 76:8). Being extracted from the living reality, abstractions are for Lawrence, closely related to death and inhumanity. The soldier in 'The Crown' who has nearly died, but has returned maimed from the trenches, is 'strange, abstract, glowing still from the consummation of destruction and pain and horror' (RDP 291:39), and is become 'almost impersonal, a simple abstraction, all his personality loosened and undone' (RDP 291:9).

It is this line of reasoning that explains Lawrence's mixed reaction to the abstract paintings of Duncan Grant. Lawrence went to see Grant's abstract paintings in his studio on the 22nd of January 1915. Kinkead-Weekes, relying mostly on Garnett's account, depicts a disastrous meeting, including a diatribe from Lawrence: 'the more Lawrence saw of Grant's painting, the more he disliked it, and said so', with Grant himself developing toothache, sitting with his hands on his knees, 'rocking himself gently in his chair, not attempting a word in defence of his works' (Kinkead-Weekes, D. H. Lawrence: Triumph to Exile 1912-1922 184). Whether it really went as badly as described will probably never be established, but in a letter, Lawrence told Lady Ottoline Morrell on the 27th of January, that 'he *really* liked' Grant, and suggested that they both shared the same basic project: 'he is after stating an Absolute […] a whole conception of the existence of Man […] it is an Absolute we are all after, a statement of the whole scheme—the issue, the progress through Time—and the return—making unchangeable eternity' (2L 263). According to Alexandra Bickley Trott, Grant's abstract painting had developed from the same basic idea we discussed earlier in the chapter, the idea that vision does not work like a camera:

> … modern artists had become increasingly suspicious of naturalistic representation, believing that it falsely presented a constructed reality as a true one, and created an experience based on illusion, deception and manipulation […] Accordingly, visual styles developed which emphasized that the act of painting was an interpretation of the world rather than its realistic representation. (Trott)

Thus, what Lawrence actually took issue with was not what Grant wanted to achieve, but his methods, and, above all, the fact that, for Lawrence, the only way to get to the eternal absolute (in other words, the Creative Mystery) was from the particular. Grant only produced abstract paintings for a relatively short period so Lawrence must have been talking about works like Grant's painting (figure 5), *Abstract Kinetic Collage Painting with Sound*, described by Trott as: 'rectangles of variegated colour placed upon a mottled background', complicated by a use of collage intended 'to disrupt the conventions of pictorial representation' (Trott). Arranged on a scroll, it was 'composed of 17 sections, in each of which there appears to be a cluster of oblongs that tilt, rise and fall again as the scroll is slowly wound past a viewing aperture, to the accompaniment of a slow movement from one of Bach's Brandenburg concertos' (Spalding).[248]

Figure 5*:* Scroll of *Abstract Kinetic Collage Painting with Sound,* Duncan Grant, 1914



In the letter, Lawrence asks Morrell to tell Grant not to 'make silly experiments in the futuristic line, with bits of colour on a moving paper', and criticizes the collage effects: 'most puerile is this dabbing geometric figures behind one another, just to prove that the artist is being abstract, that he is not attempting representation of the object' (2L 263). But Lawrence's pluralism can be seen again from the criticism he makes—the idea that you can only get to the absolute through the concrete particular. Grant wanted to reveal the Absolute in his art, but, for Lawrence, his method was all wrong: 'one cannot build a complete abstraction, or absolute, out of a number of small abstractions […] one can only build a great abstraction out of concrete units' (2L 263).[249]

4.3.3 Positive abstractions?

Occasionally, Lawrence talks of abstractions in a more positive sense, and the examination of these rare cases helps us to see in what way Lawrence's criticisms of abstraction are ultimately linked to Lawrence's pluralism and his belief that the particular is more important than the whole. One example of this positive use is that of a child's vision in *Fantasia*

[248] '…the only occasion we know that it was exhibited during the time of its making, it was unwound by hand, by Grant and David Garnett' (Trott n.p.).
[249] Whatever the outcome of their meeting, though probably because of the impact of the war, Grant abandoned his experiments with the abstract in the middle of 1915 and returned to figurative painting. (Trott)

of the Unconscious. As in *Sketches of Etruscan Places* Lawrence again takes the example of a horse when discussing perception. If we ask a child to draw a horse, we must recognize that: 'his vision isn't ours. When a boy of eight sees a horse, he doesn't see the correct biological object we intend him to see. He sees a big living presence of no particular shape with hair dangling from its neck and four legs […] We don't *want* him to see a proper horse. The child is *not* a little camera. He is a small vital organism which has direct dynamic *rapport* with the objects of the outer universe' (PFU 121). Instead the child 'distorts inevitably and dynamically. But the dynamic abstraction is more than mental' (PFU 122:13). The perception is, therefore, partial and subjective. By abstraction in this case he insists that it is not mental, it is about the dynamic rapport deep down in the child's senses, with the horse itself. On the other hand, if one tells a child that the world is round, this is something that can never be verified by direct experience, it is a purely mental idea:

> They should never be told that the earth is round. It only makes everything unreal to them. They are balked in their impression of the flat good earth, they can't get over this sphere business, they live in a fog of abstraction, and nothing is anything. Save for purposes of abstraction, the earth is a great plain, with hills and valleys. (PFU 122:25)

What Lawrence is saying is that what we see of the world is inevitably partial, and any idea of the whole must, always and necessarily, remain a purely mental conception. Thus, as cited earlier, Lawrence specifically says that 'the attempt to make a child focus for a whole view—which is really a generalisation and an adult abstraction is simply wicked' (PFU 122:36). Later Lawrence says that a child *should* only know in part, the part it can physically experience. Referring again to Saint Paul's: 'for now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as I am known', he asserts that it should 'see, through a glass, darkly' (PFU 143:19), not in full.

Another example of this positive use is that of an American Indian hunter in 'Pan in America'. Intensely focused on the deer he is pursuing, Lawrence describes him as being in a 'state of abstraction, and subtle, hunter's communion with the quarry — a weird psychic connection between hunter and hunted' (MM 161:27). There is, in other words, a fusional

connection between the perceiver and his surrounding world.[250] Lawrence says that it was 'better to be a hunter in the woods of Pan, than it is to be a clerk in a city store. The hunter hungered, laboured, suffered tortures of fatigue. But at least he lived in a ceaseless living relation to his surrounding universe' (MM 163:1). In the alternative unpublished version of 'Pan in America', Lawrence underlines the fact that this kind of positive abstraction is categorically not mental, but *physical*: 'in this state of concentration, intense sensual abstraction, the hunter goes on, mile after mile […] his whole sensual self summed up in one intense, concentrated spell, casting dispel over the deer he's tracking down' (MM 204:9).

Overall we can conclude that the abstractions Lawrence objects to are the mental ones which abstract away from the actual physical experiences of particular human beings. This was why one should turn away from theoretical intellectualism, and turn to the physical realities of individual experiences. Neglecting the concrete in favour of the abstract is something Lawrence highlights in the chapter 'Indians and Entertainment' in *Mornings in Mexico*, where he comments that 'we detach ourselves from the painful and always sordid trammels of actual existence, and become creatures of memory and of spirit-like consciousness' (MM 59:14). Striving for permanency by constituting mental abstractions in a world which is really in a state of permanent flux drives a wedge between us and the cosmos. As Lawrence notes at the beginning of '…. Love was Once a Little Boy', even things as seemingly permanent as diamonds, change. Only static mental concepts never change: 'If you want something really more durable than diamonds you must be content with eternal truths like "twice two are four"' (RDP 331:6). Abstract mental thinking, in other words, runs counter to nature.

Lawrence points out in 'Art and Morality' that, whereas primitive man didn't really know who or what he was, and the Egyptians 'only *felt* their own existence surging in the darkness of other existences' (STH 165:19), modern man thinks he knows everything about himself. Having striven through long ages to 'have the real objective reality' (STH 164:21), he has finally formed the habit of visualising everything including himself: 'each of us has a complete kodak-idea of himself' (STH 164:38). By dint of a long struggle, modern man has finally learnt to see like 'an All-Seeing Eye':

[250] Note the idea of the fusional nature of the predator and the prey, (see the discussion on relationality later): 'And the deer, once she has let her quivering alertness be overmastered or stilled by the hunter's subtle, hypnotic, *following* spell, she cannot escape' (MM 161:37)

> We, however, have learned to see ourselves for what we are, as the sun sees us. The Kodak bears witness. We see as the All-Seeing Eye sees, with the universal vision. […] We have achieved universal vision. Even god could not see *differently* from what we see: only more extensively, like a telescope, or more intensively, like a microscope. But the same vision. A vision of images which are real, and each one limited to itself. We behave as if we had got to the bottom of the sack, and seen the Platonic Idea with our own eyes… (STH 165:21)

The reality is that we are not spectators, we are *actors*, and as such we should place ourselves not in a theoretical, external point of view, looking at wholes, but in the position of the individual living being, interacting with his own circumambient universe. What Lawrence objected to might be summed up by what Dewey called the 'Spectator theory'. Dewey felt that it was a fundamental error to think of man, as if he were merely a spectator looking on to the world. In 'The Quest for Certainty' he explains that the problems of knowledge arise from 'the assumption that the true and valid object of knowledge is that which has being prior to and independent of the operations of knowing […] If we see that knowing is not the act of an outside spectator but of a participator inside the natural and social scene, then the true object of knowledge resides in the consequences of directed action' (Dewey 196). The same idea is to be found in James (as discussed in chapter 2), who said: 'we are not the readers but the very personages' (PU 27), and in Nietzsche too, who wrote in *The Gay Science* that for man 'a *delusion* remains his constant companion: he thinks himself placed as *spectator* and *listener* before the great visual and acoustic play that is life; he calls his nature *contemplative* and thereby overlooks the fact that is also the actual poet and ongoing author of life' (GS 171). According to Lawrence, it is this know-it-all attitude of modern man that must change. We must no longer think in terms of wholes, but instead see each other as just one small particular world in the multiverse.

Chapter 5: Looking for Other Worlds '… the clue *hidden*, as it always is hidden, in every revelation, underneath what is stated' (RDP 376:3)

In the essay 'Aristocracy' (1925), Lawrence asserts that the clue to a meaningful life is '*hidden*, as it always is hidden, in every revelation, underneath what is stated' (RDP 376:3). If we are to reinvigorate our lives, we must stop taking it for granted that our vision of the world is the right one, we must strive to see whether a new reality is possible but for this to occur, one must first rid oneself of the 'know-it-all state of mind' (MM 175:30). Travel for Lawrence was a means of glimpsing other alternatives. But it was also his attempt to get at the underlying reality of the world: a world of chaos and of interrelations, a quite different world to the one we think we live in. And Lawrence thought too, that although we can never return to the past, we can get clues about how to live properly from ancient civilisations. He tried to establish where the split, so characteristic of modern life, between man and world had occurred, and to imagine how it might be if we were still in touch with living reality and the cosmos.

5.1 Lawrence and the World of Man: 'Travelling as a means of 'shaking our faith in those realities we were obliged to accept'

5.1.1 Lawrence's Travel Itch: 'Once be disillusioned with the man-made world, and you still see the magic, the beauty, the delicate realness of all the other life' (IR 293)

Lawrence's travel itch has been understood by many critics as being driven by some sort of psychological urge, rather than as a search for an alternative to the ideology of modernity. L. D. Clark, for instance, in *The Minoan Distance: The Symbolism of Travel in D. H. Lawrence* maintains that 'he carried out an exploration of strange lands synonymous with the exploration of self. It was a search for identity, an all-absorbing endeavour to reconcile the conflicts of religion and sex and disease within, and the identity he sought was the fulness of a strong and vital manhood' (Clark xxii). According to Clark, Lawrence is supposed to have suffered from 'psychic disturbances' such as his allegedly repressed 'homosexual cravings' (Clark 178-9). He is said to have been 'prevented from reaching a normal male independence after puberty by the possessiveness of his mother' (Clark 7), leading him to seek a primeval male identity and ultimately to suffer from 'a deep mistrust of the feminine. He did not so much

fear becoming a woman as he dreaded domination by a woman' (Clark 9). Nonetheless, if he really dreaded domination by a woman, his choice of a wife was a strange one, since by all accounts, Frieda was an extremely strong character. Furthermore, whether or not Lawrence did in fact experience homosexual cravings cannot be established with any reasonable certainty, and, more importantly, it is entirely beside the point. All in all, seeing Lawrence's travels as psychological projections seems to me to be both misleading and unhelpful; there is considerable textual evidence to support the idea that by travelling Lawrence was seeking alternatives to the society he had been born into. Jessie Chambers recalls that the young Lawrence was fascinated with Samuel Butler's *Erewhon*, a novel which he said 'started like a book of travel' but then proceeded to 'turn all our ideas of society upside down' (Chambers 120). Published in 1872, Butler's *Erewhon* is about the experiences of a traveller who accidentally discovers the existence of a radically different society in the middle of nowhere - a society with ideas that seem, in many ways, diametrically opposed to those of the modern world. Thus, from an early age, the idea of travel was clearly already associated with a critique of modern society in his mind. In fact, Lawrence's travel writings tell us a lot about Lawrence's philosophy.

In 1926, Lawrence reviewed H. M. Tomlinson's travel book 'Gifts of Fortune',[251] giving a fascinating insight into the way in which he perceived travel writing himself: 'As Mr. Tomlinson makes very plain, a P. & O. liner will only take us from one hotel to another. Which isn't what we set out for, at all' (IR 288:7). The subtitle 'with some hints to those about travel' must have pleased Lawrence, reflecting his own idea that man 'moves into a new world, as he makes himself a new vision' (IR 296:16). If the sea does indeed tempt us to travel, Tomlinson show us why—he 'gives us the clue for his own case' (IR 293:22). According to Lawrence, Tomlinson shows that travelling is not just about exploring, but also about getting away from the world of man: 'We do not travel to get from one hotel to another, and perhaps to see a few side-shows. We travel to get away from a world we hate, which is the world of man as we have made it' (STH 289:21). Travelling itself, Lawrence makes clear, is ultimately a disenchanting experience since: 'this world remains the same, wherever we go. Every ship is a money-investment, and must be made to pay. The earth exists to be exploited, and is exploited. Malay head-hunters are now playing football instead of hunting heads. The voice of the gramophone is heard in the deepest jungle. That is the world of disillusion' (IR 288:20). But, as with his

[251] There are two versions of this review, the manuscript version and the periodical version. Both are similar, but there are some slight differences. Both are to be found in *Introduction and Reviews* (Cambridge Edition).

nihilism, this disillusionment is double-edged, a necessary stopping-off point if we are to discover new worlds. The horror of the world of man has first to be accepted in order to open up 'the strangeness and the beauty of life. Once be disillusioned with the man-made world, and you still see the magic, the beauty, the delicate realness of all the other life. Mr. Tomlinson sees it in flashes of great beauty' (IR 290:3). Lawrence shows this by referring to Tomlinson's description of the return back to an unexpectedly beautiful, misty English port, and finally finding what one was looking for—an unexpected glimpse of another world—at the very point one had started from!

Lawrence clearly agrees with Tomlinson—whose horror of war and human cruelty to animals Lawrence shares—that what pushes us to travel around is the 'horror of disillusion in the world of man. We cannot get away from it, and we have no business to. Man has turned the world into a thing of horror. What we have to do is to face the fact. And facing it, accept other values and make another world' (IR 289:21). This requires us to recognise that there are many other forms of life, and that ours is just one of many: 'the earth is a planet, and we are inhabitants of the planet, along with many other strange creatures. Life is a strange planetary phenomenon, all interwoven' (IR 290:24). Then we will see that 'there is a wide freedom in the world, after all, if only we had the will to take it […] sufficient to shake our faith in those realities we had supposed we were obliged to accept. There are other worlds' (IR 293:27). As I hope to show, this is the real reason why Lawrence felt impelled to travel.

5.1.2 Twilight in Italy: 'the hideous rawness of the world of men' (TI 214)

If we accept that Lawrence's travels really are, as I think they are, about 'shaking our faith in those realities we were obliged to accept' and that they are driven by a fundamental rejection of the modern world, then Lawrence's travel writings become a lot easier to understand. *Twilight in Italy* (1915), Lawrence's first complete travel book is a good example of this search for alternative worlds, and his revulsion for the 'the hideous rawness of the world of men, the horrible, desolating harshness of the advance of the industrial world upon the world of nature' (TI 214:29). Lawrence is continually searching for interesting new encounters and things that surprise and intrigue him, always for something that strikes him as different from the world he has come from: the little statues of Jesus in the Tyrol, the spinning lady, the church of San Tommaso, the discoursing monks, the world of the little Italian theatre, the little cyclamens like 'little living myths I cannot understand' (TI 154:6) (see chapter 1), the pan-like character *Il Duro.* But coming across things or people that remind him of the modern world,

like the *padrone* in 'Lemon gardens' who talks admiringly of England, his disgust is obvious: 'teeming swarms of disintegrated human beings seething and perishing rapidly away amongst it, till it seems as if a world will be left covered with huge ruins, and scored by strange devices of industry, and quite dead' (TI 132:28).

It is clear that Lawrence is horrified by the idea that Italy is going the same way as England. In 'San Gaudenzio', he complains that 'the earth is annulled, and money takes its place […] it is passing away from Italy as it has passed from England. The peasant is passing away, the workman is taking his place […] And the new order means sorrow for the Italian more even than it has meant for us. But he will have the new order' (TI 165:6). By the last phrase, Lawrence doesn't just mean that it will inevitably happen, but to his great despair, the Italians actually desire it to happen. Lawrence bumps into a string of Italians who dream of 'our world, the world of consciousness and deliberate action' (TI 186:33), that is, of England or America, like the enigmatic John who is due to go back to America again and who seems, Lawrence feels, like a person unable to do anything else: 'like a creature under the influence of fate which was disintegrating the old life and precipitating him, a fragment inconclusive, into the new chaos' (TI 186:17). Lawrence is obviously reminded of England again as he descends the Ticino Valley in 'The Return Journey'. The passage is even a bit disorientating because although, ostensibly, he starts off talking about Ticino Valley, we suddenly realize he is really thinking of England:

> Down the road of the Ticino valley I felt again my terror of this new world which is coming into being on top of us. One always feels it in a suburb, on the edge of a town, where the land is being broken under the advance of houses. But this is nothing, in England, to the terror one feels on the new Italian roads, where these great blind cubes of dwellings rise stark from the destroyed earth, swarming with a sort of verminous life, really verminous, purely destructive. It seems to happen when the peasant suddenly leaves his home and becomes a workman. Then an entire change comes over everywhere. Life is now a matter of selling oneself to slave-work, building roads or labouring in quarries or mines or on the railways, purposeless, meaningless, really slave-work, each integer doing his mere labour, and all for no purpose, except to have money, and to get away from the old system.

Even by Lawrence's standards, the imagery is particularly violent, this 'new world' seems to be bearing down on us, 'coming into being on top of us', the land gradually being shattered by the advance of the geometrically regular cube-like houses, the repetition of the words 'terror',

and ‘verminous’, the earth destroyed, it all contains an unmistakable sense of menace which communicates the depth of Lawrence’s feelings. Modern life, he declares, is becoming ‘purposeless, meaningless’, people are no longer people but ‘integers’ working like slaves, and all ‘for no purpose’ than to get money. Everything seems to be eaten away by a ‘dry rot’ which is not merely confined to these navvies working on the construction of new roads; it englobes the crumbling away of the whole of society: ‘the roads, the railways are built, the mines and quarries are excavated, but the whole organism of life, the social organism, is slowly crumbling and caving in, in a kind of process of dry rot’, so that in Lugano, too, ‘it seemed here, here in this holiday-place, was the quick of the disintegration, the dry-rot, in this dry, friable flux of people backwards and forwards on the edge of the lake, men and women from the big hotels, in evening dress, curiously sinister, and ordinary visitors, and tourists, and workmen, youths, men of the town’. Indeed, it seems as though this dry rot is gradually taking over the whole world.

It is for these reasons that I believe that Clark, and Neil Roberts in his book *D. H. Lawrence, Travel and Cultural Difference* (2004), misinterpret the well-known lines at the end of the chapter ‘The Lemon Gardens’:

> I thought of England, the great mass of London, and the black, fuming, laborious Midlands and north-country. It seemed horrible. And yet, it was better than the padrone, this old, monkey-like cunning of fatality. It is better to go forward into error than to stay fixed inextricably in the past. (TI 132:7)

Both of these critics, see in these lines, not nihilism, but a sign that Lawrence has not yet become completely disenchanted with the modern world: ‘Lawrence is not yet ready to condemn the modern world out of hand, for all his grave reservations about it’ (Clark 124). However, in reality, Lawrence’s sentiment seems more akin to Heidegger’s hope at the end of ‘The Age of the World Picture’ that by continuing on, and accentuating, the same path towards ever greater technology and quantification, this will ultimately lead to something more positive—that ‘what can seemingly always be calculated completely, becomes precisely through this, incalculable’ (Question Concerning Technology 135). Lawrence, who as we have seen, did not believe in turning back, but only in moving forward, believes that destruction is a necessary step to enable the creation of something new.[252] Despite being, in some ways, one

[252] It is only later that Lawrence loses this hope, and realizes that the porcupine, in other words modern society, will need to be shot.

of the best books about Lawrence's encounter with cultural otherness, Roberts's book nonetheless fails to come to terms with this aspect of Lawrence's thought, citing Mara Kalnins's affirmation that Lawrence's travel writings are 'a metaphor for his inner development' (Roberts 77). Such statements understate the radicality and continuity of Lawrence's thought, and place undue emphasis on the psychological aspect of Lawrence's motivations.

5.1.3 Sea and Sardinia: 'It lies outside; outside the circuit of civilisation' (SS 8)

Because Roberts cannot seem to take Lawrence's beliefs seriously, he argues that, in reality, Lawrence is just another one of those Imperialist Western tourists gazing at (and being gazed at in return) the local population. In reality, Roberts argues: 'his expectations are those of the adventurous holidaymaker seeking comfort' (Roberts 55). Despite claiming on the first page of the introduction that he is dealing with 'a coherent and developing body of work in which the travelling protagonist searches for and attempts to come to terms with the cultural and religious alternatives to European civilisation which it was Lawrence's declared aim to discover' (Roberts 1), he then states that Lawrence's real motive for his trip to Sardinia was to see whether he and Frieda would like to live there (presumably based on his letters), but that 'the motive for travelling is not mentioned' (Roberts 42). This despite the fact that Lawrence explicitly explains why he is travelling there in a well-known passage at the outset of the book:

> Where then? Where then? Spain or Sardinia. Spain or Sardinia. Sardinia, which is like nowhere. Sardinia, which has no history, no date, no race, no offering. Let it be Sardinia. They say neither Romans nor Phoenicians, Greeks nor Arabs ever subdued Sardinia. It lies outside; outside the circuit of civilisation. (SS 8:37)

For Roberts, Lawrence's ideological project (coming to terms with the religious and cultural alternatives to European civilisation) cannot be the real motivation, since the episodes recounted 'contradict the ideology that is supposed to inform Lawrence's experience in Sardinia' (Roberts 51), the scene in Mandas is as 'a moment when the ideology fails to cohere' (Roberts 52), and 'the ideological complex dissolves even more strikingly in the account of a marionette show in Palermo' (Roberts 52). As a result, Roberts's analysis of *Sea and Sardinia* is beset by a streak of ambiguity, never really resolved, which runs through the entire argument. Despite acknowledging that there is in the text 'a sense of the journey as a quest for the other of European civilisation' (Roberts 42), Roberts doesn't seem to consider that this can be taken at face value. This is why, despite him describing 'the tendency to dismiss Lawrence's engagement with cultural difference as merely a psychological projection' as particularly

'irksome' (Roberts 30), and repeating the same claim two pages later, he himself asserts that Lawrence's 'troubled' engagement with the other is in fact due to the legacy of his troubled relationship with his parents. Lawrence, he claims, is 'undoubtedly and inevitably infected by trouble about gender and sexuality, and still unresolved contradictions of feeling about his parents and what they represented' (Roberts 32), and he is therefore looking not only for a place to go, outside of European civilisation, but also for a masculine freedom (Roberts 43), leading inevitably to his conclusion that Lawrence's 'paradigmatic example of the cultural/racial other is always male' (symbolizing his quest for his father and belated rejection of the influence of his mother) (Roberts 50). It never seems to occur to him that the cultural difficulty of making close contact with Sardinian women might have posed a problem, even though Lawrence himself says: 'like sharp, brisk birds they dart along the streets, and you feel they would fetch you a bang over the head as leave as look at you […] you feel in these women there is something shy and defiant and un-get-at-able' (SS 66-7).

And yet it seems obvious from the above few lines that what attracted Lawrence to Sardinia was the very fact that it might just have remained to some extent untouched by the Greeks or Romans or any other major civilisations, thereby offering glimpses of the kinds of 'other worlds' that Lawrence was searching for. Indeed, the very fact that Sardinia had managed to stay out of mainstream European history and civilisation was exactly the kind of thing that would have attracted Lawrence. This refusal to take Lawrence at his word must be because Roberts clearly cannot fathom how what Lawrence says about seeking an alternative to the European way of life can really be taken seriously. It becomes obvious from the disparaging comments which occasionally slip into the text that he wants to save Lawrence from what he considers to be his tragic flaws. Lawrence's project, he writes, is 'beset by prejudices and personal obsessions' (Roberts 1). Moreover, the kind of ideology that Lawrence espouses shows 'troubling characteristics of didacticism, obsessiveness and abstraction' (Roberts 14), and some of his writing is found by many (presumably by Roberts too) to be 'didactic, authoritarian and repellent' (Roberts 15). The clearest statement of what he actually means when he refers to Lawrence's ideology is contained in the following phrase: 'this combination of primitivism, hierarchical gender polarity and hostility to democracy and material progress is pretty much the ideology that has damned Lawrence in the eyes of the *bien-pensant* for more than a generation' (Roberts 51). As has been argued, and will also be argued later on, these are mis-readings of Lawrence's ideology, whose philosophical underpinnings are far stronger than such comments would suggest.

Sea and Sardinia is indeed about travelling to get away from 'the human world that we hate' as the following brief analysis will show. But Lawrence quickly realized that Sardinia was not going to afford more than a few brief glimpses of that 'other world' he was looking for. Initially, Lawrence seems full of hope. The opening descriptions of the sea are lyrically portrayed as a moment of freedom, of freedom from the world of man: 'oh God, to be free of all the hemmed-in life — the horror of human tension' (SS 30:32); 'why come to anchor? There is nothing to anchor for. Land has no answer to the soul any more' (SS 48:3). And as if to emphasize the importance of getting away from this human world, he enthuses: 'let me *wander aimless* across this vivid outer world, *the world empty of man*, where space flies happily' (SS 48:5, my italics), and again: 'happy it was to sit there in the stillness, with nothing but the *humanless* sea to shine about us' (SS 49:23, my italics).[253] But before he even arrives in Sardinia, the intrusive presence of an annoying carpenter sets the tone for what is to come, rendering Lawrence furious by treating him as 'a triple abstraction'—rather than being treated as an individual, he becomes l'Inghilterra, il carbone, and il cambio (England, coal, the exchange rate), leaving him protesting that he is 'not the British Isles on legs' (SS 50:25); 'after all, I am no more than a single human man wondering my lonely way across these years. But no— to an Italian I am a perfected abstraction, England — coal — exchange. The Germans were once devils for inhuman theoretic abstracting of living beings. But now the Italians beat them' (SS 51:3).

Shortly after his arrival in Sardinia, in Cagliari, Lawrence has already realized that it is too late, remarking that, 'the last sparks are dying out in Sardinia and Spain. Nothing left but the herd-proletariat and the herd-equality mongrelism, and the wistful poisonous self-sacrificial cultured soul. How detestable' (SS 63:12). Some remnants of something different remain but very little, with only a few faces which 'strike a stranger, older note: before the soul became self-conscious: before the mentality of Greece appeared in the world' (SS 67:34). And in Mandas, it is the ubiquity of the wartime khaki which reminds Lawrence that Sardinia certainly no longer stands outside of the circuit of European civilisation: 'It is symbolic of the universal grey mist that has come over men, the extinguishing of all bright individuality, the blotting out of all wild singleness. Oh democracy! Oh khaki democracy!' (SS 71:36). Sardinia also seems to have its fair share of socialists, whom Lawrence considers to be part of the problem too (as we will see later); and who seem to be just as obsessed with material circumstances as the rich

[253] See also Birkin in *Women in Love* 'I much prefer to think of the lark rising up in the morning upon a humanless world—Man is a mistake, he must go' (WL 128).

are. Others, like the bus driver's mate who dreams of becoming a chauffeur, are obsessed with going to England, and another passenger on the bus exasperates Lawrence by suddenly adopting 'a look of ingratiating admiration' the moment he finds out Lawrence is English. 'I turn out to be l'*Inghilterra*. I might as well be a place on a map, or a piece of goods with a trade-mark. So little perception of the actual me! so much going by labels!' (SS 158:35).

Already by the time he has got to Sorgono, Lawrence knows that little remains of that ancient Sardinian character, which Lawrence has gained fleeting glimpses of: 'one feels for the first time the real old mediaeval life […] they are not going to be broken in upon by world-consciousness' (SS 88:23), but which, nonetheless, clearly cannot survive for much longer: 'one cannot help wondering whether Sardinia will resist right through. Will the last waves of enlightenment and world-unity break over them and wash away the stocking-caps?' (SS 88:36).[254] Lawrence explicitly links the Enlightenment with modernity and presents it as the counterpart to something more ancient, different, rather hoping that everything in Sardinia will collapse and that 'the remote places lapse back into inaccessibility again? Who knows! I rather hope so' (SS 116:9). In *Sea and Sardinia* we see, often in humorous form, Lawrence's rejection of the modern world, and of the modern world view; a world view which included all those things Lawrence hated—mental abstractions, obsession with money, conformism, the war, the negative impact of the Greeks and Romans, the idea that the Enlightenment was a time of progress. All of these are highlighted and critiqued by Lawrence in ways that Roberts fails to consider. Despite its obvious merits, Robert's analysis reflects a tendency to be found amongst certain Lawrentian scholars to look down rather condescendingly on Lawrence's thought. Given the depth and breadth of Lawrence's thinking, such attitudes need to be rethought.[255]

5.2 'We Live in a Multiple Universe' (RDP 312)

5.2.1 A Pluralistic World

It may be recalled from the third chapter that James had converted Lawrence into a pluralist, leading him to declare in the essay 'Him with His Tail in his Mouth': 'we live in a multiple universe. I am a chick that absolutely refuses to chirp inside the monistic egg' (RDP 312:33).[256] Unsurprisingly, therefore, Lawrence's answer to the modern sensation of

[254] This phrase will be discussed further in the conclusion.
[255] In Lawrence's other major travel work, *Mornings in Mexico*, he does indeed successfully find some genuine glimpses of other possible worlds. I return to this in chapter 7.
[256] Lawrence says something similar (reconfirming that he had initially been attracted by monistic pantheism, but had finished up rejecting it) in the Melville essay in the final version of *Studies in Classic American Literature*

meaninglessness was to focus on individual beings. James's pluralism, by putting the emphasis on the 'each' (the individual or the particular) rather than the 'all' (the whole totality of the world), contends that the world we live in is not a universe but a multiverse (PU 159). As we have seen, James insisted on the real possibility of 'distributive ways of being' (PU 142), according to which each individual would be like a little 'knot of relations' distributed throughout space and time. If this is so, our totalizing mental conceptions are inadequate to render the 'concrete pulse of experience' in which 'all real units of experience *overlap*' (PU 141). In fact, in every present moment, each individual is:

> … a little past, a little future, a little awareness of our own body, of each other's persons, of these sublimities we are trying to talk about, of the earth's geography and the direction of history, of truth and error, of good and bad, and of who knows how much more? Feeling, however dimly and subconsciously, all these things, your pulse of inner life is continuous with them, belongs to them and they to it. (PU 141)

Thus, 'the rush of our thought forward through its fringes is the everlasting peculiarity of its life. We realise this life as something always off its balance, something in transition, something that shoots out of a darkness through a dawn into a brightness that we feel to be the dawn fulfilled' (PU 139). Our field of consciousness is 'a centre surrounded by a fringe that shades insensibly into a subconscious more' (PU 141).[257] This is why Lawrence so frequently refers to man and his circumambient environment: we are all a centre surrounded by a fringe of relationships.[258]

Whereas James merely asserted its possibility, Nietzsche, as Lawrence knew, actually did believe the world was organized distributively, as a collection of all the individual perspectives. In a well-known passage from *The Will to Power*, Nietzsche described an incongruent world of relationships and different points of view: 'the world […] does not exist as a world "in itself"; it is essentially a world of relationships; under certain conditions it has a differing aspect from every point; its being is essentially different from every point, every point resists it—and the sum of these is in every case quite incongruent' (Nietzsche, WP 306). Lawrence believed that

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(1922) where he writes: 'There must be true separatenesses as well. Melville was, at the core, a mystic and an idealist. Perhaps, so am I. And he stuck to his ideal guns. I abandon mine' (SCAL 132:32).

[257] James's manner of speaking might remind us of Lawrence's poppy in *Study of Thomas Hardy* which 'hangs at the brink of the void, scarlet and radiant for a little while, imminent on the unknown, a signal, an out-post, an advance-guard, a forlorn, splendid flag, quivering from the brink of the unfathomed void, into which it flutters silently' (STH 18:30).

[258] See chapter 7.

these pluralistic ideas had also been confirmed by Einstein's theory of relativity, as is obvious from *Fantasia of the Unconscious* (1921): 'the latest craze is Mr. Einstein's Relativity Theory. Curious that everybody catches fire at the word Relativity. There must be something in the mere suggestion, which we have been waiting for' (PFU 190:6).[259] Lawrence well understood that Einstein was denying that there was such a thing as absolute space and time, and asserting that time and space were always relative to the perceiver, a stance entirely concordant with Lawrence's own position: 'I feel inclined to Relativity myself. I think there is no one absolute principle in the universe. I think everything is relative. […] And that all things in the universe are just relative to the individual living creature. And that individual living creatures are relative to each other' (PFU 191:3).[260] It is for this reason that Lawrence is so enthusiastic about Einstein; for Lawrence, he seemed to have proved that the world should no longer be regarded as a whole, but as a collection of particulars. Lawrence praises Einstein for pulling out the 'very axle pin […] now the universe has escaped from the pin which was pushed through it, like an impaled fly vainly buzzing' (FU 73:7).[261] Lawrence is here talking of the phenomenal world of existence, the *three-dimensional* world. Crossland suggests that there is 'a definite sense that Lawrence is, so to speak, trying to have his cake and eat it where relatives and absolutes are concerned' (Crossland 103), but, of course, as we have seen, there is for Lawrence, a *fourth dimension* outside of time and space in which there is an absolute, meaning that for Lawrence there is no contradiction to saying (in a phrase which has baffled many critics), as he does in *Kangaroo*, that 'even relativity is only relative. Relative to the absolute' (K 280).

All this explains what Lawrence means when he considers Cézanne's apples, or Van Gogh's painting of the sunflower in the first version of the essay *Morality and the Novel* (1925): 'if Van Gogh paints sunflowers, he achieves a relation between himself, as man, and the yellow sunflower. His painting does not represent the sunflower in itself. Heaven only knows what the sunflower itself is. And the camera will give you the most unexceptional, universal picture of

[259] He was far from being the only one to do so, and, clearly, these ideas were circulating freely in intellectual circles. Quinones notes, for example, that Ortega had already drawn attention to the links between Nietzsche's theories and in an essay in 1916 called 'Verdad y Perspectivismo', which denied that there is any one absolute perspective or any such thing as absolute space (Quinones 114-115). There does not appear to be any evidence suggesting Lawrence knew of Ortega.

[260] Crossland asserts that Lawrence failed to grasp the fact that Einstein's special theory of relativity did in fact have an absolute, which is that 'the speed of light is, in Brose's words, 'the limiting or maximum velocity in nature and has thus a universal significance"' (Crossland 82). But the point Lawrence is making when he writes, 'what I doubt is the equation formula' (PFU 190) is that Einstein is still clinging onto the hope that there can be a final explanation, which Lawrence denies.

[261] Elise Brault-Dreux also draws attention to the image of the axle pin in *Fantasia*: 'an image which stands for the absolute that was jeopardized by Einstein's theory of relativity' (Brault-Dreux, "Creep closer in, that I am more"—Is there a "theory of human relativity" in the Poetics of Look! We Have Come Through? 3).

it' (STH 241:3). Any object, any animal, any human has, therefore, an entirely unique perspective, as Donald Crosby explains in his article 'Two Perspectives on Metaphysical Perspectivism: Nietzsche and Whitehead':

> Nietzsche's version of perspectivism also implies what might be called a radical relationism. For instance, whatever world there is or worlds there are for us humans, it is a world or worlds in relation to our perspectives as human beings. If we had ten different senses instead of only five, or if our senses were greatly augmented, the world for us would be quite different. If we could routinely hear like a bat, smell like a dog, see with the eye of an eagle, or have an ant's sense of taste, the world would be different. (Crosby)

In the article cited above Crosby also asserts that 'if we were radically different in size, either smaller or larger by many orders of magnitude than we in fact are, the world would also be different. Interestingly, Crosby's assertion is almost the exact replica of what Lawrence wrote in 1914 in *Study of Thomas Hardy*: 'When I am in a moving train, strictly, the land moves under me, I [and] the train are still. If I were both land and train, if I were large enough, there would be no motion. And if I were very, very small, every fibre of the train would be in motion for me, the point of rest would be infinitely reduced' (STH 60:6). Lawrence's point is that it is all a question of perspective—if we were a million times larger, the train would not even seem to be moving. And if we were a million times smaller, we would see that even the metal of which the train is constructed is in permanent vibration. In fact, he writes, 'this table on which I write, which I call at rest, I know is really in motion' (STH 60:22).

Another good example of Lawrence's relativism is to be found in his psychological treatise *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, in which he specifically comments upon the difficulties involved in interpreting another person's perspective:

> realize that what I say is not what you hear, but something uttered in the midst of my isolation, and arriving strangely changed and travel-worn down the long curve of your own individual circumambient atmosphere. I may say [Boo][262], but heaven alone knows what the goose hears. (PFU 72:27)

[262] I have written 'Boo', as the Cambridge Edition cannot be right to say: 'I may say Boh'! One says Boo! to a goose, not Boh! It must be an error.

Obviously, the way in which the goose interprets the world must be quite different from that of a human being. The same is the case for every human being, every species, every living creature: each exists in its own particular world.[263] Thus, as Jonathan Pollock points out, each species has what Uexküll called 'its own specific milieu or *Umwelt* which is not to be confused with a common shared environment (*Umgebung*)', and '"the same universe of Space and Time" can contain any number of dimensions or *Umwelten*' (Pollock, Tortoise Love: DH Lawrence on Reptile Orgasm). Similarly, Bergson in *Creative Evolution* also argued that the essence of the world was barely accessible to humanity. Since all we can know of it, are the immediate relations in which we find ourselves embroiled, the whole can never be known.[264] However, this means, as Nietzsche suggests, that there is in fact an infinity of possible perspectives and interpretations. In *The Gay Science* he puts it as follows: '… the world has once again become infinite to us: insofar as we cannot reject the possibility *that it includes infinite interpretations*' (Nietzsche, GS 239).

Nietzsche had also argued that the way the world appears depends on its utility with regard to what is preferable for the perceiver: 'every centre of force adopts a perspective toward the entire remainder, i.e., its own particular valuation, mode of action, and mode of resistance' (Nietzsche, WP 305).[265] Different world views must, therefore, engender quite different perspectives. Lawrence makes this clear too, in the following reference to nature in the rather stinging 'Review of a Second Contemporary Verse Anthology':

> You say nature is always nature, the sky is always the sky. But sit still and consider for one moment what sort of nature it was the Romans saw on the face of the earth, and what sort of heavens the medievals knew above them, and your sky will begin to crack like glass. (IR 233:34)

James claimed that: 'the facts and worths of life need many cognizers to take them in. There is no point of view absolutely public and universal' (James, Writings 1878 -1899 708).[266] No one

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[263] Lawrence echoes the theories of the biologist Uexküll, who makes a distinction between the *Umgebung* (the shared place in time and space) and the *Umwelt*, the individual world of every living creature, whether it be a tick or any other kind of animal.

[264] '"… the essence of things escapes us, and will escape us always; we move among relations; the absolute is not in our province; we are brought to a stand before the Unknowable."—But for the human intellect, after too much pride, this is really an excess of humility' (Bergson, *The Creative Evolution* xi).

[265] Schwartz, for instance, discussing the poetry of immediate experience explains that Nietzsche, and the later James, maintain 'that there is no fixed division between subject and object; transient practical interests determine the boundary between *my* experience and the experienced *world*, internal sensation and external object. Immediate experience may therefore be defined as personal and subjective, impersonal and objective, or as something between the two' (Schwartz 63).

[266] In the Preface to 'Talks to Teachers on Psychology'.

account of the world and no single *point of view* can take everything in. This implies at the same time that 'every bit of us at every moment is part and parcel of a wider self' (James, Writings 1902-1910 762). For Crosby, 'there is one respect in which the world is other than us, but another in which it is contained within us' (Crosby 60). In other words, what something *is*, is not something invariable and fixed, it is something fundamentally interactive.

5.2.2 'A knot of relations': 'Everything in the world is relative to everything else. And every living thing is related to every other living thing' (RDP 367).

As a result, as Lawrence writes in *Fantasia of the Unconscious*: 'Everything is a question of relativity. Not only is every force relative to other force or forces, but every existence is relative to other existences. Not only does the life of man depend on man, beast, and herb, but on the sun and moon, and the stars', even going so far as to suggest that the sun and moon and the stars also depend in turn upon the herbs, beasts and men (PFU 188:19). In 'Chaos in Poetry' Lawrence describes it as 'an iridescent confusion of sense-impression, sound and touch and sight all running into one another, blending into a vagueness which is a new world' (I & R 114:7).[267] As Quinones points out in *Mapping Literary Modernism*: 'the world is, really according to Whitehead (and D. H. Lawrence in his many essays) "a manifold of prehensions"—that is, situations of relatedness existing between subjects and objects' (Quinones 117).

Rachel Crossland in *Modernist Physics: Waves, Particles, and Relativities in the Writings of Virginia Woolf and D. H. Lawrence* is probably correct to say that Lawrence started to multiply the references to relativity and relationships after he read Einstein and wrote *Fantasia of the Unconscious* (Crossland 121), but she is obliged to concede that the idea was already present in Lawrence's writing beforehand: 'his writing of relationships after reading Einstein and after writing *Fantasia* is not drastically different from his writing of them in his early novels […] thus Lawrence was already moving in the direction suggested to him by Einstein's ideas before he had read about them and before they were widely known' (Crossland 122-123). Crossland correctly notes the influence of James, but like Wallace, she refers only to *Pragmatism*, and makes no mention of *A Pluralistic Universe* (Crossland 108-9, 122) (J. Wallace, D. H. Lawrence: Science and the Post-Human 95). In the essay 'Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine', Lawrence writes that 'every creature exists in time and space. And in

[267] Lawrence is actually discussing a particular poem, but it is an act of attention that yields a glimpse of the true nature of the chaos of the world.

time and space it exists relatively to all other existence, and can never be absolved. Its existence impinges on other existences, and is itself impinged upon' (RDP 358:23). In other words, it is a world in which everything is co-penetration and interrelationships, in which, 'man swims in the stream along with all things, and is relative to all things' (STH 236).

Emmanuele Coccia in his book *La vie des plantes: une métaphysique du mélange*, sets out a metaphysics of mixture, imagining the world as a fluid in which we are all immersed. In this manner, a fish, is paradigmatic of every living being. Not only does the water surround the fish, but it is actually inside it, traversing it, leaving it (Coccia 48). The world and the subject are inter-penetrated and as Nietzsche says in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, 'Es gibt kein Aussen!' ('how could there be an outside-of-me? There is no outside!') (Nietzsche, TSZ 234). It means, to state it differently, that all beings in the world are immersed in flows, and partaking in them. Indeed, Lawrence took his painter friend Brewster Ghiselin to task for painting fish in a way that isolated them and 'deprived them of their actual relation to things, to water, for instance'; it was, he thought, a way of 'refusing to admit and to express the relatedness, the vital interchange, between them and all other things, each in their special quality and degree' (Nehls 1959: 295). Lawrence himself, according to Brewster, was 'trying to find some expression in paint for the relations of things […] perhaps by means of the touching and mingling of colours flowing from different things…' (Nehls III 295). For analogous reasons, Heidegger, thinking and writing at roughly the same period as Lawrence, felt he had to invent a new concept, *Dasein*, as a way of revisiting the artificiality of separating the self and the world as if they were two different things. Thus, in *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* Heidegger declared that 'self and world belong together in the single entity, the Dasein. Self and world are not two beings, like subject and object, or like I and thou, but self and world are the basic determination of the Dasein itself in the unity of the structure of being-in-the-world' (Heidegger, Basic Problems 297). In the world of flows, the relationship with the world is not that of a subject to an object, but rather, that of a jellyfish to the sea (Coccia 48). The world is a continuum, and divisions are arbitrary. Certainly, for Lawrence, the idea that the world is a continuum was an important one, and as we will see, it also informed his historical vision. In the midst of a world which is in constant movement is each of us, a little moving centre:

> We move, and the rock of ages moves. And since we move and move for ever, in no discernible direction, there is no centre to the movement, to us. To us, the centre shifts at every moment. […] There is nothing to do but to maintain a true relationship to the things we move with and amongst and against. (STH 167:11)

Obviously, this means that the self always remains in flux, so that constant readjustment is always required.[268]

5.2.3 The Circumambient Universe:

In her memoirs Frieda, Lawrence recalled that 'to Lawrence his surroundings were a mystery, a miracle through all his life. When you think of a whale or a butterfly, or forget-me-not or an oak tree, it is staggering to think of the endless variety that lives along with us, much too much to take in with one short lifetime' (F. Lawrence, The Memoirs and Correspondence 139). In earlier chapters, the influence of James's pluralism on Lawrence has been repeatedly noted. James's conception of a distributed world, composed of particular things—each one of them constituting a peculiar 'knot of relations'— clearly constitutes a vital element in Lawrence's thought, and the frequent use of the phrase 'circumambient universe' (or 'circumambient world') is testimony to the centrality of this notion in Lawrence's thinking.[269] Everyone, he writes in *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* has their 'own individual circumambient atmosphere' (PFU 72:30). This seems to be what Lawrence is trying to infer in the opening lines of the series of travel sketches, *Mornings in Mexico*, where he seems to progressively zoom in on the individuality of his perspective:

> One says Mexico: one means, after all, *one little town* away South in the Republic: and in this little town, one rather *crumbly adobe house* built round two sides of a garden patio: and of this house, *one spot* on the deep, shady veranda facing inwards to the trees, where there are an onyx table and three rocking-chairs and one little wooden chair, a pot with carnations, and *a person with a pen*. We talk so grandly, in capital letters, about Morning in Mexico. All it amounts to is *one little individual looking at a bit of sky and trees*, then looking down at *the page of his exercise book*. It is a pity we don't always remember this. (MM 11:1, my italics)

Thus, starting with the rather grandiose title *Mornings in Mexico*, we first go from the country of Mexico taken as a whole, to one little town in the South; then to one particular house in this town; and then to one particular spot in this particular house; before passing from this particular

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[268] 'Me, man alive, I am a very curious assembly of incongruous parts. My yea! of today is oddly different from my yea! of yesterday. My tears of tomorrow will have nothing to do with my tears of a year ago' (STH 196:35).
[269] See also in the novel *Aaron's Rod*: Lily seems to Aaron to resemble an animal 'perfectly at one with its surroundings' (AR 292:32), and his is a state like 'a rabbit quite still and wide-eyed, with a faintly-twitching nose. *Not passivity, but alert enjoyment of being central, life-central in one's own little circumambient world*' (AR 292:35, my italics).

spot to one particular person, writing at a table looking at the trees; and finally, to the horizon of this individual person, surrounded by nothing but a bit of sky and trees. In other words, he is talking about the circumambient world of that particular person at that particular time. Everything else is mere abstraction. Thus, for example, we find Lawrence in 'Education of the People' using the image of the stars to convey this understanding:

> Sirius must move and flash in his own circumambient space, single. Who knows what strange relation and intercommunion he has with Aldebaran, with the Pole Star, even with ourselves? But whatever his intercommunion, he is never raped from his own singleness, he never falls from his own isolate self. The same for the child. (RDP 139:22)

Stars represent an effective way for Lawrence to communicate the idea of a single being always in relation with its environment: 'we mean, in the first place, the recognition of the exquisite arresting manifoldness of being, multiplicity, plurality, as the stars are plural in their starry singularity' (RDP 138:29).

The same idea is to be found in the essay 'Aristocracy', when he declares that: 'in so far as I am I, a being who is proud and in place, I have a connection with my circumambient universe, and I know my place' (RDP 373:22). One knows one's place because one must recognize that it is only possible to know the little world of which we are the centre, and must recognise that every other individual being, whether bird, beast or flower, also represents its own little circumambient world, of which *it* itself constitutes the centre, and that it is therefore, likewise, a manifestation of the Creative Mystery—so that Lawrence can write: 'when the white cock crows, I do not hear myself, or some anthropomorphic conceit, crowing. I hear the not-me, the voice of the Holy Ghost' (RDP 373:24). Coming across the white cockerel, therefore, the aim is not to get in touch with one's own idea of what it is (which is merely an anthropomorphic conceit), but to get into relation with this other manifestation of the miracle of life, to see the revelation of God in the other thing. As Lawrence emphasizes in 'Aristocracy' (1925), 'Whoever can establish, or initiate a new connection between mankind and the circumambient universe is, in his own degree, a saviour' (RDP 370:8). And many types of relationships are possible:

> This is how I "save my soul" by accomplishing a pure relationship between me and another person, me and other people, me and a nation, me and a race of men, me

> and the animals, me and the trees or flowers, me and the earth, me and the skies and sun and stars, me and the moon: an infinity of pure relations, big and little, like the stars of the sky: that makes our eternity, for each one of us, me and the timber I am sawing, the lines of force I follow; me and the dough I knead for bread, me and the very motion with which I write, me and the bit of gold I have got. (STH 172:10)

Lawrence suggests that: 'if we think about it, we find that our life consists in this achieving of a pure relationship between ourselves and the living universe about us' (STH 172:8). If we do succeed in getting in touch with the 'living universe about us', then we come into being, and we can live meaningful lives: 'This, if we knew it, is our life and our eternity: the subtle, perfected relation between me and my whole circumambient universe. And morality is that delicate, for ever trembling and changing *balance* between me and my circumambient universe, which precedes and accompanies a true relatedness' (STH 172:10).

James had drawn a distinction between a multiverse (the EACH), and a universe (the ALL), and concluded that the former is a concrete, living reality, whereas the latter can only be imagined. It is clear from 'Education of the People' that Lawrence agrees: 'we don't find fault with the mental consciousness, the daylight consciousness of mankind. Not at all. We only find fault with the One-and-Allness which is attributed to it. It isn't One-and-All, any more than the sun is one and all' (RDP 136:37). Continuing to spin out the metaphor of the sun (in which the sun represents the *all*, as opposed to the *each*), he points out that 'after all, it is the little spheres which live, and the great sun is instrumental to their living, even as the powerful arc-lamps high over Piccadilly only serve to illuminate the little feet of foot-passengers' (RDP 137:5). Hence, Lawrence criticises 'all our oneness and our infinite— which does but mount up to the sum-total of human mentality' (RDP 137:9)—as a departure from life,[270] and in *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* Lawrence emphasizes that part of a child's early development is 'to extricate itself from cohesion with the circumambient universe' (PFU 23:27), and thereby to assert its individuality. According to Lawrence, that is all we can do: 'finish for ever the old

[270] This is the point which lies behind Lawrence's version of Plato's "allegory of the cave". Unlike Plato's prisoner, this man is only let out in the daytime and sees only the oneness of the sun, so that he believes there is only this oneness. When he is let out at night and beholds the stars for the first time, he will see not 'a mass of homogeneity, like sunlight. But a fathomless multiplicity, like the stars at night' (RDP 135:12) and, consequently, 'all that he counted eternal, infinite, *Everything*, suddenly shrivelled like a vast, burnt roof of paper, or a vast paper lantern: the eternal light gone out: and behold, multiplicity, twinkling, proud multiplicity, utterly indifferent of oneness' (RDP 136:10).

unison with homogeneity. Let every man fall apart into a fathomless, single isolation of being, exultant at his own core, and apart. Then, dancing magnificent in our own space, as the spheres dance in space, we can set up the extra-individual communication. Across the space comes the thrill of communication. There is an approach, a flash and blaze of contact' (RDP 135:5). Following James, therefore, Lawrence believes that we are connected to the whole, but only indirectly: 'we and the cosmos are one. The cosmos is a vast living body, of which we are still parts' (A 77:35). As a consequence, to live well we should not strive to get into relation with the *whole world*, as the monistic pantheists had vainly tried to do (a purely mental and imaginary exercise), but instead to get into touch with *one's immediate environment*, for 'there is nothing man can do but maintain himself in true relationship to his contiguous universe' (STH 117:20).

Since each person is a little world, or as James put it, 'a centre surrounded by a fringe that shades insensibly into a subconscious more' (PU 141) (see chapter 2), then there is as such no such thing as an individual that is not, in fact, a network of relations. We only become individuals through relationships, as he points out in the essay 'We need One Another': 'we have our very individuality in relationship. Let us swallow this important and prickly fact' (LEA 298:34). The idea that we are a knot of relations is important because it is the relationships we have at any one moment which make us unique. In the opening pages of the essay 'John Galsworthy' Lawrence declares that to be able to recognise what makes someone an authentic individual and not just a social being, a standard for judging a human is needed. According to Lawrence, for Sainte-Beuve, man was the standard of goodness; for Pater, the capacity for pure thought; for MacCaulay it was humbleness of spirit; for Gibbons it was individual morality (STH 209-210). But all of these standards are rejected by Lawrence in favour of his own: the capacity to form relationships. Someone who 'feels himself together within the great continuum of the universe' (STH 211:23) is 'not divided or cut off' (STH 211:24); in other terms, 'he is one with the living continuum of the universe. From this he cannot be swept away' (STH 211: 25). Lawrence even goes so far as to suggest that immorality is basically unthinkable for whoever really strives to get into contact with their immediate environment, suggesting that 'nothing is true, or good, or right, except in its own living relatedness to its own circumambient universe; to the things that are in the stream with it' (STH 167:32). Fundamentally, as he writes in the wartime essay 'The Reality of Peace', this 'primal desire, the desire to come into being' (RDP 40:19), stems from a longing to belong to life, and it is all, Lawrence states, 'we shall ever know of a *primum mobile*' (RDP 40:21).

Of course, as Lawrence maintains in *Apocalypse*, we can refuse to admit these relations, but this always leads to a split: 'I am a part of the great whole, and I can never escape. But I *can* deny my connections, break them, and become a fragment. Then I am wretched' (A149:28). Hence it is, that Lawrence believes men were more fulfilled in earlier times, at times when there was a oneness between man and his surrounding universe. For Lawrence, the idea of separating an individual from his or her environment only arose at the time of the Greeks with the arrival of the spirit of abstraction: 'what is the soul of a man, except that in him which is himself alone, suspended in immediate relationship to the sum of things? Not isolated or cut off. The Greeks began the cutting apart business' (RDP 316:16). In the earlier draft of the John Galsworthy essay (known in *Phoenix* as 'Individual Consciousness vs Social Consciousness'), he contends that, however paradoxical it might seem 'the individual is only truly himself when he is unconscious of his own individuality, when he is unaware of his own isolation, when he is not split into subjective and objective, when there is no *me or you*, no *me or it* in his consciousness, but the *me and you*, the *me and it* is a living continuum, as if all were connected by a living membrane' (STH 249:22).[271]

5.3 The Great Split, 2000 years of modernity: 'we are at the end of the philosophic state. What next?' (A 182)

Lawrence in his non-fiction also sought to explore the known vestiges and remains of ancient civilisations, hoping that from the remaining traces it might be possible to glean some insights into alternatives to modernity—leading in particular to hermeneutic works like *Apocalypse* or *Sketches of Etruscan Places*. He was interested in history too and in one of the unpublished fragments of *Apocalypse* he sketches out a very useful schema of what he considered to be the great movements in world history. In 'Fragment 2' Lawrence states that 'man has had, as far as we can tell, three great phases of consciousness, each carrying its own culture' (A 180:23). These are as follows:

Phase 1: Cosmic-religion world view

Phase 2: God-religious world view ("the fall")

Phase 3: Philosophico-scientific world-view

[271] See also the final version of this essay where he writes of, 'the thing most precious to any human being, that core of manhood or womanhood, naive, innocent at-oneness with the living universe-continuum, which alone makes a man individual and, as an individual, essentially happy' (STH 213:19).

Although there is some evidence that Lawrence really thought these phases of consciousness might really have existed, they are perhaps best taken as a kind of thought experiment, in the same way as Rousseau's *Second Discourse* had postulated an ideal world, a state of nature which could never have really existed, in order to draw out the implications.[272] I will very briefly set out the bare-bones of Lawrence's theory here, before developing them in considerably more detail thereafter.

Whereas the first phase corresponds to a time when there was no separation between man and the cosmos (hints of this consciousness can still be found in ancient tribes, like the American Indians, just as hints may also be found in the vestiges of ancient civilisations like the Etruscans), the second phase occurred (probably around 2000 B.C.) as a result of the first split between man and the cosmos, which led to the first acute awareness of what lies beyond oneself, the not-Me. This phase constitutes what we might call *the Great Split*, and leads to a feeling of lost oneness, from which the need for a God, or Gods, first arises. Finally, a third phase, which started in or around 600 B.C., but with further developments at the period of the Renaissance and the Reformation,[273] corresponds to what we have been calling modernity, a period of reason, science, and the Galilean belief that the universe can be rewritten in a mathematical language.

It is important to note that Lawrence is not entirely negative about the progression to a more objective world view, which has also brought us a greater degree of personal freedom and individuality. Lawrence explains, for instance, in the first version of *Studies in Classic American Literature* that the ancients were also in an impasse, just as we are today:

> …we are so imprisoned in the cul de sac of our mutilated psyche that we are in the first stages of that madness and self-destruction into which the ancients fell when they were imprisoned and driven mad within the cul de sac of the sensual body. (SCAL 206: 26)

[272] 'Il ne faut pas prendre les Recherches dans lesquelles on peut entrer sur ce Sujet, pour des vérités historiques, mais seulement pour des raisonnements hypothétiques et conditionnels ; plus propres à éclaircir la Nature des choses qu'à en montrer la véritable origine' (Rousseau 65-66).
[273] As this is a gradual process, there can be no exact date.

And Lawrence also knew, as we have seen, that a return to the first phase is neither desirable nor possible.[274] In fact, in spite of Lawrence's reputation as a nostalgic, he always maintains that any return to the past is impossible, and repudiated the accusation on numerous occasions:

> We can't go back. We can't go back to the savages: not a stride. We can be in sympathy with them. We can take a great curve in their direction, onwards. But we cannot turn the current of our life backwards, back towards their soft warm twilight and uncreate mud. Not for a moment' (SCAL 127:22).

Indeed, by the end of Lawrence's lifetime, his irritations show through in 'We Need one Another' when he complains: 'I am so tired of being told that I want mankind to go back to the condition of savages. As if modern city people weren't about the crudest, rawest, most crassly savage monkeys that ever existed' (LEA 302:13). Nonetheless, Lawrence is convinced that the past can potentially yield us helpful insights about how to live. Lawrence was interested in the way that true historical writing should confront rather than exclude the past, as Salgado suggests in his analysis of Lawrence's history book for children *Movements in European History* (Salgado 237). Lawrence, in his introduction to this work, asserts that, even for children, history is not just about 'the ascertaining and verifying of facts, and the ascribing of certain sequence and order to such facts' (MEH 8:33); history proper, he writes, is 'nakedly veracious' (MEH 8:36), and we must not '*shut out* the strange, vast, terrifying realty of the past' (MEH 7:21).

The early Greeks, Egyptians and Babylonians (and today the few primitive civilisations like the Native American Indians which remained largely untouched by the axial age), lived in a world so different to ours that we can no longer understand them. Lawrence suggests that this is why it is so hard for us not only to understand Pagan thinkers but even Bushman folklore—because they use images rather than reasoning and language:

> It is very difficult for us to understand the pagan mind. When we are given translations of stories from the ancient Egyptian, the stories are almost entirely unintelligible. It may be the translations' fault: who can pretend really to read

[274] William York Tindall, an early critic, despite useful insights, set the tone for many by erroneously misrepresenting him as a primitivist, even as a sentimental romantic, yearning for past civilizations, and hating science and all that is modern: 'His sufferings and responses were those of the sentimental artist in our times' (Tindall, 199-200).

> hieroglyph script! But when we are given translations from Bushman folk-lore, we find ourselves in almost the same puzzled state. The words may be intelligible, but the connection between them is impossible to follow. (A96:12)

The fact that we find it hard to understand the period preceding this point may well indicate that our modern way of thinking commences at this time. The end of Lawrence's first phase of consciousness corresponds quite closely to the German philosopher Karl Jaspers's description of the axial period in *The Origin and Goal of History* (1953), which followed on from a sort of collapse in the late Bronze Age. The axial period is a period of total collapse, leading to a dark age, and then subsequently alphabetisation (there was cuneiform, hieroglyphs before, but these were not as accessible as alphabetic literacy) of course which enabled second-order thinking (and hence self-awareness, metacognition); abstractions, greater awareness of our own thoughts which we can externalize (Jaspers). This is what Lawrence is getting at when he discusses the introductions written to Plato by the classical scholar Benjamin Jowett.[275] For Lawrence, Jowett can only explain Plato using the logical, philosophical concepts of his era, and occludes the pagan aspects which are clearly present: 'flatter ourselves as we may, the gulf between Professor Jowett's mentality and Plato's mentality is almost impassable; and Professor Jowett's Plato is, in the end, just Professor Jowett with hardly a breath of the living Plato. Plato divorced from his great pagan background is really only another Victorian statue in a toga' (A 96: 21). Although Plato is often thought of as a very rational thinker, Lawrence points out that many paganistic vestiges remain in Plato.[276] As he explains in 'Fragment 1', a book needs to be interpreted as an entry point into a different world. In the act of reading we should, 'recover the real background, put the book into natural relationship with its time and place and spirit, and it lives again with a fine new life' (A 154:13). Lawrence reads the *Apocalypse* in just this way, hoping to glean some insights from the pagan traces that still remain in the book, a glimpse of a world more in contact with the cosmos. In Fragment 2, Lawrence writes: 'an Apocalypse is a revelation of what lies beyond this world: really, it is a journey into heaven' (A 184:27). In the same way, he seeks to interpret the Etruscan tombs or the rituals of the Native American Indians in ways that might open up alternative possibilities for living in today's man-made

[275] Benjamin Jowett was very well known as a translator of Plato, but what Lawrence is referring to is the long scholarly introductions which preceded each translation. These lengthy introductions to each work were intended to show the practical and logical relevance of Plato's philosophical ideas for contemporary readers.

[276] Plato's works contain many passages that may have pagan origins, the *Myth of Er* in *Republic* being one example of many possible others.

world. Modern science, Lawrence writes, 'hates to go one step beyond the Greeks. Why be afraid of the great ancient pre-Greek world! It goes deeper and deeper into time' (A 183:13).

5.3.1 Phase 1: Cosmic-religion consciousness

Lawrence's basic credo was laid out in the early chapters: mankind's desire for union with his fellow-men, with a woman, with the cosmos. However, in this first phase, Lawrence posits the previous existence of a state of oneness in which all these needs would have been redundant. This is because, firstly, it is a period of purely collective consciousness when people instinctively think and feel together (A 180:25), he calls this a 'feeling-in-unison' (A 180:30). Secondly, the need for a sexual partner is absent; there would be no call for it in a world of oneness since sexuality stems from an 'awareness of separateness and fragmentariness' (A 181:16). Thirdly, there would have been no need for any God, or Gods, because the contact with the cosmos was continuous and unbroken; and this cosmos would have met all of man's needs:[277]

> In the beginning, the cosmos itself was the great Power that Is. The cosmos was alive, and its power was a great living effluence. Looking into the sky was like looking into the eyes of some mighty living creature, or being: and even today, we cannot look into the eyes even of a cat or a baby without quivering from the naked contact with life and the power of life. The universe was all power, unmanned derived power from the cosmos. (A171:16)

In other words, there was both power (from the cosmos) and unison (of mankind with it and between themselves). Consequently, Lawrence calls this phase 'purely religious'—taking religion to mean *being in connection*.

Probably Lawrence's most sustained attempt to imagine what this kind of world might be like is to be found in the essay 'Pan in America', again perhaps best thought of as a kind of thought-experiment. Lawrence postulates a pre-abstraction world with Pan representing the period before *the Great Split*, a time when there was no language, no division into spirit and matter, no gods and not-gods:

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[277] A similar theory has been formulated more recently by the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor in *A Secular Age*. In opposition to Max Weber's well-known description of the modern world as a world of 'disenchantment', he describes the pre-axial world as the *continuous cosmos*, and calls it a period of 'enchantment' (Taylor, A Secular Age). He terms the subsequent splitting apart of man and cosmos 'disembedding'.

> Go back beyond the Greeks with their passion for intellectualisation, and back beyond the image-makers and idol-worshippers, who felt their ideas clumsily in stone, and you come, as one travelling deeper and deeper into an unbroken, living forest, to the old world of Pan, of all. (MM 201:34)

Lawrence always associates Pan with darkness because sight in itself creates separation and therefore, Pan is hard to catch a glimpse of. In the earlier (slightly corrupted) version, Lawrence writes: 'before the gentleman with the brown face and horns and goat legs was visualised, before the hosts of nymphs and dryads, fauns and satyrs were discriminated among the flowers and fruit, an <older,> {a greater}, darker more mysterious presence. The Pan who was Everything, and a very great God, among the most ancient of trees' (MM 201:18).[278] Man before getting separated from the world, was without language (words being another form of mental abstraction):

> When man first emerged from the womb of Pan, like an infant it spoke a primary syllable, *Pan*!—or *Ra*! The first syllable of the born mind. But before the mind was born into separateness, with a power of creating its own abstract reality, its own spiritual world, or imaginary world, or ideal world, before the first Word, or Logos was uttered, then mankind lived in the world of the unconceived, unspoken Pan. Man himself *was* Pan, along with all the rest. (MM 202:7)

Thus, this idealized pre-Greek world was far closer to a state of oneness than our own; the introduction of the Greek Logos being the first manifestation of the birth of the split between man and the cosmos. Pan symbolizes a period anterior to this split:

> When Pan was greatest, he was not even Pan. He was nameless and unconceived mentally. Just as a small baby new from the womb may say Mama! Dada! Whereas in the womb it said nothing, so humanity in the womb of Pan, said nought. But when humanity was born into a separate idea of itself, it said *Pan*! In the days before Pan got too-much separated off from the universe, he *was* Pan, along with all the rest. (MM 157:25)

[278] The brackets are presumably due to the difficulty of deciphering the manuscript.

In the essay 'The Novel' (1925) Lawrence says that the flame that leaps in you is 'the oldest Pan-mystery. God is the life-flame in all the universe' (STH 189). In a letter to E. M. Forster in 1915, he had told him that Pan is 'all that dark, concentrated, complete, all-containing surge of which I am the fountain' (2L 275), telling Forster that *his* Pan is all wrong, 'don't you see Pan is the undifferentiated root and stem drawing out of unfathomable darkness […] you should not confuse him with universal love, as you tend to do. You are very confused. You give Pan the attributes of Christ' (2L 275). Forster's version of Pan is too much of a holistic mental concept for Lawrence.

5.3.2 Phase 2: God-religious Consciousness

Lawrence believes that there occurred a great split between the subjective and the objective, 'a "fall" from unison-at-oneness' (A 181:23), in or around 2000 B.C. During this second phase, the separation of the subjective and the objective led to a new awareness of oneself 'as an apart, fragmentary thing' (A 181:11); and this first awareness of an objective exterior, a 'not-me', means that for the first time mankind actually came to have need of a personal God, to act as an intermediary between man and the 'lost cosmos' (A 181:25):

> Now when man first "fell" into knowledge or self-consciousness, I believe the first thing he did was to lie down and gaze at the stars. Then he felt himself back in his old oneness: he was again at one with the mighty and living cosmos. But alas, now he was doomed to view it objectively. (A182:20)

It becomes apparent from Lawrence's description that the first phase would have been a 'pre-phallic' one, since phallic symbols only come to the fore during the second phase: the phallos, writes Lawrence, is 'the point at which man is broken off from his context, and at which he can be re-joined. In his awareness of sex, which is awareness of separateness and fragmentariness, lies man's sense of shame and "sin"' (A181:15).[279]

The fact that Lawrence also calls it the tragic conception—'the fall into knowledge, or self-awareness, the fall into tragedy and into "sin"' (A 181:13)—may well be an indication of

[279] In 'Fragment 1', however, he suggests that the phallic period may have arisen during the end period of the first phase 'towards the end of the great pagan era, though long before Christianity or Plato, cosmic power came to be conceived as phallic power, and the act of marriage was the consummation of man's divinity. But this was only towards the *end* of the pagan era' (A 171:24).

the influence of a short book by the Cambridge scholar Jane Harrison, *Ancient Art and Ritual*, in which Lawrence thought he had found historical confirmation of the way in which this separation had emerged. Harrison was a member of the so-called Cambridge Ritualist group,[280] which had an influence on many Modernist writers (as Martha Carpentier shows in her book: *Ritual, myth and the Modernist text: the influence of Jane Ellen Harrison*).[281] Lawrence started reading Harrison's book in October 1913, writing on the 26th of October, 'the book on Art and Ritual pleases me most just now. I am just in the mood for it. It just fascinates me to see art coming out of religious yearning — one's presentation of what one wants to feel again, deeply. But I haven't got far in' (2L 90). He was still reading it or re-reading it nearly two months later. In another letter dated the 2nd of December 1913, he wrote: 'I love travels and rather raw philosophy and when you can lend me books about Greek religions and the rise of Greek Drama, or Egyptian influences— or things like that— I love them. I got a fearful lot out of a scrubby book *Art and Ritual* — one of the Universal Knowledge Shilling series. It is stupidly put, but it lets one in for an idea that helps one immensely' (2L 114). Finally, in a letter dated the 17th of December 1913 Lawrence wrote: 'You have no idea how much I got out of that *Ritual and Art* book—it is a good idea but a school marmy woman who writes it' (2L 119). Despite his reservations about the way it was written, there is no doubt that Lawrence read it very carefully over a period of a few months.

Harrison shows how Greek tragedy had evolved from Bacchic rites, and that by gradually introducing spectators into their rituals, the Greeks had slowly but surely transformed ritual (*dromenon*, things done) into the spectacle of modern drama. According to Harrison, the prologues, the messengers' speeches, the choruses were the surviving vestiges of ancient rituals, performed to Dionysos. These changes can still be perceived in the archaeological evolutions of the Greek Theatre. Initially there were circular spaces for ritual dances in which everyone participated (called *orchestras*) and there would have been no seats as there were no spectators. As ritual evolved into drama, people started to watch rather than merely participate, and theatres with seats came into being. The history of the Greek stage is, therefore, one long

[280] The *Cambridge Ritualists* were an important part of a group of British classical scholars who sought to discover mythic and/or ritual patterns underlying art — Frazer, Jane Ellen Harrison, Gilbert Murray, F. M. Cornford and A.B. Cook. It is something of a misnomer to call them the Cambridge ritualists as not all of them were from Cambridge. According to Robert Ackerman in his book *The Myth and Ritual School,* they worked on the origins of Greek Drama: 'On the basis of the comparative anthropological study of "primitive" religion they concluded that drama evolved from certain magic fertility rituals performed in the worship of a deity who died and was reborn. Dionysos was the Greek example of this class of gods' (xi). All of them were influenced by Nietzsche's seminal book *The Birth of Tragedy.*

[281] Carpentier only mentions Harrison's influence on Lawrence in passing, but (as we see from the following extracts from these letters) Harrison's 1913 book *Ancient Art and Ritual* made a significant impact on Lawrence.

story of the encroachment of the stage on the orchestra. As Harrison notes, separation is implied in the very notion of spectators:

> There is no division at first between actors and spectators; all are actors, all are doing the thing done, dancing the dance danced. Thus at initiation ceremonies the whole tribe assembles, the only spectators are the uninitiated, the women and children. No one at this early stage thinks of building a *theatre*, a spectator place. It is in the common act, the common or collective emotion, that ritual starts. This must never be forgotten' (Harrison 126).

One of the consequences of this evolution was that mankind had become separate from the ritual in which it had previously participated.

It is not hard to see how this might relate to the spectator theory of knowledge discussed earlier; rather than participating directly in the action, the former participants become detached spectators. Lawrence clearly seems to see what Harrison says, in a far broader context, as emblematic of the way the mental consciousness operates in modernity. Certainly, Harrison's influence made itself clearly felt, many years later, in the chapters of *Mornings in Mexico* which compare European entertainment with Native American Indian rituals and performances. Writing perhaps ten years after reading Harrison, Lawrence restates her position: 'drama, we are told, has developed out of these ceremonial dances. Greek drama arose this way […] the Greeks usually had some specified deity, some specific God to whom the ceremony was offered. And this God is the witness, the essential audience of the play. The ceremony is *performed* for the gratification of the god. And here you have the beginning of the theatre, with players and audience' (MM 66:3). Harrison describes the evolution from ritual *dromena* to more conventional Greek theatre as follows:

> In the *dromenon* of the Spring Festival, though his acts are unpractical, being mere singing and dancing and mimicry, his *intent* is practical, to induce the return of his food-supply. In the drama the representation may remain for a time the same but the intention is altered: man has come out from action, he is separate from the dancers, and has become a spectator. The drama is an end in itself. (Harrison 135)

This same idea is clearly brought out in Lawrence's comparison between the modern idea of entertainment and the Indian one. Modern spectators are external, they are onlookers — modern spectacle involves detachment as he repeatedly points out: 'while we sit aloft in plush seats we are creatures of pure consciousness, pure spirit, surveying those selves of clay who are so absurd or so tragic, below' (MM 59:19). This is not the case in Indian rituals, as Lawrence theorizes in the following passage:

> And here finally you see the difference between Indian entertainment and even the earliest form of Greek drama. Right at the beginning of Old-World dramatic presentation there was the onlooker, if only in the shape of the God himself, or the Goddess herself, to whom the dramatic offering was made. And this God or Goddess resolves at last into a mind occupied buy some particular thought or idea. And in the long course of evolution, we ourselves became the gods of our own drama. The spectacle is offered to us. And we sit aloft, enthroned in the mind, dominated by some one exclusive idea, and we judge the show. (MM 67:12)

On the other hand, Lawrence describes the Indian world in terms of 'enmeshment': 'there is absolutely none of this in the Indian dance. There is no God. There is no Onlooker. There is no Mind. There is no dominant idea. And finally, there is no judgement […] The Indian is completely enmeshed in the wonder of his own drama' (MM 67:21). In other words, there is no separation between the Indians and their world: 'The American Indian sees no division into Spirit and Matter, God and Not-God' (MM 82:16). Lawrence underlines the fact that the Indians are not spectators but active participants in the 'rhythm of pure forgetting and pure renewal' in which 'all eyes are round with wonder, and the mystery of participation' (MM 65). The Indians, who are caught up in the world, do not distinguish between interior and exterior, whereas for the Europeans it is only by stepping outside that we are able to separate the performance from the spectacle in this way.

The Indians' rituals can teach us something that has been lost in the modern world. Following Harrison's schema, he favourably compares Indian singing and dancing with other types of singing or dancing:

> Perhaps the commonest entertainment among the Indians is singing round the drum, at evening, when the day is over. European peasants will sit round the fire and sing. But they sing ballads or lyrics, tales about individuals or

> individual, personal experience. And each individual identifies the emotion of the song with his own emotion. Or the wild fishermen of the Outer Hebrides will sing in their intense, concentrated way, by the fire. And again, usually, the songs have words. Yet sometimes not. Sometimes the song has merely sounds, and a marvellous melody. It is the seal drifting in to shore on the wave, or the seal-woman, singing low and secret, departing back from the shores of men, through the surf, back to the realm of the outer beasts that rock on the waters and stare through glistening, vivid, mindless eyes. This is approaching the Indian song. But even this is pictorial, conceptual far beyond the Indian point. The Hebridean still sees himself human, and outside the great naturalistic influences, which are the dramatic circumstances of his life. (MM 62:5)

European peasant songs are inferior as they are 'tales about individual, personal experiences' (MM 62:7), whereas the more primitive, less abstract songs sung by the fishermen of the Outer Hebrides are closer to the Indian songs but nonetheless remain far more pictorial and conceptual than the Native American Indians' songs.[282] The Hebridean vision is 'externalized', they see themselves as separate to Nature, 'human and *outside* the great naturalistic influences' (MM 62:20). Comparing the Indian songs with the songs of Hebridean fishermen, Lawrence clearly emphasizes the superiority of the non-verbal, non-conceptual nature of the Indian experiences, experiences which are essentially emotional and embodied: 'The Indian, singing, sings without words or vision. Face lifted up and sightless, eyes half closed and visionless, mouth open and speechless, the sounds arise in his chest, from the consciousness of his abdomen' (MM 62:22). When describing the round dances, for instance, Lawrence states that the dance 'has no name. It has no words. It means nothing at all. There is no spectacle, no spectator' (MM 63:30). For the Indians, it is not a thought experience but a felt experience. Lawrence points out that the Indians are 'not representing something, not even playing. It is a soft, subtle *being* something' (MM 65:44).

[282] See *Kangaroo* where Lawrence fictionalizes his wartime experiences: 'Somers had had in his pocket the words of one of the Hebridean folk songs which Sharpe had brought down, and which they all thought so wonderful. On a bit of paper in his jacket-pocket, the words which have no meaning in any language apparently, but are just vocal, almost animal sounds: the Seal Woman's Song — this they had taken. Ver mi hiu — ravo na la vo — Ver mi hiu — ravo hovo i — Ver mi hiu — ravo na la vo — an catal — Traum — san jechar — . What would the investigation make of this?' (K 245:3).

5.3.3 Phase 3: Philosophico-Scientific Consciousness: the logos

Finally, the third stage, which started to occur between around 800 to 600 B.C., and ran till the Renaissance is a godless one too. Lawrence says it is 'naked disembodied mind losing itself in a naked and disembodied universe, a strange nirvana', showing that it is a cerebralized, mentalized world, of Mind, quantification, bureaucratisation, technologization and rationalisation. This phase is also associated by Lawrence with the desire for knowing, as opposed to simply being (see chapter 3). In about 600 B.C., 'the wish for pure knowledge became dominant in man, and carried with it the death-wish' (A168:22). Men wanted 'to experience death and come out the other side' (A168:23) (hence the Orphic, Dionysiac, Eleusinian. Mithraic mysteries and so on). They were looking for 'ways of getting out of the body and of obtaining experience beyond' (A168:29). In other words, they were all ways of obtaining 'death in the body' (A169:8).

By dwelling in the world of mental forms and ideas, the great historical split described earlier has been provoked between man and the cosmos. In 'A Propos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*', he complains that the threefold relationship (see chapter 1) between man and the living universe, man and woman, man and his fellow man, have all been destroyed by over-thinking: 'we have abstracted the universe into Matter and Force, we have abstracted men and women into separate personalities – personalities being isolated units, incapable of togetherness – so that all three great relationships are bodiless, dead' (LCL 331:35). On the one hand, we have gradually lost contact with the rhythms of the cosmos, the seasons, the times of the day; on the other, our knowledge of, for example, the sun and the moon has meant that we are no longer able to see the miracle of existence:

> The cosmos became anathema to the Christians, though the early Catholic Church restored it somewhat after the crash of the Dark Ages. Then again the cosmos became anathema to the Protestants after the Reformation. They substituted the non-vital universe of forces and mechanistic order, everything else became abstraction, and the long, slow death of the human being set in. This slow death produced science and machinery, but both are death products. No doubt the death was necessary. [...]. It is death none the less, and will end in the annihilation of the human race — as John of Patmos so fervently hoped — unless there is a change, a resurrection, and a return to the cosmos. (A 79:8)

Heidegger thought that *logos* had led to *gestell*, and was the reason for the approaching catastrophe and the annihilation of mankind. Consequently, if the aim is to divest ourselves of logos, then the pre-ontological period can give us a hint as to the way forward. Lawrence agreed, asserting in *Apocalypse* that: 'we are at the end of the Christian cycle. And the Logos, the good dragon of the beginning of the cycle, is now the evil dragon of today. It will give its potency to no new thing, only to old and deadly things. It is the red dragon, and it must once more be slain' (A 125:31). Now, 'we have to *conquer* the logos, that the green dragon gleaming green may lean down from among the stars and vivify us and make us great again' (A 126:18).

In 'Pan in America', he lists some of the reasons why we have lost Pan: glory of overpowering and war, the vainglory of words, the pomp of argument, the vanity of ideas. In the following chapter, we will be looking in more detail at this last philosophico-scientific phase as Lawrence sees it, its ideas, its machines, its vanity and conceit.

Chapter 6: Modernity, a Shrieking Failure

In this chapter, Lawrence's criticisms of the modern way of life will be looked at in greater detail. There will be a focus, firstly, on mechanical and automatic behaviours in modernity, secondly, on Erich Fromm's distinction between the having mode and the being mode and how this is extremely relevant to Lawrence's thought, thirdly, on the modern quantitative way of conceiving the world and the reasons why Lawrence considers idealism and materialism to be basically the same thing, and finally, on his criticisms of the modern uses of machines and technology. In *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, he affirms that 'it is life we have to live by, not machines and ideals. And life means nothing else, even, but the spontaneous living soul which is our central reality. The spontaneous, living, individual soul, this is the clue, and the only clue. All the rest is derived' (PFU 169:22). Using all this, we will look at the way in which Lawrence strove to radically rethink the modern world. Taken together, Lawrence's analyses constitute an attack on the very premises of modernity, and provided a basis for what he felt was the possibility of re-envisaging modern life—something which will be looked at in the final chapters of this study.

6.1. Mechanical behaviours: 'Lord, but it is a bitter thing to be born at the end of a rotten, idealistic machine-civilization' (RDP 162:20)

Interestingly, in Lawrence's novella *St. Mawr*, there is a conversation about Pan shortly before the unpredictable horse unseats its rider, and Lou's subsequent vision of evil. In the story, the horseman Cartwright says of Pan: 'if your third eye is open, which sees only the things that can't be seen, you may see *Pan within the thing, hidden*: you may see with your third eye, which is darkness' (SM 65:31, my italics). There is, in other words, two ways to see things, and one may occasionally gain glimpses of something hidden within them, the spirit of Pan. The spirit of Pan in the story is to be found in the horse, which is full of the mystery of another realm, unpredictable and dangerous: 'when he reared his head and neighed from his deep chest, like deep wind-bells resounding, she seemed to hear the echoes of another darker, more spacious, more dangerous, more splendid world than ours, that was beyond her. And there she wanted to go' (SM 41:24). In Lou's vision, on the other hand, the modern humanity she sees is that of people 'directing all their subtle evil will against any positive living thing. Masquerading as the ideal, in order to poison the real', and whose motto seems to be: 'believe in nothing, care about nothing: but keep the surface easy, and have a good time', or '*keep the*

game going smooth and jolly, and bear your bit like a sport' (SM 79). Lou's vision is a vision of a world of 'pseudo-spontaneous modern living' as Lawrence names it in 'Education of the People' (RDP 130:13). Rico and his friends are all going through the motions, thinking they are spontaneous, whilst really they are just stuck in automatic behaviours: 'people, all the people she knew, seemed so entirely contained within their cardboard let's-be-happy world. Their wills were fixed like machines on happiness, or fun, or the-best-ever' (SM 41:23). Rico and his social set in *St. Mawr* have fallen into the kind of automatic, unreflective behaviour that characterises modernity.

To the extent that we have free will, and Lawrence does believe each individual possesses a faculty of self-determination (PFU 42:23), it should be used, according to Lawrence, as a great balancing faculty. The mind can, in other words, be used positively (as an instrument and not as a director). Among other things the mind can give us 'plain indications of how to avoid falling into automatism, hints for the *applying* of the will, the loosening of false, automatic fixations, the brave adherence to a profound soul-impulse' (PFU 43:25). If this free will, however, is not exercised, it becomes all too easy to fall into non-spontaneous, mechanical ways of thinking, a phenomenon which, Lawrence thinks, can occur in two different ways.[283] The first way is primarily affective, it concerns feelings, passions, or the activities that we do. We can easily become obsessed with, or fixed upon, some particular function or activity which then becomes an *idée fixe*, such as, for example, 'a lust for power, a lust for success, a lust for being loved' (RDP 79:20).[284] Here, I will call this *the feelings we live by*. As this type of 'sensational activity' (PFU 79:24) is ultimately meaningless, it often degenerates into what Lawrence calls *sensationalism*. The second way of falling into non-spontaneous automatic behaviour is when the will fails in its role to such an extent that we become obsessed with a fixed idea or an ideal, and we end up aspiring towards some mental abstraction. I will call this *the ideals we live by*, and try to show some examples. There is of course some overlap between the two, the categories are not watertight, but they do constitute two different aspects of the way we can fall into mechanical ways of thinking and behaving.

[283] Both are identified in *Psychology and the Unconscious*, and in the essay 'Democracy'.
[284] Another Manuscript (TCC) gives, instead, 'a lust for power, a lust for consuming, a lust for self-abnegation and merging' (RDP 443).

Furthermore, in 'Blessed are the Powerful' (1925), Lawrence insists that living well is not just a question of *doing* things, or playing a role, like 'running after women, or digging a garden or working an engine, or becoming a member of Parliament' (RDP 322:36):

> Living won't even consist in jazzing or motoring or going to Wembley, just because most folks do it. Living consists in doing what you really, vitally want to do: what the *life* in you wants to do, not what your ego imagines you want to do. And to find out *how* the life in you wants to be lived, and to live it, is terribly difficult. *Somebody has to give us a clue*. (RDP 323:1, my italics)

Living is not about just doing the activities that we are supposed to do, or copying what everyone else does: we need to find a way to live more spontaneously, more authentically—but this is by no means easy to do. As we will see later, there is an issue of freedom at stake here: are we actually free to live spontaneously, or are we always doomed to mechanically do what everyone else does? The very last line of *Psychology and the Unconscious* makes this very point: 'what tyranny is so hideous as that of an automatically ideal humanity?' (43:29). And in the essay 'Democracy', he says that freeing oneself from automatic, mechanical behaviour is the first step towards creating a real democracy. To these issues of freedom and politics I will return later.

6.1.1 The feelings we live by: 'Thus arises our pseudo-spontaneous modern living' (RDP 130:12)

Lawrence sometimes uses the metaphor of collapse whenever he evokes the automaticity of our feelings. In 'Education of the People' for instance he writes that:

> The old polarity has broken down. The primal centres have collapsed from their original spontaneity, they have become subordinate, neuter, negative, waiting for the mind's provocation, waiting to be worked according to some secondary idea. Thus arises our pseudo-spontaneous modern living. (RDP 130:9).

A similar image is employed in *Psychology of the Unconscious*: 'sometimes the free psyche really collapses, and the will *identifies* itself with an automatic circuit' (PFU 42:38). In 'Education of the People', Lawrence claims that:

> As far as ever possible we have resisted the independence of the great affective centres. We have struggled for some thousands of years, not only to get our passions under control, but absolutely to eliminate certain passions, and to give all passions an ideal nature. And so, at last, we succeed. We do actually give all our passions an ideal nature. Our passions at last are nothing more or less than ideas auto-suggested into practice. (RDP 130:26)

It is this deformation of our instincts, intuitions and passions, and the subsequent loss of all spontaneity. which hinders us from living meaningfully.

In reality, Lawrence maintains, we really do experience the entire gamut of feelings[285], but we select only a few of them and focalize on these to such an extent that they eventually end up becoming repellent to us (LEA 186:16), a sentiment which he puts memorably, but rather shockingly, in 'Introduction to Pictures': 'even the most pot-headed American judge, who feels that his daughter will be lost for ever if she hears the word *cunt*, has all the feelings of a satyr careering somewhere inside him, very much suppressed and distorted' (LEA 168:5). Nonetheless, we have, as Lawrence writes in 'Education of the People', allowed ourselves to become 'tethered to a few great ideas, like a goat to a post' (RDP 130: 22). These ideas gradually become increasingly stale and meaningless, until, as Lawrence says in 'Introduction to Pictures', they become 'practically all dead batteries, played out. They can't provoke any emotion or feeling or reaction in the spontaneous body' (LEA 173: 26). The whole process of education should be, Lawrence argues, learning to escape from automatic reactions and behaviour (RDP 105:3) since when everyone does or thinks more or less the same thing, it becomes far more difficult to be authentic: 'every man must learn to be proud and single and alone, and after that, he will be worth knowing. Mankind has degenerated into a conglomerate mass, where everybody strives to look and to be as much as possible an impersonal, non-individual, abstracted unit, a standard' (RDP 151:19). Lawrence is acutely aware of the tremendous pressure to conform to certain ideals and ways of life: the way we dress, the activities we pursue, the roles we play, the personality we adopt, the behaviours we exhibit. Even if we really do desire to be independent and individual, it remains an extraordinary difficult task:

> I object to the abstract Mr. Everyman being clapped over me like an extinguisher. I object to wearing his coat and his boots and his hat. Me, in a

> pair of "Lotus" boots, and a "Burberry," and "Oxonian" hat, why, I might just as well be anybody else. And I strenuously object. I am myself, and I don't want to be rigged out as a poor specimen of Mr. Everyman. I don't want to be standardized, or even idealized. If I could, I would make my own boots and my own trousers and coats. I suppose even now I could if I would. But in Rome one must do as Rome does: the bourgeois is not worth my while, I can't demean myself to *epater* him, and I am much too sensitive to my own isolation to want to draw his attention. (RDP 151:29)

Unfortunately, trying to buck the trend actually makes one stand out, and, furthermore, usually turns out to be little more than another form of acceptance of the current paradigm: 'even our wickedness today, being ideal in its origin, a sort of deliberate reaction to the accepted ideal, amounts to the same mechanism' (RDP 130:39).

The net result is that, although this kind of mechanical conformity may make us feel safe, it remains profoundly unsatisfying. Deep down 'the human being craves for change in his automatism. Sometimes it seems to him horrible that he must, in a fixed routine, get up in the morning and put his clothes on, day in, day out. He can't bear his automatism. He is beside himself in his self-consciousness' (RDP 131:6). Lawrence seems convinced that, in their heart of hearts, people really know this: 'we know we are drifting, but we don't know how or where. Because there is no primary *resistance* in us, nothing that resists the helpless but fatal flux of ideas which streams us away. The resistant spontaneous centres have broken down in us' (RDP 130:16). But unless, as he exclaims in 'The Crown', 'you kick hard and kick in time, they are your prison walls forever' (RDP 287:20). In the absence of any real resistance to these tendencies towards universalism and sameness (RDP 286:29), there remains to us only two real possibilities: either simply to give up and accept, or, to self-destruct (RDP 286:32).[286] And yet, in spite of this, he notes that there seems to be a kind of self-satisfied complacency with regard to the current state of affairs: 'the human ego, in its pettifogging arrogance, sets up these things for you as absolutes' (RDP 287:19). The conceit of man is such, fumes Lawrence in 'Education of the People', that he is like 'a damned little Oliver Twist […] always wanting more' (RDP 131:10):

[286] He calls giving up 'renunciation' in the earlier 1915 version and 'inertia' in the 1925 version; and he calls self-destruction 'sensationalism' in the 1915 version, and 'the triumph of the will' in the 1925 version.

> Man is accursed once he falls into the trick of ideal self-automatism. But he is infinitely conceited about it. He really works his own psyche! He really is the god of his own creation! Isn't this enough to puff him out? Here he is, tricky god and creator of himself at last! And he's not going to be ousted from his at-last-acquired godhead. Not he! The triumphant little god sits in the machine of his own psyche and turns on the petrol. […] so proud of himself, it's a wonder he hasn't set off to fly to the sun in one of his aeroplanes, like a new Icarus. (RDP 131:26)

So, if we don't kick back, we end up mere spectres: 'spectres we are to one another. Spectre you are to me, spectre I am to you. Shadow you are even to yourself. - And by shadow, I mean idea, concept, the abstracted reality, the ego. We are not solid. We don't live in the flesh. Our instincts and intuitions are dead, we live wound round with the winding-sheet of abstraction' (LEA 203:24). It is enough, says Lawrence, who is no doubt talking about himself, 'to send a sane man mad' (RDP 132:13).

6.1.2 Meaninglessness and Sensationalism: 'this God whom we have left out and this Life that we have shut out from our living, must in the end turn against us and rend us' (RDP 208)

S*ensationalism* is Lawrence's term for the seeking out of extreme physical sensations (meaningless sex, alcohol, drugs, speed, extreme sports, and so on) to fill the void left by the lack of meaning in one's life. This lack of meaning stems from the fact that we are operating with a world-view which has left out God, the creative mystery, as he makes patently clear in the essay 'On Human Destiny' (1924):

> … since Life is always more than any idea, behold, from the human conception of God and of Life, a great deal of necessity is left out. And this God whom we have left out and this Life that we have shut out from our living, must in the end turn against us and rend us. It is our destiny. (RDP 208:39)[287]

The hunger for intense sensations occurs, in other terms, 'when the Life that we exclude from our living turns to poison and madness in our veins' (RDP 208:4). Possibly he may also have been thinking of the *fin de siècle* decadence, of which, he said, in his review of the book

[287] Lawrence repeats somewhat similar words in 'The Crown' (a 'great turning round upon the self'), which may well contain the most detailed exposition of what he calls the modern problem of sensationalism.

Hadrian the Seventh: 'The whole decade is now a little ridiculous, ridiculous decadence as well as ridiculous pietism' (IR 239:13). Thus, sensationalism is inextricably bound up with nihilism; the emptier one feels, the more one pursues physical sensations. Because sensationalism is the result of an overly mental conception of the world, it also entails the 'mind' acting upon the body as he explains in 'On Being a Man' (1925): 'all the suffering today is psychic: it happens in the mind. The red Adam only suffers the slow torture of compression and derangement' (RDP 218:6).[288]

In 'The Crown' Lawrence remarks that 'we come to a point where sex seems exhausted, and passion falls flat. When even criticism and analysis now only fatigue the mind and weary the soul' (RDP 289:30)—until the point is reached when the desire is finally formulated: 'oh, give us the brush with death, and let us see if we can win out all right!' (RDP 289:33). For sensationalism is, in a certain manner, a kind of death drive, a craving to destroy ourselves and others:

> Drink, drugs, jazz, speed, "petting," all modern forms of thrill, are just the production of sensation by the katabolism of the finest conscious cells of our living body. We explode our own cells and release a certain energy and accompanying sensation. It is, naturally, a process of suicide. (LEA 174:15)

Lawrence calls this 'the continued activity of disintegration — disintegration, separating, setting apart, investigation, research, the resolution back to the original void' (RDP 281:15), and it is partly why Lawrence associates Edgar Allan Poe with sensationalism: the clue to Poe is that 'the great psyche, which we have evolved through two thousand years of effort, must die, and not only die, must be reduced back to its elements by a long, slow process of disintegration, living disintegration' (SCAL 229:14). For Lawrence, Poe represents, *par excellence*, the modern conception of the mind wishing to know and control everything; likewise, he represents the epitome of the spirit turning upon itself. Describing Poe, Lawrence says 'he went on in a frenzy […] the heightening, the flow, the ecstasy. Poe tried alcohol, and any drug he could get his hands on. He also tried any human being he could get his hands on' (SCAL 68:38). Thus, although for Lawrence Poe is a great writer, he is more of 'a supreme scientist' than an artist,[289] his business is to break things apart: 'Poe is a man writhing in the

[288] As we saw earlier, Lawrence associates Poe with sensationalism, in part because the motto he chose for *Ligeia*, which is also a clue to Poe's position, shows that his idea of God is too anthropomorphic, and does not allow for living reality. Poe is too cerebral.

[289] 'Poe is hardly an artist. He is rather a supreme scientist. Art displays the movements of the pristine self, the living conjunction or communion between the self and its context' (SCAL 230:17).

mystery of his own undoing. He is a great dead soul, progressing terribly down the long process of post-mortem activity in disintegration' (SCAL 230:3). Thus, sensationalism is a sign of the decay in the very heart of modern society: 'it is the rottenness seething within the cabbage, corruption within the old, fixed body' (RDP 294:2). This also explains Lawrence's frequent use of the latin proverb *Quos vult perdere Deus, dementat prius*, the translation of which ('Whom the gods wish to destroy they first make mad') he employs in the wartime essay 'Love', commenting that 'this is how we become mad, by being impelled into activity by the subconscious reaction against the self we maintain' (RDP 11:31).[290]

6.1.3 The Ideals we live by: 'it is the death of all life to force a pure idea into practice' (PFU 117:17)

Jessie Chambers noted that Lawrence's early philosophical reading included 'Locke's *On Human Understanding*, and Bishop Berkeley who said that everything exists in one's own consciousness' (Chambers 112). Berkeley's position is that of a radical solipsism, in which nothing can be proved to exist outside the individual self. Everything we think we see outside is therefore said to be an illusion, an idea put there by an external God who is generating all the ideas of which the world is constituted. Lawrence seems to see in Berkeley's thinking an instance of the hubris of man, a case of believing that the *mind* (which is after all a merely human conception) is more important than the *mystery of life* itself. In 'On Being a Man', Lawrence refers to Berkeley when he satirizes the modern belief in the omnipotence of the human mind, and the idea that there is nothing more than mental consciousness: 'and Bishop Berkeley is absolutely right: things only exist in our own consciousness. To the known me, nothing exists beyond what I know' (RDP 214:9). Indeed, certain descriptions in 'The Crown' of the 'triumphant ego', seem to leave little doubt that Lawrence had him in mind: 'the False I comes into being: the I which thinks itself supreme and infinite […] it conceives itself as the whole universe, surrounded by dark nullity. It doesn't know it is in prison. It believes itself to have filled up the whole of the universe, right to the extremes where there is nothing but blank nullity' (RDP 279:14-28).[291] But this false self is in prison, Lawrence argues, because we have

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[290] Lawrence also uses the Latin phrase in 'Letter from Germany' (MM 152:30); in *Mornings in Mexico (MM 84:13, already cited in chapter 1)*; we find it again in the chapter on Fenimore Cooper in the first version of *Studies in Classic American Literature*; in the chapter on Hawthorne in the final version: 'their *souls* smell, because their souls are putrefying inside them. The sin against the Holy Ghost. And gradually, from within outwards, they rot. Some form of dementia. A thing disintegrating. A decomposing psyche. Dementia. *Quos vult perdere Deus, dementat prius*' (SCAL 98:24); also in a poem 'Fate and the Younger Generation'; and, again, in English translation, in *Movements in European History.*

[291] 'It is tremendously conceited. It can only react upon itself. And the reaction can only take the form of self-consciousness. For the self is everything, universal…' (RDP 279:27).

become trapped in our mental conceptions: our human consciousness has become 'a millstone around our necks strangling us' (RDP 208:33). For where, Lawrence asks, do we find God and the creative mystery? Not in the all-too-human conceptions of humanity, but in physical reality, in the body, in living things.

Lawrence asserts in *Fantasia of the Unconscious* that 'it is the death of all life to force a pure *idea* into practice. Life must be lived from the deep, self-responsible spontaneous centres of every individual' (PFU 117:17). For Lawrence, human ideas and mental conceptions have entrapped us to such an extent that (he complains in 'Democracy') 'ideals, all ideals and every ideal, are a trick of the devil. They are a superimposition of the abstracted, automatic, invented universe of man upon the spontaneous creative universe' (RDP 69:21). This explains why, in Lawrence's opinion 'the real enemy today is idealism' because the 'invented *ideal* world' has turned us all into 'abstracted, functioning mechanical units' (RDP 69:17), and we have even come to worship our own ideas as we have come to worship machines (RDP 68). Mental ideas lead to the *idées fixes*, clichés and habits which form our worldview and condition our behaviour: 'for man just doesn't know how to interpret his own soul promptings, and therefore he sets himself up a complicated arrangement of ideas and ideals' (RDP 106:2). This 'mistake of idealism' (PFU 155:23) as he calls it, is for Lawrence, characteristic of the modern Western world, and not necessarily a characteristic of all societies, something he makes clear in *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, remarking that other life modes than ours are possible, though an over-reliance on any of them is a negative thing. The Chinese, he affirms, live according to *tradition*, the South seas according to *impulse*: 'each of the three modes is a true life-mode. But any one, alone or dominant, brings us to destruction. We must depend on the wholeness of our being, ultimately only on that, which is our Holy Ghost within us' (PFU 155:25). Lawrence gives an interesting example in 'Education of the People' (1920) to illustrate his point, based on a well-known soap advert: 'a child in the bath sees the soap, and wants it, and won't be happy till he gets it. When he gets it he rubs it into his eyes and sucks it, and is in a far more unhappy state. Why?' (RDP

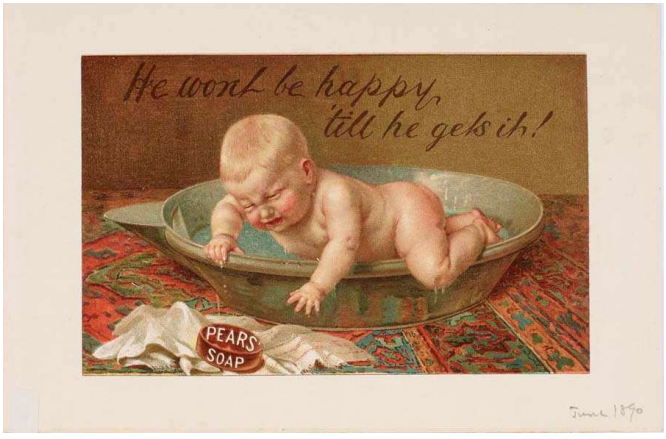

Figure 6: Advertisement for Pears soap

104:13). The difference between a human and an animal, Lawrence claims, is that whilst animals might also be attracted to the soap, they would quickly move on to something else, whereas the child, once it has the idea in its head, cannot get it out again:

> Beautiful to us is the pure nonchalance of a young animal which forgets the piece of soap the moment it has sniffed it and found it no good. Only the intelligent human baby proceeds to fill its mouth, stomach, and eyes with acute pain, on account of the piece of soap. Why? Because the poor little wretch got an idea, an incipient idea into its little head. The rabbit never gets an idea into its head, so it can sniff the soap and turn away. But a human baby, poor, tormented little creature, can't help getting an idea into his young head. And then he can't help acting on his idea: no matter what the consequences. (RDP 104:30)

This relative 'sophistication' of man compared to the relative 'naiveté' of the animal, only results in mankind being at the mercy of ideas; and this tendency, from an early age, to fixate upon certain ideas is what prompts Lawrence to issue this warning in *Fantasia of the Unconscious*: 'to tell the truth, ideas are the most dangerous germs mankind has ever been injected with' (PFU 115:28).

Lawrence gives another example in 'Introduction to Pictures' (1928): 'the moment the mind *fixes* a feeling, that feeling is repulsive. Take a greedy person, who falls right into his food. Why is he so distasteful? Is it because his stomach is asserting itself? Not at all! It is because his mind, having decided that food is good, or good for him, drives on his body to eat and eat and eat' (LEA 168:18). In both cases, the mind is forcing the body to do something which is not good for it. Lawrence believes that one of the most important ideas of the last two thousand years has been the idea that the body is bad, since for some reason, self-conscious man looked at his body and found it shameful (LEA 172:37):[292]

> We are *afraid* of the instincts. We are *afraid* of the intuition within us. We suppress the instincts, and we cut off our intuitional awareness from one another and from the world. The reason being some great shock to the procreative self. Now we know

[292] In 'Introduction to these Pictures' Lawrence even wonders whether it might not be the terrible effects of syphilis in Elizabethan times which led to the puritanical distaste for the body and for the passions.

> one another only as ideal or social or political entities, fleshless, bloodless, and cold, like Bernard Shaw's creatures. (LEA 190:20)

Thus, instead of the intuitive, spontaneous self, we live by our ideals instead. In *Fantasia of the Unconscious,* he declares that 'the very first thing of all to be recognized is the danger of idealism. It is the one besetting sin of the human race. It means the fall into automatism, mechanism, and nullity' (PFU 152:11). Lawrence repeatedly criticizes ideals and ideas, without always going into much detail about what he means (and sometimes in a rather off-putting manner for modern readers). It is interesting, therefore, to try to gather together some of the threads scattered throughout his non-fiction and focus on some of the ideals that come up most frequently.

Love: One such ideal is the ideal of *love*, very often the butt of Lawrence's ire. But what Lawrence seems to be criticizing above all is the idea of love as the all-important goal of life, 'the single necessity for fulfilment through love' (PFU 14:34) as he puts it in *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*, or again in *Fantasia of the Unconscious* where he criticises 'our creed of insatiable love' (FU 150:16). As far as Lawrence is concerned, 'there is practically no spontaneous love left in the world. It is all *will*, the fatal love-will and insatiable morbid curiosity' (PFU 114:5). Thus, Melville's fixed ideal of love as a state of permanent bliss is 'the pin he tortured himself on, like a pinned-down butterfly' (SCAL 129:30). Furthermore, he criticizes the mechanical nature of it all; playing roles, a women, for instance, often forced to play 'one role or another, sweet-heart, mistress, wife, mother' (LEA 302:22). Lawrence is, in fact, convinced that love in the modern era has become a mere simulacrum—so stale a concept, that people now are merely going through the motions:

> The mob, of course, will always deceive themselves that they are feeling things, even when they are not. To them, when they say *I love you*! there will be a huge imaginary feeling, and they will act up according to schedule. All the love on the film, the close-up kisses and the rest, and all the responses in buzzing emotion in the audience, is *all* acting up, all according to schedule. It is all just cerebral, and the body is just forced to go through the antics. (LEA 172:38)

Love should be spontaneous, and not be seen as a goal which has to be attained. Love is, in fact, as he sometimes puts it, a 'travelling', in other words it can never be a fixed goal. In 'We

Need one Another', written in late 1929, and published in *Scribner's Magazine* in 1930, Lawrence writes:

> If only we could break up this fixity, and realize the unseizable quality of real woman: that a woman is a flow, a river of life, quite different from a man's river of life: and that each river must flow in its own way, though without breaking its bounds: and that the relation of man to woman is the flowing of two rivers side by side, sometimes even mingling, then separating again, and travelling on. The relationship is a life-long change and a life-long travelling. (LEA 302:23)

Love, like all things, must always change, which, for Lawrence, was Melville's problem: 'love is never a fulfillment. Life is never a thing of continuous bliss. There is no paradise. Fight and laugh and feel bitter and feel bliss: and fight again. Fight, fight. That is life. Why pin ourselves down on a paradisal ideal? It is only ourselves we torture' (SCAL 129:31).

Universal love, pity, benevolence, charity, and so on: Of course, there are many types of love, as Lawrence himself points out, and another form of love which is the target of his wrath is *universal love*, which he often classes together with other emotional ideals such as pity, benevolence, charity, self-sacrifice and so forth. In *Fantasia of the Unconscious* Lawrence describes them as 'the disease of love, the disease of "spirit", the disease of niceness and benevolence and feeling good on our own behalf and good on somebody else's behalf. Pah, it is all a gangrene' (PFU 18:25). These criticisms are perhaps those that now sound most strangely to a modern audience. How can one object, after all, to things like benevolence and pity? On the one hand, there is no doubt that Lawrence's criticisms of these kinds of ideals were linked to his hatred of what he saw as hypocritical war propaganda. In *Fantasia of the Unconscious* the outburst—'beastly benevolence, and foul good-will, and stinking charity, and poisonous ideals' (PFU 162:7)—is followed by the assertion that, in the future, 'a greater flux of vital sympathy', might prevent future generations from begetting 'more aeroplanes and hospitals and germ-killers and food-substitutes and poison gases' (PFU 162). In 'Democracy' he proclaims that 'it is only Ideal concerns which go to war, and slaughter indiscriminately with a feeling of exalted righteousness' (RDP 67:13). On the other hand, Nietzsche's influence may be at play. Nietzsche, as Schneider points out, also considered ideals like selflessness, equality, loving one's neighbours, and so on, were illusory, and hiding other far less honourable motives: 'beneath all Platonic jabbering about "the Good", the "ideal", the *ens realissimum*, lies the hairy brute, the predator, the animal seeking domination or omnipotence' (Schneider,

D. H. Lawrence: The Artist as Psychologist 50). Certainly, this is reminiscent of Lawrence's virulent letter to Bertrand Russell, discussed earlier, in which he accuses Russell of being '*full* of repressed desires', telling him he is 'like a soldier who might jab man after man with his bayonet, saying "this is for ultimate peace"' (2L 392). But ultimately, quite apart from the fact that they are all abstractions, what Lawrence seems to object to in these ideals is that, once again, they appear to be just one more example of mankind's universalising desire to force all and sundry to adopt the same pattern of behaviour, regardless of the circumstances, prompting Lawrence to write in *Fantasia of the Unconscious*: 'our idealism is the clue to our fixed will. Love, beauty, benevolence, progress, these are the words we use. But the principle we evoke is a principle of barren, sanctified compulsion of all life. We want to put all life under compulsion' (PFU 114: 12).

Personality: This will be discussed in greater detail later, but for now, let us note that another group of ideals could be grouped together in the category of *personality*, prompting him to state in 'Democracy' that 'every individual is born with a mill-stone of ideals round his neck' (RDP 75:22). For instance, Lawrence makes a distinction between the secondary self and the real self,[293] giving an example in 'Democracy':

> Let us take a sentence from an American novel: "My ego had played a trick on me, and made me think I wanted babies, when I only wanted the man." This is a perfectly straight and lucid statement. But what is the difference between the authoress's *ego* and her *me*? The ego is obviously a sort of second self, which she carries about with her. It is her body of accepted consciousness, which she has inherited more or less ready-made from her father and grandfathers. This secondary self is very pernicious, dictating to her issues which are quite false to her true, deeper, spontaneous self, her creative identity: her *me*. (RDP 75:7)

Lawrence mentions that her false secondary, social self is more attractive to American men, 'because personalities and egos, after all, are quite reasonable, which means, they are subject to the laws of cause-and-effect; they are safe and calculable' (RDP 76:3).

Political and social ideals: Lawrence gives numerous examples of these kinds of ideals, and also goes into some detail explaining them, as will be shown in the chapter on Lawrence's

[293] In the essay 'Galsworthy', Lawrence makes a similar distinction between the social self and the individual consciousness.

political philosophy. These are perhaps more familiar to us nowadays under the name *ideology*. One of his major bugbears is the idea of *equality*—a logical deduction and abstraction which has no foundation in experience: 'Men are not equal, and never were, and never will be, save by the arbitrary determination of some ridiculous human Ideal' (RDP 65:19). But this is just one of many, including 'equality and social perfection. Rights of Man, Equality of Man, Social Perfectibility of Man: all these sweet abstractions, once so inspiring' (RDP 63:18), the State, socialism, the League of Nations, the representatives of peoples, the list goes on (and will be explored further in due course). To these can be added a whole host of ideals based around the idea of accumulation and property: 'man has his highest fulfilment as a possessor of property: so they all say, really […] This is the last of the ideals. This is the last phase of the ideal of equality, brotherhood, and oneness. All ideals work down to the sheer materialism, which is their intrinsic reality, at last' (RDP 81:37). Other ideals we live by include the idea that we must have a job and a wage: 'the wage is the mania of the moment: the working-man consciousness of himself as a working-man, which has now become an idee fixe, excluding any possibility of his remaining a lively human being' (RDP 128:16); 'what you've got to do is to *get a job*, and when you've got your job then you must *make a decent screw*.[294] First and last, this is the state of man. So says little Jimmy Shepherd, and so says his sister Nancy' (RDP 88:30); 'this is the disaster that has happened to almost every Englishman — he's got to do a job. All day long and every day, all his life, he is condemned to a job. There's no getting away from it. Very few men can inherit a fortune or marry a fortune. A job! — That is the great inevitable. That is the boss and the bully. That is the treadmill. The job!' (LEA 141:32). Accumulation, or possession, says Lawrence in 'Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine', is perhaps our worst false ideal: 'our last wall is the golden wall of money. This is a fatal wall. It cuts us off from life, from vitality' (RDP 363:22). This obsession with possession is the subject of the next section.

6.2 The *Having* mode: 'Man doth not live by bread alone' (PFU 41:25)

6.2.1 Having and Being: 'all that great force which would carry them naked over the edge of time, into timelessness, into being, they convert into fatness, into having' (RDP 274)

The German thinker Erich Fromm makes a very useful distinction between two ways of life which he calls the *being mode* and the *having mode*, a distinction which is extremely

[294] To earn a good wage.

pertinent to Lawrence's thought. The having mode, according to Fromm is one in which one's relationship to the world is one of possessing or owning, one in which 'I want to make everybody and everything, including myself, my property' (To Have or To Be 21). On the other hand, the mode of being is founded on, firstly, 'aliveness and authentic relatedness to the world'; and secondly, on an authentic relation with the true nature of a person or a thing (as opposed to deceptive appearances). Whereas *having* is the contrary of relationality, since it is about controlling and exploiting the world (as is mechanical thinking and material accumulation), *being* is about seeking meaning from life, and our relations with others. It means 'to renew oneself, to grow, to flow out, to love, to transcend the prison of one's isolated ego, to be interested' (Fromm, To Have or To Be 76). *Having*, therefore, is about controlling the world, whereas *being* is about seeking meaning from the experiences life has to offer, and the encounter with the other. As an example of the having mode, Fromm cites Tennyson's 1863 poem 'Flowers in the crannied wall' (Fromm, To Have or To Be 14):

> Flower in the crannied wall,
> I pluck you out of the crannies,
> I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
> Little flower—but if I could understand
> What you are, root and all, all in all,
> I should know what God and man is.

Lawrence himself directly criticizes this kind of approach to the world in the essay 'Nottinghamshire and the Mining Countryside':

> Possession! A possession! Something added on to me! And most of the so-called love of flowers today is merely this reaching out of possession and egoism: something I've got: something that embellishes me. Yet I've seen many a collier stand in his back garden looking down at a flower with that odd, remote sort of contemplation which shows a real awareness of the presence of beauty. It would not even be admiration, or joy, or delight, or any of those things which so often have a root in the possessive instinct. It would be a sort of contemplation… (LEA 291:4)

As Lawrence writes in 'The Crown', man has fallen 'into the condition of fine cabbages' (RDP 274:2): 'all that great force which would carry them naked over the edge of time, into timelessness, *into being*, they convert into fatness, *into having'* (RDP 274:2, my italics).

Lawrence, therefore, is advocating a philosophy of *being* over a philosophy of *having*, something he specifically states, both explicitly and implicitly, as here in the essay 'Democracy': 'every individual must be ready at all times to defend his own being against the mechanization and materialism forced upon him by those people who have fallen or departed from being' (RDP 80): clearly what Lawrence means by mechanization and materialism is the direct equivalent of Fromm's mode of having. Indeed, Fromm contends that people today are attracted to 'the mechanical, the powerful machine, the lifeless, and ever increasingly to destruction' (To Have or To Be 7). For Lawrence, as we saw in the last chapter, the modern era is characterized by a great split between the living reality of the cosmos, and the world of ideas. Lawrence makes it clear in the essay 'John Galsworthy' that there is a link between the great split and the mode of having. When man feels divided and cut-off, if he accords too much importance to the external world, to objective reality, then he becomes obsessed with the material universe, and in particular with the desire for wealth and money as a protection from the outside world: 'he becomes obsessed with the idea of objectives or material assurance; he wants to insure himself, and perhaps everybody else' (STH 211:39).[295]

Opening up a schism between self and world, between self and others, has caused man to think of nature as a collection of exploitable resources, to perceive everything in quantitative terms, to assert human exceptionalism, and also to an ever-growing individualism which has led to fruitless competition, a war of all against all, and the frenzied accumulation of capital and property by some at the expense of others.[296] Fromm claims that 'we have tried to solve our existential problem by giving up the Messianic vision of harmony between humankind and nature by conquering nature, by transforming it to our own purposes until the conquest has become more and more equivalent to destruction' (To Have or To Be 7). The having mode is always closely bound up with individualism: it excludes others because, in Fromm's words, 'it transforms everything and everybody into something dead and subject to another's power' (To

[295] In the fragment of the early draft (also known as 'The Individual Consciousness v. the Social Consciousness'), he writes: 'the moment you break the continuum, the naivete, the innocence, the at-oneness, you get materialism and nothing but materialism' (STH 251:5).

[296] In *Contre le libéralisme : la société n'est pas un marché* the French thinker Alain de Benoist argues that for the activity of private appropriation and accumulation to take place, the world must be represented as an object which may be thoroughly mapped out, calculated and appropriated (in Heidegger's terms, treated as a 'standing reserve'). The world being considered as fundamentally exploitable, it is required to become not only useful but profitable too; it must always have economic value. This logic of the expansion of capital, what Heidegger called the *Gestell* or *Machenshaft* (sometimes translated as calculative thinking), renders capitalism a system founded upon disproportion (*hubris),* constant preoccupation with adding value, and the refusal of any limit (De Benoist, Contre le libéralisme: La société n'est pas un marché 17 - 18). Though employing very different terms, Lawrence is expressing very similar arguments.

Have or To Be 65). Like the padrone in *Twilight in Italy* who would, according to Lawrence, prefer the domination and possession of nature to a reciprocal relationship between the man and the sun, this resource-based approach, premised on an initial reification of the world, ultimately leads to a philosophy of having rather than being: 'As for the sun, that is common property, and no man is distinguished by it. He wanted machines, machine production, money, and human power. He wanted to know the joy of man who has got the earth in his grip, bound it up with railways, burrowed it with iron fingers, subdued it' (TI 131). Re-establishing true connections and relationships to the world is, therefore, not only a question of human well-being, it is also, and more importantly, a way of transitioning to a healthier way of being-in-the-world. This idea is truly at the heart of Lawrence's philosophy: much of his non-fiction is concerned with analysing where humanity has gone wrong, and what might be done to put it right again.

Yet, the society in which we live is so accustomed to the mode of *having* that it is seen as the most natural, even the most acceptable way of life (Fromm, To Have or To Be 25). Lawrence argues in 'Education of the People' that children are inculcated with (inadequate) ideas and then adopt their attitude to the world accordingly. The ease with which even children fall into the possessive mode has already been alluded to in the discussion of the baby with the bar of soap, and Lawrence argues that this desire for possession has been culturally and socially integrated to such an extent that it makes itself felt in the language itself:

> The concept of I is quite late in forming. Some children do not realize that they are themselves until they are four or five years old. They are something objective to themselves: "Jackie wants it"—"Baby wants it"—and not "I want it." In the same way with the hand or the foot. A child for some years has no *conception* of its own foot as part of itself. It is "*the* foot." In most languages it is always "the foot, the hand," and not "my foot, my hand." But in English the ego is very insistent. We put it self-consciously in possession as soon as possible. (RDP 142)

Fromm draws a distinction between, on the one hand, having what we need to survive (existential having), and on the other, going way beyond—pathologically, as we will see—what those needs require (characterological having).[297] Like Fromm, Lawrence believes that 'a man

[297] Aristotle draws a similar distinction in *Politics* between on the one hand, the kind of household provisioning which is necessary for good living, and, on the other, a quite different sort of acquisition of money which is unhealthy, since it involves accumulating for its own sake: 'some people are led to believe that making money is

only needs so much as will help him to his own fulfilment: 'surely' he asks in 'Democracy', 'the individual who wants a motor-car merely for the sake of having it and riding in it is as hopeless an automaton as the motor-car itself?' (RDP 82). Likewise, in *Study of Thomas Hardy* Lawrence highlights the way in which the mode of self-preservation has spiralled out of all control: 'he has gone on fighting for more food, more clothing, more shelter; and though he has roofed-in the world with houses and though the ground has heaved up massive abundance and excess of nutriment to his hand, still he cannot be appeased, satisfied. He goes on and on' (STH 7). But mere possession is for man, ultimately meaningless and hollow, something Lawrence drives home in 'The Crown':

> Having no being, they assert their artificial completeness, and the life within them becomes a will-to-have; which is the expression of the will-to-persist, in the temporary unit. Selfishness is the subjugating of all things to a false entity, and riches is the great flux over the edge of the bottomless pit, the falsity, the nullity. For where is the rich man who is not the very bottomless pit? Travel nearer, nearer, nearer to him, and one comes to the gap, the hole, the abyss where his soul should be. He *is* not. And to stop up his hollowness, he drags all things unto himself. (RDP 274:7)

If it is assumed, as Fromm does, that the having mode is the mode of existence *par excellence* of modernity, then Lawrence would have entirely agreed.

6.2.2 Accumulation: 'Why can't we know when we have enough, as we know when we have had enough to eat?' (STH 38: 3)

As Lawrence insists in the Epilogue to *Movements in European History*, there are different ways of growing: 'a man doesn't grow just because he gets fatter. He may be getting fatter, but the spirit inside him may be flagging and dying' (MEH 257:4). Individuals and society need to get healthier, but this change needs to come from within. In *A Study of Thomas Hardy* Lawrence sets up an opposition between the modes of *having* and *being*, symbolized as mentioned above by the lily ('laying up secretly her little storehouse and barn, well under the ground, well tucked with supplies' (STH 7:35)), and the 'gaudy, fleeting poppy' (STH 8:10).

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the object of household management and the whole idea of their lives is that they ought either to increase their money without limit, or at any rate not to lose it. The origin of this disposition in men is that they are intent upon living only and not upon living well; and as their desires are unlimited, they also desire that the means of gratifying them should be without limit' (Benjamin Jowett's translation of *Politics* (Aristotle, Politics 1258a)).

The first mode is that of *self-preservation*, stemming from our anxieties and oriented predominantly towards external things, cautious, like a lily which stores up reserves in its bulb for the year to come. A letter to Lady Cynthia Asquith in 1915 gives a flavour of Lawrence's despair at the whole affair:

> One watches them on the sea-shore, all the people: and there is something pathetic, almost wistful in them, as if they wish that their lives did *not* add up to this scaly nullity of possession, but as if they could not escape. It is a dragon that has devoured us all: these obscene, scaly houses, this insatiable struggle and desire to possess, to possess always and in spite of everything, this need to be an owner, lest one be owned. It is too horrible. One can no longer live with people… (2L 376)

In 'John Galsworthy' (1927), Lawrence notes that 'all they can do, having no individual life of their own, is out of fear to rake together property' (STH 213:33). So, ultimately this system has led us into a vicious circle, like America, 'shut up fast in her own "productive" machines like millions of squirrels running in millions of cages. It is just a farce.' (SCAL 31:1). Lawrence opposes this mode to the mode of *coming-into-being*, of fulfilling oneself, of disinterestedness, of dancing, art, and so on.[298] Lawrence points out, after all, that not all of man's efforts have always been directed towards self-preservation:

> …there is something more, something else, thank heaven, than this unappeased rage of self-preservation. Even the passion to be rich is not merely the greedy wish to be secure within triple walls of brass, along with a huge barn of plenty. And the history of mankind is not altogether the history of an effort at self-preservation which has at length become over blown and extravagant. Working in contradiction to the will of self-preservation, from the very first man wasted himself begetting children, colouring himself and dancing and howling, and sticking feathers in his hair, in scratching pictures on the walls of his cave, and making graven images of his unutterable feelings. So he went on wildly and with gorgeousness taking no thought for the morrow… (STH 7:20)

[298] Even though the old man in the very beginning, criticizes the poppy for its 'reckless shameless scarlet flower', and recounts Jean de La Fontaine's *Fable of the Grasshopper and the Ant* to his grandson, Lawrence makes him quickly regret what he has said, so that he compromises and tells him a story about a phoenix instead (STH 8:24). In French, *la cigale et la fourmi*, a hungry grasshopper begs for food from an ant in winter. The ant refuses, telling him he should have worked during the summer instead of spending all summer singing and dancing.

Meaning in life is not to be found in self-preservation, nor in the accumulation of money and property, nor in the conquest of nature but in the dynamic, upsurging nature (*phusis)*:

> Every step I move forward into being brings a newer, juster proportion into the world, gives me less need of storehouse and barn, allows me to leave all, and to take what I want by the way, sure that it will always be there; allows me in the end to fly the flag of myself, at the extreme tip of life. (STH 19:5)

Indeed, Lawrence is convinced that man, when he is authentically himself is not primarily driven by monetary concerns —when he 'feels himself together within the great continuum of the universe […] is not divided nor cut-off' (STH 211:22)—as we might be when we are on holiday:

> Why are we so rarely away on our holidays? Why do we persist in taking ourselves seriously, in counting our money and our goods and our virtues? We are down in the end. We rot and crumble away. And that without ever bursting the bud, the tight economical bud of caution and thrift and self-preservation. (STH 10:12)

Lawrence finds that modern mankind is so obsessed with possession that: 'they have all lost their being over it' (RDP 82:6). Like Fromm, Lawrence believes that a man should only desire as much as will help him to his own fulfilment. When men can 'become their own decent selves again, then we can so easily arrange the material world. The arrangement will come, as it must come, spontaneously' (RDP 82:31).

6.2.3 The Will-to-power: 'A will-to-power seems to work out as bullying. And bullying is something despicable and detestable' (RDP 321:10)

Even if Lawrence did indeed understand Nietzsche's will-to-power in the sense in which it was commonly understood at the time, he makes it very clear in the essay 'Blessed are the Powerful' that it was not a notion he agreed with: 'we have a confused idea, that *will* and power are somehow identical. We think we can have a will-to-power. A will-to-power seems to work out as bullying. And bullying is something despicable and detestable' (RDP 321:10).[299] Power for Lawrence is not a means of possessing or *having* things, power is actually a force that comes

[299] As mentioned previously, Lawrence was probably too sensitive a reader to subscribe to simplistic interpretations of what Nietzsche meant by his *Wille zur Macht* (Will-to-Power). This is, it seems to me, what he was getting at in 'Fragment 1' of the *Apocalypse*, when he wrote: 'love and power are the two divine things in life. This is what Nietzsche meant' (A 165:1).

to us from the cosmos: 'power is not in the least like Will. Power comes to us, we know not how, from beyond. Whereas our will is our own' (RDP 321:37).[300] Thus, the human desire to dominate is, once again, simply hubris, and fundamentally a sign of weakness: 'when a man prides himself on something that is just in himself, part of his own ego, he falls into conceit, and conceit carries an inferiority complex as its shadow' (RDP 321:39). On that account, Lawrence underscores that, 'in an age that, like ours, has lost the mystery of power, and the reverence for power, a false power is substituted: the power of money. This is a power based on the force of human envy and greed, nothing more' (RDP 326:14).[301] Even in Lawrence's era, the lamentable result of the domination of the mode of *having* over the mode of *being* was obvious, and inescapably reminds us that little has changed over the course of the last hundred or so years:

> Nowadays, when the only power is the power of human greed and envy, the greatest men in the world are men like Mr. Ford, who can satisfy the modern lust, we can call it nothing else, for owning a motorcar: or men like the great financiers, who can soar on wings of greed to uncanny heights, and even can spiritualise greed. (RDP 326:32)

But apart from obtaining notional power through possessions and money, man also tries to obtain power through knowledge. As Fromm also points out, the *having* mode is not restricted to the sphere of possession, it can also apply to the domain of knowledge: 'the difference between the mode of having and the mode of being in the sphere of *knowing* is expressed in two formulations: "I have knowledge" and "I know". *Having* knowledge is taking and keeping possession of available knowledge (information); *knowing* is functional and serves only as a means in the process of productive thinking' (Fromm, To Have or To Be 34). With regard to Lawrence, we have already looked at his horror at the desire to know everything *in full*, as he says Shelley tries to do (whereas all that it is really possible to know is what we can know partially from our own perspective). The desire to know the whole is, for Lawrence, a futile desire to use our minds to conquer the universe. In other words, it is also an example of the will-to-dominate. In this fashion, tales like Poe's *Ligeia* are centred on the attempt 'to be scientifically master of the mystery of the other being' (SCAL 232:39); 'each is possessed with

[300] 'The *power* of God, and the *will* of God we have imagined identical. We need only think for a moment, and we can see the vastness of difference between the two' (RDP 321:17).
[301] Lawrence says, 'money is to power what margarine is to butter: a nasty substitute' (RDP 324:18)!

the craving to search out and *know* the other, entirely; to know, to have, to possess, to be identified with the other' (SCAL 233:37).[302] The emphasis on knowing over being is made even more explicit in the revised second version of his Poe essay in which Lawrence says 'these terribly conscious birds like Poe and his Ligeia deny the very life that is in them, they want to turn it all into talk, into *knowing*. And so life, which will *not* be known, leaves them' (SCAL 72:35). Now, for Lawrence, this will-to-dominate through knowledge has already exhausted itself, and needs to be supplanted by something more positive:

> By willing and by intellectualising we have done all we can, for the time being. We only exhaust ourselves, and lose our lives — that is, our livingness, our power to live — by any further straining of the will and the intellect. It is time to take our hands off the throttle: knowing well enough what we are about, and choosing our course of action with a steady heart. (RDP 322:14)

Nonetheless, to his great exasperation, the will-to-power lives on in the society around him, with scientists still attempting to explain the world through laws, and man to subjugate the physical world with their machines, and the seemingly unstoppable accumulation of resources: 'the supreme little ego in man hates an unconquered universe. We shall never rest till we have heaped tin cans on the North Pole and the South Pole, and put up barb-wire fences on the moon […] The back of creation is broken. We have killed the mysteries and devoured the secrets. It all lies now within our skin, within the ego of humanity' (RDP 281:4).

6.2.4 Franklin or Frankenstein

This tension between having and being, between *technē* and *phusis* makes itself clearly felt in Lawrence's depiction of the iconic figure of American literature and culture, Benjamin Franklin. His essay on Franklin, initially published as an article in 1918, but later replaced by a revised (and in many ways, a far less radical) version in *Studies in Classic Literature* is a humorous but devastating, character assassination. The first thing Lawrence dislikes about Franklin is that, from an early age, he seems to have ousted any sense of wonder and adopted what Lawrence considers to be a mechanical, predictive outlook:

> We do, perhaps, get a glimpse of a really wondering young Franklin, where he still has the living faculty for beholding with instinct the world around

[302] According to Lawrence, murder is the supreme example of this desire to possess, and he notes that Poe and De Quincy both took opium and were fascinated by murder.

> him—when he was a printer's workman, in London, for a short time. But the glimpse is soon over. He is back in America, and is all American, the very model of a man, as if a machine had made him. (SCAL 189:7)

Another trait of Franklin that Lawrence dislikes is his lack of spontaneity. In his autobiography, Franklin tells how he created a creed of six articles and a list of moral virtues, according to which, 'he proceeded to control his every motion' (SCAL 185:37), attempting to stifle all spontaneity and natural impulses, to 'automatise himself and subdue life' (SCAL 182:28) and 'reducing himself to a deliberate entity' (SCAL 182:31). Even Franklin's humour, Lawrence says, illustrated 'the triumph of cautious, calculated virtuous behaviour' (SCAL 189:2).[303] In other words, he is the perfect example of the predictive, mechanical model. Rather than giving himself over to being, he attempts to control his destiny with his will. Franklin's paradigm as 'the perfect Man of the Future', a man, Lawrence writes, 'whose passions are the obedient servants of his mind, whose sole ambition is to live for the bettering and advancement of his fellows, a man of such complete natural benevolence that the interests of self never obtrude in his works or his desires' (SCAL 180:10), is depicted by Lawrence as a kind of anti-man, a veritable monster. Franklin is what Lawrence calls a 'false self', a man who has repudiated his bodily instincts in an attempt to become the perfect machine, and is henceforth ruled by ideas.

Another aspect of Franklin that Lawrence abhors, is his belief in the perfectibility of man, the fact that he allows himself to sacrifice his spontaneity to become 'perhaps the most perfect little automation that the world has ever seen'. It is the idea that we can decree what we want to be, elaborate a blueprint for it and then become it, 'the fallacy of our age—the assumption that we, of our own will, and by our precept and prescription, can create the perfect being and the perfect age' (SCAL 180:34). This was why Lawrence was interested in Rousseau's idea of the human faculty of perfectibility.[304] In his *Second Discourse* Rousseau had said humans were (alone of all animals) capable of using their minds to modify their behaviour, whereas animals and birds (cats and pigeons were the specific examples he gives) are unable to overcome their instincts through the power of ideas. Interestingly, as part of his preparation for the writing of *Studies in Classic American Literature* Lawrence had ordered Rousseau's *Emile*, (a book which Lawrence might well have come across during his teacher

[303] Lawrence encountered Franklin as a youth via the moralistic Poor Richard's almanack that his father purchased every year, of which, he only realized later, Franklin was the author (SCAL 24).
[304] Lawrence may be partially misinterpreting Rousseau, since part of Rousseau's point is that man's faculty of perfectibility has engendered largely negative consequences.

training), in which Rousseau imagines an ideal upbringing by a tutor of a young boy.[305] Lawrence criticizes the idea that we are the master of our fate and says that 'we should have the dignity of our own nature and know that we cannot ordain the creative issues, neither in ourselves nor beyond ourselves' (SCAL 180:30). In fact, Lawrence asserts, we cannot create ourselves, we can at best only fabricate a false self as Franklin endeavours to do.

Lawrence dislikes any kind of standardisation and detests the way Franklin sets out to promote himself as a model for all men to follow:

> Why then did Benjamin set up this dummy of a perfect citizen as a pattern to America? Of course, he did it in perfect good faith, as far as he knew. He thought it simply was the true ideal. But what we *think* we do is not very important. We never really know what we are doing. (SCAL 30:4)

The logical development of Franklin's approach would ultimately lead to the individuality of man being sacrificed at the altar of providence since all spontaneity, all impulses, all differences must be supressed: 'he could never see that the only riches of the earth is in free, whole, incomparable beings, each man mystically himself, and distinct, mystically distinguished'. Instead, to Franklin, Lawrence asserts, 'men were like coin to be counted up, coin interchangeable' (SCAL 188:23). If Franklin had his way, everyone would have to end up the same.

Finally, Lawrence also despises the fact that Franklin elevates production over creation, criticizing the hubris of Franklin for inventing a God who has nothing to do with the mystery of creation and instead has become a productive God, dedicated to providence (the equivalent for Lawrence of the superfluous accumulation of wealth and property, i.e. self-preservation). Thus, in Franklin's world, God has become 'the inventor and director of the universe and not a God at all', with the earthly business conceived as a paying concern (SCAL 182). Such a reproach for Lawrence is more than just a humorous dig at Franklin, he is saying that Franklin has committed a blasphemy against life by denying the miracle of creation, in favour of an externally created God, whose job seems to be merely to serve mankind. In the first version, Lawrence goes much further though, comparing Franklin to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*—if Frankenstein's monster is a man created by man, then Benjamin Franklin is a monster too: 'not

[305] As can be seen from the opening line which refers to the somewhat unlikely trio of Rousseau, Godwin and Shelley. The last two were associated in Lawrence's mind due to a book he had read, *Shelley, Godwin and their Circle*, which discussed the doctrines of perfectibility and universal benevolence (see the explanatory notes of the Cambridge Edition of *Twilight in Italy* (TI 279)).

exactly as the monster in *Frankenstein*, but for the same reason, viz., that he is the production or fabrication of the human will, which projects itself upon a living human being, and automatises that being according to a given percept' (SCAL 181:6). This essay, therefore, also has an ethical dimension. For Lawrence, Franklin is not a man; he is 'a dreadful automaton, a mechanism' (SCAL 188:12); he has abandoned living in wonder, in favour of providence and control: 'so far as affairs went, he was admirable. As far as life goes, he is monstrous' (SCAL 188:29). And as Lawrence points out, commenting on Franklin's attitude towards Native American Indians, all this has a more sinister side to it, since, ultimately, it can even lead to genocidal tendencies. Franklin describes a scene in which the Indians had got drunk on rum, and then follows it with the following comment: 'and, indeed, if it be the design of Providence to extirpate these savages in order to make room for the cultivators of the earth, it seems not improbable that rum may be the appointed means. It has already annihilated all the tribes who formerly inhabited all the seacoast' (SCAL 189:32). Of this Lawrence comments:

> This is what a Providence must lead to. A providence is a Provider for the universe, and the business of the provider is to get rid of every waster, even if this waster happens to be part of the self-same-created universe. When man sets out to have all things his own way he is bound to run up against a great many men […] he becomes a great leveller, cutting off all tall men's heads. For no man must be taller than Franklin who is middle-sized. (SCAL 189:37)

Instead of living at the 'extreme tip of life', mankind, of whom Benjamin Franklin is for Lawrence one of the most egregious examples, has used *having* to control and conquer the world, resulting in a stale, meaningless world.

6.3. A Mechanical world: 'The Universe isn't quite a Machine after all'

6.3.1 Cause and effect

Causal thinking has become so commonplace in modernity that it generally seems completely self-evident to think that there are causes and effects. Lawrence, however, is aware that causal thinking amounts to little more than arbitrarily imposing a schema, or framework on the world—even if, as we have seen, the habits of the world do indeed lend themselves to this kind of thinking. In his introduction to Lawrence's *Apocalypse*, Deleuze describes Lawrence's position in the following terms:

> We turn connection into a relation of cause and effect or a principle of consequence. We abstract a reflection from the physical world of flows, a bloodless double made-up of subjects, objects, predicates, and logical relations. In this way we extract the system of judgement […] but whenever a physical relation is translated into logical relations, a symbol into images, flows into segments, exchanged, cut up into subjects and objects, each for the other, we have to say that the world is dead… (Deleuze, Nietzsche and Saint Paul 52).

Causal thinking is essentially backward-looking, because the conclusions have to be drawn from past experience, and based on the assumption that the same patterns will be repeated again in the future. It all breaks down if the present moment always contains an element of unpredictability, and this is the meaning he is trying to convey in the 'Reality of Peace' when he writes: 'we shall never be able to map out the way to the new. All our maps, all our charts, all our right and wrong are only record from the past. But for the new there is a new and for ever incalculable element.' (RDP 29:2). Lawrence knows that causal thinking is just a manner of thinking, which is the point he is making in the introduction to *Movements in European History* (1921) about causal thinking in history:[306]

> Each fact must be established, and put into relation with every other fact. This is the business of scientific history: the forging of a great chain of logically sequential events, cause and effect demonstrated down the whole range of time. Now this is all very well, if we will remember that we are not *discovering* any sequence of events, we are only abstracting. The logical sequence does not exist until we have made it, and then it exists as a new piece of furniture of the human mind. (MEH 8)

For Lawrence, endlessly repeating the same old patterns is the source of the staleness and the meaningless of modern life, which Lawrence sees in *Study of Thomas Hardy* in the character Phillotson, who 'could not create a single new movement or thought or expression. Everything he did was a repetition of what had been. All his study was a study of what had been. It was a mechanical, functional process' (STH 113:19). Such a life cannot be fulfilling as he makes clear in the opening lines of 'The Reality of Peace', it becomes a sort of prison in which we are trapped:

[306] A children's history book, which Lawrence was commissioned to write due to his excellent historical knowledge.

> Our life becomes a mechanical round, and it is difficult for us to know or to admit the new creative desires that come upon us. We cling tenaciously to the old states, we resist our own fulfilment with a perseverance that would almost stop the sun in its course. But in the end we are overborne. If we cannot cast off the old habitual life, then we bring it down over our heads in a blind frenzy. (RDP 27)

If everything is stale and repetitive, then we lose all our sense of wonder, and become alienated. This is why in the later essay 'Introduction to These Paintings' (1929), he talks of 'the endless chain of cause-and-effect, the infinite web of the hated cliché, which nets us all down in utter boredom' (LEA 212:13).

Furthermore, there is a link between causal thinking and idealism, as he makes clear in *Kangaroo*. Man, he asserts 'is said to be a creature of cause-and-effect, or a creature of free-will. The two are the same. Free-will means acting according to reasoned choice, which is a purest instance of cause-and-effect. […] And idealism, the ruling of life by the instrumentality of the idea, is precisely the mechanical, even automatic cause-and-effect process' (K 295:24). Thus, Lawrence identifies the 'endless repetition of certain motions' as being a quality innate to most societies:[307]

> The idea, or ideal, becomes a fixed principle, and life, like any other force, is driven into mechanical repetition of given motions — millions of times over and over again — according to the fixed ideals. So, the Christian-democratic world prescribes certain motions, and men proceed to repeat these motions, till they conceive that there *are* no other motions but these. And that is pure automatism. (K 295:28)

Just as the Christian-Democratic world has certain ingrained patterns inherent to it, so do the ancient Egyptians or the Aztecs: these patterns constitute their cultural style, modes of being, or world views. The modern tendency is to affix a label on them (as primitive or uncivilized, for example), or alternatively, try to understand them in terms of patterns that are most familiar to us. But as Lawrence points out, it is the very fact that other men have had other ways of

[307] Some pages in novels like *Kangaroo* (particularly the opening pages of the chapter 'A Row in Town'), or a few pages in *Mr. Noon* (which was never published) can, in my opinion, reasonably be taken as non-fictional philosophy, or at the very least as bridging the divide between non-fiction and fiction. Although a case can be made for their presence in the novel, for example, as representing the internal thoughts of Richard Summers in the former, they somehow seem out of place.

being—so radically removed from ours that we cannot even imagine them—that makes primitive peoples so interesting: 'when scientists describe savages, or ancient Egyptians, or Aztecs, they assume that these far-off peoples acted, but in a crude, clumsy way, from the same motives which move us. "Too much ego in his cosmos." Men have had strange, inconceivable motives and impulses, which were just as "right" as ours are' (K 295:13).

6.3.2 Quantity versus Quality: 'we want quality of life, not quantity' (RDP 106)

If the world really was purely mechanical, there would be (as cited above) no man 'colouring himself and dancing and howling, and sticking feathers in his hair, in scratching pictures on the walls of his cave, and making graven images of his unutterable feelings' as Lawrence puts it, nor there would there be any art, as Nietzsche stresses:

> … an essentially mechanistic world would be an essentially meaningless world! Suppose one judged the value of a piece of music according to how much of it could be counted, calculated, and expressed in formulas—how absurd such a "scientific" evaluation of music would be! What would one have comprehended, understood, recognized? Nothing, really nothing of what is "music" in it! (GS 239)

'We want quality of life, not quantity', writes Lawrence in 'Education of the People' (RDP 106:3) because a world based on quantity rather than quality is ultimately a meaningless one—the point, as Lawrence well knew, that Nietzsche had made in *The Gay Science* when he argued that: 'a "scientific" interpretation of the world, as you understand it, might still be one of the *stupidest* of all possible interpretations of the world, i.e. one of those most lacking significance' (GS 239). This is because the scientific interpretation cannot actually *explain* anything, it merely tries to base everything on cause-and-effect: 'we reason "this and that must precede for that to follow"—but we haven't thereby *understood* anything. The specifically qualitative aspect for example of every chemical process, still appears to be a "miracle", as does every locomotion; no one has "explained" the push' (GS 113). The *push* Nietzsche refers to is, of course, as for Lawrence, the mysterious force that pushes all movement into the world, the thing-in-itself. It is this *push* that gives the quality of things, and thereby makes them meaningful. This is why Lawrence says in the essay 'Return to Bestwood' (1926), 'I know that we must look after the quality of life, not the quantity' (LEA 24:1), because 'our vision of life is all wrong. We must be prepared to have a new conception of what it means, *to live* […] first

and foremost, we must be sensitive to life and to its movements' (LEA 23:28-39).[308] Quantitative causal reasoning, mathematical explanations, laws may suffice for (approximately and pragmatically) interpreting the three-dimensional world of phenomenal existence, but they cannot explain the significance and meaning of the fourth dimension. This was also Nietzsche's point:

> A "world of truth" that can be grasped entirely with the help of our four-cornered little human reason—What? Do we really want to demote existence in this way to an exercise in arithmetic and an indoor diversion for mathematicians […] One that permits counting, calculating, weighing, seeing, grasping, and nothing else—that is a crudity and naiveté, assuming it is not a mental illness. (GS 238)

Furthermore, human existence itself can be reduced to a quantitative way of life—if we choose to live in this manner, a manner in some ways much easier (as we saw above in the lines on *personality*)*:* 'because personalities and egos, after all, are quite reasonable, which means, they are subject to the laws of cause-and-effect; they are safe and calculable' (RDP 76:3). Quantity, like any concept, is 'a purely arbitrary institution of the human mind' (RDP 64:18),[309] so we can indeed live mechanically like the walker from Streatham whom Lawrence encounters in *Twilight in Italy*, and whom he finds so symptomatic of the mechanical nature of the social system:

> I could feel so well the machine that had him in its grip. He slaved for a year, mechanically, in London, riding in the Tube, working in the office. Then for a fortnight he was let free. So he rushed to Switzerland, with a tour planned out, and with just enough money to see him through, and to buy presents at Interlaken: bits of the edelweiss pottery: I could see him going home with them. (TI 211:21)

Lawrence, at first hesitating between pity and contempt, finally plumps for the latter when he reflects on the extent to which it is sheer mental will-power that forces his shattered body onwards: 'his body must pay whatever his will demanded, though it were torture' (TI 212:17). Following the same line of reasoning, Lawrence also criticizes the character Clym (from

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[308] 'Return to Bestwood' is not Lawrence's own title, since he never gave it a title. It received its current title when it was published posthumously in *Phoenix II* (LEA 13).
[309] Lawrence is talking here of the concept of the average: 'It is a mathematical quantity, like the metre or the foot-rule: a purely arbitrary institution of the human mind' (RDP 64:18).

Hardy's *Return of the Native*) for his calculative behaviour in *Study of Thomas Hardy*: 'his life had been arrested, and his activity turned into repetition' (STH 27:2), denouncing him for always acting according to pattern, according to 'the pathetic little pattern of man's moral life' (STH 29:1), rather than in accordance with 'the vast incomprehensible pattern of some morality greater than ever the human mind can grasp' (STH 28:39). Likewise, he criticizes Benjamin Franklin for being the 'pattern American' (SCAL20:26) and, of course, to get his own back on the critic Muir in 'Accumulated Mail' whom he criticizes for his 'mechanical repetitions' (RDP 242:24). America is criticized again in the first version of the 'Introduction to Memoirs of the Duc de Lauzun' for being '*chose connue*' (we already know everything there is to be known about it): 'This is our true bondage. This is the agony of our human existence, that we can only feel things in conventional feeling-patterns' (IR 90:6). For Lawrence, a new pattern means a new pre-consciousness which can revolutionise our outlook on the world. This is why he states in 'Education of the People' that 'we have got to discover a new mode of human relationship. Which means incidentally that we've got to get a new conception of man and of ourselves' (RDP 115:28). Without new patterns—new presuppositions and preconceptions—a new world is not possible: 'And therefore, there is no revolution. Because a revolution is really the birth of a new baby, a new idea, a new feeling, a new way of feeling, a new feeling-pattern' (IR 91:3).

One of the clearest examples of the importance of this division between quality and quantity is to be found in a kind of thought-experiment which he invents in *Mornings in Mexico*. Rather as did Samuel Butler, in the quotation cited earlier, by 'turning all of our ideas of society on their head', Lawrence tries to defamiliarize the linear, quantitative Eurocentric point of view by imagining things from a native Mexican perspective (the white man, thus, becomes a kind of 'white monkey', totally lacking in the basic rudiments of how one should really live). Lawrence, by assuming the Mexican Indians' point of view, describes the white man as some sort of 'white monkey' who has:

> … learnt lots of semi-magical secrets of the universe, and made himself boss of the show. Imagine a race of big white monkeys got up in fantastic clothes, and able to kill a man by hissing at him; able to leap through the air in great hops, covering a mile in each leap; able to transmit his thoughts by a moment's effort of concentration to some great white monkey or monkeyess, a thousand miles away: and you have, from our point of view, something of the picture that the Indian has of us. (MM 36:24)

By contrasting two very different, possible worlds in this manner, it becomes possible to see how quantitative our world-view has become. Unlike the Mexicans, Lawrence asserts, the Europeans see exact 'spots of time' (hours, minutes, seconds), exact distances, exact amounts of money. Everything is cut up and measured.[310] The white man, seen from this point of view 'has a horrible, truly horrible, monkey-like passion for invisible exactitudes' (MM 37:9). The white man's way of cutting up the day horrifies the Indian since 'to the white monkey, horrible to relate, there are exact spots of time, such as five o'clock, half past nine. The day is a horrible puzzle of exact spots of time' (MM 36:37). Spatially too, the white man has 'horrible invisible distances called two miles, ten miles. To the Indians, there is near and far, and very near and very far. There is two days or one day. But two miles are as good as twenty to him, for he goes entirely by his feeling. If a certain two miles feels far to him, then it is far, it is *muy lejos*! But if a certain twenty miles feels near and familiar, then it is not far' (MM 37:1). In this manner, Lawrence problematises the quantitatively-based, linear nature of modern existence. In modernity, as the Indians perceive, we have ultimately become trapped by our own paradigms:

> … seeing the white monkeys for ever mechanically bossing, with their incessant tick-tack of work. Seeing them get the work out of us, the sweat, the money, and then taking the very land from us, the very oil and metal out of our soil. They do it! They do it all the time. Because they can't help it. Because grasshoppers can but hop, and ants can carry little sticks… (MM 38:39)

In this fashion, Westerners, who are reduced to perpetually and mechanically repeating the same actions like ants or grasshoppers, are portrayed as the ones who ultimately lead a very stifling way of life.

6.3.3 Machines: 'the triumph of Mind over the cosmos progresses in small spasms: aeroplanes, radio, motor traffic. It is high time for the Millennium' (A 199:1)

It is obvious from what was said so far that, in Lawrence's understanding, the mechanical and the ideal both have something in common: they are both forms of attempted domination.

[310] Quinones traces back the quantitative and causal model to the Renaissance, during which period the discovery of time 'led to practical decisions and mundane consequences, such as scheduling one's activities (the newly devised *emploi du temps*)'. It was, writes Quinones, 'a fervent discovery that lent itself to quantitative precision and an increased control over human life' (Quinones 37).

This is why Lawrence repeatedly insists that mechanism and idealism ultimately amount to the same thing:

> An ideal established in control of the passional soul is no more and no less than a supreme machine-principle. And a machine, as we know, is the active unit of the material world. Thus we see how it is that in the end pure idealism is identical with pure materialism, and the most ideal peoples are the most completely material. Ideal and material are identical. The ideal is but the god in the machine — the little, fixed, machine principle which works the human psyche automatically. (PFU 14:24)

The mind can be used as an instrument to subdue the universe, just as a machine is employed to the same end:[311]

> It is necessary to produce food and clothing. Then, under necessity, the thing must be done as quickly as possible. Is not the highest recommendation for a labourer the fact that he is quick? And how does any man become quick, save through finding the shortest way to his end, and by repeating one set of actions? […] And these movements are the calculative or scientific movements of a machine. (STH 33:30)

As Lawrence explains in the article 'Men Must Work and Women as Well', 'a machine is absolutely material but also anti-physical' (LEA 284:15). Although machines are products of the material realm, they remain nevertheless the culminating reality of human ideas. For these reasons, despite Jeff Wallace's valiant and brilliantly argued efforts to demonstrate in *Lawrence: Science and the Post-Human* that Lawrence was not a complete Luddite (J. Wallace, D. H. Lawrence: Science and the Post-Human), the reality is that Lawrence was consistently critical of the role played by machines and technology in modern society, with the following citation from 'Apocalypsis II' far from being the only example: 'the triumph of Mind over the cosmos progresses in small spasms: aeroplanes, radio, motor traffic. It is high time for the

[311] See *Kangaroo*: 'they had a universal desire to take life and *down* it: these horrible machine people, these iron and coal people. They wanted to set their foot absolutely on life, grind it down, and be master. Masters, as they were of their foul machines. Masters of life, as they were masters of steam-power and electric-power and above all, of money-power. Masters of money-power, with an obscene hatred of life, true spontaneous life' (K 256:8).

Millennium. And alas, everything has gone wrong. The destruction of the world seems not very far off, but the happiness of mankind has never been so remote' (A 199:1).

One idea that seems to haunt Lawrence, an idea which he may also have drawn from Samuel Butler, is that of man being dominated by his own inventions. In the poem 'Man and Machine' he writes:

> Man invented the machine
> And now the machine has invented man. (CP 641)

Part of *Erewhon* is dedicated to a story about the decision taken by the Erewhonians to destroy all the machines before they took over from the humans:

> They have preyed upon man's grovelling preference for his material over his spiritual interests, and have betrayed him into supplying that element of struggle and warfare without which no race can advance. The lower animals progress because they struggle with one another; the weaker die, the stronger breed and transmit their strength. The machines being of themselves unable to struggle, have got man to do their struggling for them: as long as he fulfils this function duly, all goes well with him — at least he thinks so; but the moment he fails to do his best for the advancement of machinery by encouraging the good and destroying the bad, he is left behind in the race of competition; and this means that he will be made uncomfortable in a variety of ways, and perhaps die. (Butler 207)

It is clear, too, that the war played a role in Lawrence's disgust of the mechanization of modern life, as is apparent in *Fantasia of the Unconscious*: 'concerning the universe of Force and Matter we pile up theories and make staggering and disastrous discoveries of machinery and poison-gas, all of which we were much better without' (PFU 169:18), or 'let us awake as soon as possible to the repulsive machine quality of machine-made things. They smell of death' (PFU 119:11). The war seemed to Lawrence to symbolize, writ large, the dual danger of the two elements of materialism and idealism, and to him it ultimately resembled, as he expresses it in 'Education of the People', humanity choosing to destroy oneself:

> The human soul is really capable of honour, once it has a true choice. But when it has a choice only of war with explosive engines and poison-gases, and a universal peace which consists in the most sordid commercial and industrial competition,

> why, believe me, the human soul will choose war, in the long run, inevitably it will; if only with a remote hope of at last destroying utterly this stinking industrial-competitive humanity. (RDP 160:19)

Instead, the entirety of all explosive weapons, poison gases and guns of all sorts should be immediately destroyed (RDP 160-161): 'after all, we are masters of our own inventions. Are we really so feeble and inane that we cannot get rid of the monsters we have brought forth?' (RDP 160:32).

6.3.4 Technology

But quite apart from the disastrous consequences of the war, Lawrence believes that technology in general stops us from living spontaneously. Even taps and electric lights and showers hinder us from having meaningful relationships with the world, as he warns in *Mornings in Mexico*: 'to us, heaven switches on daylight, or turns on the shower-bath. We little gods are gods of the machine only. It is our highest. Our cosmos is a great *ennui*. And we die of ennui' (MM 84:13). And again in 'Pan in America', he repeats, 'what does life consist in, save a vivid relatedness between the man and the living universe that surrounds him? Yet man insulates himself more and more into mechanism, and repudiates everything but the machine and the contrivance of which he himself is master, god in the machine' (MM 160:27).

In a later article 'Men Must Work and Woman as Well' (1929), Lawrence marvels at the increasing reluctance to engage in any kind of physical tasks. On the fifth of August 1929, Lawrence sent off the article to his agent Nancy Pearn for publication in *Star Review*, in which he wrote: 'there is an enormous, insistent demand on the part of the human being that mere labour, such as scrubbing, hewing and loading coal, navvying, the crude work that is the basis of all labour, shall be done away with. Even washing dishes. Science hasn't even learned how to wash dishes for us yet' (LEA 277:5).[312] Lawrence was probably unaware that dishwashers had already been invented—but it wasn't until the 1950s that they became widely introduced into households. A clear indication of the extent to which he believed the physical relationship with the universe should be as direct and unmediated as possible is to be found in the essay on

[312] For a remarkable expression of the joy Lawrence finds in washing dishes, see 'Education of the People': 'The actual doing things is in itself a joy. If I wash the dishes I learn a quick, light touch of china and earthenware, the feel of it, the weight and roll and poise of it, the peculiar hotness, the quickness or slowness of its surface. I am at the middle of an infinite complexity of motions and adjustments and quick, apprehensive contacts' (RDP 151:3). Everyone who knew Lawrence was amazed how domesticated he was.

'Dana's "Two Years Before the Mast"' in *Studies in Classic American Literature*, in which he asserts that 'the more we intervene machinery between us and the naked forces the more we numb and atrophy our own senses. Every time we turn on a tap to have water, every time we turn a handle to have a fire or light, we deny ourselves and annul our being' (SCAL 117:25). In the first version of the essay (1918), Lawrence had said, 'machines depend upon the conquest of the external forces, so that by the intervention of machinery, we not only destroy the purest joy, but we rob ourselves of very life, we become as it were deaf and numb in the elemental physical body' (SCAL 283:23). And in the final version (1922) Lawrence writes, of modern appliances; 'we do not know what we lose by all our labour-saving appliances. Of the two evils it would be much the lesser to lose all machinery, every bit, rather than to have, as we have, hopelessly too much' (SCAL 283:37).

But, as far as Lawrence is concerned, this phenomenon extends well beyond simple household appliances to include technologies like film, the radio, the gramophone: all invented, according to Lawrence since 'physical effort and physical contact have become repellent to men and women alike. The aim is to abstract as much as possible' (LEA 277:33). Rather like the vain efforts in *The Lost Girl* to keep the theatre going in the face of the arrival of the cinema, it proves a losing battle: 'we don't *want* the physical contact, we don't *want* to look at flesh and blood people — we want to watch their shadows on a screen. We *don't* want to hear their actual voices: only transmitted through a machine. We must get away from the physical' (LEA 283:24). This ever-greater cerebralization, the repudiation of the physical, ultimately leads to a distaste for bodily contact, especially, remarks Lawrence, on the part of women:

> She doesn't want to feel his presence as something material, unavoidable and permanent. It goes dead against her grain, it upsets her instinct. She loves him, she loves, even, being faithful to him. But she doesn't want him substantially around. She doesn't want his actual physical presence — except in snatches. What she *really* loves is the thought of him, the idea of him, the *distant* communion with him — varied with snatches of actually being together, like little festivals, which we are more or less glad when they are over. (LEA 282:2)

This, concludes Lawrence, is the tendency of modern civilisation: 'it is, and there is no denying it, towards a greater and greater abstraction from the physical, towards a further and further physical separateness between men and women, and between individual and individual' (LEA

282:17);[313] in other words, machines are part of a much bigger trend of the mentalization of our lives, ultimately leading towards ever more separation and individualism. This is what lies behind the following sentence in 'Pan in America': 'this was the death of the great Pan. The idea and the engine came between man and all things, like a death. The old connexion, the old Allness, was severed, and can never be ideally restored' (MM 162:23).

In this chapter, we have looked at the way in which Lawrence feels that static ideals, machines and technology have got in the way of any kind of spontaneous existence and that our feelings and ideals have grown stale and automatic. Unlike Franklin, the fundamental disposition for those who are attuned to the never-ceasing unfolding of life is the disposition of wonder, but in our desire to control and master our environment we have got caught up in a system of permanent and never-ending accumulation, spiralling out of all control—such that at times Lawrence is convinced that man is ultimately destined for extinction:

> How they long for the destruction of the cosmos, secretly, these men of mind and spirit! How they work for its domination and final annihilation! But alas, they only succeed in spoiling the earth, spoiling life, and in the end destroying mankind, instead of the cosmos. Man cannot destroy the cosmos: that is obvious. But it is obvious that the cosmos can destroy man. Man must inevitably destroy himself, in conflict with the cosmos. It is perhaps his fate. Before men had cultivated the mind, they were not fools. (A199:27)

But in spite of this powerful passage which concludes 'Apocalypsis II', Lawrence never completely abandons all his hopes of reforming man. In 'The Future of the Novel' Lawrence pleads in favour of 'a new state of things' rather than this 'democratic-industrial-lovey-dovey-darling-take-me-to-mammy state of things' (STH 154:17), complaining about novels which wallow in existing feelings without seeking to change them (STH 155:10), and which fail to strive for 'new, really new feelings, a whole new line of emotion, which will get us out of the old emotional rut' (STH 155:20). Consequently, Lawrence asserts that we need to find a new impulse for things: philosophy has gone too far down the algebraic route; current novels had 'gone too far on the emotional tack' (STH 155:9). Any new novel, and by implication any new way of thinking, must find a way forward: 'it's got to break a way through, like a hole in the

[313] We will be returning to this in the final chapter.

wall' (STH 155:24), until 'gradually first one and then another of the sheep filters through the gap, and find a new world outside' (STH 155:30).

Elsewhere, as in *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*, he argues that it is time to leave behind the business of self-preservation and concentrate on the more profound question of how to actually live well (PFU 40:21): 'Man doth not live by bread alone. He lives even more essentially from the nourishing creative flow between himself and another or others' (PFU 41:25). In *Study of Thomas Hardy* (1915) he asks, 'cannot we see, rich and poor alike, how we have circumscribed, hampered, imprisoned ourselves within the limits of our poor-and-rich system, till our life is utterly pot-bound?' (STH 38:24) and notes that 'the shoots of London trees have force to burst through the London pavements. Is there not life enough in us to break out of this system? Let every man take his own and go his own way, regardless of system and State' (STH 38:30). The rest of this study will be dedicated to outlining the proposals Lawrence makes to avoid this fate, starting with the importance of getting back into contact with the life that surrounds us, without ideas and ideals: 'ideas are the dry, unliving, insentient plumage which intervenes *between us and the circumambient universe*, forming at once an insulator and an instrument for the subduing of the universe' (PFU 42:1, my italics). Human fulfilment stems from continually seeking for, and discovering, the revelation of life as it manifests itself in living things, including in human beings themselves, for, as Lawrence declares in the first version of his essay 'Nathaniel Hawthorne' (1918) in *Studies in Classic American Literature*: 'the clue or quick of the universe lies in the creative mystery'. Getting back in relation with this creative mystery is, according to Lawrence, the real aim of life, which we had got utterly wrong—a point he hammered home in *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*: 'the whole of life is one long, blind effort at an established polarity with the outer universe, human and non-human; and the whole of modern life is a shrieking failure. It is our own fault' (PFU 41:11).

Part 3: The clue to the future

Chapter 7: A Philosophy of Being: 'what, are we going to revoke our own being?' (RDP 159)

Lawrence's vision of the world, as we can now see, is a pluralistic one, imbibed largely from James, but also possibly from another one of his early influences. In letter XII of his *Letters on Reasoning* (which Lawrence carefully read during his youth), J. M. Robertson writes that 'it is by seeing as largely as may be the objective truth of things that you can best make your inner life stable. The more widely you are related to things, the more real is your own existence' (Robertson 236). This must have resonated with Lawrence, at a time when he was deeply suffering from loneliness. From the time he formulated it in his early years, the idea of the importance of relating oneself to other people, to other things and to the cosmos in general, not only formed the guiding star in Lawrence's intellectual constellation, but it also seemed to him to be perhaps the only real clue to the future fulfilment of mankind. In her memoirs, Frieda Lawrence stated that 'his final conclusion was that only human relations, good human relations, can save the world. Here lies the final sanity' (F. Lawrence, The Memoirs and Correspondence 128). Contrary to certain views, therefore, Lawrence was no egoist. Above all, he advocated the forging of new, authentic relations as the ingredient for a healthy, fulfilled life. As Kant writes in *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (1796), 'the opposite of egoism can only be pluralism, that is, the way of thinking in which one is not concerned merely with oneself as the whole world, but rather regards and conducts oneself as a mere citizen of the world' (Kant, Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View 18). Pluralism is an outlook which entails an acknowledgement of the value of others, however different they are; and a good dose of humility.[314] In this chapter, we look in more detail at the importance of relationality for Lawrence.

7.1 Relationality

7.1.1 Getting into Relation, Being: 'living and having being means the relatedness between me and all things.' (RDP 373)

Living well is, for Lawrence, a question of continually forming new, meaningful relationships with the surrounding environment, which itself, like the self, is constantly changing:

[314] See also Goodman's article 'William James's Pluralisms' for a development of this point (Goodman 155).

> A man, as he lives and moves and has being, is a fountain of life-vibration, quivering and flowing towards someone, something that will receive his outflow and send back an inflow, so that a circuit is completed, and there is a sort of peace. Or else he is a source of irritation, discord, and pain, harming everyone near him. But while we remain healthy and positive, we seek all the time to come into true human relationship with other human beings. (LEA 299:25)

As we have seen, Lawrence constantly insists that we can only know our circumambient universe, such as in *Sketches of Etruscan Places* (1928), in which he exclaims 'Oh, the weary, asinine stupidity of man's desire to "see the thing as a whole". There *is* no whole—the wholeness no more exists then the equator exists. It is the dreariest of abstractions' (SEP 34:26).[315] This means, as Lawrence highlights in 'Aristocracy' that 'man is great according as his relation to the living universe is vast and vital' (RDP 371:1). Just as the tiger has 'a by-the-way relatedness with trees, soil, water, man, cobras, deer, ants, and of course, the she-tiger' (RDP 374:3), so man's life consists 'in a relation with all things: stone, earth, trees, flowers, water, insects, fishes, birds, creatures, sun, rainbow, children, women, other men. But his greatest and final relation is with the sun' (RDP 374:9).[316] However in general, modern man does not maintain meaningful relations to his surroundings. In *Apocalypse* he writes 'with us, all is personal. Landscape and the sky, these are to us the delicious background of our personal life, and no more. Even the universe of the scientist is little more than an extension of our personality, to us' (A 76:7). The way of *being* involves the respectful acknowledgement of the presence of the divine mystery in the other: 'man now looks upon the white cock, the cow, the ram, as good to eat. But *living* and *having being* means the relatedness between me and all things' (RDP 373:18, Lawrence's italics); in other words, the best way to get pure vitality is through 'a pure relationship, which includes the *being* on each side, and which allows the transfer to take place in a living flow, enhancing the life in both beings' (RDP 359:5, Lawrence's italics). This is ultimately a way of getting into contact with the creative mystery itself, as he makes clear in 'The Crown' (1925): 'a man, if he win to a sheer fusion in himself

[315] For the same reasons, Lawrence prefers local museums to larger ones. Here, he is comparing the local museum at Tarquinia to the Etruscan Museum in Florence, since, as he says, one should not tear things from their settings: 'What one wants is to be aware. If one looks at an Etruscan helmet, then it is better to be fully aware of that helmet, in its own setting, in its own complex of associations, than it is to "look over" a thousand museums of stuff […] if one must have museums, let them be small, and above all, let them be local' (SEP 34:30).

[316] We will be returning to the importance of the sun for Lawrence later on.

of all the manifold creation, a pure relation, a sheer gleam of oneness out of manyness, then this man is God created where before God was uncreate' (RDP 303:6).[317]

There is, therefore, a clear sense in which Lawrence's conception of relationality corresponds to the distinction outlined in chapter 3, between two different worlds, the world of life from the source, or the world of the human taint. Hence, Lawrence maintains that if we want to establish where 'the quickness of the quick lies' (STH 183:12), we seem to find it 'an odd sort of fluid, changing grotesque or beautiful relatedness' (STH 183:14), and whereas he explicitly associates genuine relationships with God, or life (the 'quick'), he links false ones to predominantly human activities: 'and the sum and source of all quickness, we will call God. And the sum and total of all deadness we may call human' (STH 183:10). Moreover, in 'The Novel' Lawrence argues that the strength of the novel itself, lies in the characters' 'quick relatedness to all the other things in the novel: snow, bed-bugs, sunshine, the phallus, trains, silk-hats, cats, sorrow, people, food, diphtheria, fuchsias, stars, ideas, God, tooth-paste, lightning, and toilet-paper' (STH 183:33). Thus, Lawrence argues, a character like Pierre in *War and Peace* is far less alive than Prince André, because, although he is in relation with some of the most human ideas like silk-hats, trains, food and so forth, he is sluggish when it comes to the three most meaningful types of relations, namely to the cosmos (snow, sunshine), to other living beings (people, cats, fuschias, etc.), and to the other sex (the phallus).[318] Pierre was, he affirms, 'what we call, "so human". Which means, "so limited". Men clotting together into social masses in order to limit their individual liabilities: this is humanity' (STH 184:7).

Thus, in 'Morality and the Novel' (1925), Lawrence makes it clear that relationality equates, once again, to the distinction between *existence* and *being* (which he here calls 'life'). Even apparently meaningless everyday tasks can become meaningful if performed in the right spirit.[319] If the ordinary act of a bank clerk buying a new straw hat 'is just existence, quite all right, like everyday dinners', it is not life since 'by life, we mean something that gleams, that has the fourth-dimensional quality' (STH 173:31). On the other hand, says Lawrence, 'if the bank clerk feels really piquant about his hat, if he establishes a lively relation with it, and goes out of the shop with the new straw on his head, a changed man, be-aureoled, then that is life' (STH 173:25). The relationships we create can be either positive or negative, or as Lawrence

[317] This passage was added in the 1925 version, replacing the original text.
[318] The examples are from the citation above.
[319] According to Crossland, there seems to have been something creative in relativity for Lawrence: unlike mechanistic science, it is a science of the living, relative, human world' (Crossland 89).

likes to describe it, genuine of false. Positive connections, which Lawrence lists in *Apocalypse* (1929), are those that we constitute with 'the cosmos, with the world, with mankind, with the nation, with the family' (A148:31).[320] It is these good relationships which, as he remarks in 'We Need One Another' can bring us a state of peace: 'a soul is something that forms and fulfils itself in my contacts, my living touch with people I have loved or hated or truly known. *I am born with the clue to my soul*. The wholeness of my soul I must achieve. […] We lack peace because we are not whole. And we are not whole because we have known only a tithe of the vital relationships we might have had' (LEA 300:32, my italics).

For Lawrence, then, the false connections (those created by humans) are opposed to the true ones (the mystery of life, *phusis*), an opposition which Deleuze notes in his introduction to *Apocalypse*: 'According to Lawrence's critique, money, like love, must be reproached not for being a flow, but for being a false connection that [monetizes] subjects and objects' (Deleuze, Nietzsche and Saint Paul 52).[321] In 'Aristocracy' (1925), Lawrence compares these two different ways of perceiving the cockerel. Is he, on the other hand, to be reckoned in anthropomorphic, utilitarian terms, as a *resource*, as *livestock*, in other words, is he 'merely a barnyard rooster, worth a dollar-and-a-half' (RDP 373:11)? Or is he a revelation of the creative mystery, the Holy Ghost, 'a god indisputable' as he describes him in 'Him With his Tail in his Mouth' (RDP 314:23)? For Lawrence, a true relationship entails the recognition of the godhead in the cock, so that 'every time I hear him, a fountain of vitality gushes up in my body. It is life' (RDP 373:14). The same alternative is posed in 'Pan in America' with regard to the great pine tree in front of his cabin in New Mexico. Is the tree merely *timber*: 'if I like to cut myself off, and say it is all bunk, a tree is merely so much lumber not yet sawn' (MM 159:3), or can one relate to its *being*, and be positively transformed? Because then 'one realizes that the tree is asserting itself as much as I am. It gives out life, as I give out life. Our two lives meet and cross one another, unknowingly: the tree's life penetrates my life, and my life the tree's' (MM 158:19). In other words, a genuine non-anthropomorphic relationship with the great tree can be realised if one considers it as another incarnation of the will-in-itself: 'So much depends on

[320] The list is similar to the sympathies laid out by Lawrence in his earliest piece 'Art and the Individual' which was discussed in the first chapter.

[321] The original French reads : 'ce qu'il faut reprocher à l'argent […] ce n'est pas d'être un flux, mais d'être une fausse connexion qui monnaye des sujets et des objets' (Deleuze, Apocalypse 39). Deleuze also notes that this problem of genuine or false connections is a political issue. We will be looking at Lawrence's political philosophy in the final chapter. I have modified the translation slightly. Here Deleuze is specifically alluding to this pronouncement from Lawrence (occurring towards the end of *Apocalypse*): 'what we want is to destroy our false, inorganic connections, especially those related to money, and re-establish the living organic connections, with the cosmos, the sun and earth, with mankind and nation and family' (A 149:31).

one's attitude. One can shut many, many doors of receptivity in oneself; or one can open many doors that are shut' (MM 159:5).

But if the 'human taint' is too preponderant in any relationship, then a proper balance can never be achieved, since the establishment of a delicate mutual equilibrium requires that neither one of the two parties 'seeks his own' (STH 174:28), nor sacrifices themselves by yielding to the other (STH 174:31). Thus, Caesar's desire to dominate the world was ultimately too strong for him to be able to forge true relationships: 'he was not aware that the sun for ever was beyond him, and that only in his relation to the sun was he deified. He wanted to be God' (RDP 375:5). Furthermore, bad connections mean we lose out on the meaningfulness of life: because 'we are held by a few fixed ideas, like sex, money, what a person "ought" to be, and so forth, and we miss the whole of life' (LEA 302:5). Lawrence argues, therefore, that new connections are required 'because mankind is always exhausting its human possibilities, always degenerating into repetition, torpor, ennui, lifelessness. When ennui sets in, it is a sign that human vitality is waning, and the human connection with the universe is gone stale' (RDP 370:11). Hence, as he declares in *Apocalypse*, 'we feel an immense yearning to be freed from this petty personal entanglement of weak life, to be back in the far-off world before men became "afraid". We want to be freed from our tight little automatic "universe"' (A76:3). And yet, as he says in 'A Propos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*', a change in the way we nurture our relationships with the world around, is not easy, requiring daily practice (LCL 329:29). And, writes Lawrence, establishing new relationships is a painful experience; it hurts because 'a new relatedness hurts somewhat in the attaining; and will always hurt. So life will always hurt […] Each time we strive to a new relation, with anyone or anything, it is bound to hurt somewhat. Because it means the struggle with and the displacing of old connexions, and this is never pleasant' (STH 174:19). Thus, as he highlights in 'Morality and the Novel' it takes courage and discipline (STH 175:1-5). It takes, as we saw in chapter 3, the courage to *be*. In the draft version Lawrence insists that 'the highest quality in man is pure courage, the courage to meet life and establish the new relationship' (STH 243:10).

7.1.2 The Two Types of Conquest

Contrasting the American Indians with the modern Westerner, Lawrence points out in *Mornings in Mexico* that there are, in fact, two ways to conquer the world, corresponding alternatively to the mode of *having*, or the mode of *being*. The first is the way of the modern Western world: 'to us, science is our religion of conquest. Hence through science, we are the

conquerors and resultant gods of our earth' (MM 83:23); 'we make reservoirs, and irrigation ditches and artesian wells. We make lightning conductors, and build vast electric plants. We say it is a matter of science, energy, force. But the Indian says No! It all lives' (MM 82:22). The second is that of the American Indian, to whom 'the so-called mechanical processes do not exist. All lives. And the conquest is made by the means of the living will' (MM 83:25). The first, the modern way, the Western conquest by science, he concedes, has been quicker and more effective— 'between the two visions lies the gulf of mutual negations. But ours was the quickest way, so we are conquerors for the moment' (MM 94:6)—but it has been more terrible. Accordingly, the modern way has won its victory at a terrible price, like that which England is said to have achieved in *Twilight in Italy* 'with her machines and her horrible destruction of natural life' (TI 132).[322] It is, as Lawrence intimates in his introduction to the novel *Bottom Dogs*, also the state of modern America: 'the savage America was conquered and subdued at the expense of the instinctive and intuitive sympathy of the human soul. The fight was too brutal […] The heart was broken. But the will, the determination to conquer the land and make it submit to productivity, this was not broken' (IR 119:32). But this way ultimately remains an impasse since it has led to a state of terrible *ennui*, a crisis of meaninglessness, as he protests in 'Pan in America':

> Man has lived to conquer the phenomenal universe. To a great extent he has succeeded. With all the mechanism of the human world, man is to a great extent master of all life, and of most phenomena. And what then? Once you have conquered a thing, you have lost it. Its real relation to you collapses. A conquered world is no good to man. He sits stupefied with boredom upon his conquest. We need the universe to live again, so that we can live with it. A conquered universe, a dead Pan, leaves us nothing to live with. You have to abandon the conquest, before Pan will live again. (MM 162:27)

On the other hand, whereas, modern man has made the conquest with dams and reservoirs and windmills, 'the Indian, like the old Egyptian, seeks to make the conquest from the mystic will within him, pitted against the Cosmic Dragon' (MM 82:32). To the Indians, Lawrence adds, 'the so-called mechanical processes do not exist. All lives. And the conquest is made by the

[322] See also *St. Mawr*, where Lawrence makes the vanity of using technology to conquer the world apparent: 'He and his New England wife spent their summers there: and turned on the taps in the cabins and turned them off again, and felt really that civilisation had conquered' (SM 141:28).

means of the living will' (MM 83:25). Their way is the way of *being*: 'how is man to get himself into relation with the vast living convulsions of rain and thunder and sun, which are conscious and alive and potent, but like vastest of beasts, inscrutable and incomprehensible' (MM 82:7). It is the way of the Hopis which Lawrence describes in 'Pan in America': 'give me of your power, then, oh tree! And I will give you of mine. And this is what men must have said, more naively, less sophisticatedly, in the days when all was Pan. It is what, in a way, the aboriginal Indians still say, and still *mean*, intensely' (MM 159:13). As Lawrence insinuates in *Sketches of Etruscan Places* when he compares the Etruscan's way of being with the greed and desire for conquest of the Romans, the two ways of conquest are mutually exclusive. Whereas the true quality of the Etruscans was 'ease, naturalness, and an abundance of life', with 'no need to force the mind or the soul in any direction' (SEP 19:12), the Romans, by contrast, hated the mysteries of life because they wanted empire and dominion and, above all, riches: social gain' (SEP 20:38). The choice between the two has to be made: 'you cannot dance gaily to the double flute and at the same time conquer nations or rake in large sums of money. *Delenda est Cartago.* To the greedy man, everybody that is in the way of his greed is vice incarnate' (SEP 20:39).

Lawrence is, therefore, looking to redefine the modern understanding of the word conquest, emphasizing that conquest as *being* does not always have to be at the expense of another: 'in heaven, in the perfected relation, is peace: in the fourth dimension. But there is getting there. And that, for ever, is the process of conquest' (RDP 362:33).[323] Frieda in her *Memoirs and Correspondence* takes issue with William York Tyndall for trying to belittle Lawrence: 'Professor Tyndall believes he is jeering at Lawrence when he dwells on Lawrence's relationship with Susan, the cow […] He completely ignores the fact that Lawrence reconquered the world so to speak, with his vision; he took the old given world and tried to establish a new relationship with everything in this universe, from a human being to a caterpillar or a daisy' (F. Lawrence, The Memoirs and Correspondence 135). Lawrence's theory of relationality, tries to trace out an alternative route for humanity which eschews a model that has unfortunately come to dominate: 'there will be conquest, always. But the aim of conquest is a perfect relation of conquerors with conquered, for a new blossoming. […] All that is real is the overwhelmingness of a new inspirational command, a new relationship with all things' (RDP 361:22). Lawrence proposes a liberation from meaningless conquest, a route away from

[323] See also 'in the kingdom of heaven, in the fourth dimension, each soul that achieves a perfect relationship with the cosmos, from its own centre, is perfect, and incomparable. It has no superior. It is a conqueror, and incomparable' (RDP 362:40).

the world of man, from social conformity, from accumulation, property, individualism, greed, from the destruction of the planet. He proposes, as Eileen Crist describes it, the 'freedom of humanity to choose a different way of inhabiting Earth' (Crist 22):

> …civilized man, having conquered the universe, may as well leave off bossing it. Because, when all is said and done, life itself consists in a live relatedness between man and his universe: sun, moon, stars, earth, trees, flowers, birds, animals, men, everything – and not in a 'conquest' of anything by anything. (MM 164)

He believes it is time to free humanity from the ties that it itself has created.

7.1.3 Vibrations: 'little clots of vibrations'

In the final version of *Studies in Classic American Literature*, Lawrence, writing about Melville, claims that 'his bodily knowledge moves naked, a living quick among the stark elements. In sheer physical vibrational sensitiveness, like a marvellous wireless-station, he registers the effects of the outer world' (SCAL 134:38). This idea of the physical body as a centre registering vibrations from the outside world is an idea so frequently encountered in Lawrence's writing that it is clear that the idea of vibrations plays an important role in Lawrence's thought. Though, to modern ears, the idea that the world might be composed of vibrations might seem a little esoteric, it is a way of theorizing how interaction, and indeed perception, might take place, and to Lawrence and many of his contemporaries, it was taken seriously, and vibrations, which Lawrence mentions on numerous occasions in his non-fiction, sometimes seems to play a crucial role of his conception of the cosmos.[324] A good example is to be found in the cosmological chapter of *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, where he declares that: 'across space fly the innumerable vibrations which are the basis of all matter. They fly, breathed out from the dying and the dead, from all that which is passing away, even in the living. These vibrations, these elements pass away across space, and are breathed back again' (PFU 169:32). In 'The Two Principles', for instance, Lawrence seems to see vibrations (which here he calls 'quivers') as the means by which the self is linked to its surrounds: 'the primary

[324] Vibrations are also an important concept in the novel *Kangaroo*, particularly in the chapter 'A Row in Town'. Discussing how a flock of birds know how to all take off at the same moment he suggests that vibrations play an important role in animal communication: 'It is not instinct. It is a vertebral-telegraphy, like radio-telegraphy. It is a complex interplay of vibrations from the big nerve centres of the vertebral system in all the individuals of the flock, till, click! — there is a unanimity. They have one mind. And this one-mindedness of the many-in-one will last while ever the peculiar pitch of vertebral nerve-vibrations continues unbroken through them all. As the vibration slacks off, the flock falls apart' (K 299:6).

human psyche is a complex plasm, which quivers, sense-conscious, in contact with the circumambient cosmos. Our plasmic psyche is radio-active, connecting with all things, and having first-knowledge of all things' (SCAL 260:15). This may have been derived, at least in part, from William James, who in *Psychology: Briefer Course* employs the idea of vibrations to explain how the nerves come to be affected by the external world: 'each [nerve] selects from the vibrations of the outer world some one rate to which it responds exclusively' (James, Writings 1878 -1899 18). In 'The Stream of Consciousness' chapter, James describes a world which is in reality chaotic, in which human senses are only capable of registering certain types of vibrations: 'out of the infinite chaos of movements, of which physics teaches us that the outer world consists, each sense organ picks out those which fall within certain limits of velocity. To these it responds, but ignores the rest is completely as if they did not exist' (James, Writings 1878 -1899 169).[325]

Tim Armstrong in *Modernism: A Cultural History* explains that late 19th century science had been dominated by the notion of energy, and that classical materialistic thinking had been 'reconceived as a flux of force-fields and particles in motion' rather than as the mechanical actions of solid bodies (Armstrong 115): 'matter itself became insubstantial, electrons whirling through empty space' (Armstrong 116). Armstrong notes that the crisis of Modernism takes place and takes account of this 'radically altered scientific field' (Armstrong 121), in which mechanical, relativistic, perspectival, and paradoxical models were all competing with each other (Armstrong 117).[326] Coccia's conception of an immersed world gives us a metaphysical equivalent. A fluid universe in perpetual movement would be a universe which properly speaking is without *things*. It would be, instead, something more like a tremendous field composed of events of varying intensities. If the world were composed not of objects, but of flows, then humans would be composed of the same substance as that which 'surrounds' them. They would be like music, a series of vibrations in the air in the same way as the jellyfish is just a thickening of the water. This would explain, speculates Coccia, why listening to music yields us so much pleasure—it might enable us to gain a glimpse of the

[325] It is clear in James's discussion that he is referring to what we would most likely call *waves* nowadays. Not all of these vibrations are perceivable, at least not consciously so: 'between the quickest audible air-waves (40,000 vibrations a second at the outside) and the slowest sensible heat-waves (which number probably billions), Nature must somewhere have realized innumerable intermediary rates which we have no nerves for perceiving' (James, Writings 1878 -1899 18-19).

[326] Armstrong, however, suggests that Lawrence struggles against this world of 'electricity, magnetism and electromagnetic waves' (Armstrong 115), and was part of a tendency which 'sought to stabilize the flux of existence' (Armstrong 119). As is clear from the preceding pages, this is a fundamental misinterpretation, and pretty much the opposite of what Lawrence was trying to achieve!

deeper structure of the world which the eyes sometimes prevent us from seeing (Coccia 48-49).[327] Lawrence was also prepared to believe, like many of his contemporaries, that some kind of telepathy was possible.[328] Although spiritualism as such does not figure large in Lawrence's writings, he does discuss the messages mediums might be able to receive in an interesting essay on Hawthorne in the final version of *Studies in Classic American Literature* (1922) which is worth quoting in full:

> But what sorts of messages? All sorts. Vibrations from the stars, vibrations from unknown magnetos, vibrations from unknown people, unknown passions. The human apparatus receives them all and they are all dealt with in the underconscious. There are also vibrations of thought, many, many. Necessary to get the two human instruments in key. There may even be vibrations of ghosts in the air. Ghosts being dead wills, mind you, not dead souls. The soul has nothing to do with these dodges. But some unit of force may persist for a time, after the death of an individual - some associations of vibrations may linger like little clouds in the etheric atmosphere after the death of a human being, or an animal. And these little clots of vibrations may transfer themselves to the conscious-apparatus of the medium. (SCAL 102:24)

Although Lawrence is talking about psychic phenomena, it is noteworthy that all these vibrations are described in purely physical terms, with Lawrence taking care to stress he is not talking about anything non-physical like souls, but rather of 'little clots of vibrations' that persist together for some time before dispersing. In 'Education of the People' he explains that, just as wireless telegrams convert waves into fixed script, the brain registers 'the infinite currents and meaningful vibrations in the world's atmosphere' (RDP 129:12). The comparison

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[327] Moreover, even more recent scientific theory might seem to lend credence to the idea that the world might be constituted of vibrations or waves. String theory, as Brian Greene explains in his book *The Elegant Universe: Superstrings, Hidden Dimensions, and the Quest for the Ultimate Theory,* postulates that matter is composed of atoms, but that these are in turn made from quarks and electrons, and that if another microscopic layer is added, it turns out that on the very smallest level all such particles are actually 'loops of vibrating strings' (Greene 14). Thus, particle properties in string theory are 'the manifestations of one and the same physical feature: the resonant patterns of vibration—the music, so to speak—of fundamental loops of string' (Greene 15-16). Greene goes on to state that if string theory is correct, then 'the microscopic fabric of our universe is a richly intertwined multidimensional labyrinth within which the strings of the universe endlessly twist and vibrate, rhythmically beating out the laws of the cosmos' (Greene 18). One feels Lawrence would have agreed.

[328] Armstrong points out that the study of mesmerism, telepathy and other types of psychic research were important components of Modernist thought, with active spiritualists including W. B. Yeats, Conan Doyle and Rudyard Kipling and others less active, but still interested in it including Henry James, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and Lawrence himself. Armstrong explains that 'spiritualism describes a universe pulsating with hidden forces, in which it is possible to slide effortlessly from personal emanations to X-rays' (Armstrong 122).

with a wireless station seems obvious since the waves, although we don't see them, are received by the radio, which then converts them into the sound waves which the ear can perceive. For Lawrence, the world is a world of flux, of energy, of waves and vibrations, a dynamic world, a world of perpetual movement, in which we ourselves are merely momentary cohesions of the flux, or little clots of vibrations.

Because living creatures are constituted of 'living plasm', they can interact with the vibrations emanating from the surrounding environment: 'in the beginning was a living creature, its plasm quivering and its life-pulse throbbing' (PFU 69:25).[329] In *Sketches of Etruscan Places* (1927 - 29), discussing the meaning of the *patera* found in the tombs Lawrence writes that: 'it stands for the plasm, also, of the living cell, with its nucleus, which is the indivisible God of the beginning, and which remains alive and unbroken to the end, the eternal quick of all things' (SEP 36:37). Thus, for Lawrence, this vibrating plasm gives us life itself. The body, he writes in *Study of Thomas Hardy*, is 'a quivering plasm of what will be, and has never yet been' (STH 35:5); and again in 'Poetry of the Present' (1919), the 'living plasm vibrates unspeakably, it inhales the future, it exhales the past, it is the quick of both, and yet it is neither' (Complete Poems 182). The self and the world interact through vibrations as he underlines in 'The Two Principles' (1917): 'there certainly does exist a subtle and complex sympathy, correspondence, between the plasm of the human body, which is identical with the primary human psyche, and the material elements outside. The primary human psyche is a complex plasm, which quivers, sense-conscious, in contact with the circumambient cosmos' (SCAL 260:13). Similarly, in *Fantasia of the Unconscious* (1921), he insists that 'there is a definite vibratory rapport between a man and his surroundings' (PFU 153:38) and that 'between an individual and any external object with which he has an affective connection, there exists a definite vital flow, as definite and concrete as the electric current whose polarized circuit sets our tram-cars running and our lamps shining, or our Marconi wires vibrating. Whether this object be human, or animal, or plant, or quite inanimate, there is still a circuit' (PFU 153:18). He goes on to suggest that literally everything emits vibrations, a tree ('the very cells in the ash-tree I loved as a child had a dynamic vibratory connection with the nuclei in my own centres of primary consciousness'), 'my dog, my canary', even 'the boots I have worn' (PFU 153). In the essay 'Pan in America', for instance, Lawrence claims, of the huge pine tree next to the house in Taos, that: 'we cannot live near one another, as we do, without affecting one another […] it vibrates its presence into my soul […] I am conscious that it helps to change

[329] See also the poem 'Let there be life': 'In the beginning is the incomprehensible plasm of life'.

me, vitally. I am even conscious that shivers of energy cross my living plasm, from the tree, and I become a degree more like unto the tree…' (TI 158-9). The description shows the reciprocity of the relationship, mirrored in the very structure of the language, with two living beings, each asserting its own will to live, each vibrating its presence into the other. [330]

And the emission of vibrations is not confined to animate beings. Lawrence, for example, is particularly interested by Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher* in which Usher was convinced that everything in and around the house, the family, the house, the water, was interwoven into a physical oneness of atmosphere, and thought that all things, even inorganic ones had sentience.[331] It is a sentiment with which Lawrence clearly seems to agree, stating: 'surely all material things have a *form* of sentience, even the inorganic: surely they all exist in some subtle and complicated tension of vibration which makes them sensitive to external influence and causes them to have an influence on other external objects, irrespective of contact. It is of this vibration or inorganic consciousness that Poe is master' (SCAL 77:16). For Lawrence, particular places emit their own particular vibrations. In *Sea and Sardinia*, he claims that Mount Etna, 'makes men mad. Such terrible vibrations of wicked and beautiful electricity she throws about her, like a deadly net! Nay, sometimes, verily, one can feel a new current of her demon magnetism seize one's living tissue and change the peaceful life of one's active cells. She makes a storm in the living plasm and a new adjustment' (SS 8:13).[332] Homes emit distinctive vibrations too, since, as he writes in *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, 'any particular locality, any house which has been lived in has a vibration, a transferred vitality of its own. This is either sympathetic or antipathetic to the succeeding individual in varying degree' (PFU 153:40). Life itself, in other words, is actually a continual interchange, as he writes in the essay 'Dana' in *Studies in Classic American Literature*, 'it is the strange current of interchange that flows between men and men, and men and women, and men and things. A constant current of interflow, a constant vibrating interchange. That is the breath of life' (SCAL 109:21).

According to Lawrence, people also emit particular vibrations, and every encounter can be rendered in terms of vibrations. His psychological treatise, *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, relies heavily on the idea of vibrations as a means of explaining the communication between a

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[330] In *The Hidden Life of Trees*, Peter Wohlleben argues that trees do indeed perceive and react to vibrations, only far more slowly than humans (Wohlleben).

[331] '…in his disordered fancy, the idea had assumed a more daring character, and trespassed, under certain conditions, upon the kingdom of inorganization' (Poe 100).

[332] See also *Fantasia of the Unconscious*: 'but certain it is that the inhabitants who live at the foot of Etna will always have a certain pitch of life-vibration, antagonistic to the pitch of vibration even of a Palermitan, in some measure' (PFU 154:2).

mother and a child. In the womb for example, he describes the exchange between mother and child, in terms of 'a matter of dynamic polarized intercourse of vital vibrations, as an exchange of wireless messages which are never translated from the pulse-rhythm into speech, because they have no need to be' (PFU 106:33). A family for example emits very similar types of vibrations, so that a brother and sister will be able to communicate in a way they never can with strangers: 'the connection is as direct and as subtle as between the Marconi stations, two great wireless stations. A family, if you like, is a group of wireless stations, all adjusted to the same, or very much the same vibration. All the time they quiver with the interchange' (PFU 77:19). In 'We Need One Another' (1929) he asserts that a woman's vibration is fundamentally different to a man's: 'a woman is a strange soft vibration on the air, going forth unknown and unconscious, and seeking a vibration of response. Or else she is a discordant, jarring, painful vibration, going forth and hurting everyone within range. And a man the same' (LEA 299:22). Strangers on the other hand, emit different vibrations, vibrations that can sometimes be disturbing, such as when Lawrence describes his meetings with Indians in the essay 'Taos' (1922): 'It brings a sick sort of feeling over me, always, to get into the Indian vibration. Like breathing chlorine' (MM 126:17). A similar experience is described in 'On Being a Man' (already referred to): 'He is a Negro. As he sits next to me, there is a faint uneasy movement in my blood. A strange vibration comes from him, which causes a slight disturbance in my own vibration. There is a slight odour in my nostrils. And above all, even if I shut my eyes, there is a strange presence in contact with me […] I shall admit a certain strange and incalculable reaction between me and him. This reaction causes a slight but unmistakable change in the vibration of my blood and nerves' (RDP 215:2). Such a description inevitably seems racist to our modern ears, but Lawrence could not believe that someone who had lived, or whose ancestors had lived, on another continent could not have preserved some traces of the past in their vibration. Finally, Lawrence seems convinced that ancient civilisations were more receptive to these sensitivities than is the case in the modern era. In 'New Mexico' he writes: 'in the oldest religion, everything was alive, not supernaturally but naturally alive. There were only deeper and deeper streams of life, vibrations of life more and more vast' (MM 180:32).

7.2 Resonance

Notwithstanding the fact that the German sociologist Hartmüt Rosa shows no sign of ever having read Lawrence's non-fiction, or fiction, for that matter, Rosa's book *Resonance* can be seen as a modern re-working of Lawrence's relationality, and thereby provides a useful way of approaching the latter from a slightly different and more contemporary perspective.

Rosa starts with the premise that 'human beings are existentially shaped by their longing for resonant relationships. Human desire can thus be interpreted simply as desire for resonance' (Rosa, Resonance 171)—the extent of the common ground shared by Lawrence and Rosa is already manifest in Rosa's choice of the concept of resonance to denote a new, more meaningful way of relating to the world. Rosa also shares Lawrence's view that resonance is intimately linked to unpredictability and uncontrollability, and he specifies that 'resonance is to be strictly distinguished from causal or instrumentalist "linear" forms of interaction (in the sense of mechanical coupling) that necessarily produce fixed, precisely predictable effects' (Rosa, Resonance 167). Moreover, Rosa sees scientific understanding as largely responsible for the deadening effects of our non-responsive reaction to the world: '…our scientific/rationalistic understanding of the world is based on a mute relationship to the world in which "objects" (whether rocks or trees, neurons or the cosmos, or even utility-maximising individuals) can scarcely be understood to be responsive. Any scientific or technological relationship to the world is a mute relationship to the world' (Rosa, Resonance 169). Hence, the concept of *resonance* 'stands in opposition to the reifying concepts of a rationalism oriented toward calculation, specification, domination, and control' (Rosa, Resonance 171). Genuine resonance, therefore, is defined 'not as a material or substantial but strictly as a *relational* concept […] resonance describes a mode of *being-in-the-world*, i.e. a specific way in which subject and world come into relation with each other' (Rosa, Resonance 166).

7.2.1 Resonance

Rosa also has recourse to the physical phenomenon of vibrations, though he seeks to clarify that it is not to be used in any kind of esoteric sense (Rosa, Resonance 166). His aim, instead, is to develop a social-scientific category from the physical phenomenon of resonance, and he insists upon the fact that resonance must be distinguished from echoing, because an echo lacks its own voice, whereas the idea of resonance is that 'two entities in relation, in a vibratory medium (or resonant space), mutually affect each other in such a way that they can be understood as *responding to each other*, at the same time *each speaking with its own voice*' (Rosa, Resonance 167). Lawrence, in 'A Propos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*', wonders whether in the relationship between man and woman there is not 'some unseen, unknown interplay of balance, harmony, completion […] one symphony, made out of the soundless singing of two strange and incompatible lives' (LCL 324:10).

The idea that there exists in modernity a widespread feeling of *ennui*, is a sentiment clearly shared by Rosa, who prior to the publication of *Resonance*, had argued in *Alienation and Acceleration* that 'the systematic imperatives' of modern capitalist societies, have led to empirically observable forms of social alienation—leading him to pose the question: 'what is alienation's other?' What would a non-alienated life look like? (Rosa, Alienation and Acceleration: Towards a Critical Theory of Late-Modern Temporality 9). Rosa notes Walter Benjamin's distinction between two types of experience: *Erlebnissen* (mere episodes of experience, primarily meaningless and which make little impact on us) and *Erfahrungen* (experiences which affect us profoundly, which change who we are, which are somehow transformative), suggesting that Benjamin may have been correct to foretell that we would get 'richer and richer in episodes of experience, but poorer and poorer in lived-experiences (*Erfahrungen*)' (Rosa, Alienation and Acceleration: Towards a Critical Theory of Late-Modern Temporality 95). Lawrence was always on the lookout for these kinds of transformative lived experiences. In *Not I, But the Wind*, Frieda describes Lawrence's typical attitude as: 'I am D. H. Lawrence from my head to my toes, and there I begin and there I end and my soul lives inside me. All else is not me, but I can have a relationship with all that is not me in the world, and the more I realise the otherness of other things around me the richer I am' (F. Lawrence, Not I, But the Wind 64).

In *Resonance* Rosa also argues that the answer to the problem of alienation is to make the world more responsive by establishing deeper, living relationships. Social exhaustion, burn out and depression are the primary tokens of modern civilisation's failure to do so. Successful lives should be defined not by one's share of the world (*having*), but by the degree to which one is connected with, and to, other people and things (*being*) (Rosa, Resonance 26).[333] In a successful life, relationships would not be mute and alienated, but resonant. Rosa also points out that because world views are 'shaped and predetermined by social conditions' and 'historically existential sensibilities' (Rosa, Resonance 27), it is necessary to revise and redraw the cognitive and evaluative map of modernity, thereby modifying our relationship to the world. Only a transformation of our relationship to the world provides a means of overcoming the escalatory logic of modern dynamic stabilisation.[334] In other words, another way of being in the world is possible but requires a revolution not only at the individual level, but ultimately at

[333] Rosa acknowledges his debt to Erich Fromm's *To Have and to Be* in the introduction (Rosa, Resonance 27).
[334] By 'dynamic stabilisation', Rosa is referring to the fact that modern capitalism constantly needs *more*, more resources, more growth, more exploitation, merely to remain stable. This is 'The Red Queen Effect' (after Lewis Carroll), meaning we have to run on the spot merely to stay in the same place.

the social and cultural level too. It is resonance, according to Rosa, which may provide the ingredient for what is sorely missing in late modernity (Rosa, Resonance 443), responding to 'a nameless longing' which is becoming increasingly obvious in modern times.

7.2.2 Rosa's different axes of relationship

In *Resonance* Rosa roughly sketches out three possible types of deep relationships which might render our lives more meaningful: *horizontal* ones (with other human beings, social, familial, political);[335] *diagonal* relationships to the world of things, and *vertical* relationships (with life itself, existence, all the world as a whole). Taken as a whole, they can provide a useful way of looking in greater detail at Lawrence's ideas about relationality.

For Lawrence, the relationship between man and woman remains, more or less throughout his whole writing life, one of the most important relationships of all, the 'central relation of all' he writes in 'Morality and the Novel': 'it is the *relation itself* which is the quick and the central clue to life, not the man, nor the woman, nor the children that result from the relationship, as a contingency' (STH 175:15).[336] In sex, as he writes in 'A Propos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*', man and woman are two rivers of blood, 'two distinct eternal streams, that have the power of touching and communing and so renewing, making new one another, without any breaking of the subtle confines, any confusing or commingling' (LCL 325:11). In sex, man and wife are joined in oneness, without ever losing individuality. Lawrence says that this 'oneness gradually accomplished throughout a lifetime in twoness, is the highest achievement of time or eternity' (LCL 325:17). Thus, in a real (not a counterfeit marriage, Lawrence emphasizes), the oneness they will have achieved during their lifetime, 'completes the universe' (LCL 325:26), and is wished for by God (LCL 325:20). One of Lawrence's most sustained treatments of the fundamental need for healthy relationships between men and women is to be found in the essay just mentioned, 'We Need One Another' (1929):

> We are all individualists: we are all egoists: we all believe intensely in freedom, our own at all events. We all want to be absolute, and sufficient unto ourselves. And it is a great blow to our self-esteem that we simply need another human being. (LEA 296:3)

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[335] Politically, Rosa advocates 'an ongoing process of becoming more sensitive to a variety of voices in the sense of perspectives, modes of existence, and relationships to the world' (Rosa, Resonance 218). We will be returning to Lawrence's politics in due course.

[336] Lawrence does not seem to be consistent about which relationship is the most important one, which seems to vary. Sometimes it seems to be the relationship with the cosmos too.

As a general rule, Lawrence talks of man to woman relationships from a male perspective, or maybe a generic one, but here he makes it clear that the same applies to woman: 'and the same of woman. There is hardly a woman on earth who can live cheerfully without some intimate relationship to a man; unless she substitutes some other woman for the man' (LEA 296:17).

But the connection with one's fellow man, as we have seen, is a vital concept in Lawrence's world view. Probably from an early age, Lawrence was fascinated by the friendship between the two friends Chingachgook and Natty Bumppo since in their friendship, he asserts, Fenimore Cooper had dreamed 'the nucleus of a new society, the clue to a new world-epoch' (SCAL 58:20):

> What did Cooper dream beyond democracy? Why, in his immortal friendship of Chingachgook and Natty Bumppo he dreamed the nucleus of a new society. That is, he dreamed a new human relationship. A stark stripped human relationship of two men, deeper than the deeps of sex. Deeper than property, deeper than fatherhood, deeper than marriage, deeper than love. So deep that it is loveless. The stark, loveless, wordless unison of two men who have come to the bottom of themselves. (SCAL 58:13)

The chapter 'Market Day' in *Mornings in Mexico*, makes the point that for the native Mexicans the actual commercial exchanges are largely secondary in importance to the desire for human contact: 'to buy, to sell, to barter, to exchange. To exchange, above all, things, human contact' (MM 52). What predominates is the contact with one's fellow men, where 'only that which is utterly intangible matters', human contact, the clue to life itself. In modernity, the loss of any sense of community means that things have changed little since Lawrence wrote in the essay 'Books' (1924) that if things are simply going from bad to worse the attitude remains, 'all right, let 'em! Let 'em go from bad to worse. Après moi le déluge' (RDP 199:1). As a result Lawrence complains, in 'A Propos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*', that of all the three relationships—with the living cosmos, with woman, with man—none is quite so dead as the man-to-man relationship (LCL 331:39). As the feeling of oneness and community with one's fellow-man declines, the result is a sense of menace, of competition. Individualism has triumphed (LCL 332):

> I believe there has never been an age of greater mistrust between persons than ours today: under a superficial but quite genuine social trust. Very few of my friends would pick my pocket, or let me sit on a chair where I might hurt myself. But practically all my friends would turn my real emotions to ridicule.

> They can't help it; it's the spirit of the day. So there goes love, and there goes friendship: for each implies a fundamental emotional sympathy. (LCL 313:12)

Yet in fact, as Lawrence states in *Apocalypse:* 'man is individual only in part of his nature. In another great part of him, he is collective' (A 67: 34). Part of Lawrence's interest in the people resides in the yearning for the collective, for communion with fellow men and women. As Eileen Crist points out in a recent article on the Anthropocene, a concern for others is fundamental to re-thinking the way we live: 'integration within an organism, an ecosystem, a bioregion, a family, or a community signals a state of being within which gifts of wellness can flow […] To integrate the human within this original matrix would signal humanity's living in integrity in the biosphere, and reaping such gifts as elude our anthropocentric civilization which appears incapable of conceiving that the wellness of human mind, emotion, body, and surroundings can be built on anything other than "resources"' (Crist 27). For Lawrence, it lies in the realisation, as he writes in 'We Need One Another' (1929) that everything is interrelated, and that if we deny these deep connections, we deny ourselves: 'it is in the living touch between us and other people, other lives, other phenomena that we move and have our being. Strip us of our human contacts and of our contact with the living earth and the sun, and we are almost bladders of emptiness.' (LEA 298: 35).[337]

A fascinating discussion of the importance of alterity for Lawrence is to be found in the article 'The Strange Reality of Otherness' by M. Elizabeth Sargent and Garry Watson, who compare Lawrence to Levinas, Buber and Bakhtin. They argue that for Lawrence, as for Buber, there is nothing obvious about relationships: 'far from its being practically inescapable, something one simply can't help but engage in, Buber understands dialogue as the kind of meeting between self and other that it is fatally easy to avoid, that it is the last thing we can take for granted' (Sargent and Watson 418). It is the very difficulty of the encounter that makes it valuable. For Lawrence, they affirm, 'otherness is always something to be respected, at least in principle. So that if he at times fails to respect it in practice […] he is guilty by his own lights of what he himself calls "immorality"' (Sargent and Watson 426). As they point out 'most writers who would compare someone to a rat in the sewers would presumably mean us to see such a comparison as a damning criticism. But with Lawrence things are not so simple. […] Lawrence is not just fascinated by the figure of the rat: he positively admires its spirit. […]

[337] There are, of course, many relationships possible, but for Lawrence, marriage and fraternity are by far the most important human ones, 'and, a long way after, all the other relationships, fatherhood, motherhood, sister, brother, friend' (LEA 301:13).

Lawrence is no more interested in demonising the rat that he is in demonising the snake' (Sargent and Watson 428).

Rosa describes diagonal resonance as a response to the material world of things and, quoting the German Romantic poet Von Eichendorff, calls it a poetic way of bringing the song out of things: 'Schläft ein Leid in allen Dingen/Die da träumen fort und fort./ Und die Welt hebt an zu singen/ Triffst Du nur das Zauberwort' (Resonance 229).[338] Rosa affirms that the modern understanding of the world is a 'mute' universe, in which only human beings are given a voice. The modern way of relating to things has become predominantly practical, with the world often seen as little more than a bank of disposable resources, whereas, Rosa agrees with Lawrence that ancient animistic and totemic cultures were different since they recognized things as ensouled, and saw everything as interwoven into a web of resonant relationships (Rosa, Resonance 226).[339] Sargent and Watson remark that 'as Lawrence understands it, the dialogical is by no means restricted to the realm of the inter*human*' (Sargent and Watson 417). One of the things Lawrence emphasizes about the American Indians, as we have seen, is that for them 'the wonder and fascination of creation shimmers in every leaf and stone, in every thorn and bud, in the fangs of the rattlesnake, and in the soft eyes of a fawn. Things utterly opposite are still pure wonder of creation' (MM 66:28). Lawrence himself appears to perceive things as active, possessing agency, in ways which run counter to more modern notions of the world of things; so that, as he explains in '….Love Was Once a Little Boy' (1925):

> Everything that exists, even a stone, has two sides to its nature. It fiercely maintains its own individuality, its own solidity. And it reaches forth from itself in the subtlest flow of desire. It fiercely resists all inroads. At the same time it sinks down in the curious weight, or flow, of that desire which we call gravitation. And imperceptibly, through the course of ages, it flows into delicate combination with the air and sun and rain. (RDP 343:26)

The same, he writes, is true of 'the worlds, the stars, the sun. All is alive, in its own degree' (RDP 344:1). Consequently, as he writes in the draft version of 'Morality and the

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[338] 'Slumbering deep in every thing/ Dreams a song as yet unheard,/ And the world begins to sing/If you find the magic word' (Rosa, Resonance 226).

[339] Rosa then extends this 'diagonal axe' to include relationships with work, with sports and even consumption. I will be looking at work in the next chapter. Lawrence discusses all these areas, work, sport and education, in 'Education of the People'. He considers physical movement to be very important (RDP 144), that work can be pleasurable if one is doing things for oneself, and that education needs to be dramatically overhauled.

Novel', although the central relationship is between man and woman, 'there is an infinite host of others: man and man, woman and woman, other people, children, creatures, cities, skies, trees, flowers, mud, microbes, motorcars, guns, sewers—everything' (STH 242:15). The list of possible relations extends well beyond trees, the stars, the sun, the moon, to include even Mount Etna, one's old boots, old houses (PFU 153-4). It is therefore possible to get into a 'living connexion' with things as Lawrence does in *Twilight in Italy* with the church at San Tommaso (TI 103) or with the crucifixes he comes across in the Tyrol. Indeed, a whole host of relationships are possible: 'How marvellous is the living relationship between man and his object! be it man or woman, bird, beast, flower or rock or rain: the exquisite frail moment of pure conjunction, which, in the fourth dimension, is timeless' (MM 316).

For Rosa the vertical dimension of resonance occurs when the thing that the subject is in relation with is 'perceived and experienced as a totality that exceeds the individual' (Resonance 40). If the essence of religion is taken to be the existential need for response, then it is 'the idea of God as a kind of *being of relation*' (Resonance 264).[340] For Lawrence, this essentially means the cosmos, but although for him, the relation to the cosmos constitutes one of the most important relationships, Lawrence remains, for the most part, a bit vague about what he means by getting into contact with the cosmos, contenting himself with unexplained phrases like these from *Apocalypse*: 'we have lost the cosmos, by coming out of responsive connection with it, and this is our chief tragedy' (A 76:22), or 'when I hear modern people complain of being lonely then I know what has happened. They have lost the cosmos. – It is nothing human and personal that we are short of. What we lack is cosmic life' (A 78:25). Some more concrete hints about what he might mean by getting into contact with the cosmos may be gleaned in *Sketches of Etruscan Places*, in which he states that there used to be two deep 'culture-rhythms', one being 'some old, old Italian rhythm of life, belonging to the soil' (SEP 176:10), and the other being 'the old cosmic consciousness, or culture principle of the prehistoric Mediterranean' (SEP 176:13), mentioned in chapter 5, which is about becoming aware of the cosmos. A more detailed description of what he might mean by a rhythm of life, belonging to the soil, can be found in 'A Propos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*', where

[340] Unlike Rosa, who counts the relationship with Nature as part of the vertical dimension (mentioning the Romantics and the American transcendentalists), Lawrence considers the concept of Nature to be little more than an idealized human construct, as we have seen.

Lawrence draws a distinction between *little needs*, which concerns only 'persons and the little needs of man' (LCL 329:3), and the *greater needs* of man, which is 'the greatest need of man is the renewal forever of the complete rhythm of life and death, the rhythm of the sun's year, the body's year of a lifetime, and the greater year of the stars, the soul's year of immortality. This is our need, our imperative need' (LCL 329:13). This takes us back to the distinction made during the discussion of Lawrence's cosmology, namely that the cosmos is driven by the dual forces of attraction and repulsion (Lawrence associates the centrifugal separative force with the great life-giver, the sun; and the centripetal assimilative with the moon, or water, principle of dissolution and death). The body, as we saw, emerges from the chaos of eternity, and returns to it on our death, so that we are always poised midway between life and death. Consequently, the cosmos is the reflection of these great universal principles, which also manifest themselves in our bodies. The rhythms of the sun, the body, the stars are all different, but all are related to the life of man, the body's year (a lifetime).[341] Lawrence writes:

> 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. This is an affair of the individual and the household, a ritual of day. The ritual of the moon in her phases, of the morning star and the evening star is for men and women separate. Then the ritual of the seasons, with the Drama and the Passion of the soul embodied in procession and dance, this is for the community, an act of men and women, a whole community, in togetherness. And the ritual of the great events in the year of stars is for nations and whole peoples. To these rituals we must return: or we must evolve them to suit our needs. (LCL 329:31)

Rituals are important for Lawrence because they get us back in contact with the two principles of centrifugal life and centripetal death, like the systole-diastole of a beating heart. Dawn, and noon and sunset follow the same rhythms as the body, the rhythms of birth, maturity, and death.[342] Kindling fire and pouring water represent the life-giving sun and the dissolution of

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[341] The solar year is the cycle that the Sun's magnetic field revolves through roughly every 11 years, the Great Year, roughly 25000 years is the time it takes for a complete cycle of the equinoxes.

[342] The importance of these kinds of rituals for Lawrence explains their presence in the new religion established in *The Plumed Serpent* by Don Ramon. Terry Gifford asserts that 'perhaps more than in any other novel, there is here a sense of humans living with a particular material environment that has the potential to become a spiritual daily experience of connection with "the cosmos"' (Gifford 149).

water. The stages of the moon, the seasons and so forth, all represent in some ways the great duality of the universe. All these rhythms of the cosmos are means of getting back into physical contact with one's life, the very opposite of what Buddha, Plato and Jesus did in 'teaching that the only happiness lay in abstracting oneself from life the daily, yearly, seasonal life of birth and death and fruition, and in living in the "immutable" or eternal spirit' (LCL 330:35). Lawrence also makes clear in 'Introduction to *The Grand Inquisitor'* that getting into touch with the cosmos entails getting back in touch with the soil: 'In sowing the seed man has his contact with earth, with sun and rain: and he *must not* break the contact. In the awareness of the springing of the corn he has his ever-renewed consciousness of miracle, wonder, and mystery: the wonder of creation, procreation, and re-creation, following the mystery of death and the cold grave' (IR 132:40). In sowing, reaping and harvesting man gets in contact with 'earth and sun, a rich touch of the cosmos, a living stream of activity' (IR 133:8). It is the contact with the fourth dimension, or as he puts it here, the 'heavenly bread' which we get in the course of getting the earthly bread we need to live on (IR 132:10).

The second sense of getting into contact with the cosmos is primarily religious, and consequently, for Lawrence, it is interpretative.[343] All the various Etruscans tribes had in common, according to Lawrence, 'the remains of an old cosmic consciousness, an old religion, an old attempt on man's part to understand, or at least interpret to himself, the cosmos as he knew it' (SEP 177:8), and the symbols that have come down to us are 'the remnants of vast old attempt made by humanity to form a conception of the universe' (SEP 177:23). According to Lawrence, in the pre-historic Mediterranean, 'man is *always* trying to be conscious of the cosmos, the cosmos of life and passion and feeling, desire and death and despair, as well as a physical phenomenon. And there are millions of undreamed-of ways of becoming aware of the cosmos. Which is to say, there are millions of worlds, whole cosmic worlds, to us yet unborn' (SEP 176:14). The cosmos is, therefore, the collection of an infinite number of possibilities, a multiverse, but as we have seen in the preceding chapters, these multiple worlds ultimately lead to one truth: 'the infinite of the human consciousness lies in an infinite number of different starts to an infinite number of different goals; which somehow, we know when we get there, is one goal' (SEP 176:24). Deleuze writes 'Lawrence defines the cosmos in a very simple manner: *it is the locus of great vital symbols and living connections, the more than personal life*' (Deleuze, Nietzsche and Saint Paul 45), and adds that, for Lawrence, 'the collective problem,

[343] 'Every religion, every philosophy, and science itself, each has a clue to the cosmos, to the becoming aware of the cosmos' (SEP 176:20)

then, is to institute, find, or recover a maximum of connections. For connections (and disjunctions) are nothing other than the physics of relations, the cosmos' (Deleuze, Nietzsche and Saint Paul 52). Thus, the Etruscans, for Lawrence, are 'the revelation of the human existence of people who *were*, in a way somewhat different from our way of living and being' (SEP 176:39), 'the last glimpses of a human consciousness—or human attempt at cosmic consciousness—different from our own' (SEP 176:30).

Yet another source of resonance is that of the world of art: 'art—almost simultaneously with nature, and in a very similar way—has become one of the most important spheres of resonance in modernity' (Rosa, Resonance 280). Lawrence asserts in 'Morality and the Novel', that Van Gogh's painting of the sunflowers is 'a revelation of the perfected relation, at a certain moment, between a man and a sunflower' (STH 171:21). It is a revelation of the relation between man and his circumambient universe which offers up an ephemeral glimpse of the fourth dimension: 'the business of art is to reveal the relation between man and his *circumambient universe*, at the living moment […] this perfected relation between man and his *circumambient universe* is life itself, for mankind. It has the fourth-dimensional quality of eternity and perfection. Yet it is momentaneous' (STH 171:1, my italics). Similarly, in his chapter 'The Philosophy of D. H. Lawrence', P. N. Furbank cites the lines from 'The Crown' about art, where Lawrence asserts that: 'it is a revelation of God […] it remains with us for a long, long time, like the sculptures of Egypt. But it is all the time slowly passing away, unhindered, in its own time. It passes away, but it is not in any sense lost' (RDP 302:33). As Furbank points out, art can only attain to a kind of 'relative permanence' (Furbank 152).

All these types of relationships, whatever kind they may be, are, for Lawrence, about relating to other worlds, other beings, other civilisations. Relating to other worlds is, therefore, a way of affirming and transforming one's being.

7.3 Relating to other worlds

7.3.1 Body and World

In the final 'Benjamin Franklin' essay (1922), Lawrence decided to devise his own version of Franklin's famous credo, after which he declares: 'there's my list. I have been trying dimly to realize it for a long time, and only America and old Benjamin have at last goaded me into trying to formulate it' (SCAL 28:24). I have so far tried to demonstrate that from an early age the basis of Lawrence's philosophy remains, in its essentials, consistent, but this does not

preclude the fact, as the above quotation shows, that there was a measure of progression or evolution of his thought, or indeed, some groping around in his search for clues. Between 1917 and 1921 in the first versions of *Studies in Classic American Literature*, *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*, 'Education of the People', and finally in *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, Lawrence devoted considerable time and energy to elaborating a physiological theory of the body, and its nervous system, before more or less dropping the detail in subsequent works (though the importance of the body remained fundamental to his work throughout). This theory, which involved dividing the body up into four basic nerve centres (the navel, the lower back, the front of the chest, and the upper back) has occasionally been mocked by critics for its anatomical inaccuracy,[344] but as James C. Cowan points out in *D. H. Lawrence's American Journey*, it can perhaps be seen, more sympathetically, in a more functional manner (Cowan 21). More importantly, it can be seen as a way of conceiving how the body interacts with its immediate environment, as Lawrence makes clear in *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*: 'the individual is never purely a thing-by-himself. He cannot exist save in polarized relation to the external universe, a relation both functional and psychic-dynamic' (PATU 39:37).

The theory Lawrence developed was in many ways a fairly logical development from the basic polarities we have already encountered, and can easily be rendered in a diagram. Firstly, Lawrence argues, the body is, of course, also subject to the dual forces of communion and separation (the sympathetic and the voluntary) which constitute the world itself, manifesting themselves corporally in the systole and diastole of the heart, the need to assimilate food and drink and reject (by excrementation), and in breathing and walking: 'the motion of walking, like the motion of breathing, is twofold. First, a sympathetic cleaving to the earth with the foot: then the voluntary rejection, the spurning, the kicking away, the exultance in power and freedom' (PFU 89:34). Secondly, Lawrence draws a distinction between what is myself, the *me* (the subjective awareness that we exist) and what is not myself, *the not-me* (the awareness that there is a world out there, a world which is different to myself). From the combination of these two different polarities he divides the body up into four centres (each with its own nerve centre), which can easily be represented as a quadrant.[345] As he himself

[344] See David Ellis's account in *D. H. Lawrence: Centenary Essays* (Ellis, Lawrence and the Biological Psyche). Lawrence himself is partially responsible for this, since despite disclaimers that he is no scientist, he also sometimes insists on its scientific veracity.

[345] Critics who have produced such diagrams also include Daniel J. Schneider in *D. H. Lawrence: The Artist as Psychologist*, although he seems to me to make two mistakes when he describes the objective sympathetic centre as meaning 'I am nothing. The other is the positive reality', and asserting that 'the subjective sympathetic centre is the urge to identify the other with the self', since 'the other' is objective, not subjective (Schneider, D. H.

writes in *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* there is a *vertical* division between the voluntary and sympathetic systems, and a *horizontal* division between the lower body (concerned only with one's subjective presence) and the upper body (awareness of the other), which are represented in the following table:[346]

	SYMPATHY ***(love, communion)***	***VOLUNTARY*** **(power, Separation)**
SUBJECTIVE (ME, I AM)	**I am I, the centre of all things** *Nerve Centre: Solar plexus (Behind the navel)* 'I am I, the vital centre of all things. I am I, the clue to the whole' (PFU 80:10) The child is aware of itself	**I am I, distinct from the rest** *Nerve Centre: Lumbar Ganglion* 'I know that I am I, in distinction from a whole universe, which is not as I am' (PFU 80:15) 'It is my distinction from all the rest of things which makes me myself' (PFU 80:19) The child asserts its distinction from its mother
OBJECTIVE (THE NOT-ME, IT IS)	**We realise the wonder of other beings** *Nerve Centre: Cardiac Plexus* 'From the cardiac plexus the child goes forth in bliss. It seeks the revelation of the unknown. It wonderingly seeks the mother' (PFU 82:30)	**Encounter with the difference of others** *Nerve Centre: Thoracic Ganglion* 'From the thoracic ganglion also the unconscious goes forth in its quest of the beloved. But what does it go to seek? Real objective knowledge. It goes to find out the wonders which itself does not

Lawrence: The Artist as Psychologist 61). Thalia Trigoni also produces a simplified, graphic representation in *The Intelligent Unconscious in Modernist Literature and Science* (Trigoni 75).

[346] In *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*, Lawrence states that 'the horizontal line and the vertical line form the cross of all existence and being. And even this is not mysticism — no more than the ancient symbols used in botany or biology' (PFU 39:30). Likewise, in 'Two Principles' Lawrence also says that 'this fourfold activity is the root-activity of the universe' (SCAL 266:9).

	‘Here I know no more of myself. Here I am not. Here I only know the delightful revelation that you are you. The wonder is no longer within me, my own dark, centrifugal, exultant self. The wonder is without me. The wonder is outside me. And I can no longer exult and know myself the dark, central sun of the universe. Now I look with wonder, with tenderness, with joyful yearning towards that which is outside me, beyond me, not me’ (PFU 82:6) ‘When a child leans its breast against its mother it becomes filled with a primal awareness of *her*—not of itself desiring her or partaking of her—but of her as she is in herself. This is the first great acquisition of primal objective knowledge’ (PFU 29:20)	contain and to transfer these wonders, as by impress, into itself. It goes out to determine the limits of its own existence also’ (PFU 34:31) ‘In its true harmony the thoracic ganglion is a centre of happier activity: of real, eager curiosity, of the delightful desire to pick things to pieces, and the desire to put them together again, the desire to “find out,” and the desire to invent’ (PFU 84:20) Negative (extravagance): pity, bullying love, forcing sympathy Positive: true harmony; real, eager curiosity, desire to find out

Once again, it seems likely that Lawrence’s familiarity with William James may have supplied the first underpinnings of his psychological reflections. For a start, the fact that Lawrence associates the subjective mode with the lower body and the objective realm with the upper body may well be due to the fact that in a chapter on habit, James makes a distinction between our lower centres which are responsible for our physical memory, and our higher thought centres which hardly know anything about the matter: ‘few men can tell off-hand which sock, shoe, or trousers-leg they put on first’ (James, 1PP 115). Secondly, Lawrence’s assumption that there are many distinctive nerve centres may have been inspired by the *Psychology: Briefer Course*, in which James alludes to the nerve centres of the body, before asserting (as mentioned

above) that ‘each [nerve] selects from the vibrations of the outer world some one rate to which it responds exclusively’ (James, Writings 1878 -1899 18). Thirdly, the division into the *me* and the *not-me* is a characteristically Jamesian distinction, to be found, notably, in the chapter ‘The ‘Stream of Consciousness’ in the same shorter version of James’s psychology (James, Writings 1878 -1899 172).

To summarize the four quadrants briefly, we can say that all that is on the *subjective* plane concerns itself uniquely with the *me*: in other words, there is no real awareness that what lies outside of me is not actually me. Lawrence’s description of this spinning lady in the chapter ‘The Spinner and the Monks’ in *Twilight in Italy* provides a good example. In 1915, Lawrence describes the apprehension of the spinning lady in the following terms:

> To her I was a piece of the environment. That was all. Her world was clear and absolute, without consciousness of self. She was not self-conscious, because she was not aware that there was anything in the universe except *her* universe. In her universe I was a stranger, a foreign *signore*. That I had a world of my own, other than her own, was not conceived by her. She did not care. (TI 107 :10)

Lawrence adds that ‘there was nothing which was not herself, ultimately. Even the man, the male, was part of herself’ (TI 108:2).[347] But a comparison with the earlier version written in 1913 reveals clear evidence that some development in his thinking had already occurred over the intervening period. Although Lawrence notes, as they talked, how indifferent she is to him—with Lawrence writing ‘she was as indifferent to me as if she were the most sought-after young woman of the commune’ (TI 53:17)—there is nothing of the above development.

The subjective plane is divided into the two poles: the *sympathetic* and the *voluntary*, of which the subjective sympathetic centre is essentially the basic awareness of our existence in the world, ‘I am I, the centre of all things’, first sensed in the lower body, in the *solar plexus*. Lawrence points out that since the brain develops later than the spinal column and nervous system, there must be some kind of consciousness which is blood-based, and non-cerebral: ‘let us consider the child in the womb. Is the foetus conscious? It must be, since it carries on an

[347] In my opinion, Julianne Newmark slightly misinterprets Lawrence’s description of the spinning lady, because she doesn’t realise that Lawrence is trying to describe her subjective consciousness, not his own point of view. Thus she writes, ‘to the little old woman Lawrence assigned cosmological import; indeed, she was so aesthetically powerful she transcended the local, the national and the global: “she was herself the core and centre to the world, the sun, and the single firmament”, even though she “did not know this”’ (Newmark 69).

independent and progressive self-development. This consciousness obviously cannot be ideal, cannot be cerebral, since *it precedes any vestige of cerebration*. And yet it is an integral, individual consciousness, having its own single purpose and progression. Where can it be centred, how can it operate, before even nerves are formed?' (PFU 19:17, my italics). This, writes Lawrence, is 'throughout all the long and incalculable history of the individual […] still remains central and prime, the source and clue of the living unconscious, the origin' (PFU 19:32). The foetus has a connection with the parent body, which is immediately reestablished after birth through the act of suckling.

But in the voluntary pole, there is also an assertion of individuality, via the *lumbar ganglion*: 'I am I, not because I am at one with all the universe, but because I am other than all the universe. It is my distinction from all the rest of things which makes me myself' (PFU 80:17). It is a knowledge of the fact that the rest of the world is different to oneself, 'the first tremendous flash of knowledge of singleness and separate identity' (PFU 80). According to Lawrence, it is present almost immediately after birth, when the child already starts to exercise a measure of control over its environment:

> In a measure, this taking of the breast reinstates the old connection with the parent body. It is a strange sinking back to the old unison, the old organic continuum — a recovery of the pre-natal state. But at the same time it is a deep, avid gratification in drinking in the sustenance of a new individuality. It is a deep gratification in the exertion of a new, voluntary power. The child acts now separately from its own individual centre and exerts still a control over the adjacent universe, the parent body. (PFU 21:30)

Together, this subjective duality of two tendencies towards oneness and separation is likened by Lawrence to *dehiscence*, a botanical term for splitting or an opening up of oneness in a seed, or fruit along a fault line, a rupture which is necessary for individual life: 'there at the navel, the first rupture has taken place, the first break in continuity. There is the scar of dehiscence, scar at once of our pain and splendour of individuality. Here is the mark of our isolation in the universe, stigma and seal of our free, perfect singleness […] Life cannot progress without these ruptures, severances, cataclysms' (PFU 21-22).

In the *objective* plane, there is the awareness that there is also a not-me, and therefore, the encounter with the Other, 'the first ministration of the self to that which is beyond itself'

(PFU 30:5). From the sympathetic cardiac plexus,[348] there is the wonder, the yearning for the oneness of the meeting with the other. From the voluntary, separative thoracic ganglion comes awareness of the gulf between oneself and the other, a 'recognition of abysmal *otherness*' as Lawrence calls it in *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* (PFU 37:3). The dwelling on an object which is recognized as something distinct to oneself is a relation which Lawrence also calls a 'living connection' and which we will look at shortly.[349] In its positive form, it brings the acquisition of new knowledge, curiosity, the desire to know the other. In its negative form, it can lead to pity, bullying love, and forcing sympathy.[350] Throughout, Lawrence always stresses the need for a healthy balance between all the various elements. Someone skewed too much towards one particular, or pole, cannot enter into a proper relationship with his or her environment. If the upper modes are overly activated, it leads to idealism of love and of the spirit (PFU 142:11).[351]

For Lawrence, animals (and early man) perceive in the subjective mode—as if the outside world were a mere extension of themselves: 'the dark, desirous look of a savage who apprehends only that which has direct reference to himself, that which stirs a certain dark yearning within his lower self. Then his eye is fathomless blackness' (FU 101:37). Thus, they have no strong (mental) conception of an objective, external world as modern man does, but instead a more sensuous way of seeing. It is an eye which beholds, but remains within itself: 'the savage is all in all in himself. That which he sees outside he hardly notices, or, he sees as something odd, something automatically desirable, something lustfully desirable, or something dangerous. What we call vision, that he has not' (FU 102:7). Animals like cats, wolves, tigers, hawks, are primarily oriented towards the voluntary mode of power, whereas animals like cows and horses are closer to the sympathetic mode, the desire for oneness. In so far as predators like birds of prey, cats, and so on, see at all, they perceive only their prey in relation to their own desires, like the tiger Lawrence so vividly describes in *Twilight in Italy* (1915)*:*

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[348] Lawrence also sometimes calls this the thoracic plexus.

[349] From this brief sketch, it is not hard to see how this can be mapped onto the historical schema described earlier. Phase 1 (the cosmic-religious phase) corresponds to both poles of the subjective plane, when man was 'nakedly vital man breast to breast with the vital cosmos' (A 181:9); phase 2 (the god-religious phase), corresponds to the sympathetic, objective quadrant (at least in its negative form) with 'a separation of the subject and object' (A 181:21); the final phase (philosophico-scientific) corresponds to the final quadrant, voluntary, objective, the idealism of the 'naked, disembodied mind losing itself in a naked and disembodied universe'(A 181:40).

[350] See PFU 84:4 on a child crying for attention, or chapter 4 of *Fantasia of the Unconscious* on bullying.

[351]In *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, he even adds another four additional nerve centres (the *cervical ganglion* in the neck, the *cervical plexus* in the throat, the *sacral ganglion* in the back, and the *hypogastric plexus* at the front), centres which he claims develop during adolescence (PFU 132). See also *The Intelligent Unconscious in Modernist Literature and Science* (Trigoni 75-76).

> … the white eyes of the tiger gleam to a point of concentrated vision, upon that which does not exist. Hence its terrifying sightlessness. The something which I know I am is hollow space to its vision, offers no resistance to the tiger's looking. It can only see of me that which it knows I am, a scent, a resistance, a voluptuous solid, a struggling warm violence that it holds overcome, a running of hot blood between its jaws, a delicious pang of live flesh in the mouth. This it sees. The rest is not. (TI 118:20)

The language itself memorably duplicates this denial of any agency to the object, which is seen only in subjective terms: a scent, a resistance, a struggling warm violence, a running of hot blood. Two years later, when describing a tiger in 'Two Principles' (1971), Lawrence notes that the source of their power is to be found 'at the base of the spine, in the sacral ganglion in the tiger and the cat the power-centre is at the base of the spine, in the sacral ganglion. All the tremendous sense of power and mastery is located in these centres of volition' (SCAL 270:35). The reference to the sacral ganglion shows that the idea of nerve centres takes centre stage in Lawrence's thought at this point. But their tendency towards destruction anchors them firmly in the voluntary mode. The cat Timsy (as we cited earlier), has the power in her (RDP 356:17). The cow, for Lawrence, is full of wonder: 'the eye of the cow is soft, velvety, receptive. She stands and gazes with the strangest intent curiosity. She goes forth from herself in wonder. The root of her vision is in her yearning breast. The same one hears when she moos' (PFU 102:13). Discussing his cow Susan in '…Love was Once a Little Boy' (1925), Lawrence says 'her whole being and motion is that of being desirable: or else fractious. It seems to unite her with the very air, and the plants and trees' (RDP 339:10). Horses, on the other hand, have more awareness of the other than cows: 'his curiosity is cautious, full of terror, or else aggressive and frightening for the object. The root of his vision is in his belly, in the solar plexus. And he fights with his teeth, and his heels, the sensual weapons' (PFU 102:19).

A look at the much earlier *Study of Thomas Hardy*, also shows that the seeds of these distinctions were already present, and we can see Lawrence engaged in casting about for hints of the distinctions he makes later. In it, Lawrence compares two paintings representing a mother with her child, focusing on two paintings which he had no doubt studied at the National Gallery in London, probably around 1908 when he was teaching in Croydon. Dürer's vision, according to Lawrence much more closely resembles the subjective plane, whereas Correggio's is far more objective. Thus Lawrence claims that 'to Dürer woman did not exist; even as to a child at the breast, woman does not exist separately. She is the overwhelming condition of life' (STH 68:19). The child is only dimly aware of the mother, but not as a separate individual, only as something vaguely different: 'I know that I am I, in distinction from a whole universe, which is not as I am' (PFU 80:15). Lawrence says that Dürer is, like a child: 'He is overpowered by the vast assurance at whose breasts he is suckled, and, as if astounded, he grasps at the unknown. He knows that he rests within some great stability, and, marvelling at his own power for movement, touches the objects of this stability, becomes familiar with them' (STH 68:24). Unlike Dürer, Correggio's relation to the woman is objective. This is the objective vision of the otherness of the woman to be found in Correggio: 'what he is now concerned with is not her great female mystery, but her individual character […] But still she is also unknown, also she is the mystery' (STH 67:33). As Lawrence describes it in *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*: 'from the sympathetic centre of the breast as from a window the unconscious goes forth seeking its object, to dwell upon it. When a child leans its breast against its mother it becomes filled with a primal awareness of *her*—not of itself desiring her or partaking of her—but of her as she is in herself. This is the first great acquisition of primal objective knowledge' (PFU 29:20). Correggio, argues Lawrence, embodied a tendency in art towards the *voluntary* mode, because he is moving away from the mystery of the unknown towards the known: 'thus Correggio leads on to the whole of modern art […] Ever man is more and more occupied with



Figure 8: The Virgin and Child, Albrecht Dürer, The National Gallery London.



Figure 7: The Madonna of the Basket, Correggio, The National Gallery, London

his own experience, with his own overpowering of resistance, ever less and less aware of any resistance in the object, less and less aware of any stability, less and less aware of anything unknown, more and more preoccupied with that which he knows...' (STH 68:5). It is this tendency which Lawrence goes to describe three of four years later in *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* in the following terms: 'from the thoracic ganglion also the unconscious goes forth in its quest of the beloved. But what does it go to seek? Real objective knowledge. It goes to find out the wonders which itself does not contain and to transfer these wonders, as by impress, into itself. It goes out to determine the limits of its own existence also' (PFU 34:31). This is the search for living connections.

7.3.2 Living Connections

Living connection is the phrase Lawrence employs in *Twilight in Italy* to describe getting into relation with an object or a person.[352] In *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*, Lawrence asserts that 'the realisation of that which is apart, different […] is like riches to the objective consciousness. It is, as it were, the adding of another self to the own self, through the mode of apprehension' (PFU 36:14). In *Twilight in Italy* Lawrence describes the experience of becoming suddenly aware ("realizing") of the presence of the church as follows: 'it did not occur to me to ask where these bells rang. Till at last my everyday trance was broken in upon, and I knew the ringing of the Church of San Tommaso. The church became a living connexion with me' (TI 103). For a 'living connexion' to occur there must be both a sense of wonder and a sense of the utter otherness of the person or thing being related to. This is why Lawrence is always searching for someone that will shock him, or surprise him. As he comes across the wood-sculpture of a Bavarian peasant he writes in *Twilight in Italy*: 'I was startled into consciousness one evening' (TI 91:39). Lawrence's curiosity is engaged because the statue seems to him to be saying something important and meaningful. Another example is the encounter with Mount Etna itself:

> If you would see her, you must slowly take your eyes from the world […] There are so many photographs, there are so infinitely many water-colour drawings and oil paintings which purport to render Etna. But pedestal of heaven! You must cross the invisible border. Between the foreground, which

[352] Neil Roberts makes the claim that 'otherness' first emerged in Lawrence's writing in the post-1916 revisions of *Women in Love*' (Roberts 87). This may be true with regard to the term, but Lawrence's concern with otherness certainly predates this period, as we see here, and as was shown in my first chapter.

> is our own, and Etna, pivot of winds in lower heaven, there is a dividing line.
> You must change your state of mind. A metempsychosis. (SS 8:1)

Mount Etna is so different, such a different world, that it cannot be accessed through ordinary conventional thinking. To do so requires the crossing of 'an invisible border', a 'dividing-line'; and an accompanying transformation of one's soul.

Making a living connection means accepting the difference of the other. Roberts points out that the experience of otherness for Lawrence is a kind of 'extended awareness of the mystery of the not-self. In this sense his notion of otherness is not only ethical but also religious' (Roberts 19), and points out that there is a twofold dialectic to Lawrence's otherness: 'on the one hand the insulated self, living from the predetermined will, confined in a mechanical repetition of known experience, is detestable to Lawrence. On the other hand 'merging, mingling [and] identification', the obliteration of self and of difference in love, is equally undesirable' (Roberts 17). This is particularly evident in the fine passages where Lawrence comments on Crèvecœur's descriptions of the quails:

> The pure beauty of the sentiment here lies, not in a selfless or self-abandoning or spiritual love, but in the deep, tender recognition of the life-reality of the other, the other creature which exists not in union with the immediate self, but in dark juxtaposition. It is the tenderness of blood-knowledge, knowledge in separation…They are they and he is he. And over the mysterious dark gulf reaches his tenderness and the wild confidence of the quails, leaving their two nature uncommingled, yet strangely in contact. (SCAL 199:20)

In the essay '…. Love was Once a Little Boy', Lawrence emphasizes the point when he says, 'you can't worship love and individuality in the same breath. Love is a mutual relationship, like a flame between wax and air. If either wax or air insists on getting its own way, or getting its own back too much, the flame goes out and the unison disappears. At the same time, if one yields itself up to the other entirely, there is a guttering mess' (RDP 332:16). What is needed is a balance, meaning a relationship which accepts the *being* on each side (RDP 359:5). Getting into relationship with something else involves respecting the individuality, the otherness, of that particular thing. As Elise Brault-Dreux highlights, one's own consciousness must be deliberately restrained: 'a form of deliberate naiveté the perception of the other should be unspoilt by mental knowledge and transgressive mental analysis' (Brault-Dreux, Responding

to Non-Human Otherness: Poems by D. H. Lawrence and Katherine Mansfield 36). In *Fantasia of the Unconscious* Lawrence puts it in the following terms:

> We have no desire to say what men *ought* to be. We only wish to say there are all kinds of ways of being, and there is no such thing as human perfection. No man can be anything more than just himself, in genuine living relation to all his surroundings. But that which *I* am, when I am myself, will certainly be anathema to those who hate individual integrity, and want to swarm. And that which I, being myself, am in myself, may make the hair bristle with rage on a man who is also himself, but very different from me. Then let it bristle. (PFU 89:7)

Lawrence is always fascinated by those people he meets who are most unlike himself, like the pedlar he comes across in *Sea and Sardinia*: 'that mysterious division between a respectable life and a scamp's life divided us. There was a gulf between me and him, between my way and his' (SS 106:28). This is why Roberts's claim that 'otherness troubles Lawrence' (Roberts 59) seems rather curious. Again, similar language is also employed in *Twilight in Italy* (1915) for the rather Satyr-like figure known as 'Il Duro' whose radical otherness is the focus of Lawrence's attention throughout the chapter. Il Duro (his real name is Faustino) likes to be near the Lawrence couple, although 'he was quite helpless in the relation. Only by mechanical attraction he gravitated into line with us. But there was nothing between us except our complete difference. It was like night and day flowing together' (TI 178:21). And he uses very similar language when discussing the Native Americans in *Mornings in Mexico*: 'the Indian is not in line with us. He's not coming our way. His whole being is going a different way from ours' (MM 61:5). Throughout, Lawrence seeks contact with otherness as a means of meeting the divine mystery of the cosmos. Equilibrium is attained in the fourth dimension, when one recognizes the uniqueness of every creature, recognizes that each creature is tracing its own individual path. Thus, Lawrence writes, the cuckoo, the cow, the coffee-plant all travel in different directions: 'not different directions of space and time, but different directions in creation: within the fourth dimension. The cuckoo went cuckoo-wards, the cow went cow-wise, and the coffee-plant started coffing. Three very distinct roads across the fourth dimension' (RDP 313:38).[353]

[353] In the little poem, embedded in the essay 'Him with his Tail in his Mouth', Lawrence makes it clear that it is the encounter with the difference of others which makes us aware who we really are. 'At the sight of each other the pair of them flew/ Into tantrums, and started their hullabaloo/ They startled creation; and when they were

What is needed is equilibrium, and the recognition of the inviolability and incomparability of the individuality of the other. But this can only be achieved by not trying to impose your point of view on the other, or seeing everything in one's own terms. A non-anthropocentric approach to the Other is a vital component of seeking out 'different forms of relatedness to the more-than-human world', as Terry Gifford expresses it in his chapter on 'Birds, Beasts and Flower' (Gifford 40). The Greeks, unfortunately, as Lawrence affirms in the essay 'Him with His Tail in His Mouth', were far too anthropomorphic in their relations, and saw everything in human terms:

> That is the mistake the Greeks made. They talked about equilibrium, and then, when they wanted to equilibrate themselves with a horse, or an ox, or an acanthus, then horse, ox, and acanthus had to become nine-tenths human, to accommodate them. Call that equilibrium? As a matter of fact, we don't call it equilibrium, we call it anthropomorphism. And anthropomorphism is a bore. Too much anthropos makes the world a dull hole. (RDP 315:24)

For a real living connection to be established, this anthropomorphic tendency has to be kept in check, as Lawrence finds it was in ancient carvings and drawings—'how marvellous is the living relationship between man and his object! be it man or woman, bird, beast, flower or rock or rain: the exquisite frail moment of pure conjunction, which, in the fourth dimension, is timeless' (RDP 316:27). Accordingly, the relationship has to be 'fifty per-cent me, fifty per-cent thee: and the third thing, the spark, which springs from out of the balance, is timeless. Jesus, who saw it a bit vaguely, called it the Holy Ghost. Between man and woman, fifty per-cent man, fifty per-cent woman: then the pure spark. Either this, or less than nothing' (RDP 317:11). It is to these alternative civilisations which we will now turn.

7.3.3 The American Indians; 'Man cannot live without mystery. He has a great need of it' (Lame Deer)

It is an obvious question to ask whether Lawrence just invented his own American Indians, because they were convenient for him; or whether there was actually any truth in his descriptions. Almost from the start, Lawrence has been accused of idealising 'primitive' people,

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through/Each said to the other: till I came across you/ I wasn't aware of the things I could do! Cuckoo! Moo! Cuckoo! And this I hold is the true story of equilibrium' (RDP 313:9).

despite the fact that Lawrence denied this on many occasions. Roberts maintains, for example, that 'in their anxiety to find a way of escaping from "the mental consciousness" of European civilisation, these texts risk dehumanising the people who are the object of their desire' (Roberts 4). In his book Roberts maintains that 'otherness' made Lawrence anxious, and asserts that for Lawrence the 'cultural/racial other is always implicitly gendered' (Roberts 85), tracing this back to the influence of Lawrence's parents on his thinking. He notes that in *Studies in Classic American Literature* Lawrence, having stated that we all have both a blood-consciousness and a mind-consciousness, writes: 'my father hated books, hated the sight of anyone reading or writing. My mother hated the thought that any of her sons should be condemned to manual labour. Her sons must have something higher than that. *She won. But she died first. He laughs longest who laughs last*' (SCAL 83:30, my italics). Roberts writes: 'I think we can deduce from this that it is symbolically impossible for the Lawrentian mother to be dark skinned, and that the act of miscegenation is as necessary to his psychological drama as it is, for the moment, impossible for him to contemplate in terms of otherness' (Roberts 85). But there is nothing obvious about such a deduction. Roberts is trying to find a psychological reason to rationalize what he perceives to be Lawrence's negative reaction to the Other, whereas in my view, Lawrence's reaction is dictated by his philosophical thinking. If Lawrence really does draw a parallel between his parents and the Indians in America, this is because Lawrence draws a parallel between the white man's desire to dominate with the mind and his mother's desire to do the same thing. The parallelism with what Lawrence says about the two ways of conquest (in the lines I have italicised) is obvious. Lawrence is talking not about psychology but about two quite different ways of approaching the world.

One of the most cogent attacks came in the early 1990s in Wayne Templeton's article '"Indians and an Englishman": Lawrence in the American Southwest' (1975). Templeton argues that 'from the outset, whites have "created" Indians, diminishing them and their religions, rejecting them as inferior, or romantically appropriating their culture' (Templeton), and that Lawrence was no exception. Lawrence's version of America, he claims, is an America he invents (Templeton 19). Templeton argues that Lawrence remains 'representative of a colonialist sensibility', adding that 'this is the 20th century form of colonialism facing these people: an unspoken but unavoidable form of interaction characterised by the sojourns of D. H. Lawrence and virtually every other American or European who has lived in or visited the Sout-West' (Templeton 29). While there is undoubtedly some truth to his assertion that Lawrence tended to over-generalise, and glossed over tribal differences, Templeton does not

always seem to have a very good grasp of Lawrence's understanding of religion, and repeatedly overstates Frazer's influence on Lawrence. Furthermore his complaints that 'Lawrence was unaware that these people generally believe in progress'—by which he no doubt means modernity—and that Lawrence's biggest mistake was to assume that Indians would no longer be able to function in traditional ways, that 'they must assimilate or disappear' (Templeton 26), show that the charge of colonialism could just as easily be levied at Templeton himself, as more recent books like Jonathan Lear's *Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation* show. Commenting on the words collected in 1930 from the Indian Plenty-Coups that 'when the buffalo went away the hearts of my people fell to the ground, and they could not lift them up again. After this nothing happened' (Linderman 169), Lear points out that the Crows 'actually did endure a cultural catastrophe' (Lear 8) and points out that though the social group may still exist 'the problem is what happens to the subject when the possibility of living according to its associated ideals collapses' (Lear 44). Here, I propose to look briefly at first-hand accounts recounted by two Indians Lame Deer and Plenty-Coups,[354] which seem to suggest that despite Templeton's criticisms, Lawrence's version of the Indians is perhaps not so far removed from their own. Indeed, in *Lame Deer: Seeker of Visions*, Lame Deer sounds rather like Lawrence when he says that we must all 'see ourselves as part of the earth, not as an enemy from the outside who tries to impose its will on it. Because we, who know the meaning of the pipe, also know that, being a living part of the earth, we cannot harm any part of her without harming ourselves' (Lame Deer and Erdoes 281).

Notwithstanding what Templeton asserts, both the descriptions of the Indian religion by Lame Deer and Plenty-Coup, seem to confirm, to some extent at least, Lawrence's assertions. Sounding uncannily like Lawrence, Lame Deer says 'the great spirit is one, yet he is many. He is part of the sun and the sun is a part of him. He can be in a thunderbird or in an animal or plant. A human being, too, is many things. Whatever makes up the air, the earth, the herbs, the stones is also part of our bodies, we must learn to be different, to feel and taste the manifold things that are us' (Lame Deer and Erdoes 162). Lame Deer also writes that 'the spirit is everywhere. Sometimes it shows itself through an animal, a bird or some trees and hills. Sometimes it speaks from the Badlands, a stone or even from the water' (Lame Deer and Erdoes 2). Plenty-Coups also says that for an Indian 'his God is All, Everywhere; and this is the reason

[354] These accounts were written up by two writers, Lame Deer's words were recorded by Richard Erdoes, Plenty-Coup's words were rendered by Frank B. Linderman. Both claim to have faithfully described the stories as they were told, although, there can be, of course, no certainty that this was indeed the case. Both Indians were from different tribes, Lame Deer was a Sioux, Plenty-Coups was a Crow.

why, in crossing a stream, he will sometimes give the water a bit of fat meat or some little finery' (Linderman 44).

The idea that there are powers in things is confirmed by Plenty-Coups, too, who recounts that 'the Indian of the Northwest (Montana and the surrounding country) believes that the Almighty gave each of His creations some peculiar grace or power, and that these favours, at least in part, may be obtained from them by him, if he is studious of their possessor's habits and emulates them to the limit of his ability' (Linderman 5). Plenty-coups describes how if one successfully chased and caught a butterfly, you could capture their power—"O Butterflies, lend me your grace and swiftness" I repeated, rubbing the broken wings over my pounding heart' (Linderman 6), reminiscent of Lawrence's descriptions of the Indians in the early version of 'Pan in America': 'only by acquiring the power of the deer, the eagle, the mountain-lion, the stream of water, the pine tree, the sun, on the middle earth, can he live, and keep himself alive' (MM 204:23). Likewise, Lame Deer says that 'all animals have power, because the Great Spirit dwells in all of them, even a tiny ant, a butterfly, a tree, flower, a rock. The modern, white man's way keeps that power from us, dilutes it. To come to nature, feel its power, let it help you, one needs time and patience for that' (Lame Deer and Erdoes 127).

Lame Deer has a similar perspective to Lawrence, too, with regard to the body, claiming that 'human beings have come to a point where they no longer know why they exist. They don't use their brains and they have forgotten the secret knowledge of their bodies, their senses, or their dreams. They don't use the knowledge the spirit has put into every one of them' (Lame Deer and Erdoes 162). On smoking the great pipe, Lame Deer says, 'all this I could understand only with my heart and blood, I guess in the same way an animal understands things, not with my mind' (Lame Deer and Erdoes 278). And like Lawrence, Lame Deer seems to think that man has lost the direct physical contact with the cosmos that gave life meaning:

> I think white people are so afraid of the world they created that they don't want to see, feel, smell, or hear it. The feeling of rain and snow on your face, being numbed by an icy wind and thawing out before a smoking fire, coming out of a hot sweat bath and plunging into a cold stream, these things make you feel alive, you don't want them anymore. Living in boxes which shuts out the heat of the summer and the chill of winter, living inside a body that no longer has a scent, hearing the noise from the hi-fi instead of listening to the sounds of nature, watching some actor on TV having a make-believe experience when

> you no longer experience anything for yourself, eating food without taste—that's your way. It's no good. (Lame Deer and Erdoes 122)

Thus both Lawrence and Lame Deer are critical of the Western way. Indeed, while clever people, Lame Deer says, 'study sun-spots through giant telescopes', the ancient Indians 'knew the sun and the moon much better in those long-forgotten days, were much closer to them'.[355]

The Indians, then, seem to live in a world which would be characterized by Lawrence as a world of *being* rather than *having*, with Lame Deer particularly critical of the way Westerners treat everything as resource: 'I made-up a new proverb: "Indians chase the vision, white men chase the dollar". We are lousy raw material from which to form a capitalist. We could do it easily, but then we would stop being Indians' (Lame Deer and Erdoes 39). For the Indians, money is of no importance. Lawrence says in *Mornings in Mexico* that 'if an Indian is poor, he says to another: I have no food; give me to eat. Then the other hands the hungry one a couple of tortillas. That is natural' (MM 38:10), and this is echoed by Lame Deer who says that, 'if a man was so poor that he had no horse, tipi or blanket, someone gave him these things. We were too uncivilised to set much value on personal belongings. We wanted to have things only in order to give them away. We had no money, and therefore a man's worth couldn't be measured by it' (Lame Deer and Erdoes 71). Lame Deer criticises the white man's neglect of ecosystems: 'for the white man each blade of grass or spring of water has a price tag on it […] and the Prairie becomes a thing without life […] the Sioux have a name for white men. They called them *wasicun*—fat-takers. It is a good name, because you have taken the fat of the land. But it doesn't seem to have agreed with you' (Lame Deer and Erdoes 35-36). Lame Deer himself states that the welfare of the group should take precedence over a single person's desire, saying that if this earth should ever be destroyed, it will be by desire, by the lust of pleasure and self-gratification, by greed' (Lame Deer and Erdoes 266), before concluding that the current system is failing, and that, 'if man wants to survive, he had better come round to this Indian point of view, the sooner the better, because there isn't much time left to think it over' (Lame Deer and Erdoes 39). There are, therefore, according to these accounts at least, some grounds for thinking that Lawrence's understanding of the Indians was grounded in some kind of reality.

In the final analysis, the Indian way of life is a qualitative one, and not a quantitative one. In *Lame Deer: Seeker of Visions*, there is an interesting discussion between the writer Richard

[355] Lawrence's views on similar matters will be dealt with in the next chapter.

Erdoes and Lame Deer about the Mount Rushmore statues, in which Lame Deer agrees with Erdoes (the writer himself) saying that it is a disease of white society to confuse bigness with greatness. This is a point which Lawrence himself makes in 'Education of the People', when he writes the following:

> Bigness as a rule means departure from life. Things which are vividly living are never so very big. Vastness is a term which applies to the non-vital universe. The moment we consider the vital universe, vastness and extensiveness cease to be terms of merit, and become terms of demerit. Whatever is vast and extensive in the living world is less quick, less alive than that which creates no impression of superlative size. In the *living* world, appreciation is intensive, not extensive. A small fowl like a lark or a kestrel is more to us than a flock of rooks or an ostrich or a condor. (RDP 137:12)

Ultimately, this is the message of Lawrence: greatness is better than bigness, the intensive is better than the extensive. *Being*, not *having* is the secret to life, and establishing 'a living dynamic relation to other creatures' (PFU 191:13) remains the way to achieve a 'particular and individual fullness of being' (PFU 191:11). In this approach lies the road to liberation, which is the topic of the next chapter.

Chapter 8: Liberation: 'The promised land, if it be anywhere, lies away beneath our feet' (PFU 68)

In the last chapter we saw that Lawrence's philosophy is a philosophy of *being*, founded on the idea that the solution to the problem of modernity is to get into relation with one's fellow man, with other beings, but above all with the cosmos as a whole—because every person, every being, every object can afford a glimpse of the miracle of life. The old solutions having been rendered stale and obsolete, a new pathway is required. In the essay 'Books' Lawrence proclaims 'now I live in 1924, and the Christian venture is done. The adventure is gone out of Christianity. We must start on a new venture towards God' (RDP 200:35). In order to bestow significance on a man or woman's life, and liberate them from the mental conceptions which have become a straitjacket, a new way forward is required in this post-Christian world. Indubitably, as far as Lawrence is concerned, the solution is not to be found in lofty ideals and false aspirations but in our very own selves: 'the promised land, if it be anywhere, lies away beneath our feet. No more prancing upwards. No more uplift. No more little Excelsiors crying world-brotherhood and international love and Leagues of Nations' (PFU 68:7). Thus, at the very heart of Lawrence's philosophy, lies a preoccupation with 'the promised land' of liberating modern mankind: firstly by freeing it from its social ideas, its artificial allocation of societal roles, and its obsession with self-preservation, with false ideals and false feelings—to put it simply, it is about finding the authentic self within. Secondly, epistemologically, by focusing on a more intuitive, more intimate manner of knowing, by focusing on all the revelations we may encounter (if we are alert enough to them) which are signs of, or clues to, the meaningfulness of life. Finally, as a result of becoming increasingly aware of one's true self, and one's relations with the world, one also becomes aware of that which is eternal in the world, and this higher awareness in itself can contribute, as Lawrence understands it, to achieving a state of peace or bliss, and subsequently of ultimate freedom.

8.1 Liberating the self

In the Danish artist Merrild Knud's memoir *With D. H. Lawrence in New Mexico*, he recounts a conversation which took place in December 1922 about Scandinavian literature: 'on one of the first visits he made to our cabin, we talked about literature. We asked him what he thought of Scandinavian writers, and Danish writers in particular. I don't remember his words, but he was not enthusiastic and criticised them strongly. He had some respect for Kierkegaard,

and of Hamsun he liked 'Pan' the best, and J. P. Jacobsen he only knew slightly, but wanted to read more of him. We talked about Ibsen, Strindberg, Lagerlöf, Nexö, and many others' (Knud 88). Apart from the fact that it provides another fine example of the scope and extent of Lawrence's reading, it is also noteworthy that Lawrence singles out the existential philosopher Kierkegaard since Kierkegaard's account of authenticity is very similar to Lawrence's own.

As mentioned in the introduction, Kierkegaard defines the self as 'a relation which relates to itself' in *The Sickness Unto Death* (Kierkegaard, The Sickness Unto Death 43), making it clear that the self is an activity, not a thing; and that maintaining the self is a balancing act since the self is 'a synthesis of the infinite and the finite, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity' (Kierkegaard, The Sickness Unto Death 43). Kierkegaard suggests that there are three forms of possible lives: the aesthetic life, the ethical life and the religious life. The narrator Anti-Climacus argues that the only truly satisfactory life is the *religious* life because to avoid falling into inauthenticity (sickness), the self must relate itself to the eternal. By contrast, the *aesthetic* life, which implies a fall into frivolity, personal pleasure and subjectivism (or in Lawrence's terms a life of *sensationalism*) represents a far less fulfilling way of life, proving, in the final analysis, to lack any real meaningfulness. By dint of repetition it becomes too mechanical and loses intensity, like the broken clock in *The Present Age* which strikes once all day so that it 'leaves everything standing but cunningly empties it of significance' (Kierkegaard, The Present Age 14). Another alternative way of life, but which also ultimately proves meaningless, is the *ethical* life (which Kierkegaard based on Hegel's *Sittlichkeit*), perhaps best characterized by the emblem of the mask. Someone who lives an ethical life is someone who performs the roles expected of him or her by the customs of society, such as getting married, going to church, getting a job, founding a family, carrying out one's duties; in short, by doing all that is expected of one. This way of life leaves one merely going through the motions, and when all is said and done, means living a life which lacks any significance, and which leaves one in a state of *despair* (somewhat similar to Lawrence's *ennui*)—all of which is to say that if the self is not established on a proper basis (i.e. in relation to the eternal), an existential anxiety will arise (Kierkegaard, The Sickness Unto Death 44). As we will see, it is obvious that this account of authenticity and inauthenticity has a lot in common with Lawrence's.

8.1.1 Authenticity: 'the great adsum of our being'

In the first version of his Benjamin Franklin essay in *Studies in Classic American Literature*, Lawrence points out that each person is a manifestation of the creative mystery:

> The centre of creative mystery is primal and central in every man, but in each man it is unique and incommutable. When we know *all things* about ourselves we shall know this, know, and enter upon our being. But first we must know all things, both bad and good. For this, the great liberating truth, is the last to be realised, the very last. When we know that the unique, incommutable creative mystery of the Self is within us and precedes us, then we shall be able to take our full being from this mystery. (SCAL 190:31)

Lawrence believes that there *is* an essential self (though not a static one, but a dynamic one); that this authentic self is *qualitatively* unique to each individual (it constitutes their essential nature); and finally, that people tend to misrepresent themselves, often reluctant to admit to the worst aspects of their authentic selves. The representation one makes of oneself— 'the ego is merely the sum-total of what we *conceive* ourselves to be' (PATU 26:25)— is just the idea one has of oneself: 'when a man talks about himself he is talking about his idea of himself: his own ideal self, that little homunculus he has fathered in his brain' (RDP 77:15). Thus, Lawrence exclaims in 'The Crown': 'I never yet met a man who was anything but what he had been *told* to be' (RDP 306:11) and suggests that 'men may be utterly different from the thing they now see' (RDP 306:13). As Frieda Lawrence recalled in her book *Memoirs and Correspondence* authenticity was an important theme for Lawrence:

> I know it to my sorrow now how I wasn't grateful enough to Lawrence myself. How he tried to bully me out of my false feelings for 'my own good'. We none of us seem to like 'our own good'. How well he knew that my feelings weren't my own genuine feelings, but the remains of stereotyped, inherited, conventional, ready-made feelings. When I think how at seventeen, I believed in duelling and dying for your country, and if a man kissed me I would commit suicide because it would not be chaste when you weren't married. It isn't at all easy to know what you really feel […] Lawrence *was* a genuine breath, and was I grateful at the time, when he blew down my little card-houses? Not I, at

> the time I clung to my little card-houses, but now I know and am grateful. (F. Lawrence, The Memoirs and Correspondence 150)

Consequently, Lawrence contends in the essay 'Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine' that the clue towards meaningful existence is to become authentically himself: 'man, as yet, is less than half grown. Even his flower-stem has not appeared yet. He is all leaves and roots, *without any clue put forth'* (RDP 360:30, my italics).

In 'On Being a Man' Lawrence writes: 'we must take ourselves as we are, not as we know ourselves to be' (RDP 217:1). This seeming paradox underscores Lawrence's belief that what we think we know of ourselves is misleading since the real me is so difficult to grasp ('my body is like a jungle in which dwells an unseen me, like a black panther in the night' (RDP 213:27)). By contrast, here is Lawrence's description of the 'known self':

> Then there is this other me, that is fair-faced and reasonable and sensible and complex and full of good intentions. The known me, which can be seen and appreciated. I say of myself: "Yes, I know I am impatient and rather intolerant in ideas. But in the ordinary way of life I am quite easy and really rather kindly. My kindliness makes me some-times a bit false. But then I don't believe in mechanical honesty […]". This is the known me, having a talk with itself. It sees a reason for everything it does and feels. (RDP 213:30)

Our known self is the result of our using our past knowledge to try to control our environment, and the subsequent ideas we have developed. Lawrence re-interprets Socrates's 'know thyself' to mean knowing that you *can't* know yourself, that your self will always remain unpredictable, however much we try to rationalize it, for 'I can't know the Adam of red earth which is me. It will always do things to me, beyond my knowledge' (RDP 217:13). People merely delude themselves, Lawrence thinks, into believing they control everything with their will, hiding behind 'the full armour of their own idea of themselves. Their unknown bodily self is never for one moment unsheathed. All the time, the only protagonist is the known ego, the self-conscious ego' (RDP 218:1). In this manner, we cover ourselves over with platitudes and fixed ideas: 'man is never spontaneous, as we imagine the thrushes or the sparrow-hawk, for example, to be spontaneous. No matter how wild, how savage, how apparently untamed the savage may be, Dyak or Hottentot, you may be sure he is grinding upon his own fixed, peculiar ideas…' (RDP 203:34). Accordingly, in the essay 'The Novel and the Feelings' Lawrence says: 'man is the only creature who has deliberately tried to tame himself. He has succeeded. But alas! it is a

process you cannot set a limit to. Tameness, like alcohol, destroys its own creator' (STH 203:30); moreover, 'unless we proceed to connect ourselves up with our own primeval sources, we shall degenerate' (STH 204:13). Our true self, then, is the spontaneous welling up of the central mystery within us. This is why Lawrence says we have to learn how not-to-know, as in 'The Proper Study' where he exclaims: 'Allons! the road is before us. Know thyself! Which means, *really*, know thine own *unknown* self. It's no good knowing something you know already. The thing is to discover the tracts as yet unknown.' (RDP 169:27).

Once again, we can look to Schopenhauer to gain insight into Lawrence's idea of personality. Schopenhauer argues that 'for everything in nature there is something to which no ground can ever be assigned, for which no explanation is possible, and no further cause is to be sought'. That something which can never be explained is 'its being or true essence' (TWWR 124),[356] and in man this is his 'unfathomable character' (TWWR 124). This is why, Schopenhauer speculates, we feel grief when we lose someone, since 'in every individual there is something inexpressible which is unique to him alone and therefore actually *irretrievable*, every individual being is unfathomable' (2PP 524). Schopenhauer distinguishes between the *intelligible character*, which is groundless (the will as thing-in-itself) and the *empirical character* (its manifestation in the phenomenal world) (TWWR 158). The *empirical character* is the essential *inner being*, but this inner being can be expressed, in a hundred different ways, depending on the external circumstances it encounters. Nonetheless, unlike the naivete of an animal which, as he says in 'Psychological Remarks', can only be 'entirely what it should and can be' (2PP 521),[357] man is 'capable of a high degree of dissimulation' (TWWR 156), and his inner being is only really unveiled in outbursts of affects and passions (2PP 521). There is, says Schopenhauer, 'only one mendacious being in the world: it is the human being' (2PP 522). Consequently, few people actually manifest any real individuality: they are, according to Schopenhauer, 'specimens', 'trivial, mundane […] usually what they say and do can also be predicted rather accurately. They have no characteristic stamp: they are factory productions' (2PP 535-6). Schopenhauer suggests that 'the customary use of the word person for referring to the human individual is unconsciously fitting, for persona really means the mask of an actor,

[356] 'I consider the inner being that first imparts meaning and validity to all necessity (i.e., effect from cause) to be its presupposition. In the case of man, this is called character; in the case of the stone, it is called quality; but it is the same in both' (TWWR 136)

[357] 'But what a peculiar pleasure is granted by the sight of any free animal when it goes about its business unhindered and on its own, looking for food, nursing its young or interacting with another of its species! In doing so it is entirely what it should and can be. And even if it's only a little bird I can look at it with pleasure for a long time—indeed a water rat or a frog…' (2PP 521).

and certainly no one shows himself as he is, but everyone wears a mask and plays a role' (2PP 526). Let us compare this now with a similar passage from Lawrence's 'Democracy':

> And now for Personality. What meaning does "person" really carry? A person is given in the dictionary as an individual human being. But surely the words person and individual suggest very different things. It is not at all the same to have personality as to have individuality, though you may not be able to define the difference. And the distinction between a person and a human being is perhaps even greater. Some "persons" hardly seem like human beings at all. The derivation this time helps. *Persona*, in Latin, is a player's mask, or a character in a play: and perhaps the word is cognate with sonare, to sound. An *individual* is that which is not divided or not dividable. A *being* we shall not attempt to define, because it is indefinable. (RDP 74:21)

Lawrence's use of the Latin definition of *persona* suggests that he may well have read Schopenhauer's essay 'Psychological Remarks' and his remark that a *being* is 'indefinable' recalls Schopenhauer's *intelligible* character (his indivisible thing-in-itself), while Lawrence's *individual* corresponds to Schopenhauer's *empirical* character (the objectivation of the *Will*), and Lawrence's *personality* is the equivalent of the inessential, inauthentic self. By defining an individual as that which is not divided or nor dividable, he is alluding to the *fourth dimension*, outside of time and space and therefore not quantitatively measurable. The unfathomable individual must necessarily be something qualitative, which is why the concept of the average is meaningless. Qualitatively speaking, a real individual is incomparable to any other, the average is, of course, merely an abstraction:

> There is me, and there is another being. That is the first part of the reality. There is no comparing or estimating. There is only this strange recognition of present otherness. I may be glad, angry, or sad, because of the presence of the other. But still no comparison enters in. Comparison enters only when one of us departs from his own integral being, and enters the material-mechanical world. (RDP 80:21)

In his intrinsic self, therefore, every individual is utterly other, which is important as we will see later. Yet, because the majority of men are inauthentic, Lawrence joins Schopenhauer in asserting in 'Democracy' that very few men are *really* individuals, a point he also makes in *Apocalypse* where he writes: 'the mass of men have only the tiniest touch of individuality: if

any. The mass of men live and move, think and feel collectively, and have practically no individual emotions, feelings or thoughts at all. They are fragments of the collective or social consciousness' (A 146:23).

These distinctions explain, thereby, the difference which Lawrence insists upon in 'Democracy', between the *impersonal* self which is the real self (the *individual*), and the *personal* self which is one's social being, or ego (the *personality*):

> Nothing in the world is more pernicious than the ego or spurious self, the conscious entity with which every individual is saddled. He receives it almost *en bloc* from the preceding generation, and spends the rest of his life trying to drag his spontaneous self from beneath the horrible incubus. (RDP 75:17)

This fundamental distinction is what Lawrence is alluding to in what is perhaps his most famous letter, on characters in novels:

> I don't care so much about what the woman *feels*—in the ordinary usage of the word. That presumes an *ego* to feel with. I only care about what the woman *is*—what she *is*—inhumanly, physiologically, materially—according to the use of the word: good for me, what she *is* as a phenomenon (or as representing some greater, inhuman will), instead of what she feels according to the human conception […][358] you mustn't look in my novel for the old stable ego of the character. There is another ego, according to whose action the individual is unrecognisable, and passes through, as it were, allotropic states which it needs a deeper sense than any we've been used to exercise, to discover are states of the same single radically-unchanged element. (2L 183) [359]

Lawrence's highlighting of the *is*, and his references to phenomenon and the great inhuman will make it obvious that the distinction is inspired by Schopenhauer's idea of the inner being. It is this inner being that Lawrence believes we should strive to uncover and reveal.

In 'The Novel and Feelings' (1925), Lawrence draws a distinction between feelings and emotions, stating that emotions are the humanized, more recognizable version of the feelings

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[358] Here Lawrence writes: 'that is where the futurists are stupid. Instead of looking for the new human phenomenon, they will only look for the phenomena of the science of physics to be found in human being. They are crassly stupid' (2L 183). Lawrence criticizes the futurists in the middle of this passage because, as we have seen, the creative mystery, or the *Will*, simply cannot be explained in terms of physical forces.

[359] Lawrence is discussing here the authoress whom we mentioned in chapter 6, who makes a distinction between her ego (a sort of social self) and her real living self.

because we can put a label on emotions, whereas our spontaneous feelings remain mysterious and often inconvenient: 'emotions are things we more or less recognize. […] Our emotions are our domesticated animals, noble like the horse, timid like the rabbit, but all completely at our service' (STH 202:29). On the other hand, 'we have no language for the feelings, because our feelings do not even exist for us' (STH 203:4).[360] Yet these feelings, whose very existence we want to deny, constitute for Lawrence, the very essence of what we are, and what gives us life: 'we ourselves only exist because of the life that bounds and leaps into our limbs and our consciousness, from out of the original dark forest within us' (STH 203:22). But man is, in fact, 'the only creature who has deliberately tried to tame himself. He has succeeded' (STH 202:30). And this tameness is gradually destroying all his spontaneity:

> And that is precisely man's predicament. He is tamed. There are no untamed to give the commands and the direction. Yet he is shut up within all his barbed wire fences. He can only go insane, degenerate. What is the alternative? It is nonsense to pretend we can untame ourselves in five minutes. That, too, is a slow and strange process, that has to be undertaken seriously […] Yet unless we proceed to connect ourselves up with our own primeval sources, we shall degenerate. (STH 204:5)

Of course, to most people, this sounds rather pie-in-the-sky, as Lawrence himself makes clear. But this is because, as he writes in 'Books', we have become too mental and no longer trust our intuitions: 'the conclusion of my head and my spirit is that it would be perfect, this world of men, if men all loved one another. The conclusion of my blood says nonsense, and finds the stunt a bit disgusting' (RDP 198:14).

Lawrence may seem here to fall into a contradiction; certainly his use of terms is not entirely consistent. In a previous chapter we saw him criticizing the feelings we live by, and here he appears to be saying the opposite: that we should live by our feelings. But the underlying idea remains the same. The important distinction to make is between fake feelings (which are a human contrivance) and real, authentic feelings (which are to be found spontaneously in the living self), Fake feelings and sentimentalism are what he finds in Galsworthy's characters:

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[360] Lawrence is not entirely consistent with his use of terminology here; previously, we saw that he also describes feelings in terms which closely resemble what he calls emotion here. Nonetheless, the point remains the same, that the spontaneous inner being (the cause of man), is to be distinguished from our human conceptions of it.

> Sentimentalism is the working off on yourself of feelings you haven't really got. We all *want* to have certain feelings: feelings of love, of passionate sex, of kindliness. and so forth. Very few people really feel love, or sex passion, or kindliness, or anything else that goes at all deep. So the mass just fake these feelings inside themselves. Faked feelings! The world is all gummy with them. (STH 215:17)

Therefore, Lawrence is convinced that we need to try to get at a more authentic kind of experience, meaning that many of the things modern life holds in high esteem are the very opposite of what Lawrence thinks we should do.

For Lawrence, we have to accept all aspects of ourselves, not just the part that we have accepted, but also the part that has been repressed, and the inability to do so is one of the criticisms Lawrence levels at Emerson in his review of Sherman's 'Americans'. Emerson, he affirms, only wants to acknowledge that there is a kind of clean-shaven Gabriel, repressing the fact that that there was also a Michael: 'Emerson listened to one sort of message and only one. To all the rest he was blank. Ashtaroth and Ammon are gods as well, and hand out their own credentials. But Ralph Waldo wasn't having any. They could never ring him up. He was only connected on the Ideal phone' (IR 224:32). Rather like 'the pot-headed American judge who feels that his daughter will be lost forever if she hears the word *cunt'*, mentioned earlier, Lawrence thinks every single one of us 'has all the feelings of a satyr careering somewhere inside him, very much suppressed and distorted (LEA 168:7), prompting him to say, 'I shall accept all my desires and repudiate none' (RDP 37:40). Part of what we need to recognise, according to Lawrence, is our demons and desires. It is a theme Lawrence alludes to in his 'Foreword to *Collected Poems*', in which he remarks that 'to this day, I still have the uneasy haunted feeling, I would rather not write most of the things I do write—including this note. Only now I know my demon better, and, after bitter years, respect him more than my other, milder and nicer self' (CP 850). Certainly the war seemed to prove to him that we do indeed have repressed desires, leading him to assert in 'The Reality of Peace', that 'the man I know myself to be must be destroyed before the true man I am can exist […] Either we can and will understand the other thing that we are, the flux of darkness and lively decomposition, and so become free and whole, or we fight shy of this half of ourselves' (RDP 34:30).

Hence, Lawrence always remains an ardent critic of the ideal of *perfectibility*: the very idea that we can become the perfect being is a red herring, based entirely on human conceptions of what it means to be perfect, and therefore, an impossibility, a distortion of what we really are:

> This has been the fallacy of our age—the assumption that we, of our own will, and by our own precept and prescription, can create the perfect being and the perfect age. The truth is, that we *have* the faculty to form and distort even our own natures, and the natures of our fellow men. But we can *create* nothing. And the thing we can make of our own natures, by our own will, is at the most a pure mechanism, an automaton. (180:35)

The ultimate aim is not to live in accordance with some anthropomorphic ideal, but to become what one really *is*: 'when we are fully a flower and present, the great *adsum* of our being' (SICAL 183:19). But it also involves the recognition that what we are, essentially, may be very different to what we think we are, since 'we are a million things which we don't know we are' (RDP 115:35). How do we find this authentic self? It is by listening to our spontaneous intuitions: 'it is the impulse we have to live by, not the ideals or the idea. But we have to know ourselves pretty thoroughly before we can break the automatism of ideals and conventions […] Only through fine delicate knowledge can we recognize and release our impulses' (PFU 105:16). It is never an easy task to do so, because we have to sink our individuality into a job, a business, a family, and so forth (RDP 331:34), we have to rid ourselves of what Lawrence memorably calls in *Apocalypse* 'the trash of personal feelings and ideas' (A 76:37).

8.1.2 A revaluation of all values: 'We are at present terribly off the track, following our spirit' (RDP 198:20)

Lawrence is convinced that our entire way of life needs rethinking. In 'Why the Novel Matters' (1925) Lawrence ironizes that:

> Men get ideas into their heads, of what they mean by Life, and they proceed to cut life out to pattern. Sometimes they go into the desert to seek God, sometimes they go into the desert to seek cash, sometimes it is wine, woman, and song, and again it is water, political reform, and votes. You never know what it will be next: from killing your neighbour with hideous bombs and gas that tears the lungs, to

> supporting a Foundlings Home and preaching infinite Love, and being co-respondent in a divorce. (STH 197:20)

If we are to get back to the mystery of being and find meaning in life anew, this is only to be found in our spontaneous selves and other living beings. This is the point Lawrence is, once again, making in 'The Novel and the Feelings':

> Man is not a little engine of cause and effect. We must put that out of our minds for ever. The *cause* in man is something we shall never fathom. But there it is, a strange dark continent that we do not explore, because we do not even allow that it exists. Yet all the time, it is within us: the *cause* of us, and of our days. (STH 203:13)

Echoing Schopenhauer's claim that man is the only mendacious being in the world, Lawrence also asserts in 'Books' (1924) that man, 'is a liar. Man is a liar unto himself. And once he has told himself a lie, round and round he goes after that lie, as if it was a bit of phosphorus on his nose-end' (RDP 197:29). Lawrence writes that, 'there are, in the consciousness of man, two bodies of knowledge: the things he tells himself, and the things he finds out. The things he tells himself are nearly always pleasant, and they are lies. The things he finds out are usually rather bitter to begin with' (RDP 198:1). Consequently, all our ideas need to be completely re-evaluated if we are not to continue going round in circles, for 'man finds that his head and his spirit have led him wrong. We are at present terribly off the track, following our spirit' (RDP 198:20).

Fromm comments that, 'in contrast to today's beliefs that persons driven mainly by greed for money, possession or fame are normal and are well adjusted, they are considered by Spinoza utterly passive and basically sick' (Fromm, To Have or To Be 82). In other words, certain passions (for Spinoza passions are driven by inadequate ideas) are pathological. Lawrence would certainly agree that most people are driven by wrong (inadequate) ideas—a theme which he works out in some detail in the tract 'Education of the People'.[361] *Inadequate knowledge*, for Spinoza, is the kind of knowledge (the first type of knowledge, *cognitio primi generis*) that the ordinary man possesses, consisting of notions which are commonly held and usually rather

[361] In 'The Novel and the Feelings' Lawrence actually jokes that the education of his day was so poor that being educated was about as likely to create effectual human beings, as wearing leather boots was to turn us into a bull (STH 202:1).

confused. Spinoza compares being driven by these kind of confused notions (rather than acting in accordance with adequate ideas) to being mentally sick:

> But if the greedy person thinks only of money and possessions, the ambitious one only of fame, one does not think of them as being insane, but only as annoying; generally, one has contempt for them. But *factually*, greediness, ambition and so forth are forms of insanity, although one does not usually think of them as 'illness'. (Ethics, Book 4, Proposition 44, Note)[362]

Like Spinoza, Lawrence asserts that human conceptions constitute a perversion, a kind of illness and a form of insanity: 'sometime, somewhere, man will wake up and realize that property is only there to be used, not to be possessed. He will realize that possession is a kind of illness of the spirit, and a hopeless burden upon the spontaneous self. The little pronouns "my" and "our" will lose all their mystic spell' (RDP 82). What we need is to adopt a more responsible, mature outlook on the world, as Lawrence suggests:

> But why can't we really grow up, and become adult with respect to money and food […] Let every man answer for himself. We only know we want the freedom to live, the freedom of leisure and means. But there are ample means, there is half an eternity of pure leisure for mankind to take, if he would, if he did not think, at the back of his mind, that riches are the means to freedom. (STH 39)

Consequently, it is clear for Lawrence that the sickness of modern society stems in the first place from the individual: 'it lies in the heart of man, and not in the conditions—that is obvious, yet always forgotten' (STH 15:28) meaning that any meaningful change must originate at the level of the individual, or at least of some individuals, if not of all: 'Have we achieved to true individuality and to a sufficient completeness in ourselves? Because, if not — then, physician, heal thyself' (STH 15:15). This then, is the real task which lies before us, not to accumulate, but to know what we really are. For this we need to be liberated from the petty constraints of work.

[362] I have used the translation given by Fromm (Fromm, To Have or To Be 82)

8.1.3 Greater and lesser work: 'Not the work I shall produce, but the real Me I shall achieve' (STH 12: 40)

As we have seen, Benjamin Franklin was very much one of Lawrence's targets, and in *Studies in Classic American Literature*, he claims that Franklin was produced by Christian-emotional impulse (SCAL 191:29). One of the best-known criticisms of Franklin came from the German sociologist Max Weber, who discussed Franklin in his book *The Protestant Work Ethic*. Weber sees in Franklin a perfect example of the way in which acquisition came to be seen as an end in itself:

> In fact, the *summum bonum* of his ethic, the earning of more and more money, combined with the strict avoidance of all spontaneous enjoyment of life, is above all completely devoid of any eudaemonistic, not to say hedonistic, admixture. It is thought of so purely as an end in itself, that from the point of view of the happiness of, or the utility to, the single individual, it appears entirely transcendental and absolutely irrational. Man is dominated by the making of money, by acquisition as the ultimate purpose of life. (Weber 18)

Weber had concluded that protestant thinking had led to the privileging of the value of work and accumulation over the value of living spontaneously. Likewise, Lawrence rejects the teleological idea that there is (or should be) a kind of ideal, perfect person (perfectibility), in the manner Franklin outlines, towards which we might aim.[363] There are, therefore, clear similarities between Lawrence's and Weber's treatment of Benjamin Franklin, and it seems almost impossible to believe that Lawrence would not either have come across Max Weber's books directly, or at least, have had them explained to him by someone. For Frieda's sister, Else, was herself a social scientist, and was the lover not only of Max Weber himself at one point, but also, subsequently, of his brother Alfred, whose apartment she actually made available to Lawrence and Frieda (Byrne 111).

In an intriguing early letter, Lawrence avowed to Blanche Jennings: 'I was suffering acutely from Carlyliophobia, which you will understand if that rabid philosopher has ever

[363] In a recent book, the French thinker Jean-Miguel Pire discusses the concept of *otium* as a counterbalance to the kind of utilitarianism so inherent to modern life. The word *otium* sets up an opposition to the world of commerce, *negotium* (*nec-otium* meaning that which denies otium); it insists on the importance of a time liberated from everyday tasks, from calculation, from prejudices, from utility. In contrast to the logic of capitalism, the man engaged in this kind of activity dedicates himself to life, to reflection, to the quest for meaning, beauty and truth (Pire).

bitten you' (1L 49). Despite this reference to a phobia of Carlyle, Carlyle's thought, and surely, in particular, his emphasis on the opposition between the vital and the mechanical had certainly appealed earlier on to Lawrence as Jessie Chambers makes clear.[364] Together, they both read Carlyle's *French Revolution*, *Heroes* and *Hero Worship*, and *Sartor Resartus*, with Chambers quoting Lawrence as saying to her: '"I don't believe they were like us when they were young, do you? Our parents, I mean. I don't imagine mother ever read Carlyle"' (Chambers 102). This clearly contains the intimation that Lawrence had initially found something new and perhaps a bit transgressive in Carlyle. What, then, had caused Lawrence to turn against Carlyle? One possible explanation comes in *Study of Thomas Hardy*, and the answer seems to be connected to the idea of work:

> But what a ghastly programme! I do not want to work. You must, comes the answer. But nobody wants to work, originally. Yet everybody works, because he must — it is repeated. And what when he is not working? Let him rest and amuse himself, and get ready for tomorrow morning. Oh, my God, work is the great body of life, and sleep and amusement like two wings, bent only to carry it along. Is this, then, all? And Carlyle gets up and says, It is all, and mankind goes on in grim, serious approval, more than acquiescent, approving, thinking itself religiously right. (STH 32:28)

What Lawrence seems to be alluding to is Carlyle's sanctimonious idealization of work itself. Carlyle positively eulogizes work in *Past and Present*: 'for there is a perennial nobleness, and even sacredness, in Work […] there is always hope in a man that actually and earnestly works: in Idleness alone is that perpetual despair […] the real desire to get Work done will itself lead one more and more to truth' (Carlyle, The Works of Thomas Carlyle Volume 10: Past and Present 196). Carlyle does indeed, as Lawrence suggests

[364] Carlyle also figured in the list of significant influences given by the narrator in the largely autobiographical story 'Modern Lover', which has already been mentioned. Carlyle elaborates a set of distinctions very similar to Lawrence's own as the following table shows:

Vital/dynamic	**Mechanical**
Unconscious	Self-conscious
Spiritual	Material
Creative	Manufactured
Artist	Debater
Intuitive	Logical/
Results from inspirations	Results from analysis

Source: 'Characteristics' (Carlyle, The Modern British Essayists: Volume 5 Thomas Carlyle 296-309)

above, praise work as the be-all and end-all of existence: 'blessed is he who has found his work; let him ask no other blessedness' (Carlyle 197), even comparing work to prayer: 'work is of a religious nature:—work is of a *brave* nature: which it is the aim of all religion to be' (Carlyle 199). Carlyle even directly associates work with God—'Labour is life: from the inmost heart of the Worker rises his god-given Force, the sacred celestial Life-essence breathed into him by Almighty God' (Carlyle 197)—and it seems to be this sanctification of work which had riled Lawrence.[365]

As a consequence, Lawrence tries to redefine the conception of work itself by distinguishing between minor work and greater work. Greater work is the teleological task, of living well and of achieving one's authentic self.[366] The lesser one is simply that of 'earning a living'. Lawrence regrets that one of humanity's great ideals is the idea of work: 'the decree is held holy. My life is to be utilised for work first and foremost,—and this in spite of Mary of Bethany' (STH 32:17),[367] pointing out that even if work is meaningful for some (such as for artists for instance), 'for the mass, for the 99.9 per cent of mankind, work is a form of non-living, of non-existence, of submergence' (STH 33:27). Indeed, for the vast majority, work is merely a means of self-preservation, and cannot, therefore, be 'the be-all and end-all of existence' (STH 33:30). Work may well keep us alive, but working and living are by no means the same thing: 'living is not simply not-dying. It is the only real thing, it is the aim and end of all life. Work is only a means to subsistence. The work done, the living earned, how then to go on to enjoy it, to fulfil it, that is the question. How shall a man live? What do we mean by living?' (STH 38:11). Thus, Lawrence suggests that man should only work three or four hours a day, and dedicate the remaining twenty or so hours for the greater form of work: 'for being himself, for producing himself' (STH 39:15). Hence, we should only work a few hours a

[365] Lawrence himself did not have very happy experiences of work, his mother made him work as a clerk for a few months before ill-health forced him to stop, and he also suffered as a trainee teacher (Worthen, D. H. Lawrence: The Early Years 1885-1912).

[366] Instead of worshipping the child, we should worship the adult individual. As for the child: 'here is *a new little clue to a human being*, laid soft and vulnerable on the face of the earth. Here is our responsibility, to see that this unformed thing shall come to its own final form and fullness, both physical and mental' (RDP 118:6, my italics).

[367] The reference to Mary of Bethany is to Luke X, whom Jesus praised for privileging more important matters over work: 'She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her"'.

day and reserve the rest of the time for producing ourselves (STH 39)[368]. Work in itself should no longer be held up as an ideal:

> —'Work is service, hence work is noble. Laborare est orare'—Never was a more grovelling motto than this, that work is prayer. Work is not prayer at all: not in the same category. Work is a practical business, prayer is the soul's yearning and desire. Work is not an ideal, save for slaves. But work is quite a pleasant occupation for a human creature, a natural activity. And the aim of work is neither the emotional helping of mother and father, nor the ethical-religious service of mankind. Nor is it the greedy piling-up of stupid possessions. An individual works for his own pleasure and independence: but chiefly in the happy pride of personal independence, personal liberty. No man is free who depends on servants. (RDP 149:20)

This then, is for Lawrence, what work should really consist of: 'The final aim of every living thing, creature, or being is the full achievement of itself […] Not the work I shall produce, but the real Me I shall achieve' (STH 12).

8.2 Learning not to know

8.1.1 Intuitive knowledge: 'the way of poetic and religious consciousness, the instinctive act of synthesis' (A 190:15)

Lawrence considers, as we have seen, that the intellectual and scientific ways of knowledge which lie at the heart of modernity, are highly problematic, which is why in *Fantasia of the Unconscious* he declares that 'we must know, if only in order to learn not to know. The supreme lesson of human consciousness is to learn how not to know. That is, how not to interfere. That is, how to live dynamically, from the great Source, and not statically, like machines driven by ideas and principles from the head, or automatically, from one fixed desire' (PFU 111:13). What Lawrence says here about *learning how not to know* needs to be nuanced by what he himself says elsewhere. For Lawrence is specifically alluding here to mental knowledge. He often observes that there are two ways of knowing, which could be likened to

[368] Michael Black disagrees: 'This part of the argument is naïve, as the 1930s and 1970s have shown' (Black, The Early Philosophical Works 110). And yet, at a similar period, Keynes suggested that in a couple of generations, everybody's workload would indeed be dramatically reduced. Many studies also show that reduced working hours would reduce pollution too, see for example (Fitzgerald, Schor and Jorgenson).

Pascal's distinction between *esprit de finesse* and *esprit géometrique* (discussed in the introduction). Pascal's vision we may remember, the memory of which he sewed into the lining of his coat, told of his belief in the living God over the bloodless abstraction of the scholars and philosophers. These two ways are clearly described by Lawrence in 'Fragment 2' of *Apocalypse*. The first way is the *religious* way, the second is the *scientific* way. The first way is described by Lawrence in the following terms:

> The religious way of knowledge means that we accept our sense-impressions, our perceptions, in the full sense of the word, complete, and we tend instinctively to link them up with other impressions, working towards a whole. The process is a process of association, linking up, binding back (religio) or referring back towards a centre and a wholeness. This is the way of poetic and religious consciousness, the instinctive act of synthesis. (A 190:15)

It is, therefore, a primarily intuitive and instinctive manner of apprehending. On the other hand, the second way of knowing, the scientific, is the contrary—rather than binding, or uniting, it 'breaks up or analyses the direct impression' (A 190: 40).[369] Carr in *Henri Bergson: A Philosophy of Change* (1911), describes the intuitive way as 'the feeling of the intimate bond that binds the individual to reality', whereas, 'intelligence is essentially external; it makes us regard reality as something other than our life, as something hostile we may overcome' (Carr 58).

How do we perceive a sunset? Our *immediate* awareness of the sun is the feeling in every man, says Lawrence, that the sun is leaving us (A 191). In order 'to remove or "correct" this awareness, we have deliberately to change our state of mind, and say: No, the sun is not sinking. It is the earth which is turning round and cutting with her sharp edge, called the horizon, over the face of the really motionless planet, the sun' (A 191:20). Thus, Lawrence declares:

> … it is obvious there are two forms of truth. To our senses, the red sun slowly sinks like a drowning thing. This is the truth, and perhaps the more vital truth,

[369] We already looked, in chapter 3, at different ways of knowing, in the form of knowing mechanically (by using the patterns of the past to predict the future), or being, which entails accepting the leap into the unknown, with a leap into the unknown. The particularity of knowing in the first sense is that is intellectual, scientific and not dynamic. The second type is religious, it is getting into contact with the great source (the creative mystery). They are essentially, therefore, the same distinctions as I will be discussing here, but with less emphasis on the temporal aspect.

> since it is our everyday *experience*. On the other hand, we know by a long, long chain of inference that sunset is caused by the earth's diurnal rotation on her axis. This is the other truth, the truth of explanations. To obtain the realisation of this second truth we have to cut off our sense-impressions of sunset. (A 191:27)

Thus, Lawrence states, we have two mutually exclusive streams of consciousness, of which we can only adopt one. It becomes impossible to actually see the sunset if one has adopted the scientific explanation. Lawrence echoes this distinction in 'A Propos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*', in which he also asserts that there are two ways of knowing: by apartness (the scientific way) and by togetherness (the religious way), and in which he also develops a very similar argument with regard to the sun and the moon: '"knowledge" has killed the sun, making it a ball of gas, with spots; "knowledge" has killed the moon, it is a dead little earth fretted with extinct craters as with smallpox' (LCL 331:5).[370]

The scientific way is, of course, the way of modernity, a way that Gary Lachman described in his book *Lost Knowledge of the Imagination* as follows:

> In the early seventeenth century, a new way of knowing and understanding ourselves and the world we live in appeared in the West and quickly rose to prominence. So effective and powerful was this new approach to knowledge that within a relatively short time—merely a few centuries—it achieved ascendancy in practically all fields of human endeavour, and subsequently became, as it is today, the gauge by which we measure such difficult and fundamental notions as "truth" and "reality". (Lachman 9)

As Lachman also points out (in terms reminiscent of Lawrence when he writes in *Mornings in Mexico*: 'ours was the quickest way, so we are conquerors for the moment' (MM 94:6))—'the increase in power and mastery over the natural world that has come to us through the reign of quantity […] has come at a very high price' (Lachman 14), both in terms of the impact on the planet,[371] and the meaningfulness of our existence. As Frances Cornford pointed out in *From Religion to Philosophy* (1912): 'driven by a deep lying need to master the world by

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[370] It is interesting to compare this with the quotation from Lame Deer cited in the previous chapter.

[371] Lachman lists the following: 'the power over the natural world that has come into our hands has in recent times begun to show its shadow side. Global warming, urbanisation, industrialisation and the environmental and social problems that arise with them, as well as a variety of other crises facing us today, have their roots in the kind of mastery over the physical world that arrived with our new way of knowing' (Lachman 14)

understanding it, science works steadily towards its goal—a perfectly clear conceptual model of reality'; however, 'when we contemplate the finished result, we see that, in banishing "the vague", it has swept away everything in which another type of mind finds all the value and significance of the world' (Cornford vi). The way of the imagination is, to employ the distinction we employed in chapter 3, *synthetic* rather than analytic. In *Psychoanalysis of the Unconscious* Lawrence describes it in the following manner: 'through the mode of dynamic objective apprehension, which in our day we have gradually come to call *imagination*, a man may in his time add on to himself the whole of the universe, by increasing pristine realization of the universal. This in mysticism is called the progress to infinity' (PFU 36:16). It is, therefore, a way of encountering the object intuitively rather than intellectually. Another way to consider it is to view it as the way of wonder. As we saw (also in chapter 3), Lawrence describes wonder as a sixth sense, as the one universal sense in all life, (possessed by all living beings, even a flea or an amoeba), as the most precious element in all life, the *religious* element. The intuition of the creative mystery in the universe, constitutes a liberation from the falsities of the human vision of the world.

A more modern example of what he might mean, but which Lawrence could hardly have anticipated, is the development of artificial intelligence, which nowadays, nearly everyone senses intuitively, is a quite different manner of apprehending the world to this kind of natural apprehension. Unlike man, artificial intelligence is unable to take the significance of things into consideration, and possessing no sense of wonder, it can ask no questions. Modern artificial intelligence is powered by a series of algorithms which take no account of context, so that what it outputs can only be what was put into it, and as a consequence it remains always stale, flat and predictable. As Hubert Dreyfus argued in *What Computers Still Can't Do: A Critique of Artificial Reason*, the model used for artificial intelligence was primarily based on a representationalist model, whereby it was presumed that all our activity can be represented in propositional form, that 'human beings produce intelligence using facts and rules' (H. L. Dreyfus ix), and that 'understanding equals analysis, so that all experience must be analysable' (H. L. Dreyfus xxx).[372] The problem with this approach, he argued, was that 'Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and the gestaltists would say that objects appear to an involved participant not in isolation and with context-free properties but as things that solicit responses by their significance' (H. L. Dreyfus xxviii). Accordingly, the way of intuition is like that of the chess

[372] This book, first written in 1972, was updated in 1992, but despite its age, the premises behind it still seem to hold today.

master who does not figure out the best option to take but 'just sees the board as demanding a certain move' (H. L. Dreyfus xxviii)—all of which takes us back to the French philosopher Pascal, mentioned in my introduction and who is figured in the foreword of Dreyfus's book. Pascal, we remember, drew a distinction between the mathematical mind (*esprit géometrique*) and the perceptive mind (*esprit de finesse*), and he asserted that 'we must see the matter, at once, at one glance, and not by a process of reasoning […] mathematicians wish to treat matters of perception mathematically, and make themselves ridiculous […] the mind […] does it tacitly, naturally, and without technical rules' (Pascal, Pensées).

Because they don't really explain, but merely analyse the terms, scientific explanations are often tautological, with Lawrence giving a memorable example of how impossible it is to define fire:

> Fire, we say, is combustion. It is marvellous how science proceeds like witchcraft and alchemy, by means of an abracadabra which has no earthly sense. Pray, what is combustion? You can try and answer scientifically, till you are black in the face. All you can say is that it is that which happens when matter is raised to a certain temperature — and so forth and so forth. You might as well say, a word is that which happens when I open my mouth and squeeze my larynx and make various tricks with my throat muscles. All these explanations are so senseless. They describe the apparatus, and think they have described the event. Fire may be accompanied by combustion, but combustion is not necessarily accompanied by fire. All A is B, but all B is not A. And therefore fire, no matter how you jiggle, is not identical with combustion. (PFU 172:15)

Lawrence makes it clear in *Fantasia of the Unconscious* that when he was younger, he had hoped to find the answers to his mental anguish from the science of his day. In the end, however, science had been found wanting: 'I have tried, and even brought myself to *believe in a clue to the outer universe*. And in the process I have swallowed such a lot of jargon that I would rather listen now to a negro witch-doctor than to Science' (PFU 168:21, my italics). Jessie Chambers writes:

> Lawrence was interested in the question as to how the old religious ideas stood in relation to the scientific discoveries that was sweeping away the familiar landmarks. On one of our walks home he gave my brother and me a vivid

> description of the nebula theory of the universe, and he was troubled by the discrepancy between such a hypothesis of the origin of things and the God postulated by the congregational Chapel. (Chambers 84)[373]

Consequently. Lawrence is well aware of the metaphysical limits to scientific knowledge, and above all, of the fact that it can never actually explain things, but only analyse how things work mechanically by taking them apart, as he explains in the foreword to *Fantasia of the Unconscious*:

> Our objective science of modern knowledge concerns itself only with phenomena, and with phenomena as regarded in their cause-and-effect relationship. I have nothing to say against our science. It is perfect as far as it goes. But to regard it as exhausting the whole scope of human possibility in knowledge seems to me just puerile. Our science is a science of the dead world. Even biology never considers life, but only mechanistic functioning and apparatus of life. (PFU 62:33)

In other words, as he writes later, science has got things backwards—it is the cart giving birth to the horse (PFU 168). The clue lies in the living being, not in matter. In 'Why the Novel Matters' (1925) he expostulates: 'as for the scientist, he has absolutely no use for me so long as I am man alive. To the scientist, I am dead. He puts under the microscope a bit of dead me, and calls it me. He takes me to pieces, and says first one piece, and then another piece, is me' (STH 195:7), but, he protests, 'the whole is greater than the part. And therefore, I, who am man alive, am greater than my soul, or spirit, or body, or mind, or consciousness, or anything else that is merely a part of me. I am a man, and alive' (STH 195:16). It is a claim he repeats in *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, with regard to a fly: 'you might as well tell me a fly is a sum of wings and six legs and two bulging eyes. It is the fly which has the wings and legs, and not the legs and wings which somehow nab the fly into the middle of themselves. A fly is not a sum of various things' (PFU 172:28). Carr, when summing up Bergson's view of art, asserts that artists have the power of 'seeing more than we see, and of enabling us by their expression to penetrate further into reality' (Carr 64), adding that 'it is the power to enter by sympathy into their subject. Great art is inspiration, it is the artist's power of knowing by entering within the object and

[373] Lawrence is describing Kant's nebular hypothesis when he writes the following: 'I do not believe that the stars came flying off from the sun like drops of water when you spin your wet hanky. I have believed it for twenty years, because it seemed so ideally plausible. Now I don't accept any ideal plausibilities at all' (PFU 168:15).

living its life' (Carr 65). Thus, at length, Lawrence writes: 'for *my* part, I know that life, and life only is the clue to the universe' (PDU 168:28).

Hence, Lawrence asserts that the real value of Einstein's relativity is that it has shown that the world is far more complex than scientists had previously assumed (PFU 167:25). In *The Matrix of Modernism* Schwartz cites Ernst Cassirer as saying that, 'we constantly forget that these hypothetical substances, such as the "aether" or the "atom" are not realities to be explored in themselves; they are rather "instruments produced by thought for the purpose of comprehending the confusion of phenomena as an ordered and measurable whole"' (Schwartz 19). Lawrence agrees as the following passage shows:

> The atom? Why, the moment you discover the atom it will explode under your nose. The moment you discover the ether it will evaporate. The moment you get down to the real basis of anything, it will dissolve into a thousand problematic constituents. And the more problems you solve, the more will spring up with their fingers at their nose, making a fool of you. *There is only one clue to the universe. And that is the individual soul within the individual being. That outer universe of suns and moons and atoms is a secondary affair.* (PFU 167:23, my italics)

Scientific "discoveries" are often 'mental monkey-tricks […] you won't get anything in the end but a formula and a lie' (PFU 167:20). Describing water as H_2O, as he remarks in 'Introduction to These Paintings' is nothing more than 'a mental *tour de force*. With our bodies we know that water is not H_2O, our intuitions and instincts both know it is not so. But they are bullied by the impudent mind' (LEA 208:1).[374] Science, therefore, too far removed from our intuitions, becomes meaningless, as he notes in 'Fragment 2' of *Apocalypse*: 'today, science, even the science of physics, is said to have moved beyond the image, the atom is now imageless and utterly unimaginable. Therefore, to most minds, to mine certainly, it has turned into nothingness. The modern atom is to my mind a desperate nothingness and science has really ceased to be. I give it up' (A193:3).

For these reasons, Lawrence proposes an alternative to objective science, a *subjective science* as he names it in *Fantasia of the Unconscious*: 'to my mind there is a great field of science which is as yet quite closed to us. I refer to the science which proceeds in terms of life

[374] Lawrence does note that 'alert science' is more sceptical of these kind of truth claims (LEA 208:9).

and is established on data of living experience and of sure intuition. Call it subjective science if you like' (PFU 62:30).[375] Lawrence seems convinced, as he asserts in *Studies in Classic American Literature*, that there must have been a great era, an era 'different from ours, a civilisation established on the perfected first-mind in man, man's primal or creative sensual being […] Men then *understood* in passional sensation and pulsation, in passional symbols, as we now understand beautifully in concepts and ideas' (SCAL 289:6). Early symbolic rituals like the Eleusinian mysteries were actually 'most profound scientific exposition' (SCAL 206:20). It was, therefore, an era in which civilisations were possessed of great subjective wisdom, a wisdom which has largely now been lost, and of which some traces only remain because some, 'like Druids or Etruscans or Chaldeans or Amerindians or Chinese, refused to forget, but taught the old wisdom, only in its half-forgotten, symbolic forms. More or less forgotten, as knowledge: remembered as ritual, gesture, and myth-story' (PFU 63:32). The same claim is repeated in *Sketches of Etruscan Places*; 'they were like children: but they had the force, the power and the sensual *knowledge* of true adults. They had a world of valuable knowledge, which is utterly lost to us' (SEP 125:20). This distinction between subjective and objective science also corresponds closely to Carr's description of intuition as 'a sympathetic attitude to the reality without us which makes us seem to enter into it, to be one with it, to live with it. It is in contrast to the defiant attitude we seem to assume when in science we treat facts and things as outside, external, discrete existences, which we arrange, analyse, discriminate, break up and recombine' (Carr 59).

Lawrence is scathing with regard to the modern scorn for the ancients, calling the modern view of our ancestors childish and shallow:

> It is puerile to deny the age and the greatness of the three river civilisations, with their intermediary cultures in Persia or Iran, and in the Aegean, Crete or Mycenae. That any of these civilisations could do a sum in long division we do not pretend. They may not even have invented the wheel-barrow. A modern child of ten could lick them hollow in arithmetic, geometry, or even, maybe,

[375] This is the second of two references to the idea in the foreword. The first is: 'the great pagan world of which Egypt and Greece were the last living terms, had its own perfect *subjective* science' (PFU 63:1).

> astronomy. And what of it? What of it? Because they lacked our modern mental and mechanical attainments, were they any less 'civilised' or 'cultured', the Egyptians and the Chaldeans, the Cretans and the Persians and the Hindus of the Indus, than we are? (A90:8)

We have 'no depth to our consciousness' he remarks in *Apocalypse* (A 90:31), observing that describing ancient civilisations as *Urdummheit* (primal stupidity), in the way that a famous German Professor had done (A 87:25),[376] seems to betray some kind of repressed fear, as if they needed an enemy to justify their own existence: 'it is as if Christianity and ethnological science alike could not exist unless they had an opposite, an Antichrist or an Urdummheit, for an offset' (A 89:21). For Lawrence, it ultimately boils down to a basic fear of alterity: 'the Antichrist and the Urdummheit are just the fellow who is different from me. Today Antichrist speaks Russian, a hundred years ago he spoke French, tomorrow he may speak cockney or the Glasgow brogue. As for Urdummheit, he speaks any language that isn't Oxford or Harvard or an obsequious imitation of one of these' (A 89:23).

On the contrary, for Lawrence, the ancients had arrived at a great depth of knowledge based on instinct and intuition, not reason (A91). It was 'knowledge based not on words but on images. The abstraction was not into generalisations or into qualities, but into symbols. And the connection was not logical but emotional. The word "therefore" did not exist' (91:26). Already, in the first version of *Studies in Classic American Literature* (1918), Lawrence states that ancient priests, or the 'initiated' possessed this subjective knowledge—'the rise and movement of the dynamic consciousness in the individual, that which we might call our unconsciousness or sub consciousness, but which is more than these, and which, though in very fact the bulk of our being and knowing, is regarded from our mental standpoint as *nothing*, or nothingness' (SCAL 205).[377] This knowledge was manifested in symbols such as when 'in the Eleusinian mysteries, a golden snake was crowded into the bosom of the postulant, and drawn forth from the lowest part of the body—because there are perhaps no mental terms to express, at least dynamically, that which takes place. But in fact of process the initiation was a piece of most profound scientific exposition' (SCAL 205:24). A similar image recurs in Lawrence's description of the Hopi snake dance in *Mornings in Mexico*, where Lawrence writes, on two

[376] According to the notes of the Cambridge Edition, this was Dr Preuss, quoted by Gilbert Murray in *Five Stages of Greek Religion* (A213).
[377] Again, he notes that the mind as such is nothing more than 'an abstract' from this physical, dynamic consciousness (SCAL 205:22).

occasions, that 'the Indian, like the old Egyptian, seeks to make the conquest from the mystic will within him' (MM 82:34; 85:8).[378] This is just one of many references to the Egyptians in Lawrence's work, who argues in *Studies in Classic American Literature* that 'through the many centuries since Egypt, we have been living and struggling forwards along some road that is no road' (SCAL 127:8).

According to Lachman, the French Egyptologist René Schwaller de Lubicz (1887-1961), who spent years studying the great Pyramid Monuments and other sites, believed that their main purpose was to serve as a compendia of a kind of knowledge that he called 'the intelligence of the heart' (Lachman 52), arguing that the Egyptians saw the world symbolically, as if the world was a text to be interpreted. This world could be read, according to Schwaller through the *symbolique*, meaning an ability to hold different, sometimes contradictory ideas together simultaneously, such that a hieroglyph of a bird stood at the same time for the animal itself, but also had another meaning like the cosmic function of flight: 'with *symbolique* one looked not only at the world, but into it' (Lachman 52). This is exactly the kind of thing Lawrence is getting at, particularly in his most overtly hermeneutic texts like *Apocalypse* and *Sketches of Etruscan Places*. In the latter particularly, the double meaning of the symbol constitutes an important element: 'the Etruscan religion, surely, was never anthropomorphic: that is, whatever gods it contained were not *beings*, but symbols of elemental powers, just symbols: as was the case earlier in Egypt' (SEP 122:25).[379] As we saw in Chapter 1, in his conversation with the young German, who is the very incarnation of Lawrence's conception of modernity, the young scientist is unable to make anything of a lion with a goat's head springing backwards from its shoulders, whereas Lawrence says 'it must mean something' (SCAL 122:9), just as the dolphin leaping from the water, or the diver leaping into the sea, must represent the emergence or the return into the chaos of the non-phenomenal world, and the *Tomb of the Augurs* cannot, for Lawrence, be



Figure 9: Tomb of the Augurs

[378] In *Fantasia of the Unconscious* he writes: 'we call our way the objective, the Egyptian the subjective. But objective and subjective are words that depend absolutely on your starting point. Spiritual and sensual are much more descriptive terms' (PFU 103:13).

[379] See also: 'with the Egyptians and Babylonians and Etruscans, strictly there were no personal gods. There were only idols or symbols' (SEP 58:11).

simply a historical depiction of Etruscan sports, but must necessarily mean something more, the dog (or possibly a wolf or a lion, Lawrence thinks) biting the man's thighs must symbolize 'the dogs of disease and death, biting at the great arteries of the thigh, where the elementary life surges in a man' (SEP 127:17).[380] To the Etruscan, Lawrence argues, the human being 'was a bull or a ram, a lion or a deer, according to his different aspects and potencies. The human being had in his veins the blood of the wings of birds and the venom of serpents' (SEP 122:40).

Lawrence advocates, therefore, a more engaged physical involvement with the surrounding world, acts of attention, which he calls *knowing in full*: 'conscience is the being's consciousness, when the individual is conscious *in toto*, when he knows in full. It is something which includes and which far surpasses mental consciousness' (PFU 155:5). Lachman gives the example of Goethe who, before leaving Strasbourg, mentioned to some friends that the tower of the cathedral was in fact incomplete, and made a sketch of what he thought it would have looked like if the original design had been fully realised. When Goethe's hypothesis was confirmed by some friends, he said to them that the tower itself had told him, saying: 'I observed it so long and so attentively and I bestowed on it so much affection that it decided at the end to reveal to me its manifest secret' (Lachman 60). Goethe 'told Schiller that "perhaps there was still the possibility of another method, one which would not tackle nature by merely dissecting and particularising, but show her at work and alive, *manifesting herself in her wholeness in every single part of her being*"' (Lachman 64). This approach, which is effectively an unscientific one, resembles what Lawrence means by knowing in full. It does not mean knowing *everything* (which is impossible), instead it means being fully engaged, in what for Lawrence is a 'religious' sense, in a relationship with an 'object'. Knowing in this way by achieving a kind of mutual relationship with the object by an act of attention is totally opposed to the possessive kind of knowledge Lawrence criticizes in Poe: 'the unspeakable craving of those whose souls are arrested, to gain mastery over the world through knowledge […] to possess the world in deliberate, scientific knowledge, this is one of the cravings of the unrebuked human heart. It cannot be done' (SCAL 233:2).[381] Thus, a more intuitive form of knowledge implies being rather than having: 'we can only know in full when we *are* in full. In

[380] In 'Morality and the Novel' he wites: 'we say an Assyrian lion or an Egyptian hawk's head "lives". What we really mean is that it is beyond life, and therefore beyond death. It gives us that feeling. And there is something inside us which must also be beyond life and beyond death, since that "feeling" which we get from an Assyrian lion or an Egyptian hawk's head is so infinitely precious to us' (STH 171:34).

[381] Note that Lawrence is criticizing Poe for being in the having mode, rather than the being mode. His mental desire 'to analyse and possess and know the secret of the soul, the living self' is 'the supreme lust of possession' (SCAL 232:29).

the fullness of our own being we are at one with the mystery; in the deepest and most beautiful sense we know it' (SCAL 233:6). As Lawrence writes in *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*, 'all the best part of knowledge is inconceivable. We know the sun. But we cannot conceive the sun, unless we are willing to accept some theory of burning gases, some cause-and-effect nonsense' (PFU 17:27). Hence it is that Lawrence believes ancient knowledge might help us find meaning once more in our lives. In *Apocalypse* he writes: 'men were not fools for so doing. Men are far more fools today, for stripping themselves of their emotional and imaginative reactions, and feeling nothing. The price we pay is boredom and deadness' (A 92:28).

8.2.2 Revelation: 'my life draws strength from the depths of the universe'

It is now clear that the clue described in the phrase we encountered earlier from the essay 'Aristocracy', 'the clue hidden, as it is always hidden, in every revelation', is the *Central Mystery*, the miracle of life itself, or as Lawrence also frequently calls it, 'the Holy Ghost'.[382] It is this disclosure of the creative mystery that constitutes truth itself, not truth conditioned by human criteria of right and wrong, correctness and incorrectness,[383] but truth as the revelation of the central mystery of being. According to Heidegger, this was the primary meaning of the Greek word for truth *aletheia (*ἀλήθεια*),* which he re-interpreted as signifying revelation, or 'unconcealing'. It is, in other words, disclosure of the truth of the world-in-itself. This being is revealed in all living things, as Lawrence makes clear in 'Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine': 'the torch of revelation is handed on, by every living thing, from the protococcus to a brave man or a beautiful woman, handed to whomsoever can take it. He who can take it, has power beyond all the rest' (RDP 362:1). Those who are most capable of perceiving the revelation of this Holy Ghost are described by Lawrence in 'Aristocracy', on the other hand, as saviours: 'he who comes to make a new revelation, a new connection, whether he be soldier, statesman, poet, philosopher, artist, he is a saviour' (RDP 370:15).

Every day, the creative mystery reveals itself in the body too. As Lawrence notes in the essay on Hawthorne's *Blithedale Romance*, 'the Holy Ghost is within you. The Holy Ghost *is* you: your very YOU' (SCAL 98:13). This Holy Ghost is of the fourth dimension, which is why it 'has its own deep prescience, which will not be put into figures, but flows on dark, a stream

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[382] In 'Introduction to Pictures' (1928), Lawrence is more critical of this term: 'it is difficult to know what name to give to that most central and vital clue to the human being, which clinches him into integrity. The best is to call it his vital sanity. We thus escape the rather nauseating emotional suggestions of words like soul and spirit and holy ghost' (LEA 169:36).

[383] In philosophy, this is known as the correspondence theory of truth: truth occurs when there is correspondence between a statement and a certain state of affairs.

of prescience' (SCAL 103:17). Revering this revelation of the Holy Ghost means accepting that it will never be quite fully known, that it 'will never be anything but a ghost' (103:21); the second is 'the watchful observance of the motions, the comings and goings within us, of the Holy Ghost, and of the many gods that make up the Holy Ghost' (103:25). As we saw earlier, the body emerges from the chaos, and returns to it at death. Death, then, is also part of our existence, and must be accepted. This is the message of 'The Crown', where over the course of only a few pages, Lawrence employs the term *revelation* well over a dozen times. The human body 'is a revelation of God, it is the foam-burst of the two waves, it is the iris of the two eternities' (RDP 301:25). And yet, Lawrence points out (surely thinking of the scene in Book 7 of Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov* where the monks are shocked by the decomposition of Father Zossima's body): 'we cannot bear it, that the body should decay. We cover it up, we cannot bear it. It is the revelation of God, it is the most holy of all revealed things. And it melts into slow putrescence' (RDP 301:35). [384] The body then, is the locus for the momentary revelation of the timeless fourth dimension:

> It is we who pass away, we and the whole flux of the two eternities, these pass. This is the eternal flux. But the God-quick, which is the constant within the flux, this is neither temporal nor eternal, it is truly timeless. And this perfect body was a revelation of the timeless God, timeless as He. (RDP 302:3)

Thus, each revelation is a fresh glimpse of the fourth dimension, which needs to be continually conquered anew: 'Only in the other dimension, which is not the time-space dimension, is there Heaven. We can no more *stay* in this heaven, than the flower can stay on its stem. We come and go' (RDP 304:7).

In *Study of Thomas Hardy*, Egdon Heath in Hardy's *Return of the Native*, represents this mystery which is so much mightier than people themselves:

> This is a constant revelation in Hardy's novels: that there exists a great background, vital and vivid, which matters more than the people who move upon it. Against the background of dark, passionate Egdon, of the leafy, sappy passion and sentiment of the woodlands, of the unfathomed stars, is drawn the lesser scheme of lives […] Upon the vast, incomprehensible pattern of some primal morality greater than ever the human mind can grasp, is drawn the little,

[384] Lawrence also refers earlier in the essay to this particular Dostoevsky novel (RDP 282).

> pathetic pattern of man's moral life and struggle, pathetic, almost ridiculous. (STH 28:34)

Against this background, each revelation is a kind of conquest since 'with the kindling from the torch of revelation comes the inrush of vitality' (RDP 362:13). The aim of life, as he puts it in a later article, 'The Real Thing' (1929) is:

> … the sense that, even if I am sick and ill, I am alive, alive to the depths of my soul, and in touch somewhere in touch with the vivid life of the cosmos. Somehow my life draws strength from the depths of the universe, from the depths among the stars, from the great "world". Out of the great world comes my strength and my reassurance. One could say "God," but the word "God" is somehow tainted. But there *is* a flame or a Life Everlasting wreathing through the cosmos for ever and giving us our renewal, once we can get in touch with it (LEA 310:5)

We can, as he points out in the quotation above, draw strength from the universe when we get in touch with the mystery—a mystery which is most clearly seen in the blossoming stage of beings, when they reached teleological fullness: 'if we want to be dazzled with revelation, look at a mature tree in full blossom, a mature stallion in the full pride of spring. Look at a man or a woman in the magnificence of their full-grown powers' (RDP 117:36). In Lawrence's thinking the individual, society and the world as a whole are all inextricably intertwined since the same instinctive life source which heaves up from the primitive earth—symbolized in *Study of Thomas Hardy* by Egdon Heath (STH 25)—is also manifested in the individual as the 'passionate purpose that issued him out of the earth into being' (STH 25:29). But by losing contact with this revelation of being, man has lost power.

8.2.3 Deleuze, Spinoza and Lawrence

In this section, I wish to briefly look at the relationship between Lawrence and Gilles Deleuze. Spinoza's philosophy, as Deleuze shows, has much in common with Lawrence's as it is premised on the idea that the way to ultimate freedom is via a kind of communion with an impersonal God, the eternal.[385] Deleuze knew Lawrence particularly well as his wife Fanny

[385] Lawrence may not have read Spinoza. Although he does directly quote him (in Latin) in *Study of Thomas Hardy*, the quote he gives is to be found in Schopenhauer's essay 'The Metaphysics of Love', which is, therefore, the most likely source. Nonetheless, as Deleuze demonstrated in his lectures on Spinoza (to be discussed shortly), he and Lawrence have many ideas in common. It is not impossible that Lawrence had read his work (Jessie

translated Lawrence, and Deleuze himself wrote the introduction to her translation of *Apocalypse*. During his *Lectures on Spinoza at Vincennes*, which I discuss here, Deleuze explicitly refers to Lawrence's non-fictional writings in order to illustrate and elucidate Spinoza's three types of knowledge. Alain Madelrieux argues in 'Pluralism without Pragmatism' that Deleuze himself can be seen as a kind of latter-day pluralist who, like Lawrence (whether directly or indirectly), owed a lot to William James, Henri Bergson and Spinoza (Madelrieux). Accordingly, it might be said that Deleuze and Lawrence belong to a similar intellectual lineage. Both Deleuze and Lawrence (though probably indirectly in Lawrence's case), were indebted to Spinoza. It is possible to argue, too, that Lawrence had a significant impact on Deleuze (and Guattari) himself. Indeed, Anneleen Masschelein has convincingly demonstrated that Lawrence 'is a consistent reference in their work from the 1970s onwards' (Masschelein 23) and noting that 'the curious way Deleuze and Guattari paraphrase Lawrence's minor texts, especially the essays, betrays a great familiarity' (Masschelein 23). Deleuze, she writes, 'casts Lawrence as a direct heir of Nietzsche and Spinoza' (Masschelein 23). Likewise, in a review of the French translation of *Apocalypse* Jonathan Pollock finds it logical that Deleuze should have been interested in Lawrence's description of the rotative nature of ancient thought, likening it to Deleuze's idea of the *rhizomatic* and *deterritorialization* (Pollock, L'Apocalypse selon D. H. Lawrence).

Spinoza's three kinds of knowledge are as follows: the first type (*cognitio primi generis*) is inadequate knowledge, the knowledge of the common man. The second type (*cognitio secundi generis*) implies an adequate understanding of the properties of things and is described by Deleuze as knowledge of the relationships between things, and hence of causes. The third type, (*scientia intuitiva*), as its Latin name suggests, and which might be likened to Lawrence's *subjective science*, is of a somewhat different nature; intuitive knowledge or knowledge of essences (Spinoza V, 20) (Deleuze, Deleuze-Spinoza Vincennes).[386] These categories do coincide with the framework of Lawrence's thought, and it is precisely for this reason that Deleuze chose him to illustrate his remarks.[387] Deleuze interprets Spinoza as saying that the first type of knowledge is actually an illusory (inadequate) 'knowledge', consisting of confused notions, perhaps more accurately characterized as *doxa*, mere opinion, because we

Chambers said he had read very widely), and some of Lawrence's ideas are very similar to Spinoza's, as we will see.

[386] All references in this section are to Spinoza's *Ethics*; in keeping with the philosophical convention, references given are to the book (Parts 1 to 5), and to the particular propositions contained within them.

[387] According to Deleuze, these types of knowledge also correspond to particular modes of being or ways of life, so that, in other words, knowledge also implies knowing how to live.

are failing to perceive all the interrelations between things, objects and the universe as a whole. For Deleuze, Spinoza's first type of knowledge consists in merely registering the effect of what happens to us, being passively reduced to a mere awareness of the event, and condemned to suffer from effects whose laws escapes us. It means we have falsified the nature of the world in a manner that does not allow us to live authentically as a part of the whole. In the appendix to part 1 of *Ethics,* Spinoza demonstrates how human prejudices, their notion of the world and of God, for example, come from purely human concerns. Man assumes that all natural things are like him; in seeking things useful to him he comes to believe that things have been put there for him, and as a result, the final causes we believe in are merely the convenient fabrications of mankind. Furthermore, for Deleuze, the first type of knowledge—inadequate knowledge—is when we perceive something *in opposition to* ourselves, rather than seeing it *in relation to* ourselves.

By contrast, Deleuze interprets Spinoza's second type of knowledge as being genuine knowledge of relationships. The example Deleuze gives is that of a child in the sea: with the first kind it merely experiences the *effects* of the wave, it might, for instance, complain that the wave has hurt him. With the second type it now knows how to compose with the wave, to get into relation with it. Another example given by Deleuze, which is no doubt inspired by Lawrence, is that of the sun: either we simply feel the *effect* of the sun's warmth on us, meaning a dissociation between the sun and the person; or there is some kind of a relationship between the sun and the person. This latter kind of knowledge is superior, and is what Deleuze calls (in his Spinoza lectures) the idea of communion.

Spinoza's third type of knowledge is the knowledge of eternal essences and he famously turned to the idea of eternity with the phrase, 'And thus I have done with all that regards this present life' (Spinoza V, 20, Scolie). Spinoza had taken care to point out that men commonly confuse eternity with immortality (duration), (Spinoza V, 34, Scolie) and explained that the third type of knowledge gives rise to 'a love of what is immutable and eternal' (Spinoza V, 15). This is why Spinoza famously wrote that, 'we *sense and experience* that we are eternal' (my italics) and states that 'the greatest endeavour of the mind and its greatest virtue is to understand things by the third kind of knowledge' (Spinoza V, 25). Discussing what Spinoza could mean when he states that we sense and experience that we are eternal, Deleuze writes as follows:

> It's much later in 19th Century English literature that you find a sort of Spinozism of this type—eternity, a kind of active experiencing of eternity. And bizarrely, also

> linked to the idea of intensity; as if I could only experience eternity as a form of intensity. It's a frequent theme for authors who, as a matter of fact, don't seem to be all that far from Spinoza, even if they didn't know it, like Lawrence... (Deleuze, Deleuze-Spinoza Vincennes 109)[388]

It is therefore no accident that Lawrence's language takes on a particularly biblical tone when he describes these kinds of revelations: 'our souls are established upon all the revelations, upon all the timeless achieved relationships, as the seed contains a convoluted memory of all the revelation in the plant it represents. The flower is the burning of God in the bush: the flame of the Holy Ghost: the actual Presence of accomplished oneness, accomplished out of twoness' (RDP 302:40).

As Deleuze points out in *Spinoza: Philosophie pratique,* the two types of knowledge are closely related: the third type of knowledge finds in the second a *causa fiendi*; there is only a difference in nature. It is the idea of God that takes us from one to the other (Deleuze, Spinoza: Philosophie pratique 78). Lawrence would certainly have agreed with Spinoza that, 'the more we understand particular things, the more we understand God' (Spinoza V, 24). For both Lawrence and Spinoza, there exists a sort of eternity which we sense and experience, derived from an intuitive knowledge of the essence of particular things. The final part of Spinoza's *Ethics* is dedicated to attaining beatitude through exactly this kind of intuitive knowledge. Thus, the similarities with Spinoza are striking, going a long way towards explaining why Deleuze uses Lawrence to exemplify this third type of knowledge.

Deleuze's examples appear to be predominantly drawn from *Apocalypse*. For example, in his example of the first kind of knowledge Deleuze uses the example of people on a beach, whose understanding is limited to simply liking the feeling of the sun upon their skin (Deleuze, Deleuze-Spinoza Vincennes 126), and in *Apocalypse*, we find Lawrence writing, 'we can't get the sun by lying naked like pigs on a beach. The very sun that is bronzing us is inwardly disintegrating us—as we know later […] we can only get the sun by a sort of worship' (A 78:28). With the second type of knowledge, according to Deleuze, one has already acquired a sort of knowledge of the sun, a practical understanding of its relationship to the body, like a painter (Van Gogh, Cezanne) changing the position of their easels as the angle of the sun changes. Here, there is a relationship with the sun, one, he says, which would have seemed

[388] To my knowledge, no official translation exists of Deleuze's lectures on Spinoza. All the translations are, therefore, my own.

crazy with the first type of relationship. It is the idea that one has a certain affinity with the sun, that one is almost part of it, that there is a kind of communion with the sun (Deleuze, Deleuze-Spinoza Vincennes 126). This is the idea of communion we find in Lawrence when he writes: 'who says the sun cannot speak to me! The sun has a great blazing consciousness, and I have a little blazing consciousness. When I can strip myself of the trash of personal feelings and ideas, and get down to my naked sun-self, then the sun and I can commune by the hour, the blazing interchange and he gives me life, sun-life, and I send him a little new brightness from the world of the bright blood' (A 76:35). Finally, for Deleuze, the third type of knowledge is something more like a mystical union with the sun. Van Gogh, he says, had the impression that there was a beyond, which he was unable to convey (Deleuze, Deleuze-Spinoza Vincennes 127). And, as we have seen, this is indeed what Lawrence says in the first version of 'Morality and the Novel' (1925), when he writes: 'Van Gogh's painting is as it were, the offspring of himself and the flower itself. It is a third thing: the human soul, or spirit, or consciousness (using this to mean the unrealised consciousness) fused and consummated with some object that is not himself. A painting of sunflowers—by Van Gogh at least—is […] a reality in the fourth dimension' (STH 241:8). Deleuze concludes that: 'with this kind of knowledge we can literally say that God is the sun', and that 'I am God' (Deleuze, Deleuze-Spinoza Vincennes 127). Lawrence, he claims, develops his texts around this kind of identification between 'his individual essence, the essence of the sun and the essence of the world' (Deleuze, Deleuze-Spinoza Vincennes 127). It is in this sense that Lawrence is able to say: 'I am part of the sun as my eye is part of me'. In other words, what unites one with the other is God, or to be more precise, life itself. In the final analysis, it is the affinity between Spinoza's views and Lawrence's that renders Deleuze's examples particularly illuminating.

8.3 Freedom

Man 'wearies for his own limitless being, for the unresolved, quivering, infinitely complex and indefinite movement of living, *he wants to be free'* (STH 35:28, italics mine). The extent to which freedom lies at the very heart of Lawrence's thought has hitherto received relatively little attention from critics,[389] somewhat surprisingly given the numerous references to freedom that are to be found in his non-fictional works, such as this one in *Study of Thomas Hardy*: 'and this is why man is always crying out for freedom, to be free. He wants to be free to be himself'

[389] With the notable exceptions of Daniel Schneider on Lawrence's battle for personal freedom (see chapter 1), and more particularly, Paul Poplawski's *Promptings of Desire* which also evokes the notions of positive and negative freedom developed hereafter.

(STH 35:15). Lawrence even writes in the Epilogue of *Fantasia of the Unconscious* (mentioned in the introduction) of a planned future volume: 'I've got another volume up my sleeve, and after a year or two years, when I have shaken it down my sleeve, *I shall bring it and lay it at the foot of your Liberty statue*, oh Columbia, as I do this one' (PFU 201:8, my italics).[390] Furthermore, he made it clear that freedom was a major goal of *Rananim* (the name of the future society he hoped could be founded with a few like-minded friends), writing to Lady Ottoline Morrel that 'this shall be the new hope: that there shall be a life wherein the struggle shall not be for money or for power, but *for individual freedom* and common effort towards good' (2L 272, my italics).

Yet, Lawrence's conception of freedom is strikingly different to the kind of meaning ordinarily attached to it, as a simple glance at these seemingly paradoxical, or idiosyncratic statements makes clear:

- 'Men are less free than they imagine; ah, far less free! The freest are perhaps the least free' (SCAL 17:31).
- 'Men are only free when they are doing what the deepest self likes' (SCAL 18:3).
- 'Only a slave would take the trouble to shout: *I am free!*' (RDP 345).
- 'For to be free is to be myself and I am only really myself when desire is flowing from me, and being consummated with creation' (RDP 345).
- 'How can any man be free, without an illimitable background?' (SCAL 28:29).
- '…there is no freedom in isolation. If I deny my connections then I am wretched' (A 149).
- 'Freedom lies in the honourable yielding towards the new flame' (RDP 362:16).
- 'In astronomical space, one can only move, one cannot *be*. In the astrological heavens […] the whole man is set free' (A 46:12).

In this section, I hope to show that Lawrence's conception of freedom becomes far easier to understand if it is inserted into the context of his thought as a whole.

8.3.1 Positive and negative conceptions of freedom

A useful starting point is the philosophical distinction between *negative* conceptions of freedom and *positive* conceptions of freedom, a distinction which, though it is often attributed to Isaiah Berlin, considerably predates the latter's essay *Two Concepts of Liberty*. Berlin

[390] The third volume of psychology was never written.

defines *negative* liberty by stating that, 'I am normally said to be free to the degree to which no man or body of men interferes with my activity […] if I am prevented by others from doing what I would otherwise do, I am to that degree unfree' (Berlin, 1969, 122). This is the most traditional conception of freedom, signifying freedom from external impediments (for example, we are free when we have not been put in prison, when we are able to say what we like, when we are not subject to tyranny or oppression).[391] Historically all the emphasis has been laid on defeating the old forms of authority, namely arbitrary power, religious intolerance, censorship, unequal rights, and so on. Nonetheless, there are obvious examples of people who are not really free, even if they are not actually prevented from doing what they want, such as alcoholics, drug addicts, insane people and so on, all of whom are clearly not fully free to determine their actions. Other cases can be less obvious, since we may not be aware of the extent to which we may be trapped by social, cultural or internal beliefs. As we have seen, this clearly fits with Lawrence's ideas about the entrapment of mankind, and it is in part a criticism of this conception which Lawrence is expressing in *Studies in Classic American Literature*: 'men are not free when they are doing just what they like' (SCAL 18). *Positive* conceptions of freedom, therefore, argue that to be free it is not enough to have freedom *from* (negative), we also need freedom *to* (positive).[392] Freeing people involves much more than removing external obstacles, as Erich Fromm expresses eloquently in *The Fear of Freedom*:

> What then is the meaning of freedom for modern man? He has become free from the external bonds that would prevent him doing and thinking as he sees fit. He would be free to act according to his own will, if he knew what he wanted, thought and felt. But he does not know. He conforms to anonymous authorities and adopts a self which is not his. The more he does this, the more powerless he feels, the more is he forced to conform. (Fromm, The Fear of Freedom 220)

Thus, the fact that nothing prevents us from doing what we want to do does not automatically entail freedom: a whole host of internalized factors may limit peoples' freedom, for we are, as

[391] The modern understanding of freedom tends to be reduced to the Liberal tradition of the 18th and 19th century (Charbonneau 2021). Earlier definitions (like those of Helvetius) defined being free in purely negative terms, viz. not being in chains, not being in prison, not being terrorized into doing something against one's will.

[392] Berlin's understanding of positive liberty is, however, very different from Lawrence's. Berlin asserts that: 'the "positive" sense of the word 'liberty' derives from the wish on the part of the individual to be his own master. I wish my life and decisions to depend on myself, not on external forces of whatever kind. I wish to be the instrument of my own, not of other men's acts of will. I wish to be a subject, not an object; to be moved by reasons, by conscious purposes, which are my own, not by causes which affect me, as it were, from outside' (Berlin 131). Lawrence's understanding of positive freedom is that it does indeed come from the outside.

Lawrence writes as mentioned in chapter 1, creatures of 'beliefs and of foregone conclusions' (RDP 114:36). Images of entrapment and imprisonment abound in Lawrence's non-fiction—because whilst we may have freed ourselves from traditional tyrannies we have fallen into new ones. The war, Lawrence asserts in *Study of Thomas Hardy,* was really not a war for negative freedom as everyone thought, but a war to free mankind from its self-imposed constraints: 'it is no war for the freedom of man from militarism or the Prussian yoke; it is a war for freedom of the bonds of our own cowardice and sluggish greed of security and well-being; it is a fight to regain ourselves' (STH 16:26). Like a seed which grows into the final form which is its destiny, individual freedom can be seen as fulfilment of one's potential.[393] Indeed, this should be, as Lawrence points out, the real role of *education*: 'the process of transfer from primary consciousness is called sublimation, the sublimating of the potential body of knowledge with the definite reality of the idea. And with this process we have identified all education. The very derivation of the Latin word *education* shows us. Of course it should mean the leading forth of each nature to its fullness' (PFU 106:18).

According to Fromm, we rejoice in the fact that external authorities no longer tell us what to do but neglect the fact that anonymous authorities like public opinion and common sense make us conform:

> We are fascinated by the growth of freedom from powers *outside* ourselves and are blinded to the fact of *inner* restraints, compulsions and fears, which tend to undermine the meaning of the victories freedom has won against its traditional enemies. We therefore are prone to think that the problem of freedom is of gaining still more freedom of the kind we have gained in the course of modern human history is all that is necessary. We forget that although each of the liberties which have been won must be defended with utmost vigour, the problem of freedom is not only a quantitative one but a qualitative one… (Fromm , The Fear of Freedom 91)

Thus, positive freedom is a question of becoming what one really is, which means liberating oneself from internal rather than external constraints. If we realise that the having mode, self-preservation, is not the final goal of life, it may be, suggests Lawrence in *Study of Thomas*

[393] The term 'liberty' is etymologically derived from the Roman God *Liber* (the god of germination, of wine, of fertility, and as such closely related to the God Bacchus, or Dionysus in Greek).

Hardy, that this, 'will free us, perhaps, from the bushel we cower under, from the paucity of our lives, from the cowardice that will not let us *be*' (STH 17:5, Lawrence's italics).

As we saw, the final lines of *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* confirm that Lawrence's view of freedom was a *positive* one: Lawrence believes that the liberation from internal constraints is of vital importance for the future of humanity: 'there is so much to know, and every step of the progress in knowledge is a death to the human idealism which governs us now so ruthlessly and vilely. It must die, and we *will* break free. But what tyranny is so hideous as that of an automatically ideal humanity?' (PFU 43:37). One clear indication that Lawrence knows of and applies these distinctions is that he actually employs them. For instance, he uses the term in 'Chaos in Poetry':

> A long course of *merely negative 'freedom*' reduces the soul and body both to numbness. They can feel no more and respond no more. Only the mind remains awake, and suffers keenly from the sense of nullity; to be young, and to feel you have every 'opportunity', every 'freedom' to live, and yet not to be able to live, because the responses have gone numb in the body and soul, this is the nemesis that is overtaking the young. It drives them silly. (IR 116:23, my italics)

Lawrence is clearly suggesting that such a freedom is at least partly responsible for the nihilistic meaninglessness he felt was plaguing society. Furthermore, he directly employs the term 'positive freedom' in the opening essay of *Studies in Classic American Literature*—a book which, as we will see, is particularly concerned with the issue of freedom—when discussing why the first settlers came to North America: 'they didn't come for freedom. Or if they did, they sadly went back on themselves. All right then, what did they come for? For lots of reasons. Perhaps least of all in search of freedom of any sort: *positive freedom, that is*' (SCAL 15:12, my italics).

In other words, freedom requires another attitude to the world, as well as the awareness, as Lawrence writes towards the end of 'Aristocracy', that 'our universe is not much more than a mannerism with us now. If we break through, we shall find, that man is not man, as he seems to be, nor woman woman. The present seeming is a ridiculous travesty' (RDP 306:1), and that, as he writes in 'Pornography and Obscenity' (1929):

> Freedom is a very great reality. But it means, above all things, freedom from lies. It is first, freedom from myself, from the lie of myself, from the lie of my all-importance, even to myself; it is freedom from the self-conscious masturbating thing I am, self-enclosed. And second, freedom from the vast lie of the social world… (LEA 251:9)

For Lawrence, therefore, positive freedom means freedom from lies. A great part of Lawrence's non-fiction is dedicated to exposing the false ideals (work, money, education, social roles, ideas, abstractions), which must be understood and mastered before man can be liberated. As Lawrence makes clear in 'The Crown', our actions are often false, we act according to false representations—to such an extent that we can even accept dying for them in times of war ('But we must always lie, always convert our action to a lie. We know that we are living in a state of falsity, that all our social and religious form is dead, a crystallised lie. Yet we say: "We will die for our social and religious form"' (RDP 305:15)). To liberate their true selves, people must first realize they are trapped.

8.3.2 Lawrence and America: 'The land of the free'

Studies in Classic American Literature itself is so full of references to freedom that it is possible to make the case that Lawrence was more interested in American freedom than in American literature. The various versions of *Studies in Classic American Literature* show, if anything, that Lawrence becomes more and more interested in freedom (as the number of references increase). Yet even in the earlier version (1918-1919), it clearly constitutes the main driving force behind the project: 'I, being what I am, salute you, Whitman, before any other man, because I owe the last strides into freedom to you. And in saluting you, I salute your great America' (SCAL 369:13). Whitman's greatness, in other terms, is due to the fact that his unconscious project is ultimately about liberating the American people: 'it is obvious that Whitman's Democracy is not merely a political system, or a system of government—or even a social system. It is an attempt to conceive a new way of life, to establish new values. *It is a struggle to liberate human beings* from the fixed, arbitrary control of ideals, into free spontaneity' (RDP 78:8, my italics).

Lawrence is particularly scathing about the American model of negative freedom, which he describes as 'their bullying, detestable negative creed of liberty and democracy' (4L 226). In *Studies in Classic American Literature*, he exclaims: 'the land of the free! This is the land of the free! Why, if I say anything that displeases them, the free mob will lynch me, and

that's my freedom. Free? Why I have never been in any country where the individual has such an abject fear of his fellow countrymen' (SCAL 15). Furthermore, it has become a world dominated by the principle of competition in which people fruitlessly divert all their energies, their will, into getting ahead of one another.[394] As a result, Lawrence flatly denies that America is the land of the free:

> And now look at America, tangled in her own barbed wire, and mastered by her own machines. Absolutely got down by her own barbed wire of shalt-nots, and shut up fast in her own "productive" machines like millions of squirrels running in millions of cages. It is just a farce. (SCAL 30:39)

Lawrence makes all this abundantly clear in a letter to Frieda's sister Elsa, but the letter is interesting, too, for the way it shows how Lawrence's criticisms of American freedom are intimately bound up with some of the most dominant themes of Lawrence's thought:

> Frieda, like you, always secretly hankered after America and its freedom, its very freedom not to feel. But now she is just beginning to taste the iron ugliness of what it means to live by will *against* the spontaneous inner life, superimposing the individual, egoistic will over the real genuine sacred life. Of course I know you will jeer when I say there is such a thing as sacred spontaneous inner life, with its pride and its sacred power. I know you too believe in the screwed-up human will *dominating* human life. But I don't. And that's why I think America is neither free nor brave, but a land of tight, iron-clanking little wills, everybody trying to put it over everyone else, and a land of men absolutely devoid of the real courage of trust, trust in life's sacred spontaneity. They can't trust life until they can *control* it. So much for them – cowards! You can have the Land of the free – as much as I know of it. In the spring I want to come back to Europe. (Letter to Else, *Not I, But the Wind* 138)

Thus, here, once again, we find the same opposition between spontaneous living and the human desire to subjugate and control life.

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[394] See Hartmut Rosa, *Alienation and Acceleration* (2010) on the pressure created by the forces of competition, 'social acceleration in general and technological acceleration in particular are a logical consequence of the competitive capitalist market system' (Rosa, Alienation and Acceleration: Towards a Critical Theory of Late-Modern Temporality 27).

Unsurprisingly, Lawrence's view of freedom is also linked to his pluralistic views, which is to say that freedom requires us to recognise one's individuality without denying the fact that one is always in relation with others. People need connections with others because there can be no genuine freedom without this contact: '*we cannot bear connection*. That is our malady. We *must* break away and be isolate. We call that free, being individual. Beyond a certain point, it is suicide. Perhaps we have chosen suicide' (A 149). But on the other hand, it is also impossible to be free if everyone is treated alike. For Lawrence, democracy is an attempt to impose through laws, institutions and conventions a model which does not correspond to the real nature of man—according to democracy we are only 'free in as far as we are all alike' (RDP 341). Lawrence's fundamental objection to American democracy is that it tries to impose a norm on people who are fundamentally dissimilar: 'by turning ourselves into integers: every man to himself and every woman to herself a Number One; an infinite number of number Ones; we have destroyed ourselves as desirous or desirable individuals' (RDP 341:17). In other words, it treats people quantitatively, rather than qualitatively. Thus, in the essay 'Love' he writes:

> How can there be liberty when I am not free to be other than fraternal and equal? I must be free to be separate and unequal in the finest sense if I am to be free. *Fraternité* and *égalité*, these are tyrannies of tyrannies. (RDP 11:39)

Related to this first point is his criticism of the idea of perfectibility which was discussed in chapter three,[395] and which he develops most clearly in the essay 'Democracy'. Perfectibility, for Lawrence, is the presupposition that there exists a kind of perfect human being to which one might aspire, and which is promoted by modern democracies; a model which traps us into conforming to a certain type of paradigm:

> Perfect him quickly: the Average, the Normal, the Man-in-the-Street. He is so many inches high, broad, deep, he weighs so many pounds. He must eat so much, and sleep so much, and work so much, and play so much, and love so much, and think so much, and argue so much and read so many newspapers and have so many children.

[395] Rousseau first developed this concept in his second treatise. Mankind is unique amongst beings in its capacity to perfect itself through reason. As for Lawrence though, this is not necessarily positive. Rousseau is extremely sceptical about so-called progress. Lawrence uses the word in a different sense to indicate the imposition of an ideal to which we are supposed to aspire.

> Somebody, quick, some Professor of Social Economy draws us up a perfect Average, and let us have him before the middle of next week. (RDP 65:10)

It is obvious from the above description that on the one hand, the concept of the average man is a mere extrapolation (since the average man does not actually exist), and that this model, having once been elaborated in the minds of some men, ends up subjecting all men to a particular ideal.

Lawrence develops the concept of negative freedom in a very interesting fragment included in the appendix of *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine*, called 'Man is essentially a soul …'. Here Lawrence criticizes *negative* freedom—'freedom in the sense of escape from all authority is illusion and disintegration' (RDP 390:11)—and defines freedom, instead, as obeying the soul within: 'obeying his own soul means, to every man, realising that he cannot know his own soul will come at its intimations without help from a purer, stronger being, to whose authority he must submit himself. Yet he only submits because his own soul tells him to. And this is freedom' (RDP 390:7). His reference to negative freedom being 'illusion and disintegration' shows that Lawrence does not ultimately consider it to be meaningful. This is why he asserts in *Studies in Classic American Literature*: 'men are less free than they imagine; ah, far less free! The freest are perhaps the least free' (SCAL 17:31). For Lawrence, freedom can only come from within. Erich Fromm's urgently written book *The Fear of Freedom*, published in 1939, not all that long after Lawrence's death in 1930 made a similar argument. Fromm argued that merely negative freedom had proved insufficient to give people the kind of meaning they needed from life, and freeing mankind from traditional bonds, he argued, had simply 'made the individual more alone and isolated and imbued him with a feeling of insignificance and powerlessness' (Fromm 93). He believed that the Germans, like modern man in general—however well their economic and social life looked on the surface—were actually profoundly dissatisfied. It was this, he believed that had enabled the ascension of Hitler:

> In spite of a veneer of optimism and initiative, modern man is overcome by a profound feeling of powerlessness which makes him gaze towards approaching catastrophes as though he were paralyzed. Looked at superficially, people appear to function well enough in economic and social life; yet it would be dangerous to overlook the deep-seated unhappiness behind that comforting veneer. If life loses its meaning because it is not lived, man becomes desperate (Fromm 220). Fromm describes three self-defence mechanisms against the harmful effects of negative freedom on man's psyche which are remarkably similar to Lawrence's arguments. The

first involves surrendering one's self or merging into a oneness (sacrificing one's individuality),[396] the second is to escape one's feeling of powerlessness by destroying the world, a feeling of *ressentiment* (nihilism). The third is to conform, become an automaton, a pseudo-ego, by suppressing one's feelings and critical thoughts, and the substitution of false desires for true ones; everything becomes instrumentalized (standardization).[397]

8.3.3 Towards a new conception of freedom

According to Spinoza, freedom entails living in accordance with what our essence dictates: 'that thing is said to be FREE (libera) which exists by the mere necessity of its nature and is determined to act by itself alone' (Spinoza I, 7). Fromm describes it, in terms closely aligned with Lawrence's understanding, as follows:

> Positive freedom as the realization of the self implies the full affirmation of the uniqueness of the individual. Men are born equal but they are also different […] The genuine growth of the self is always a growth on this particular basis; it is an organic growth, the unfolding of a nucleus that is peculiar to this one person and only for him. The development of the automaton, in contrast, is not an organic growth. The growth of the basis of the self is blocked and a pseudo self is superimposed upon this self… (Fromm 227)

It is interesting to note, once again, the similarity in the vocabulary Fromm uses with Lawrence's 'pseudo-spontaneous modern living'.[398] Freedom is about liberating ourselves from these false selves and finding our authentic selves. Fromm emphasizes, as Lawrence always does, the way in which our personality may be imposed upon us from without, the fact that it can be a *false self*, in other words, exactly what Lawrence finds in Galsworthy: 'when one reads Mr. Galsworthy's books it seems as if there were not on earth one single human individual. They are all these social beings, positive and negative. *There is not a free soul among them*, not even Pendyce, or June Forsyte. If money does not actively determine their being, it does negatively' (STH 212:16, my italics). Indeed, as a general rule, mankind now

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[396] Fusion of one's self with somebody or something else outside oneself (merging): striving for submission or domination-masochism (self-accusation or self-torture or illness/accidents – provoking closest people to you); sadism (make others dependent—exploiting others—making others suffer physical or mentally); surrendering one's self to become part of a bigger whole—e.g. a person, an institution, God, Nation, conscience, then one feels like one participates in its strength and glory, and is saved from making decisions, from responsibility.

[397] There is a certain similarity here, too, with Kierkegaard's three ways of life.

[398] Charbonneau writes that 'freedom is the self, as long as this self is not a pretend one' (Charbonneau 39).

seems to have become enslaved to industrialism: fear, machines, money and wages, have all come to dominate peoples' minds. Thus, Lawrence frequently criticizes the effect of the monetary system on people, such as in 'The State of Funk' (1929) in which he alludes to 'our social system of money and grab […] The awful fight for money, into which we are all forced, hurts our good nature more than we can bear' (LEA 221:32).

Lawrence ends the first chapter of *Studies in Classic American Literature* with the following statement:

> American consciousness has so far been a false dawn. The negative ideal of democracy. But underneath, and contrary to this open ideal, the first hints and revelations of IT. IT, the American whole soul. You have got to pull the democratic and idealistic clothes off American utterance, and see what you can of the dusky body of IT underneath. (SCAL 19:8)

In Lawrence's successive rewritings of the essay 'The Spirit of Place' in *Studies of Classic American Literature,* he had added into the later version this use of the word IT in capital letters to designate the impersonal self. Calling the inner self the IT is Lawrence's way of emphasizing that it has nothing to do with the self we are aware of; it is our deepest desire, the desire of the body and not what we call the mind. The possibility of liberating America lies with the IT since 'men are only free when they are doing what the deepest self likes' (SCAL 18:3). Which is to say that for Lawrence, if the American people are to be freed, they will need to understand how to liberate themselves from their false selves.

Thus, Lawrence's concept of freedom is also bound up with his theories of relationality. 'How can any man be free, without an illimitable background?' (SCAL 28:29), he asks in *Studies in Classic American Literature*. In a letter discussing his planned contributions to *The Signature* he linked freedom to relationality, writing: 'Murry and I are going to start a little paper, which is to contain his ideas of immediate, personal freedom, what it means for me to feel free in my own soul, when I am alone: and I am to write my ideas of the other, the impersonal freedom, the freedom of me in relation to all the world, me and all the world, a free thing' (2L 389). True freedom comes from the meeting of my desire with the world around, from a kind of communion which leads to a state of peace or blessedness. The deepest feeling in a man, he writes in the essay 'John Galsworthy' is 'the sense of being at one with the great universe-continuum of space-time-life, which is vivid in a great man, and a pure nuclear spark in every man who is still free' (STH 211:34). Hence, Lawrence's attempt to show that an

ultimate kind of freedom can be attained through a communion amongst men and women, and a communion with the cosmos. At the end of *Apocalypse* he affirms that 'the only thing of me that is alone is my mind; the rest is part of the great whole. Hence, there is no freedom in isolation. If I deny my connections then I am wretched' (A 149).

Ultimate freedom comes from the revelation of the fourth dimension in the phenomenal world. Freedom is a kind of state of bliss, or peace: 'heaven, in the perfected relationship, is peace: in the fourth dimension' (RDP 362). In the final passages, on freedom, in Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation*, Schopenhauer asserts that 'in truth, real freedom […] belongs to the will as thing-in-itself, not to its phenomenon' (TWWR 402). Therefore, according to Schopenhauer, 'entrance into freedom is not to be forcibly arrived at by intention or design, but comes from the innermost relation of knowing and willing in man, hence it comes suddenly as if flying in from without' (TWWR 404). Freedom comes from without, from the fourth dimension, not from an act of will, which is why Lawrence criticizes Henley's poem *Invictus* in '…. Love was Once a Little Boy' for claiming, 'I am the master of my fate! / I am the captain of my soul!':

> Only a slave would take the trouble to shout: *I am free!* That is to say in the face of the open heavens. In the face of men, and their institutions and prisons, Yes-yes! But in the face of the open heavens, I would be ashamed to talk about freedom. *(*RDP 345*)*

In other words, it is possible to be free, in the negative conception of the word (from men and their institutions and prisons), but this is not enough for freedom in a positive sense, which only comes from a glimpse of God, of the fourth dimension. This is the reason why, he writes in *Studies in Classic American Literature*, he can't stand Benjamin Franklin, because 'he tries to take away my wholeness and my dark forest, my freedom' (SCAL 28: 27). 'And how can I be free, without gods that come and go' (SCAL 28). Franklin denies the inexplicable, and for Lawrence, without the 'gods, strange gods' that come into the clearing of the known self (SCAL 26:31), there is no real freedom—without this we are trapped in the phenomenal world. 'See all men according to the Holy Ghost that is within them', Lawrence retorts to Benjamin Franklin. Thus, as he writes in 'Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine', freedom is a kind of conquest: 'freedom lies in the honourable yielding towards the new flame' (RDP 362:16). We are part of the cosmos, and if we deny this, we cannot be free, as Lawrence makes clear when he writes: 'We are free only so long as we obey' (SCAL 18).

True freedom is thus only really to be found in the fourth dimension: 'in our whole understanding, when sense and spirit and mind are consummated into pure unison, then we are free in the world of the absolute' (RDP 38:22).[399] This is expressed particularly clearly in Lawrence's introduction to Frederick Carter's *The Dragon of the Apocalypse* where Lawrence writes that 'three-dimensional space is homogeneous and no matter how big it is, it is a kind of prison […] In astronomical space, one can only move, one cannot *be*. In the astrological heavens […] the whole man is set free' (A 46:12). This effort towards ultimate freedom is what Lawrence lyrically calls, 'a strange wild fluttering of freedom: of true freedom, really, an escape to *somewhere*, not an escape to nowhere. An escape from the tight little cage of our universe' (A 76:28). At times, when he is discussing freedom, the vocabulary Lawrence employs is particularly reminiscent of Spinoza's (*peace, bliss, desire, freedom, the absolute*), such as in the wartime essay 'The Reality of Peace'. For Spinoza this kind of freedom can only be achieved due to the fact that 'the mind's intellectual love of God is part of the infinite love with which God loves himself' (Spinoza V 36), and, consequently, that 'the love of God for men and the mind's intellectual love of God is one and the same' (corollary) and thus Spinoza concludes that: 'from this we clearly understand in what consists our salvation, blessedness, or freedom (*nostra salus seu beatitudo, seu libertas*), namely, in the constant and eternal love for God, or in the love of God for men' (Spinoza V, 36. Note).

Thus the ultimate liberation comes from contact with the creative mystery, the fourth dimension, the Holy Ghost. Achieved through our getting to know our true selves, or through a liberation from the world of man's ideas and ideals, a moment of intuitive knowing in full, a sudden revelation. It is this that gives meaning to our lives, and ultimately sets us free. In the early essay 'Life' (1917) Lawrence asks: 'where do I pay homage, whereunto do I yield myself? To the unknown, only to the unknown, the Holy Ghost. I wait for the beginning, when the great and all creative unknown shall take notice of me, shall turn to me and inform me. This is my joy and my delight' (RDP 18:26). This kind of joyful freedom is the basis for what Lawrence believes should be a radically new political system. A democratic system, he argues, merely gives an illusion of freedom, and America, he writes, 'pushed a pin through its body, and on

[399] Schopenhauer states that such an act of knowledge or insight changes man's whole inner nature in such a way that 'a new man, so to speak, actually takes place of the old. For this reason, the Church calls this consequence of the effect of grace *new birth* or *regeneration*' (Schopenhauer 404).

that pin it still flaps and buzzes and twists in misery. The pin of democratic equality. Freedom' (SCAL 49:24). He will try, therefore, to propose something new.

Chapter 9: The Fourth Way: 'there is something I *must* say to mankind…' (2L 302)

9.1 Democracy, Fascism and Socialism

9.1.1 A True Democracy?

In the introduction I mentioned that Lawrence was fascinated by the circularity of thought, and that his entire oeuvre revolves around one basic insight: the idea that only glimpses of the creative mystery could give meaning to one's life. From that starting point Lawrence developed an entire philosophy of every single aspect of life, and proposed a radical revaluation of the way we live our lives. And it is for this reason that Lawrence's thought is eminently political. I propose here, to summarize the various elements of what has been discussed, and to show how Lawrence's political ideas can tie all the loose ends together. Of course, one does not have to agree with Lawrence on every subject to believe, like him, that modernity is in crisis, and one does not have to agree with all his solutions to recognise that his insights still have something to offer us today. As Catherine Brown writes: 'his readers can either take *him* as their Holy Ghost, or alternatively—as many now find easier—follow his example rather than his trajectory, and listen out for the barking of their own Holy Ghost in the wilderness' (Brown 437).

As I have written elsewhere, the crisis we face today is very similar to the crisis faced by Lawrence a hundred years ago (Gupwell), as can be easily seen in this short extract from the epilogue to *Movements in European History*, where Lawrence writes:

> The world is in a bad way. It is in the grip of a hopeless *bassesse,* lowness, commonness. Nations are slowly strangling one another in 'competition'. The cancer of finance spreads through the body of mankind. Individuals are diseased with the same disease. To get money, and to spend money, nothing else remains. And with it goes all the strangling, and the bullying, and the degradation, the sense of humiliation and worthlessness of life, which is the bitterest of all. (MEH 266:28)

In times of crisis, Lawrence writes in *Apocalypse*, we need to return to the old prophetic method of 'the plumbing of a depth, like a whirlpool, of emotional awareness' (A 93:18). When anything important is to be decided: 'we withdraw and ponder and ponder until the deep

emotions are set working and revolving together, revolving, revolving, till a centre is formed and we "know what to do". And the fact that no politician today has the courage to follow this intensive method of "thought" is the reason of the absolute paucity of the political mind today' (A93:32). A complete and radical change in individual consciousness is needed, without which Lawrence believes, our fate will be every bit as bitter as that of the Roman Empire: 'the catastrophes that befell the Roman Empire didn't alter the Romans a bit. They went on just the same, rather as we go on today, having a good time when they could get it, and not caring. Meanwhile Huns, Goths, Vandals, Visigoths, and all the rest wiped them out' (IR 199).

Until recently at least, Lawrence's political views have rarely been taken seriously. Gãmini Salgãdo recalls in his article 'Lawrence as Historian' that, 'Leavis once remarked that we would not go to Lawrence for advice on political action' (Salgado 243). But according to Salgado, 'the Epilogue [of *Movements in European History]* does demonstrate clearly that Lawrence's refusal to engage in a specific political programme was not due to what Eliott in a notorious phrase had called "an incapacity for what we ordinarily call thinking". Given his view that a change of consciousness must precede a change in social institutions, Lawrence addresses himself to the question of where such a change must originate' (Salgado 243). Michael Bell in his chapter on Nietzscheanism in *A Concise Companion to Modernism* speaks of 'the absurdities and extremities of his Mexican Novel' (Bell, Nietzcheanism: "The Superman and the all-too-human" 69), suggesting that Lawrence first 'subscribed to the larger Nietzschean conception that the culture suffered from a failure to acknowledge the motif of power' and wished for 'the revival of a pre-Christian world' (Bell, Nietzcheanism: "The Superman and the all-too-human" 69), before he 'explicitly rejected the political power motif and turned to *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928) as a model of apolitical tenderness' (Bell, Nietzcheanism: "The Superman and the all-too-human" 69). Bell's analysis is wrong on a number of counts: firstly, as we will see, Lawrence always maintains that a balance between love and power is necessary; secondly, Lawrence always makes it perfectly plain that he is not advocating a return to the past; and thirdly, Lawrence clearly did not turn apolitical after *Lady Chatterley's Lover* since some of his latest writings like *Apocalypse*, or his 'Introduction to *The Grand Inquisitor*' are very obviously, at least in part, political in nature. The once commonly held thesis that Lawrence went through a 'leadership phase', has now been largely discredited, with Worthen alluding to the 'so-called (and very misleadingly called) "leadership novels"'

(Worthen, D. H. Lawrence 57), and, more recently, Booth labelling it 'a shorthand way of thinking about Lawrence and politics' (Booth, Politics and Art 130).[400]

The reality is that Lawrence, from his early membership of the socialist debating society, through to his criticisms of Russell's lectures, and right through to the very last writings before his death, remained interested in political thinking—and yet as Booth points out, his political thought seems to have confused critics since he 'cannot readily be placed on the usual political spectrum, or aligned with a particular party, group or creed' (Booth, Politics and Art 129). Indeed, his non-fiction is full of savage criticisms of democracy and socialism, not to mention (as we will see) an utter disdain for all that fascism stood for. As a matter of fact, Lawrence rejects all *—isms* whatsoever, all of which, as he makes clear in the essay 'Democracy', are characterized by their adherence to an underlying materialism: 'this is horribly true of modern democracy—socialism, conservatism, bolshevism, liberalism, republicanism, communism: all alike. The one principle that governs all the *—isms* is the same: the principle of the idealized unit, the possessor of property' (RDP 81:34). Salgãdo comments that, from Lawrence's point of view, 'the motive forces of progress and free competition, and the associated ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity, have been shown up for the dead wood they are by the storm of the war. But the alternatives that face post-war Europe, Socialism or Fascism, are equally unappealing' (Salgado 242).

Booth is correct to state that 'the topic of Lawrence can be worked anew if we move away from the discussions that redeploy conventional political labels' (Booth 142).[401] A possible answer to where Lawrence might stand on the political spectrum is to be found in the book by the Russian Heideggerian scholar Alexander Dugin, *The Fourth Political Theory*, and whose basic thesis is very simple but very powerful.[402] Dugin argues that there are currently three main political ideologies, Liberalism, Fascism and Socialism, all of which are deficient. Dugin notes that liberalism always identifies itself as a neutral position, to which the only possible alternatives are supposed to be the two failed ideologies of Fascism and Socialism. Liberalism, he remarks, has virtually succeeded in making itself seem like the natural order of things, and to use Fukuyama's phrase, as 'The End of History'—although the ecological

[400] The affirmation is that Lawrence went through a phase, during which he was 'a supporter of strong leadership, which is shown by his novels written in the first half of the 1920s, *Aaron's Rod*, *Kangaroo*, and *The Plumed Serpent*' (Booth, Politics and Art 130).
[401] Booth, however, describes Lawrence's political views as utopian. I return to this later.
[402] Due to his criticisms of Western Liberalism, Dugin is sometimes considered (almost entirely by people who have never read his works), to be a controversial figure; and rather like Lawrence he has sometimes been erroneously accused of being a far-right figure, despite the fact that he is a fierce critic of fascism.

consequences and ongoing wars of what is now called 'Neo-liberalism', i.e. late capitalism, means that this stance has become increasingly hard to maintain. As all three of these ideologies are unacceptable, Dugin argues that a fourth ideology must now be established, and suggests that it might be based on *being* (Heidegger's *Dasein*).[403] As we have already noted, there are certain similarities between Heidegger's *Being* and Lawrence's *Central Mystery*, so it is easy to see how this might be pertinent for Lawrence's political thought. Because the modern stance is to claim there are only three ideologies, it is automatically assumed that anyone opposing liberalism (or democracy) must be either on the left, a socialist, or on the right, a fascist; and dismissing any additional option as unrealistic and utopian. Liberalism therefore presents itself as the only possible alternative, and proceeds to impose it on everyone else. As a result, for Dugin, 'the very idea of putting an end to Fascism, Communism, and Liberalism is an extremely liberating thing. The Fourth Political Theory proclaims, 'Say "no" to fascism, "no" to Communism, and "no" to liberalism!' (Dugin 35). Dugin's stance is useful with regard to Lawrence, since Lawrence's position which we have described throughout this book (particularly in the second part), is clearly one that stands in direct opposition to liberalism, and his proposed solutions are obviously comparable to the way of *being* envisaged by Dugin.

Notwithstanding Lawrence's many criticisms of democracy, there are nonetheless some occasions where Lawrence talks more positively about democracy, such as at the end of the essay 'Democracy' (1919), when he writes: 'if we are to keep our backs unbroken, we must deposit all property on the ground, and learn to walk without it. We must stand aside. And when many men stand aside, they stand in a new world; a new world of man has come to pass. *This is the Democracy, the new order'* (RDP 83:2, my italics). Clearly, what Lawrence is talking about here is a new form of democracy, based not on *having*, but on *being*. Again, in the essay 'Return to Bestwood' (1926), Lawrence talks more positively of democracy, 'I know that we could, if we would, establish little by little *a true democracy* in England: we could nationalise the land and industries and means of transport, and make the whole thing work infinitely better than at present, if we would. It all depends on the spirit in which the thing is done' (LEA 23:17, my italics). But what does Lawrence mean by 'a true democracy'? Lawrence also discusses true and false democracies in 'Education of the People' (1920), stating that 'the false democracy is that wherein every issue, even the highest, is dragged down to the lowest issue,

[403] Dugin actually proposes a number of options for a possible fourth ideology, of which Heidegger's being is just one possibility, but as a Heideggerian himself, this seems to be the option he favours, and it is the most significant from a Lawrentian point of view too.

the myriad-multiple lowest human issue: today, the wage' (RDP 109:37), whereas a true democracy should be, as far as Lawrence is concerned, not about wages but about the 'integral soul'. The current system is a mechanical one which has been 'established for the purposes of material production' (RDP 111:18) and which has indeed succeeded in these aims, but a true democracy would establish a new system based, not on material production, but on living well. 'It is', proclaims Lawrence, 'time to start afresh' (RDP 111:7):

> And therefore the only thing to do is to undertake the responsibility with good grace. What responsibility? The responsibility of establishing a new system: a new, organic system, free as far as ever it can be from automatism or mechanism: a system which depends on the profound spontaneous soul of men. (RDP 112:6)

Thus, the current democracy, based on wrong principles, based on ever-increasing production, needs to be swept aside and replaced. Lawrence's new democracy would be based on new values, which would render all our laws and governments almost superfluous: 'if man would but *keep* whole, integral, everything could be left at that. There would be no need for laws and governments: agreement would be spontaneous' (RDP 81:1).[404] In 'America, Listen to your Own', Lawrence writes: 'Whitman was almost conscious; only the political democracy issue confused him. Now is the day when Americans must become fully self-reliantly conscious of their own inner responsibility. They must be ready for a new act, a new extension of life. They must pass the bounds' (SCAL 385:17).[405] In Lawrence's opinion, Walt Whitman's dimly conscious aim was to create a real democracy, 'to conceive a new way of life, to establish new values' (RDP 78:7).

9.1.2 Lawrence and Fascism

The mere idea that Lawrence had fascist tendencies should seem ludicrous to any attentive reader of Lawrence's non-fiction. And yet Lawrence has struggled to escape from the associations initiated as we have seen by Bertrand Russell and William York Tindall. Quite apart from Frieda's clear rebuttal of this charge—'As for his being a Fascist, that is bunk. He was neither a Fascist nor a communist nor any other "ist". His belief in the blood was a very different affair from the Nazi "Aryan" theory, for instance. It was the very opposite' (F.

[404] Plato makes a similar point about a healthy state in Book 3 of *The Republic* (405). An excess of lawyers and doctors are symptoms of a degraded, undisciplined state.
[405] Originally planned as a foreword to *Studies in Classic American Literature*.

Lawrence, The Memoirs and Correspondence 135)—there is plenty of direct evidence from Lawrence himself to refute the allegation. We find Lawrence writing, for example, in the epilogue to *Movements in European History*:

> … in Fiesole near Florence the Fascisti suddenly banged at the door of the mayor of the village, in the night when all were in bed. The mayor was forced to get up and open the door. The Fascisti seized him, stood him against the wall of his house, and shot him under the eyes of his wife and children, who were in their night dresses. Why? Because he was a socialist. That is Fascism and Law and Order. Only another kind of bullying. (MEH 263:5)

Or, in his 'Introduction to Maurice Magnus's *Memoirs of the Foreign Legion*' (1921-22), he writes: '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 fascist! That was another world. And how bitter, how barren a world!' (IR 33:16). Lawrence, in fact, makes very little distinction between fascism, socialism or even democracy. As far as he is concerned, they are all forms of decay, something which is clearly confirmed by Lou's vision of evil in *St. Mawr*:

> The evil! The mysterious potency of evil. She could see it all the time, in individuals, in society, in the press. There it was in socialism and bolshevism: the same evil. But Bolshevism made a mess of the outside of life, so turn it down. Try fascism. Fascism would keep the surface of life intact, and carry on the undermining business all the better. All the better sport. Never draw blood. Keep the haemorrhage internal, invisible. And as soon as fascism makes a break—which it is bound to, because all evil works up to a break—then turn it down. (SM 79:21)

Similarly, in a letter in 1923 (in German) to his mother-in-law, the Baroness Anna von Richthofen, Lawrence rejects all the -isms together: 'here in Mexico there's also Bolshevism and Fascism and revolutions and all the rest of it. But I don't care. I don't listen. And the Indians remain outside. Revolutions come and revolutions go but they remain the same' (4L 433).

So how did Lawrence become associated with fascism? One reason, comprehensively examined and debunked by Jake Poller in his article 'D. H. Lawrence, Fascism and the Logic of Contamination' (Poller), is that there are supposed to be similarities between *völkisch*

ideologies and Lawrence's language (accusations brought against Lawrence most notably by the critics Emile Delavenay, Anne Fernihough and Peter Fjågesund). Poller points out that 'in the wake of Russell's comments, academics have been dutifully unearthing evidence of latent, cryptic or proto-fascist ideas in Lawrence's work […] and much energy has been expended on drawing dubious parallels between *völkisch* ideologues, such as Oswald Spengler, Alfred Rosenberg and Houston Chamberlain, and the work of Lawrence' (Poller 25). But Poller shows convincingly that all the readers alluded to by these critics (quite apart from the fact, as he shows, that there is very little evidence that Lawrence has read them in any significant way) had all been influenced by Nietzsche, and that the charges therefore relied on 'a logic of contamination, whereby if Hitler had read Nietzsche and Lawrence read Nietzsche, Lawrence becomes tarred with the fascist brush' (Poller 25). Furthermore, he correctly argues, that Lawrence's conception of the blood is not about race, it is 'a metaphor that signified the instinct and the body as opposed to the intellect and mind, whereas for Houston Chamberlain and Alfred Rosenberg the blood was a metonym for race, whose literal purity had to be defended in order to preserve the Aryan race from degeneration' (Poller 30). Like Poller, Booth notes that 'the claims here often rely on invoking what happened after Lawrence's death' (Booth, Politics and Art 130) and that Lawrence clearly had a sense of foreboding about what was happening in Germany (though he didn't live to see Hitler's accession to power), and was sceptical of Italian Fascism (Booth, Politics and Art 131). An example of this sense of foreboding, which has been noted by many critics, is the powerful piece 'Letter from Germany', written in 1924, in which Lawrence writes: 'out of the very air comes a sense of danger, a queer, bristling feeling of uncanny danger. Something has happened. Something has happened which has not yet eventuated. The old spell of the old world has broken, and the old, bristling, savage spirit has set in' (MM 151:8).

Another reason for these imputations suggested by Booth is that critics detect in Lawrence 'a perceived commitment to strong leadership' (Booth, Politics and Art 130). While Lawrence's interest in powerful figures is obvious, it must be noted that Lawrence makes a very clear distinction between force and power (as we can see in the above quotation from *Movements in European History,* and as we saw in chapter 6 when the will-to-power was discussed). Unlike power, mere force is the imposition of one person's will on another.[406] In

[406] See, for example, his letter to Lady Ottoline Morrell on the 1st February 1915: 'The great serpent to destroy, is the Will to Power: the desire for one man to have some dominion over his fellow man. Let us have no personal influence, if possible—nor personal magnetism, as they used to call it, nor persuasion—no "Follow me"—but only "Behold"' (2L 272).

other words, it is nothing less than a form of bullying, as Lawrence makes abundantly clear in the essay 'Blessed are the Powerful' (1925), protesting that: 'Myself I want Power. But I don't want to boss anybody' (RDP 324:38), and declaring that tyranny is detestable (RDP 321:14). Instead, power, as we have made clear throughout, is the manifestation of the creative mystery in the world, 'the supreme quality of God and man: the power to cause, the power to create, the power to make, the power to do, the power to destroy' (RDP 325:31). In Fragment 1 of *Apocalypse*, Lawrence makes it clear that this confusion of force and power has led to the fact that power is no longer respected: 'now we must free ourselves from the superficial contempt for power which most of us feel and express today. We only know dead power which is force. Mere force does not command our respect. But power is not mere force' (A164:40). The opening pages of *Sketches of Etruscan Places* (1928) clearly demonstrate what Lawrence thought of the sheer force of the Romans (whom he clearly associates with the Fascists). In the opening lines Lawrence criticizes the Romans, whom he describes sarcastically as 'those pure, clean-living, sweet-souled Romans, who smashed nation after nation and crushed the free soul in people after people, and were ruled by Messalina and Heliogabalus and such-like snowdrops' (SEP 9:24), and whom, he asserts, wanted to destroy the Etruscan consciousness (SEP 20:38). Consequently, Lawrence finds it highly inappropriate that the fascists give back the old Etruscan name Tarquinia to the town Corneto: 'the Fascists, who consider themselves in all things Roman, Roman of the Caesars, heirs of Empire and world power, are beside the mark restoring the rags of dignity to Etruscan places. For of all the Italian people that ever lived, the Etruscans were surely the least Roman' (SEP 31:4). And in the chapter 'Volterra', Lawrence comments: 'the cheeky girls salute one with the "Roman" salute, out of sheer effrontery: a salute which has nothing to do with me, so I don't return it. Politics of all sorts are anathema. But in an Etruscan city which held out so long against Rome I consider the Roman salute unbecoming, and the Roman *imperium* unmentionable' (SEP 158:33). Another quite different instance of Lawrence's disdain of brute force is to be found in his review of '*Pedro of Valvida - Conqueror of Chile* by Cunninghame Graham' (1927), in which Lawrence criticizes Valvida (who was apparently proud of having had the hands and noses of two hundred "rebels" cut off) for his 'stone blindness to any mystery or meaning in the Indians themselves, the utter unawareness to the fact that they might have a point of view, the abject insensitiveness to the strange, eerie atmosphere of that America he was proceeding to exploit and to ruin' (IR 302:25):

> Imagine taking a dark-eyed Indian by the hair, and cutting off his nose! Imagine seeing man after man, in the prime of life, with his mutilated face

> streaming blood, and his wrist-stump a fountain of blood, and tell me if the men of action don't need absolutely to be held in leash by the intelligent being who can see these things as monstrous, root cause of endless monstrosity! (IR 302: 35)

This kind of cruelty must clearly have marked him, since he also refers to it (somewhat out of context) in *Mornings in Mexico*, when talking about the exploitation of the land and the people by the white settlers, he suddenly writes 'oh, cut his nose off and make him swallow it' (MM 39:8).

Power, for Lawrence, must always be counter-balanced by love and tenderness. In *Sketches of Etruscan Places*, Lawrence writes:

> Brute force and overbearing may make a terrific effect. But in the end, that which lives, lives by delicate sensitiveness. If it were a question of brute force, not a single human baby would survive for a fortnight. 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: for grain is grass; and Hercules or Napoleon or Henry Ford would alike be denied existence. Brute force crushes many plants. Yet the plants rise again. (SEP 36:4)

Likewise, in 'The Crown' (1925), Lawrence writes, 'take care of asserting any absolute, either of power or love, of empire or democracy. The moment power triumphs, it becomes spurious with sheer egoism, like Caesar and Napoleon' (RDP 270:3), and then a few lines later, 'the true crown is upon the consummation itself, not upon the triumph of one over another, neither in love nor in power' (RDP 270:15).[407] And in Fragment 1 of *Apocalypse*, he writes 'man is a being of power, and then a being of love. The pure individual tries either for sheer power, like Alexander, or sheer love, like Christ. For mankind forever will have its dual nature, the old Adam of power, the new Adam of love. And there must be a balance between the two' (A 163:30). The way forward must always involve both power and love, as we see in Fragment 1:

[407] These lines are from the 1925 version, but in the 1915 version he wrote 'this one Way is the way, the one Glory is an eternal glory. But only part, half. The other half is denied. The One God of Power and Might and Glory, this is David who slays Goliath and dances naked before the Ark, this is Agamemnon who sacrifices Iphigenia and departs for the glory of killing, the splendour of the Trojan War, it is the later ecstasy of naked Dionysius, it is bread and circuses of Rome, it is Napoleon, with his conquests…' (RDP 470). This use of unbridled power takes the form of Law (a term Lawrence uses to refer to power in his earlier writings), but all of these figures fail because 'they have asserted the part as the whole' (RDP 470).

‘another new breath of love, and another new courage of tenderness, coupled with the courage of power, this alone will release us from the weary world that imprisons us’ (A 160:27).

Lawrence’s real attitude towards leadership is commensurate with what he refers to as ‘the problem of Jesus’, a problem which he discusses in detail in his introduction to Dostoevsky’s *The Grand Inquisitor* (1930).[408] The Grand inquisitor’s criticisms of Jesus are unanswerable, according to Lawrence, because they have been confirmed by two thousand years of experience. Lawrence notes that Dostoevsky is asking what the limits are ‘not of man in the abstract, but of man, mere man, everyday men’ (IR 128:12). And his answer, according to the Grand Inquisitor is that men need miracles, mystery and authority:

> Mankind in the bulk can never be ‘free’, because man on the whole makes three grand demands on life, and cannot endure unless these demands are satisfied.
>
> 1. He demands bread, and not merely as foodstuff, but as a miracle, given from the hand of God.
> 2. He demands mystery, the sense of the miraculous in life.
> 3. He demands somebody to bow down to, and somebody before whom all men shall bow down.
>
> These three demands, for miracle, mystery and authority, prevent men from being ‘free’. They are man’s ‘weakness’. Only a few men, the elect, are capable of abstaining from the absolute demand for bread, for miracle, mystery, and authority. These are the strong, and they must be as gods… (IR 128:14)

Thus, Jesus has asked too much of mankind: ‘Christianity is too difficult for men, for the vast mass of men’ (IR 128:32); by loving mankind ‘for what it ought to be’ (IR 129:7) rather than for what it actually is, he is making demands ‘greater than the nature of man can bear’ (IR 129:39), so that the Grand Inquisitor finds ‘that in order to be able to live at all, mankind must be loved more tolerantly and more contemptuously than Jesus loved it’ (IR 129:5). Lawrence claims that he has come to realise that the Grand Inquisitor’s message still holds true today:

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[408] ‘The Grand Inquisitor’ is a parable recounted by Ivan in Dostoevsky’s *The Brothers Karamazov*, but which has also been published as a stand-alone book. In it, the Grand Inquisitor denounces Jesus (who has just returned to Earth during the Spanish Inquisition), for his lack of realism.

> Is it true that mankind demands, and will always demand, miracle, mystery, and authority? Surely it is true. Today, man gets his sense of the miraculous from science and machinery, radio, aeroplane, vast ships, zeppelins, poison gas, artificial silk: these things nourish man's sense of the miraculous as magic did in the past. But now, man is master of the mystery, there are no occult powers. The same with mystery: medicine, biological experiment, strange feats of the psychic people, spiritualists, Christian scientists — it is all mystery. And as for authority, Russia destroyed the Tsar to have Lenin and the present mechanical despotism, Italy has the rationalized despotism of Mussolini, and England is longing for a despot. (IR 129:17)

For Lawrence, men seem incapable of seeing what is important: 'the mass of men are incapable of looking on bread as a mere means of sustenance, by which man sustains himself for the purpose of true living, true life being "the heavenly bread" […] They cannot see the distinction between bread, or property, money, and vivid life. They think that property and money are the same thing as vivid life. Only the few, the potential heroes or the "elect", can see the simple distinction. The mass cannot see it, and will never see it' (IR 129:33). For Lawrence, this means that a strong leader is needed, someone to bow down to. 'Liberty is all very well', writes Lawrence in 'The Spirit of Place', 'but man cannot live without masters' (SCAL 16:3). Jesus's mistake, Lawrence argues in *Apocalypse*, was neglecting the collective. When Jesus said, "Render unto Caesar's that which is Caesar's"; when he said, in other words, that the money belonged to Caesar (because he 'saw the individual only, and considered only the individual' (A146:8)), then he made a great mistake because, 'money means bread, and the bread of men belongs to no men. Money means also power, and it is monstrous to give power to the virtual enemy' (A146:5). Lawrence's solution, then, is to 'take over from the devil the money (or bread), the miracle, and the sword of Caesar, and, for the love of mankind, give back to men the bread, with its wonder, and give them the miracle, the marvellous, and give them, in a hierarchy, someone, some men, in higher and higher degrees, to bow down to' (IR 130:33). Thus, Lawrence's 'true democracy' is absolutely not to be built upon a principle of equality, but upon a hierarchical structure of being. Indeed, in 'Education of the People', he writes:

> When it is a question of the human soul, the direction must be a cumulation upwards: upwards from the very roots, in the vast Demos, up to the very summit of the supreme judge and utterer, the first of men. There is a first of men: and there is the vast, basic Demos: always, at every age in every

> continent. The people is an organic whole, rising from the roots, through trunk and branch and leaf, to the perfect blossom. This is the tree of human life. (RDP 110:16)

Lawrence's system is in some ways a religious one, and when Lawrence talks of aristocrats he has this religious dimension in mind.

In the second volume of *Parerga and Paralipomena*, Schopenhauer suggests that there are lower and higher degrees of existence, depending on the soundness of one's understanding. The poet or philosopher can reach the highest degree, who 'stands in amazement before existence itself, before this great sphinx, and makes it his problem. In him consciousness has intensified to such a degree of clarity that has become consciousness of the world […] degrees of consciousness are the degrees of reality—then when we called such a man the "most real of all beings", the phrase will have meaning and significance' (2PP 534). The aristocrat, for Lawrence, is this 'most real of all beings', and should still be recognisable for his greater consciousness of the significance of life and the world. Lawrence's conception of aristocracy, then, is not one of aristocracy by birth, but of rule by those who possess *excellence*. In 'Paris Letter' (1926), Lawrence explains: 'I don't believe any more in democracy. But I can't believe in the old sort of aristocracy, either, nor can I wish it back, splendid as it was. What I believe in is the old Homeric aristocracy, when the grandeur was inside the man, and he lived in a simple wooden house' (MM 145:6). He adds that 'the Red Indians only knew the aristocrat by instinct. The leader was leader in his own being, not because he was somebody's son or had so much money. It's got to be so again. They say it won't work. I say, why not? If men could once recognize the natural aristocrat when they set eyes on him, they can still' (MM 145:12). Lawrence's aristocracy, therefore, is based not on birth, or on money, but on *being*, on life, as he explains in the closing essay of *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine*, 'Aristocracy' (1925):

> Aristocracy of birth is bunk, when a Kaiser Wilhelm and an Emperor Franz-Josef and a Czar Nicolas is all that noble birth will do for you. Yet the whole of life is established on a natural aristocracy. And aristocracy of birth is a *little* more natural than aristocracy of money. (Oh, for God's sake, the gold standard!) […] What then does *natural* aristocracy consist in? […] The providing of food, money, and amusement belongs, truly, to the servant class.

> The providing of *life* belongs to the aristocrat. If a man, whether by thought or action, makes life, he is an aristocrat. (RDP 369:1)

Thus, as Lawrence expresses in the essay on 'Fenimore Cooper's Anglo-American Novels' in the first version of *Studies in Classic American Literature* (1918), Lawrence believes in degrees of lower and higher existence, he believes in the existence of a natural aristocracy:

> If we are to recognise true beauty and superiority it must be from the inmost sincere soul; we cannot proceed on accidents of heredity. But the aristocratic system was not so wrong as the democratic, which refuses, theoretically, to recognise any intrinsic difference at all, and asserts that, since no man is higher than another, since we are all leaves of grass, no man shall presume to put the grass in the shade. No man is any higher than another man; no soul has any intrinsic right to command another soul. So says democracy. (SCAL 212:29)

Lawrence refuses to accept, in other words, that men are really equal, and it is as a consequence of this belief that he advocates strong leadership. However, Lawrence doesn't mean leadership which is fuelled by force and self-interest, but, to the contrary, a natural leadership of men and women who can show the path towards a newer, healthier life way of life. In the epilogue to *Movements in European History* he explains: 'Now we begin to understand the old motto, *noblesse oblige*. *Noblesse* means, having the gift of power, the natural or sacred power. And having such power obliges a man to act with fearlessness and generosity, responsible for his acts to God. A noble is one who may be known before all men' (MEH 265:9).

9.1.3 Lawrence and Socialism

With regard to socialism, Lawrence asserts in the epilogue to *Movements in European History* that it has two sides: a positive side which is 'the generous desire that all men shall eat well and sleep well and fare well all their lives' (MEH 261:36), and a negative side, 'the much more dangerous desire, that all existing masters shall be overthrown, and that men shall be "free", which means, there shall be no authority over the people. That is socialism. […] Some socialists are full of hatred, and some are full of sincere desire for human welfare' (MEH 262:37). Despite the early leanings towards Socialism which he expresses in his letter to the Reverend Reid, and his engagement with Willie Hopkins's socialist group and the resultant paper 'Art and the Individual', Lawrence seems to have come to have felt a kind of repulsion for Socialism, and it is interesting that in the chapter 'Italians in Exile' in *Twilight in Italy*, he says he could never bring himself to read the little paper that the anarchists he had spent the

evening with had given him: 'it was as if some curious negative magnetism arrested my mind, prevented it from working, the moment I turned it towards these Italians. I do not know why it was. But I could never write to them, or think of them, or even read the paper they gave me though it lay in my drawer for months, in Italy, and I often glanced over six lines of it' (TI 204:23). However, Lawrence does state in the epilogue to *Movements in European History*, that he personally believes 'that a good form of socialism, if it could be brought about, would be the best form of government' (MEH 262:8), and many of his statements like the need to 'nationalise the land and industries and means of transport' cited above from 'Return to Bestwood' sound like a fairly extreme kind of socialism, especially when compared to today's watered-down version. In a letter to Mary Cannan in February 1915, for instance, Lawrence suggests that 'we must have social revolution, after the war. Private ownership of land and industries and means of commerce should be abolished—then every child born into the world shall have food and clothing and shelter the birth-right, work or no work. A man shall work to earn the things beyond, if he wants them' (2L 292).

Lawrence's rejection of socialism is primarily due to his belief that it is founded on the mode of *having* rather than *being*: he considers socialism to be based on the mode of possession: 'one half says that the uneducated, being the majority, should possess the property; the other half says that the educated, being the enlightened, should possess the property. There is no more to it […] All ideals work down to the sheer materialism which is their intrinsic reality, at last' (RDP 81:40).[409] On the very last page of 'Aristocracy', he proclaims that 'the democratic mass, capitalist and proletariat alike, are a vast, sluggish, ghastlily greedy porcupine, lumbering with inertia. Even Bolshevism is the same porcupine: nothing but greed and inertia' (RDP 376:17). Consequently, Lawrence is damning in his criticisms of socialism, for essentially the same reasons as those that led him to condemn all —isms. Both **'**democracy and Socialism are dead ideals. They are one and all just *contrivances* for the supplying of the lowest material needs of a people**'** (RDP 66:16). He lumps Socialism together with Liberal Democracy as two systems which are both rich in monetary terms, but poor in life. In *Apocalypse* (1929), Lawrence describes Socialism as, 'poor, poor, poor, as the people are in all our modern democracies, though nowhere so absolutely impoverished in life as in the most absolute democracy, no matter how they be in money' (A 71:32), and declares that 'Lenin's

[409] Dugin, who lived for many years, under a communist regime, also criticizes socialism for focusing too exclusively on economic factors, for its positive attitude towards the dictatorship of the proletariat, and for its adherence to the idea of material progress.

rule of saints turned out quite horrible. It has more thou-shalt-nots than any rule of "Beasts", or emperors' (A 71:5). Furthermore, another, perhaps more fundamental problem, is that it fails to meet man's need for meaningful experience, which is for each man to become a God in his circumambient universe: 'the *primal* need, the old-Adamic need in a man's soul is to be, in his own sphere and as far as he can attain it, master, lord, and splendid one' (A 71:8). Socialism, Lawrence argues, shows man 'his own paltriness as hedged-in male. It depresses him, and *makes* him paltry' (A 71:23), whereas 'the human heart needs, needs, needs, splendour, gorgeousness, pride, assumption, glory, and lordship. Perhaps it needs these even more than it needs love: at least, even more than bread. And every great king makes every man a little lord in his own tiny sphere' (A 71:18).

9.2. Lawrence and Liberalism

9.2.1 Liberalism

To understand Lawrence's philosophy, it must be understood that in attacking modernity, Lawrence is seeking to undermine the very premises of liberalism, and it is this attack which makes Lawrence such a relevant figure for more modern ecological thought. Based on a negative conception of 'freedom-from', liberalism ultimately leads to rampant individualism and the progressive cutting of all ties. It is therefore directly opposed to Lawrence's notion of sympathy and relationality. Furthermore, liberalism is underpinned by materialist and exceptionalist assumptions, which enter directly into opposition with Lawrence's philosophy of being. Lawrence is, in fact, posing the same questions as Donna Haraway recently asked, namely: 'What happens when human exceptionalism and methodological individualism, those old saws of Western philosophy and political economics, become unthinkable in the best sciences, whether natural or social?' (Haraway 34). What Haraway calls 'those old saws' (more commonly known as Individualism and Universalism), clearly correspond to what Lawrence suggests in 'John Galsworthy, a Fragment of an early draft', are two 'tyrannies': one is 'greed or selfishness' (individualism) (STH 250:30); the other is the unhealthy kind of oneness which Lawrence calls 'social consciousness', which denies all individuality (universalism) (STH 250:23). Both lead to a fall into materialism, like the characters in Galsworthy's novels: 'every single character is determined by money: either the getting it, or the having it, or the wanting it, or the utter lacking it' (STH 214:6).[410] On the other

[410] Even a great poet like Whitman, is touched by it. In his introduction to Sherman's *Americans*, Lawrence quotes Sherman quoting Whitman himself: 'And he gives Whitman's own words in proof: "The true gravitation hold of liberalism in the United States will be a more universal ownership of property, general homesteads, general

hand, an authentic human being, 'a true human individual' has at his centre 'a certain innocence or naivete which defies all analysis and which you cannot bargain with' (STH 210:38), and 'in his essential core he is naïve, and money does not touch him' (STH 211:3). Haraway suggests that if we are to bring modernity to heel and put an end to the 'endless infernal alternatives' (Haraway), then we need to radically reconsider the narrative we are living by: 'Think we must; we must think. That means, simply, we must change the story. The story must change' (Haraway 44). Something much more radical is required—for Lawrence it is a society based on *being*: 'we must create an idea of a new, freer life, where men and women can really meet on natural terms, instead of being barred within so many barriers. And if the money spirit is killed, and eating and sleeping is free, then most of the barriers will collapse. Something must be done, and we must begin soon' (2L 293). Salgado notes that, one 'could hardly fail to recognise the tremendous stress placed in *Movements* on changes of consciousness as the motive force of historical change' (Salgado 245).

Liberalism urges the individual to free himself or herself from all forms of collective identity, religion, community, nation, and so forth. And at the same time, the liberal model is based on the conviction of its own exceptionality: a model based on progress, universal human rights, and technological development—it considers itself to be, in other words, 'the end of history' as it was described by Fukuyama. Dugin highlights the fact that liberalism encourages the individual to free himself or herself from all those 'social identities and dependencies that constrain and define the individual from outside' (Dugin 37). Defined by the conception of negative freedom (freedom-from) which we discussed in the last chapter, it simply ignores the idea of positive freedom (freedom-to): 'Liberal theorists (in particular, John Stuart Mill) underscored the fact that we are talking about a "freedom from", about the release from ties, identifications, and restrictions that are an imposition upon the individual's will. As for what the purpose of this freedom is, liberals remain silent' (Dugin 37). Dugin argues that, whereas the focus of socialism is on *class*, the main focus of liberalism is on the *individual*:

> The individual is conceived as a unit that is rational and endowed with a will (morality). The individual is both a given and the goal of liberalism. It is a given, but one that is often unaware of its identity as an individual. All forms

comforts — a vast intertwining reticulation of wealth […] She (Democracy) asks for men and women with occupations, well-off, owners of houses and acres, and with cash in the bank and with some craving for literature too" — so that they can buy certain books. Oh, Walt!' (IR 226 :35).

> of collective identity — ethnic, national, religious, caste, and so on — impede an individual's awareness of his individuality. Liberalism encourages the individual to become himself, that is, to be free of all those social identities and dependencies that constrain and define the individual from outside. (Dugin 37)

With regard to Lawrence, although he seems to multiply his criticisms of *individualism* in his later writings (particularly in 1929), it is clear from his very earliest writings—when he writes in the draft version of 'Art and Individual' (1908) that 'the passion of human beings to be brought into sympathetic community with each other is stupendous' (STH 228:19)—that community is vitally important for Lawrence. Thus, in 'Fragment 1' of *Apocalypse* he contends that, 'one of the obscurest but profoundest needs of man is this need to belong to a group, a group called a church, or a nation, or an empire, and to feel the power thereof. And the chief reason for the profound dissatisfaction of today is that man is unhappy in his collective self' (A 161:40). And he takes care in 'Education of the People' (1920) to gainsay any perception that his talk of the 'perfected singleness of the individual' (RDP 138:20) equates to 'what is nowadays called individualism. The so-called individualism is no more than a cheap egotism, every self-conscious little ego assuming unbounded rights to display his self-consciousness. We mean none of this. We mean, in the first place, the recognition of the exquisite arresting manifoldness of being, multiplicity, plurality…' (RDP 138:26). Even if it is true that, on the one hand, individuals are, for Lawrence, a manifestation of the divine power, and as he argues in 'Fragment 1' of *Apocalypse*, it is due to this sense of power that one participates fully in the creative mystery of the universe, and that this is for man 'his most precious treasure of all, his sense of solid splendour in life, his share in the glory of the cosmos. For first and foremost the cosmos is glorious, and man is part of the cosmos' (A167:19), it is also the case, on the other hand, that the needs of the individual must ultimately be subordinated to the needs of humanity as a whole: 'the might, and the splendour, and the glory must all be tempered by love' (A 167:22). In the interests of the greater humanity, our 'individual splendour and might' must be put aside, and we must submit, 'in order that a greater, a completer glory may come among men. For one man cannot be truly glorious unless all men, according to their degree, are glorified. This is the supreme truth that men like Caesar, or like Napoleon, have failed to grasp' (A167:26).

Moreover, the question of whether there can be such a thing as an isolated *individual* is a legitimate one, and as we have seen, it was one that Lawrence frequently asked: the individual

for Lawrence only exists *in relation*: 'the real danger is, reduced to your own single merits and cut off from the most vital human contacts, the danger is that you are left just simply next to nothing' (LEA 297:22). There is no such thing as an individual in the abstract, as Lawrence underscores in 'Fragment 1' of *Apocalypse*:

> … abstractions get us nowhere. Here, in the complex being that I am, there lives a me which is simply an individual, just a man like any other man, negro or Tartar. But there lives also a me which is European, which is at home in Europe, which feels and thinks as a European feels and thinks. Further, there is a me which is an Englishman, which has its final group connection with England, and its fulfilment in *power* in the acts of the English nation. And it is useless to say these things don't matter, the individual alone counts. It is not true. (A 161:31)[411]

This is what Dugin is implying when he writes that 'the individual is both a given and the goal of liberalism'. Can there really be an individual which is something other than 'a knot of relations'? Lawrence makes exactly the same point in his newspaper article 'We Need One Another' (1929) when he asks: 'What are you, when you've asserted your grand independence, broken all the ties, or "bonds," and reduced yourself to a "pure" individuality? What are you?' (LEA 297:17). Therefore, it remains illusory to maintain that an individual can exist independently of any relation to his fellow man, or to the surrounding environment, and it is this, Lawrence feels, which has led to the feelings of alienation in modern society: 'The world today is full of silly, impertinent egoists who have broken all the finer human ties, and base their claims to superiority on their own emptiness and nullity. But the empty ones are being found out. […] The fact remains that when you cut off a man and isolate him in his own pure and wonderful individuality, you haven't got the man at all, you've only got the dreary fag-end of him' (LEA 298:2). Therefore, what liberalism would call a state is for Lawrence just 'a collection of fragmentary beings' (A146:32). For if each part is neither organic nor vital, then a state is in fact, 'composed of myriad disunited fragments, each fragment assuming to itself a false wholeness, a false individuality. Modern democracy is made up of millions of frictional parts all asserting their own wholeness' (A 147:20).

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[411] Lawrence says something very similar much earlier, in a letter in 1915 to Gordon Campbell: 'I know that *I* am the English nation—that *I* am the European race—and that this which exists ostensibly as the English nation is a falsity, mere cardboard […] La race humaine, c'est *moi*. Let every man say it, and be free' (2L 301).

The sense in Lawrence of an increasingly fragmented society is palpable; he describes a society which, due to the breakdown of the collective, has become increasingly atomised. In his 'Introduction to *Bottom Dogs*' (1929), Lawrence, shocked by the vision of disintegrated world present in Dahlberg's novel, remarks that:

> … the collapse of the flow of spontaneous warmth between a man and his fellows, happens of course now all over the world […] it throws them apart in their private, individual emotions. Before, they were like cells in a complex tissue, alive and functioning diversely in a vast organism composed of family, clan, village, nation. Now, they are like grains of sand, friable, heaped together in a vast inorganic democracy. (IR 121:3)

It is a point he reiterates in 'A Propos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*' (1929), where he implies that the crusade against the physical which started with Plato was the starting point of what would ultimately become a drive towards apartness, because, as he asserts, 'Sex is the great unifier. In its big, slower vibration it is the warmth of heart which makes people happy together, in togetherness. The idealist philosophies and religions set out deliberately to kill this. And they did it. […] Now men are all separate little entities' (LCL 332:13). For this reason, Lawrence maintains that Sir Clifford in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is the epitome of this new spirit of individualism:

> … we have a man, Sir Clifford who is purely a personality, having lost entirely all connection with his fellow-men and women, except those of usage. All warmth is gone entirely, the heart is cold the heart does not humanly exist. He is a pure product of our civilisation, but he is the death of the great humanity of the world. He is kind by rule, but he does not know what warm sympathy means. (LCL 333:12)

Instead of the old solidarity, civil strife now reigns supreme, 'men only know one another in menace. Individualism has triumphed' (LCL 332:23), a tendency from which even socialism is not exempt: 'Class-hate and class-consciousness are only a sign that the old togetherness, the old blood-warmth has collapsed, and every man is really aware of himself in apartness. Then we have these hostile groupings of men for the sake of opposition, strife' (LCL 332:37). This is why for Lawrence it is vitally important to re-establish the old relationships, and put an end to the competition which has driven a wedge into the heart of society.

Dugin also argues that liberalism is based on exceptionalism, of which there are many different varieties:

> … cultural (asserting that there are high and low cultures), civilisational (dividing people into those civilised and those insufficiently civilised), technological (viewing technological development as the main criterion for the value of a society), social (stating, in the spirit of the Protestant doctrine of predestination, that the rich are the best and the greatest as compared to the poor), economic (in which all humanity is ranked according to the degree of material well-being), and evolutionary (for which it is axiomatic that human society is the result of biological development, in which the basic processes of the evolution of species — survival of the fittest, natural selection, and so on — continue today). (Dugin 44)

Thus, for Dugin, as for Lawrence, progress and the praise of modernisation must also be counted forms of exceptionalism. Like many of his time, Lawrence felt that progress was a myth: 'our great idea, during the last hundred years, has been the idea of Progress. We must all make progress. Every nation must make its own great strides of progress. But again, it is like the tree. Each branch starts in its own separate direction. But if any branch spreads too hugely, it will spread above its neighbour, and cut off the light from that neighbour' (MEH 257:19). Much of Lawrence's writing can be seen as an attempt to counter these forms of exceptionalism and his ideas of 'proper relations' are based on mutual equilibrium, which means respecting differences and never trying to impose one's own vision upon the other. The value for Lawrence of other cultures like the Native American Indians has already been discussed, as has other civilisations like the Etruscans and the Egyptians, long passed away. Discussing cave art towards the end of the essay 'Him with his Tail in his Mouth', Lawrence alludes to H. G. Well's book *The Outline of History*, writing: 'it is art on a pure, high level, beautiful as Plato, far, far more "civilized" than Burne Jones. Hadn't somebody better write Mr. Wells' History backwards, to prove how we've degenerated, in our stupid visionlessness, since the cave-men?' (RDP 316:40). As we have seen, Lawrence constantly attacks the received idea that ancient civilisations were inferior to our own, as in 'The Florence Museum' chapter in *Sketches of Etruscan Places*, in which Lawrence maintains that: 'in the days before Homer, men in Europe were *not* mere brutes and savages and prognathous monsters: neither were they simple-minded children. Men are always men, and though intelligence takes different forms, men are always intelligent: they are not empty brutes, or dumb-bells *en masse*' (SEP 177:18). As he writes in

the Epilogue to *Movements in European History*, 'mankind is one great race, in its fundamentals always the same' (MEH 255:12).

Nonetheless, Liberalist thinkers tend to promote their own model as the ideal one, upon which all others should be based. In other words, it is not merely a theoretical position but also a normative one, and directly opposed to a more pluralistic model in which there is no need to rank according to any kind of hierarchy. Dugin describes it as implicitly arguing that 'the values of all other peoples and cultures are imperfect, underdeveloped, and should be subject to modernisation and standardisation in imitation of the Western model' (Dugin 45). Lawrence's distaste for what he clearly considered to be a negative form of standardisation, must be distinguished from a more desirable form of oneness which is achieved through relationality, a distinction perhaps most clearly expressed in the first version of the 'Benjamin Franklin' essay:

> Now there are two kinds of oneness among mankind. First there is that ecstatic sense, religious and mystic, of uplifting into union with all men, through love. This experience we all know, more or less. But, secondly, there is the hard, practical state of being at one with all men, through suppression and elimination of those things which make differences. (SCAL 184:8)

The latter type, 'a oneness attained by destroying all incompatible elements in each individual, leaving the pattern or standard man' (SCAL 184:16) is the vision of a Benjamin Franklin, criticized so fervently by Lawrence (see chapter 6), and Lawrence goes on to criticize the way in which America is 'cutting down every human being towards a common standard, aiming at a homogeneous oneness through elimination of incommutable factors or elements, establishing a standardised humanity, machine-perfect' (SCAL 184:21). In *Sea and Sardinia*, written in early 1920, Lawrence wonders whether the Russian Revolution implies a reaction 'away from the old universality, back, away from cosmopolitanism and internationalism' (SS 88:40), asking whether it will 'finally break the flow towards cosmopolitanism and world-assimilation' (SS 89:9), hoping that America, too, which he calls 'that extremist in world-assimilation and world-oneness' (SS 89:12), reacts against 'hateful homogeneous world-oneness' (SS 89:17) and 'the era of world-alike' (SS 89:27), for, he feels, 'the day of the great fight into multifariousness is at hand' (SS 89:30).[412]

[412] Lawrence's comment about the Sardinians, 'one cannot help wondering whether Sardinia will resist right through. Will the last waves of enlightenment and world-unity break over them and wash away the stocking-caps?

Hence, one of the reasons why Lawrence criticises the Liberal democracy of his day (no doubt influenced by this widespread censorship and propaganda employed to support the war effort) is the idea that it entails an ever-increasing homogenisation, with all individuals summoned to become alike, to think the same thing, in short to a herd mentality, or as he writes in '….. Love was Once a Little Boy', to being, 'free in so far as we are all alike, and individuals in so far as we are commensurable integers' (RDP 341:15). The wrong sort of democracy for Lawrence is the type he expresses in 'Democracy' (1919): 'not people melted into a oneness: that is not the new Democracy. But people released into their single, starry identity, each one distinct and incommutable', and in the essay 'David' (1919-1921), he makes it clear that it is the modern (wrong) form of democracy which runs counter to 'the pride of life. The pride of the fulfilled self' (SEP 189:10)— it is 'equality, democracy, the masses, like drops of water in one sea, overwhelming all outstanding loveliness of the individual soul' (SEP 188:25). A true democracy, therefore, would be based on individual *being*, as he remarks in 'Democracy': 'so, we know the first great purpose of Democracy: that each man shall be spontaneously himself — each man himself, each woman herself, without any question of equality or inequality entering in at all; and that no man shall try to determine the being of any other man, or of any other woman' (RDP 80:27). As far as Lawrence is concerned, the system of his day was trying to force everyone towards the norm: 'this is the condition of modern democracies, a condition of perpetual bullying. In democracy, bullying inevitably takes the place of power. Bullying is the negative form of power' (A147:15).

This universalist model has also been criticized by the anti-Liberal American sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein, who argues in *European Universalism: the Rhetoric of Power* that the policies of Western leaders, media figures and establishment intellectuals are 'always presented as reflecting universal values and truths' (Wallerstein xi).[413] Wallerstein explains that there are three main strands to these universalist claims:

> The first is the argument that the policy is pursued by the leaders of the pan-European world are in defence of 'human rights' and in furtherance of something called 'democracy'. The second comes in the jargon of the clash of civilizations, in which it is always assumed that 'Western' Civilization is

Or is the tide of enlightenment and world-unity already receding fast enough?' (SS 88:36) clearly shows that he identifies this universalism with the Enlightenment.

[413] 'The rhetoric of the leaders of the Pan-European world—in particular, but not only, the United States and Great Britain—and the mainstream media and Establishment intellectuals is filled with appeals to universalism as the basic justification of their policies' (Wallerstein xi).

> superior to 'other' civilizations because it is the only one that has come to be based on these universal values and truths. And the third is the assertion of the scientific truths of the market, the concept that 'there is no alternative' for governments but to accept and act on the laws of neoliberal economics. (Wallerstein xii)[414]

All of these ideas, Wallerstein emphasizes, are always presented as being totally obvious and self-evident, although they are in fact complex ideas which need to be carefully and soberly evaluated. Lawrence himself, no doubt, learnt from bitter experience, during the war, that these universalist values were often pushed in order to conceal less noble ideals. In the epilogue to *Movements in European History* he writes, 'till the Great War, we believed in Liberty, Equality, Fraternity and in the Voice of the People' (MEH 258:33). Mr Lloyd George and Mr Horatio Bottomley, he writes, 'said what the vast majority were choking to say' (MEH 259:15), but now there is 'hardly an Englishman living who can bear to remember the voices of these two gentlemen when they were uplifted in full blast. Or, if he remembers, can remember without shame. Why? — Because they said things that were not true, and because they urged us to actions that were meaner, smaller, baser, crueller than our own deep feelings' (MEH 259:17).

These considerations help to explain Lawrence's criticisms of what we now call universal human rights. In the epilogue to *Movements in European History* Lawrence writes: 'Every man must be free to compete with every other man, and there must be equality of opportunity. Since the War these words make us feel sick, they have proved such a swindle' (MEH 257:31). But there are philosophical reasons too. Although, as Alain de Benoist ironizes, it seems quite as blasphemous and scandalous to criticize human rights nowadays as it once was to doubt the existence of God (De Benoist, Au-delà des droits de l'homme: pour défendre les libertés 17), Lawrence is in a long line of critics of universal human rights including figures as diverse and varied as Jeremy Bentham, Edmund Burke, Karl Marx, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Hannah Arendt, Aldous Huxley, and even Ghandi. What many of their objections have in common is the idea that natural rights are nothing but empty abstractions, and that context is everything: beliefs and values are not transposable from one society to another, because all societies have different trajectories. This was the argument of Lévi-Strauss,[415] and of Bentham,

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[414] Wallerstein adds: 'Read any speech of George W. Bush or Tony Blair in recent years (and indeed, the speeches of their predecessors), or any of their many acolytes, and you will find the constant reiteration of these three themes' (Wallerstein xii).

[415] 'Les grandes déclarations des droits de l'homme ont, elles aussi, cette force et cette faiblesse d'énoncer un idéal trop souvent oublieux du fait que l'homme ne réalise pas sa nature dans une humanité abstraite, mais dans

who in 'Anarchical Fallacies; Being an Examination of the Declaration of Rights Issued During the French Revolution' called the idea of universal human rights 'nonsense on stilts', arguing that natural rights can only come from real laws made by governments in the interest of the whole community, which take account of the particular time and the particular circumstances. Lawrence himself writes in 'Democracy', that 'no matter how single an ideal may be, even such a mathematical ideal as equality and oneness, it will find the most diverse and even opposite expressions. So that brotherhood and oneness in Germany never meant the same as brotherhood and oneness in France' (RDP 81:16). As for equality, Lawrence sees it as an idea which 'has no foundation in experience, but is logically deduced from certain ethical or philosophic principles' (PFU 117:10), adding 'but there is a disease of idealism in the world, and we all are born with it' (PFU 117:12). In 'Blessed are the Powerful', Lawrence writes:

> In living life, we are all born with different powers, and different degrees of power: some higher, some lower. The only thing to do is honourably to accept it, and to live in the communion of power. Is it not better to serve a man in whom power lives, than to clamour for equality with Mr. Motor-car Ford, or Mr. Shady Stinnes? Pfui! to your equality with such men! It gives me gooseflesh. (RDP 327:7)[416]

Marx in 'On the Jewish Question', argues the rights of man are the rights 'of egoistic man, of man separated from other man and from the community' (Marx 229), that the right to liberty is 'that of man as an isolated monad who is withdrawn into himself' (Marx 229), and that the right to private property is 'the right to enjoy and dispose of one's resources as one wills, without regard for other men and independently of society: the right of self-interest […] it leads each man to see in other man not the *realisation* but the *limitation* of his own freedom' (Marx 229), concluding that 'it is a curious thing the people which is just beginning to free itself, to tear down all the barriers between the different sections of the people and to found a political

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des cultures traditionnelles où les changements les plus révolutionnaires laissent subsister des pans entiers et s'expliquent eux-mêmes en fonction d'une situation strictement définie dans le temps et dans l'espace' (Lévi-Strauss 23).

[416] By 'Shady Stinnes' Lawrence is referring to the German Industrialist Hugo Stinnes, who, already rich before World War I, amassed an even greater fortune during the World War, and proceeded to invest heavily in far-right, anti-Bolshevik politics, funding the *Freikorps*. He is said to have been indirectly linked to the assassination of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, and to have made large contributions to the Alfred Hugenberg media empire, which would become Hitler's propaganda machine.

community, that such a people should solemnly proclaim the rights of egoistic man, separated from his fellow men and from the community' (Marx 230).[417]

Like Marx, Lawrence knows that equal opportunities just help those who are already rich to get richer, alluding to Lafontaine's (or Aesop's) famous fable of *The Fox and the Stork*:

> They talk about 'equal opportunity': but it is bunk, ridiculous bunk. It is the old fable of the fox asking the stork to dinner. All the food is to be served in a shallow dish, levelled to perfect equality, and you get what you can. If you're a fox, like the born financier, you get a bellyful and more. If you're a stork, or a flamingo, or even a man, you have the food gobbled from under your nose, and you go comparatively empty. (RDP 326:37)

And like Marx, Lawrence believes that 'money debases all the gods of mankind and turns them into commodities' (Marx 239).[418] Perhaps most of all, Liberalism is built on the mode of *having*. Unsurprisingly, in his review of Stuart P. Sherman's book *Americans*, Lawrence took issue with Sherman's positive description of Franklin:

> Benjamin Franklin is one of the founders of the Religion of Democracy. It was he who invented the creed that should satisfy the professors of all religions, not of universities only, and offend none. With a deity called Providence. Who turns out to be a sort of superlative Mr. Wanamaker, running the globe as a revolving dry-goods store, according to a profit-and-loss system; the profit counted in plump citizens whose every want is satisfied: like chickens in an absolutely coyote-proof chicken-run. (SCAL 223:24)

For Lawrence, modern Liberal democracy is a false democracy. But even Lawrence could hardly have foreseen the extent to which the mode of self-preservation would morph into anything as excessive as the modern consumer society.

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[417] On the rare occasions that Lawrence mentions Marx, he is negative, and appears to have little, or no, knowledge of his work.

[418] Eileen Crist points out that we still seem unable to envisage the possibility that well-being of the mind, body and the surrounding world can be built on anything but the idea of resources, and notes the way in which words like natural capital, ecological services, livestock, timber, have come to dominate contemporary language (Crist 28).

9.2.2 Neoliberalism and Lawrence

On the face of it, it might seem anachronistic to discuss Neoliberalism in connection with Lawrence, but the roots of Neoliberalism are dated back by Michel Foucault (in *Naissance de la biopolitique*) to a conference which was convened on the occasion of the publication of the book *The Good Society* (1937) by a near contemporary of Lawrence's, Walter Lippmann. Writing at a point when Liberalism was very much on the defensive, and when many believed that the Great Depression had proved beyond reasonable doubt that classical *laissez-faire* liberalism was a failure, Lippmann and his colleagues all knew that if it were to be saved, it had to be rethought. Lippmann wrote that 'the debacle of liberalism in the nineteenth century occurred when the thinking of liberals was arrested by their misunderstanding of laissez-faire and of the classical economics. It is a case of a great scientific movement suddenly inhibited by intellectual error' (Lippmann 203). Thus, whereas classical liberals believed in reducing the role of the state in the economy to an absolute minimum, the neo-liberals realised that from then on, the state would have to become the vehicle for advancing their aims. The condition for a revival of Liberalism was 'to accommodate the social order to the new economy; that end can be achieved only by continual and far-reaching reform of the social order' (Lippmann 237). In other words, he was advocating more state intervention, and extensive legal changes; thereby foreshadowing many of the developments to come.

However, modern Neoliberalism may be said to have gone even further, seeking, as Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval argue in their book on Neoliberalism, to alter man's very consciousness and to change the way we think. Citing Margaret Thatcher's formula: 'Economics are the method. *The object is to change the soul*' (Dardot and Laval 412),[419] they argue that the rationale behind Neoliberalism is to proactively encourage people to think of every aspect of our lives in terms of competition—each and every human activity must be viewed entirely in terms of productions, investments and costs. By putting competition and entrepreneurship at the very heart of society, modern Neoliberalism seems to assume, with little evidence to back it up, that competition is the most efficient model for society. Lawrence, however, is highly critical of competition. In *Movements of European History*, he argues presciently that competition between nations, like the competition between trees in a forest, only allows a few to emerge, and would probably just lead to more wars:

[419] The italics are their own; the citation originally comes from the *Sunday Times*, 7th May 1988.

> At first, plenty of room for all, and competition is the best thing possible, and equality of opportunity is the ideal. Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. Then some nations forge ahead, and get a stranglehold upon the natural resources around them. Still there must be progress, expansion, progress, expansion, free competition. All very well. But you can't progress upwards if another great tree has risen and sent out branches above you. You can't expand if your neighbour takes up all the room. You can't compete once your 'brother' has got a stranglehold on you. Then you've either got to give in, and gradually, gradually have the light of day taken from you. Or you have to fight. Sooner or later war is bound to come. (MEH 258:12)

In 'Fragment 1' of *Apocalypse*, Lawrence likens the time before the coming of Jesus to his, or our, own era.[420] Before, he maintains, 'man could not *conceive* of anything except the struggle of every man to be top dog', but now, 'we are as much imprisoned in war, in conflict, in that mean form of conflict called competition, in the mean fight for money, for a mere living […] as the men of Jesus' day were shut up in the prison of conquest' (A 160:30). Lawrence criticises in 'Education of the People' (1920) a 'universal peace which consists in the most sordid commercial and industrial competition' (RDP 160:22), complaining that:

> …having attempted, according to ideals, to convert all life and all living into one mode only, the productive mode, we have been forced to introduce into our productive activities the spirit of contest which is original and ineradicable in us. This spirit of contest takes the form of competition: commercial, industrial, spiritual, educational, and even religious competition. Was ever anything more humiliating than this spectacle of a mankind active in nothing but productive competition… (RDP 157:1)[421]

As we saw in chapter 7, Lawrence feels that this way of life is a sickness. What is needed is a new spirit of relation, and an end to individualism, rather than this mean competition between all and sundry, and many would now agree with Lawrence's assertion in 'Nottinghamshire and the Mining Countryside' (1929) that 'the industrial problem arises from the base forcing of all

[420] Lawrence argues that Jesus brought 'a new breath of love, and of tenderness' (A160:27).
[421] Lawrence is distinguishing between competing *for* something, which he dislikes, the wrong sort of conquest (see Chapter 7); and an honest, fiery contest which he approves of (RDP 157).

human energy into a competition of mere acquisition' (LEA 292).[422] In a letter to Russell, Lawrence describes his vision of a world in which people 'need never be as they are now on the defensive against each other, largely because of the struggle for existence, which is a real thing, even to those who need not make the struggle. So a vision of a better life must include a revolution of society' (2L 294).

Although Lippmann agreed with Lawrence that society needed to be reformed, he was a fervent advocate of economic liberalism, and what he proposed was not the new way of life based on *being* that Lawrence hoped for, but simply more of the same. Lippman clearly perceived the perturbations in the system, but instead of changing the system, he advocated changing man instead, arguing that the 'frictions and disturbances mark the points at which the social order is in conflict with the economy. They are the points where for one reason or another men failed to adapt themselves successfully' (Lippmann 211). There was no alternative to the current system, Lippmann felt, the problem was man's failure to adapt quickly enough to the rapidly changing conditions (Lipmann 211), and the discontent could only be tackled by encouraging man to become more adaptable (Lipmann 234). This was to be achieved by 'large social expenditure on eugenics and on education' (he does not appear to make any distinction between the two) (Lippmann 226), and state expenditure on infrastructure and leisure (presumably to keep the masses happy) (Lippmann 226). Therefore, unlike Lawrence, Lippmann remained steadfastly committed to the liberal model, and insisted that 'men cannot undo the consequences of the industrial revolution, that they are committed to the new mode of production […] This is the truly inexorable historical necessity. They can no more reverse this than they could return from manufacture to handicraft, from settled agriculture to a pastoral economy' (Lippmann 205). Lippmann seems genuinely horrified by the prospect of an end to liberalism which would mean that, 'men must dismantle and reverse the industrial revolution itself—as the autarchists are doing in Germany—and that by painful steps they must retrace the path back to isolated communities practising a relatively low degree of division of labour' (Lippmann 204). In other words, he was rejecting a return to more local communities, to greater autonomy, less alienated work, a reduced use of technology and energy, and hence less pollution—in short, the solutions that many might consider today to be part of the way forward. Lippmann was, therefore, an early exponent of Margaret Thatcher's famous 'there is no alternative', whereas Lawrence proposes a different model no longer based on a mode of

[422] In 'Introduction to Pictures' (1928), Lawrence asserts that 'the external conflict of war, or of industrial competition, is only a reflection of the war that goes on inside each human being' (LEA 172:24).

endless production and competition. Interestingly Lippmann actually refers to Lawrence in a footnote as he alludes to the need for the economy and society to be inextricably linked together:

> [if] the social heritage and the economy do not form a seamless web, there must be rebellion against the world, or renunciation of the world. That is why in epochs like our own, when society is at odds with the conditions of its existence, discontent drives some to active violence and some to asceticism and other-worldliness […] Some storm the barricades and others retire into a monastery. Thus it is that the greater part of the literature of our time is in one mood of literature a revolution and in another, often completely fused with it, a literature of escape. (Lippmann 212)

Probably thinking of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, he alleges that Lawrence is the latter, an escapist who 'fled from reality into sexual sensation with the fanaticism of an ascetic' (Lippmann 212). But this kind of description clearly suits liberals who can dismiss them as unrealistic, whereas it has become increasingly clear that the 'business-as-usual' path will ultimately lead to collapse. In 'Politics and Art' Booth advocates 'seeing Lawrence as part of a radical traditional developing a utopian trajectory' (Booth, Politics and Art 134), but it could be argued that calling Lawrence utopian suits all those who contend that there is no alternative to today's model.[423] As Booth suggests himself, Lawrence's trajectory 'can be seen as an effort to go beyond mere gesture' (Booth, Politics and Art 134), and indeed, Booth himself ends with a quote from Adorno, which, if Adorno is right, suggests that what might seem 'utopian' is perhaps more attainable than it first appears:

> It seems to me that what people have lost subjectively in regard to consciousness is very simply the capability to imagine the totality as something that could be completely different […] *My thesis about this would be that all humans deep down, whether they admit this or not, know that it would be possible or it could be different.* Not only could they live without hunger and probably without anxiety, but they could also live as free human beings. At the same time, the social apparatus has hardened itself against

[423] I understand utopia to mean 'no-place', i.e. that it can never really be realised.

> people, and thus, whatever appears before their eyes all over the world as attainable possibility, as the evident possibility of fulfilment, presents itself to them as radically impossible. (quoted in Booth 142, my italics)

If Adorno is right to affirm that all humans deep down know that it could be different, if they sense, as many seem intuitively to do so, that our current way of life is unhealthy and ultimately doomed to disaster, then perhaps Lawrence can be seen as something more than a mere utopian, and perhaps taken more seriously.

9.3 Lawrence and Being, The Fourth Way

Based on all that has preceded, it only remains to briefly sketch out the basic premises of what Lawrence's political philosophy would look like. Dugin describes the fourth political way, in terms which Lawrence would no doubt have approved of, as 'a kind of a philosophical New Year — an exciting leap into the unknown' (Dugin 35). The fourth way asserts that 'life is more important than growth' (Dugin 66), but in liberalism, according to Dugin, man has replaced God, philosophy and science have replaced religion; and most importantly, mankind has lost sight of *being*. Likewise, for Lawrence, the heart of any new political system must be the divine, creative mystery, and even if this kind of language might be hard to acknowledge nowadays, it is perhaps easier to think in Eileen Crist's terms when she writes: 'only from a perspective of profound deference for the living world can an integrated human life be imagined and created' (Crist 28). For Lawrence, too, as we have seen, the religious is akin to a sense of reverence and deference, of wonder and respect. And perhaps it is from this mind-set that a fresh awareness of *being* can be restored. Lawrence declares in 'America, Listen to Your Own' (1920), that we must believe in a new future:

> You must first have faith. Not rowdy and tub-thumping, but steady and deathless, faith in your own unrevealed, unknown destiny. The future is not a finished product, like the past. The future is a strange, urgent, poignant responsibility, something which urges inside a young race like sap, or like pregnancy, urging towards fulfilment. This urge you must never betray and never deny. It is more than all tradition, more than all law, more than all standards or monuments. Let the old world and the old way have been what they may, this is something other. Abide by that which is coming, not by that which has come. (SCAL 384:11)

But for a new type of politics to emerge, the old system must also be smashed, and politics must be reconsidered 'from new positions beyond the frameworks and clichés of the old ideologies' (Dugin 12). For Lawrence, this means renewing any political system from the bottom up, as he explains in a letter to his old friends, the Hopkins, 'believe me we shall get somewhere, after a while, a real change that alters things from the bottom' (2L 402), and again in 'Return to Bestwood' (1926): 'I know our vision of life is all wrong. We must be prepared to have a new conception of what it means, to live. And everybody should try to help to build up this new conception, and everybody should be prepared to destroy, bit by bit, our old conception' (LEA 23:28). Accordingly, Lawrence takes Russell to task for merely tinkering around at the margins instead of rethinking everything from the bottom-up: 'you are too old fashioned […] a new constructive idea of a new state is needed *immediately*. Criticism is *unnecessary*. It is behind the times. You *must* work out the idea of a new state, not go on criticising this old one' (2L 366). In the much later essay 'State of Funk' he writes, hopefully:

> There is a great change coming, bound to come. The whole money arrangement will undergo a change: what, I don't know. The whole industrial system will undergo a change. Work will be different and pay will be different. The owning of property will be different. Class will be different, and human relations will be modified and perhaps simplified. If we are intelligent, alert and undaunted, then life will be much better, more generous, more spontaneous, more vital, less basely materialistic. (LEA 220:25)

For a short period of time, Lawrence entertained the idea of founding a political community called Rananim with some close friends, although as Booth points out, the importance of this particular, relatively short-lived project has been over-exaggerated, and 'schemes Lawrence had at other times were different, involved other people, and were given alternative names' (Booth, Politics and Art 129). Nonetheless, they give an idea of what Lawrence was aiming at. In a letter to E. M. Forster, for instance, he writes, in a passage which perfectly encapsulates his pluralistic philosophy (not to mention the difficulty he had in finding people to adhere to his ideas): 'in my island, I wanted people to come without class or money, sacrificing nothing, but each coming with all his desires, yet knowing that his life is but a tiny section of a Whole: so that he shall fulfil his life in relation to the Whole. I wanted a real community, not built out of abstinence or a quality, but out of many fulfilled individualities seeking greater fulfilment. But I can't find anybody' (2L 266). In another letter to Forster, he claims that the aim is to break down the artificial barriers between man and 'to make life fuller and freer' (2L 292). And to

Lady Ottoline Morrell he expresses the hope that 'there should be a life wherein the struggle shall not be for money or for power, but for individual freedom and common effort towards good' (2L 272).

Lawrence's new state will be based on *being*, not on *having* as he makes clear in a letter to Lady Ottoline Morrell in 1915: 'One must always destroy the old Moloch of greediness and love of property and love of power. But think what a splendid world we shall have, when each man shall seek joy and understanding rather than getting and having' (2L 297), or in another letter to Barbara Low on the 11th of February 1915: 'We must revolutionise this system of life, that is based on *outside* things, money, property, and establish a system of life which is based on *inside* things' (2L 280). It is a life based not on total austerity, but on the principle of moderation. In 'Return to Bestwood' (1926), he affirms that:

> I know I want to own a few things: my personal things. But I also know I want to own no more than those. I don't want to own a house, nor land, nor a motor-car, nor shares in anything. I don't want a fortune — not even an assured income. At the same time, I don't want poverty and hardship. I know I need enough money to leave me free in my movements, and I want to be able to earn that money without humiliation. I know that most decent people feel very much the same in this respect: and the indecent people must, in their indecency, be subordinated to the decent. (LEA 23:17)

Furthermore, unlike Hobbes, Lawrence does not believe that the natural state of man is that of the war against all, *bellum omnium contra omnes*, and, as he maintains in 'The State of Funk' (1929), he remains convinced that 'people want to be more decent, more good-hearted than our social system of money and grab allows them to be. The awful fight for money, into which we are all forced, hurts our good nature more than we can bear. I am sure this is true of a vast number of people' (LEA 221:31).

Therefore, rather than being based upon production, competition, war and rivalry, Lawrence's fourth political way is also the way of tolerance and plurality. Throughout this study I have argued that Lawrences' thought is underpinned by the pluralistic pantheism that James had set out in *A Pluralistic Universe* as an attempt to solve the problem of the one and the many—and Lawrence's political ideas are no exception to this rule. There is a Whole, but it is only possible to know parts of it; yet, with each part constituting its own mini-world, each part needs to be respected because it affords us a glimpse of the Whole. Dugin whose fourth

political way is also an attempt to reconcile the tremendous diversity of humanity with the oneness of humanity, draws on Plotinus's concept of *nous,*[424] to argue that 'the future world should be noetic in some way—characterised by multiplicity; diversity should be taken as its richness and its treasure, and not as a reason for inevitable conflict: many civilisations, many poles, many centres, many sets of values on one planet and in one humanity. Many worlds…' (Dugin 197). In other words, the very diversity of different cultures, civilisations, and values is not only to be tolerated, but to be treasured. There is every reason to believe that in the novel *Mr Noon*, Gilbert Noon (Lawrence's fictional alter-ego) in the Isar Valley, also expresses Lawrence's own views when he delights in 'the sense of an infinite multiplicity of connections. […] Many magical lands, many magical peoples, all magnetic and strange, uniting to form the vast patchwork of Europe. The glamorous vast multiplicity, all made up of differences, mediaeval, romantic differences, this seemed to break his soul like a chrysalis into a new life' (MN 107:17). Realising that England is 'just a piece of local pattern in what was really a vast complicated, far-reaching design', Noon criticizes the universalising tendencies of modern society:

> He saw the white road, which seemed to him to lead to Russia. And he became unEnglished. 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. He loved the rich and free variegation of Europe, the manyness. His old obtuseness, which saw everything alike, in one term, fell from his eyes and from his soul, and he felt rich. There were so many, many lands and peoples besides himself and his own land. And all were magically different, and it was so nice to be one among many, to feel the horrible imprisoning oneness and insularity collapsed, a real delusion broken, and to know that the universal ideals and morals were after all only local and temporal. (MN 107:38)

As we have seen, the idea of relating to the other is a fundamental part of Lawrence's philosophy, as we can see in *Studies in Classic American Literature*, a book which Susan Sontag described in an acceptance speech as 'the most interesting book ever written about American culture' (Sontag 3). *Studies in Classic American Literature* is a book about the clues

[424] 'The important concept of *nous* (intellect) developed by the Greek philosopher Plotinus corresponds to our ideal. The intellect is one and multiple at the same time, because it has multiple differences in itself — it is not uniform or an amalgam, but taken as such with many parts, and with all their distinct particularities (Dugin 197).

hidden underneath the surface, and as Sontag highlights, about the profound differences between the hidden depths of American culture and the old, worn-out European ways of being. Thus, as Lawrence contends in the first version of 'The Spirit of Place', American literature contains 'strange pulses of new experience, incipient newness within the old decadence' (SCAL 167:20), and perhaps 'the incipient realities of a whole new era of experience' (SCAL 167:33). In 'America, Listen to your Own' (1920), Lawrence writes: 'Americans must take up life where the Red Indian, the Aztec, the Maya, the Incas left it off. They must pick up the life-thread where the mysterious Red race let it fall. They must catch the pulse of the life which Cortes and Columbus murdered. […] It means a surpassing of the old European life-form' (SCAL 384:34). Otherness is important for Lawrence, as it is also a manifestation, a different one, of the divine mystery. Thus Lawrence writes in 'Democracy': 'when I stand with another man, who is himself, and when I am truly myself, then I am only aware of a Presence, and of the strange reality of Otherness. There is me, and there is *another being*' (RDP 80:18). All the value lies for Lawrence in this encounter with otherness: 'it is this change in the way of experience, change in being, which we should now study in the American books. We have thought and spoken till now in terms of likeness and oneness. Now we must learn to think in terms of difference and otherness' (SCAL 168:9).

But Lawrence's philosophy is also about freedom, as we saw in the previous chapter. For a start, man must be freed from economic bondage. It is no use being free politically if, as he asserts in the article 'Is England still a Man's Country?' (1928),[425] everyone is still compelled to work, 'all day long and every day, all his life, he is condemned to a job. There's no getting away from it' (LEA 141:33). Thus, he declares that:

> … the insuperable difficulty to modern man is economic bondage. Slavery! Well, history is the long account of the abolishing of endless forms of slavery, none of which we ever want back again. Now we've got a new form of slavery. If every man who feels the burden of it determined ultimately to abolish it, using all his wits and powers and accepting no ready-made formula — then England would be a man's country, sure as eggs. (LEA 142:18)

[425] Lawrence's point in this article is to explain that men's problems shouldn't be blamed on the women, 'it's no good blaming the women. Women, poor things, have to live, just as much as men do. It's no good whining that England is no more a man's country' (LEA 142:110). He considers that the root cause to men's problems is the fact that they do not fight against economic bondage.

Secondly, even political and economic freedom is insufficient, if there is not also a positive form of freedom. Marx's distinction in 'On the Jewish Question', between *political* freedom and *human* freedom, is similar to the distinction which underlies Lawrence's question in 'The Spirit of Place' (1922): 'which will win in America? The escaped slave or the new whole man?' (SCAL 18:33). Genuine freedom for Lawrence comes not from escaping (freedom-from), but from belonging, and having a purpose:

> Men are free when they belong to a living, organic, *believing* community, active in fulfilling some unfulfilled, perhaps unrealized purpose. Not when they are escaping to some wild west. The most unfree souls go west, and shout of freedom. Men are freest when they are most unconscious of freedom. The shout is a rattling of chains, always was. (SCAL 17:35)

In the 'Preface to *Touch and Go*', Lawrence proclaims that 'if it were a profound struggle that we were convinced would bring us to a new freedom, a new life, then it would be a creative activity, a creative activity in which death is a climax in the progression towards new being' (Plays 373).

Finally, and this has been the main theme of the whole book, politics for Lawrence is about meaningfulness. In 'Aristocracy', Lawrence writes that the aristocrat of aristocrats is he who is '*most alive*' (RDP 375:33). The goal of living is 'the achieving of a vaster, vivider cycle of life', and life is about 'giving the clue to a higher cycle still' (RDP 376:2). The fact that Lawrence doesn't find this significance in the democracy of his day, is perhaps nowhere better expressed than in this letter sent from Australia to Frieda's sister Else on the 13th of June 1922:

> This is the most democratic place I have ever been in. And the more I see of democracy the more I dislike it. It just brings everything down to the mere vulgar level of wages and prices, electric light and water closets, and nothing else. You never knew anything so nothing, nichts, nullus, niente, as the life here. They have good wages, they wear smart boots, and the girls all have silk stockings; they fly around on ponies and in buggies—sort of low one-horse traps—and in motorcars. They are always vaguely and meaninglessly on the go. And it all seems so empty, so nothing, it almost makes you sick. They are healthy, and to my thinking almost imbecile. That's what the life in a new country does to you: it makes you so material, so outward, that your real inner

> life and your inner self dies out, and you clatter round like so many mechanical animals. (4L 263)

Instead, what Lawrence seeks is a new society, ‘based on the life values not on the money values’ (LEA 220:16). Lawrence’s hope is that a new society: ‘will rule the world; a confraternity of the living sun, making the embers of financial internationalism and industrial internationalism pale upon the hearth of the earth’ (RDP 376:38).

Conclusion

Ultimately, even if Lawrence's non-fiction is indeed, as I have argued, about searching for clues to the divine mystery, Lawrence's ultimate goal was perhaps an even more ambitious one, that of changing the world; and it is for this reason that his work can be considered as the first adumbrations of a possible future alternative. In the letter to Gordon Campbell cited earlier, Lawrence writes:

> You see I *know* that if I could write the finest lyrical poetry or prose that ever was written, if I could be put on the pinnacle of immortality, I wouldn't. I would rather struggle clumsily to put into art the new Great Law of God and Mankind […] and if I botch out a little of this utterance, so that other people are made alert and active, I don't care whether I am great or small, or rich or poor, or remembered or forgotten. What is it to me. Only there is something I *must* say to mankind… (2L 302)

This was Lawrence's mission.

As we near the end of this long and detailed look at Lawrence's philosophy, we now have a better idea of what motivated Lawrence, but also a better idea of what Lawrence proposes for the future, and why his vision has proved so fruitful in the first moves towards a new, more ecological model, and towards bringing the current moribund system to an end. In 1972, the Meadows Report predicted that if humanity continued on the same trajectory it was doomed to extinction, but since then little has changed.[426]

Lawrence's non-fiction is about searching for meaning in a world which Lawrence felt was so deeply in crisis that it needed to be destroyed and born anew. The starting point of this quest is Lawrence's loss of faith in Christianity and his rejection of scientific materialism, and it was his early readings of Schopenhauer and James that showed him the way forward. James's pluralistic pantheism rejected the materialism and monotheism which he could no longer believe in, and focused instead on the meaningfulness of individual beings and things. Lawrence forged a basic philosophy, which enabled him to reconcile his desire for individuality

[426] I discuss the *Meadows Report* of 1972, in my article: "We Are the Conquerors for the Moment": Impending Crisis in D. H. Lawrence's Non-fiction (Gupwell). Jared Diamond's compelling book *Collapse* also documents the many ways in which the current business model is likely to make life unliveable for future generations in the United States. Of course, the adverse effects are not confined to the United States, and have increasingly become a global phenomenon.

with this desire for communion and unity with his fellow humans and with the world. Schopenhauer and Nietzsche drew a distinction, which Lawrence adopted, between on the one hand a real world, the world-in-itself, a dynamic, unpredictable and mysterious world, the world of the fourth dimension, and on the other hand, the three-dimensional phenomenal world we know, existing in time and space, a world which we falsely believe is based on facts and rules and therefore predictable. It was this tension between a calculable world and a pluralistic pantheistic world which no doubt inspired the provisional title for a philosophy book that he never completed, *Goats and Compasses*, the compasses representing the calculable world, and the goat standing, of course, for Pan. When he conceived of the title, Lawrence probably had in mind Blake's satirical depiction of God as a Newton-like figure on the frontispiece of *Europe: A Prophecy*.[427] And Lawrence himself represented Pan in one of his paintings shown below, *Dance Sketch*. Catherine Brown notes that 'like Nietzsche's, Lawrence's obsession with Christ was one as rival and corrector, and by Pan Lawrence understood what Christ had failed to value or understand' (Brown 428). Glimpses of the world of *being* (as opposed to the world of mere *existence)* are glimpses of the divine mystery, glimpses that afford us meaningfulness and significance in a human world that finds itself in an impasse. Every object, in fact, has a double

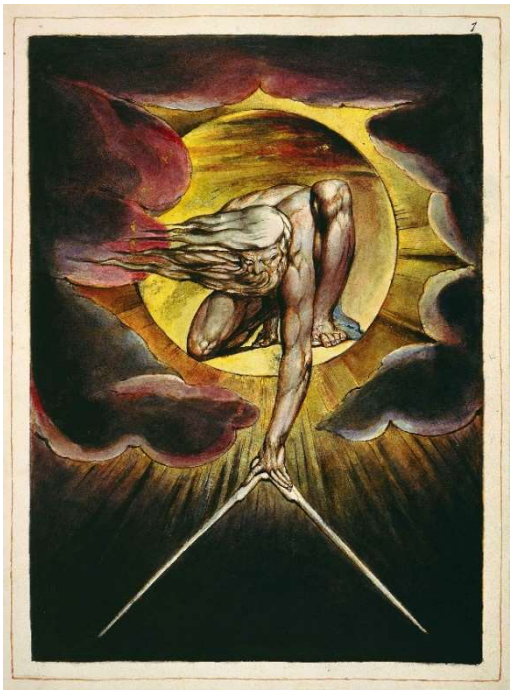

Figure 10: The Ancient of Days, Setting a Compass to the Earth, William Blake, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge University

[427] Jessie Chambers confirms that Lawrence was very taken with Blake: 'As we walked through the wood he talked to me in his rapt way about Blake, telling me what a wonderful man he was, quite poor, who taught himself everything he knew; how he made pictures and wrote poems that were interdependent, and did the printing and engraving himself, in fact producing the book entirely by his own hands. He told me that Blake's wife was a poor girl whom he taught to read, and also to print and engrave, and what a marvellous helpmate she was to him . . . For a little time we lived with Blake and his wife' (Chambers 45).

aspect, it exists in the third dimension, but it is also a manifestation of the fourth dimension, the divine mystery that lies behind all existence, and which we can only hope to catch glimpses of.

In a world which was, as he learnt from Nietzsche, 'human, all-too-human', the wrongness of our human vision of the world was an important focus for Lawrence. Lawrence shows that perception is always a kind of interpretation, and that there are myriad ways of interpreting the same phenomenon. Quite apart from the things we ignore, there are many things we don't see because we don't know what we are looking for: we only see according to our conventions. Lawrence criticized the idea that the world is exactly as we see it, and 'the escape from the domination of the ready-made mental concept, the mental consciousness stuffed full of cliches', as he puts it in his essay on Cézanne (chapter 4). Consequently, our mental conceptions of the world are deceptive, the mind is a faculty which has been misused. Instead of using the mind as an instrument, we have instead fallen into its thrall. Having invented our mental abstractions, we subsequently take them to be the underlying reality of our existence. And yet, abstractions are, Lawrence continually asserts, highly artificial and misleading, they lead to false conceptions of the world. And like James he considers that concepts negate reality altogether. In fact, influenced by James's chapter on Bergson's ideas, Lawrence quickly comes to believe that intellectual knowledge is actually the most superficial knowledge, and that theoretical knowledge of things is much inferior to a more intuitive, living, or sympathetic understanding of them.

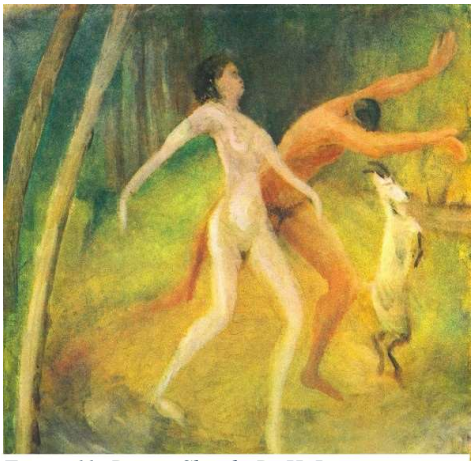

Figure 11: Dance-Sketch, D. H. Lawrence

Lawrence's search for alternative visions stems from this realisation that mankind has become far too cerebral, and lost contact with the intuitive, meaningful reality of things. Lawrence believes we need to be humbler and look for new, more fulfilling alternatives, for other worlds which may be found in other humans, in animals, plants, trees, and so forth. Furthermore, an alternative to the modern philosophico-scientific world may be found in those ancient civilisations, which were far more intuitively in contact with the divine creative mystery of the world. Combined with the search for something new, his horror of the anthropomorphism of the modern world, is also the focus of much of his travel literature. Lawrence's adherence to the Jamesian idea that the world is a multiverse, a distributed world

of multiple, inter-related points of view, means that every person, every creature, every phenomenon is, at the same time, a world-in-itself and part of the great whole.

However, the modern world has become so mechanical that our very behaviour tends to lack all spontaneity. Both Lawrence and Heidegger saw the inevitable result of imposing a particular framework on man as leading inevitably to a kind of 'standardised humanity' (Basic Questions 184), which would threaten human freedom.[428] Both our feelings and the ideals we live by have become automatic, stale and meaningless. Moreover, the desire for security and control, our desire to dominate our environment, has led to an obsession with property, and the superfluous accumulation of things we do not really need. For Lawrence, the paradigmatic example of this desire to control and subdue the world is the example of Benjamin Franklin, the perfect product of the modern mechanized human world, and Lawrence clearly derives great pleasure from transforming Franklin's credo into his own personal terms: 'Know that you are responsible to the gods inside you and to the men in whom the gods are manifest. Recognize your superiors and your inferiors, according to the gods. This is the root of all order' (SCAL 27:10); 'Lose no time with ideals; serve the Holy Ghost; never serve mankind' (SCAL 27:25).

What, then, are Lawrence's solutions? For one, the re-establishment of the old relations with our fellow-men and women, and with the cosmos, and getting into a healthier, more natural relation with our surrounds, so as to create what Hartmut Rosa calls a resonance, but which, in fact, goes far beyond this, signifying a quite new way of *being* in the world, based henceforth on living well and not on the accumulation and consumption of resources. This totally new outlook requires us to be more respectful of the cosmos. As Eileen Crist writes recently, in an article on the Anthropocene:

> … factoring in a candid admission of our powerlessness to create (or even imagine) another way of life might yield: 'we are so impotent to control our numbers, appetites, and plundering technologies, and so indifferent to our swallowing up the more-than-human world, that we are now a colonizing force in the biosphere stripping it of its biological wealth and potential, as well as of its extraordinary beauty and creative art'. (Crist 23)

[428] 'It is precisely in *Enframing*, which threatens to sweep man away into ordering as the supposed single way of revealing, and so thrusts man into the danger of the surrender of his free essence—it is precisely in this extreme danger that the most innermost indestructible belongingness of man within granting may come to light…' (Question Concerning Technology 32).

For Lawrence, the answer is to create new, living connections, and look towards other ways of being, like those formally followed by the Native American Indians, or by other ancient civilisations—all of which may afford us clues about how to live better in future times. As he says in his rewriting of Franklin's credo: 'To be sincere is to remember that I am I, and that the other man is not me' (SCAL 27:30). In more recent times, Donna Haraway has, like Lawrence, furiously criticised the inability of humanity to think through the idea of relationality, (which she calls sympoesis, *making-with*, the idea that everything is interrelated), or indeed humanity's inability to encounter 'the sheer not-us' (Haraway 59), and to 'reworld, re-imagine, relive and reconnect with each other' (Haraway 54), or even to recognise, for example, that 'diverse corals and diverse people and peoples are at stake to and with each other' (Haraway 59).

But it also means forging a quite new conception of freedom, one based on a positive sense of freedom, and not merely on a negative conception of freedom which leaves us drifting without any ties. It entails, thereby, liberating ourselves by rethinking the way we live our lives, our work, our everyday values. It also entails getting back into contact with our authentic selves, and with a more intuitive and spontaneous way of knowing. Rewriting Franklin he writes, 'the soul has many motions, many gods come and go. Try and find your deepest issue, in every confusion, and abide by that' (SCAL 28:9).

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Appendix 1: Mentions of the word ‘clue’

Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious

1. And if we could but watch this prime nucleus, we should no doubt realize that throughout all the long and incalculable history of the individual it still remains central and prime, the source and clue of the living unconscious, the origin. (19: 29)
2. … that correspondence between the individual entity and the external universe which is the clue to all growth and development. (26: 40)
3. Suffice it here to hint that the solar plexus is the first and main clue to the great alimentary-sexual activity in man, an activity at once functional and creatively emotional… (33:3)
4. …whilst the cardiac plexus is first and main clue to the respiratory system and the active-productive manifestations… (33:6)
5. …the clue to respiration and hand activity and vision is in the breast… (33:9)
6. While the clue to alimentation and passion and sex is in the lower centres. (33:10)
7. The great organs, as well as the lymphatic glands, depend each on its specific centre of the unconscious; each is derived from a specific dynamic conscious-clue, what we might almost call a soul-cell. (33:12)

Fantasia of the Unconscious

8. The very soul itself is a flux of change and transmutation. But the clue, the soul’s self remains integral all the time, a single flame, though apparently as evanescent as the foam of a waterfall (61:32)
9. Which is what the early Greek philosophers were always saying. And which still seems to me the real truth, the clue to the cosmos. Instead of life being drawn from the sun, it is the emanation from life itself, that is, from all the living, plants and creatures, which nourishes the sun. (64:37)
10. The unconscious is not, of course, the clue to the Freudian theory. The real clue is sex. A sexual motive is to be attributed to all human activity (66:10)
11. That is to say, the act of coition is the essential clue to sex (66:30)
12. Particularly the great lumbar ganglion, which is the clue to our sensual passionate pride and independence (93:18)
13. Our idealism is the clue to our fixed will. Love, beauty, benevolence, progress, these are the words we use. But the principle we evoke is a principle of barren, sanctified compulsion of all life. We want to put all life under compulsion. (114:13)
14. There is only one clue to the universe. And that is your individual soul within the individual being (167: 27)
15. And therefore, it is time for the idealist and the scientist —they are one and the same, really— to stop his monkey-jargon about the atom and the origin of life and the mechanical clue to the universe. There isn’t any such thing. (168:1)
16. I have tried and even brought myself to believe in a clue to the outer universe (168:21)
17. … for my part, I know that life, and life only is the clue to the universe. And that the living individual. And that the living individual is the clue to life (168:28)
18. The spontaneous, living, individual soul, this is the clue, and the only clue. All the rest is derived (169:24)
19. The sun itself is the soul of the inanimate universe, the aggregate clue to the substantial death, if we may call it so (169:37)
20. The moon is the clue to our earth’s individual identity, in the wide universe (170:19)
21. The moon is not water. But it is the soul of water, the invisible clue to all the waters (173:10)

22. And so we have a clue to gravitation (173:39)
23. And the clue of us sinks to the earth's centre, the clue of our death, of our *weight* (174:13)
24. And as living individuals we are the one, pure clue to our own cosmos (175 :9)
25. To which cosmos, living individuals have always been the clue, since time began, and will always be the clue, while time lasts (175:10)
26. Death, our earth's quick, powerful centre-clue (176:3)
27. To the pure polarity of the moon fly the essential waters of our universe. Which essential waters, at the moon's clue, are only an invisible energy, a polarity of the moon (176: 35)
28. The moon is the mother of darkness. She is the clue to the active darkness (189:1)
29. Collapse, maybe. But it must carry through all the collapse the living clue to the next civilisation (190:1)

Apocalypse

Fragment 1

30. The seven promises to the seven churches ought to be the real clue to the Apocalypse. But as a matter of fact…. (175:39)

Fragment 2

31. In definite religion the perceptions are referred back to consciously till they reach the clue which holds all things together, God. (190:25)
32. But in the way of affirmation, image adds itself to image in a humming unison like a swarm of bees, till at last the individual consciousness consummates itself, the swarm is completed upon the clue, the God-idea, the humming unison of the consciousness rises to a pitch where it transcends… (192:18)

Studies in Classic American literature

Final version

33. The stark, loveless, wordless unison of two men who have come to the bottom of themselves. This is the nucleus of a new society, the clue to a world-epoch. (58:20)
34. This is the new, great thing, the clue, the inception of a new humanity (62:22)
35. This brings us to Edgar Allan Poe. The clue to him lies in the motto he chose for Ligeia (68:9)
36. He decided, therefore, that the clue to the strangeness lay in the mystery of will (6)
37. But having recognized that the clue was in her gigantic volition, he should have realized.. (71:38)
38. And when she dies, the clue, which he only lived to grasp, dies with her. (73:2)
39. No doubt like Poe, he wanted to get the 'clue' to them. That was all. The two men go (136:10)

First version (1918-1919)

40. '…they cut and destroyed the living bond between men […] And for this passional contact gradually was substituted the mechanical bond of purposive utility. The spontaneous passion of social unison once destroyed, then it as possible to establish the perfect mechanical concord, the concord of a number of parts to a vast whole, a stupendous productive mechanism […] this is the clue to the western democracy. (176:16)
41. … the great psyche, which we have evolved through two thousand years of effort, must die, and not only die, must be reduced back to its elements by a long, slow process of disintegration,

living disintegration. This is the clue to Edgar Allan Poe, and to the art that succeeds him. (229:18)

42. Having recognised the clue to Ligeia in her gigantic volition there must inevitably ensue the struggle of wills (233:23)
43. For the clue or quick of the universe lies in the creative mystery. And the clue or active quick of the creative mystery lies in the human psyche. Hence, paradoxical as it may seem, if we conceive of God, we must conceive of him in personal terms. (243: 2)
44. Moreover the clue to the movement [the transcendental movement of the Brook Farm] lay in the desire to subject or disintegrate the primary sensual self. (255:35)

Intermediate version

45. Having such a clue. We can begin to find the meanings of the Rosy Cross (267:11)
46. Nevertheless, if we must imagine the most perfect clue to the eternal waters, we think of woman (267:31)
47. The clue, the connecting mystery, is love, sympathy, St. Paul's "charity" (359:31)
48. This is the clue to his cryptic "one identity" (359:37).

Reflections on the death of a porcupine

Education of the People

49. An infant is a new clue to an as-yet-unformed human being (117:40)
50. A little child has one clue to itself, central within itself. it is new pulp, busy with differentiation towards the great goal of fulfilled being. Instead of worshipping the child, and seeing in it a divine emission which time will stale, we ought to realise that here is a new little clue to a human being (118:6)
51. Upon this clue of his own identity every man is fashioned. And the clue of a man's own identity is a man's own self or soul (101:35)
52. It starts the proud geste of independence. This is the clue to early education: movement, physical motion (144:29)
53. Here is the clue to the *bourgeois*. He will have no honest fiery contest (157:10)

On Being a Man

54. From the previously unknown passion, and the fierce repudiation of false values should have ripened the seed of a whole new way of experience, the clue to a whole new era. (221:15)

The Crown

55. Power is sheer flame, and spirit is sheer flame, and between then is the clue of the Holy Ghost. But David put a false clue between them; the clue of his own ego, cunning and triumphant (269:4)
56. Between the flux of life and the flux of death. But the real clue is the Holy Ghost, that moves us on into the state (286:9)

Blessed are the Powerful

57. And to find out *how* the life in you wants to be lived, and to live it, is terribly difficult. Somebody has to give us a clue. (323:5)

…. Love was Once a Little Boy

58. But in the frail, subtle desirousness of the true male, towards everything female , and the equally frail, indescribable desirability of every female for every male, lies the real clue to the equating, or the *relating*, of things which otherwise are incommensurable (339:24)

Reflections on the death of the porcupine

59. The clue to all existence is being. But you can't have being without existence, any more than you can have the dandelion flower without the leaves and the long tap root. (359:15)
60. The Holy Ghost is that which holds the light and the dark, the day and the night, the wet and the sunny, united in one little clue. There it sits, in the seed of the dandelion (359:25)
61. So the Holy Ghost leaves the clue of himself behind in the seed and wanders forth in the comparative chaos of our universe, seeking another incarnation (360:26)
62. Man as yet, is less than half-grown. Even his flower-stem has not appeared yet. He is all leaves and roots, without any clue put forth. No sign of bud anywhere. (360:30)
63. To men the sun is becoming stale, and the earth sterile. But the sun itself will never become stale, nor the earth barren. It is only that the *clue* is missing inside men. They are like flowerless, seedless fat cabbages, nothing inside. (360:38)
64. Vitality depends upon the clue of the Holy Ghost inside a creature, a man, a nation, a race. When the clue goes, the vitality goes. And the Holy Ghost seeks forever a new incarnation... (361:1)

Aristocracy

65. Perhaps Dostoevsky was more vividly alive than Plato: culminating a more vivid life circle, and giving the clue towards a higher circle still. (376:2)
66. But the clue hidden, as it always is hidden, in every revelation, underneath what is stated. (376:3)

A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover

67. To the priest, sex is the clue to marriage and marriage is the clue to the daily life of the people and the Church is the clue to the greater life (318:3)
68. Marriage is the clue to human life, but there is no marriage apart from the wheeling sun and the nodding earth, from the straying of the planets and the magnificence of the fixed stars. (323:35)

Mornings in Mexico

69. Nothing but the touch, the spark of contact. That, no more. That, which is most elusive, still the only treasure. Come, and gone, and yet the clue itself. (55: 18)

Sketches of Etruscan Places

70. Pharaohs and kings of Nineveh, kings of the east and etruscan Lucumones, they are the living clue to the pure fire, to the cosmic vitality (58:21)
71. They are the vivid key to life, the vermilion clue to the mystery and the delight of death and life (58:23)
72. The clue to the Etruscan life was the Lucumo, the religious prince. (59:13)
73. The fish is the anima, the animate life, the very clue to the vast sea, the watery element (60:33)
74. And if you live by the cosmos, you look in the cosmos for your clue (61:38)

75. Every religion, every philosophy, and science itself, each has a clue to the cosmos, to the becoming aware of the cosmos. Each clue leads to its own goal of consciousness, then is exhausted (176:20)
76. But in the bewildering experience of searching for the etruscans there is the one steady clue that we can follow: or rather, there are two clues. The first is the peculiar physical or *bodily*, lively quality of all the art […] the second clue is the more concrete, because more ideal presence of the symbols (178:25)
77. So we have the two clues, that of the dominant idea, or half-idea, in the religious symbols; and that of the dominant feeling, in the peculiar physical freeness and exuberance and spontaneity. It is the spontaneity of the flesh itself. These are the two clues to the Etruscans (178:37)

David

78. Nymphs and Hamadryads, Silenus, Pan and the Fauns and Satyrs: clue to all these, Dionysus, Iacchus, Dithyrambus (187:7)

Europe vs America

79. There is really much more life in deep insouciance, which really is the clue to faith, than in this.. (200:37)

Late Essays and articles:

Hymns in a man's life

80. ... *stand up for Jesus, Ye soldiers of the Lord.* Here is the clue to the ordinary Englishman (134:28)

Introduction to Pictures

81. It is difficult to know what name to give to that most central and vital clue to the human being, which clinches him into vital being. The best is to call it his vital sanity. We then escape the rather nauseating emotional suggestions of words like soul and spirit and holy ghost (169:36)

Introduction to these paintings

82. That is the great clue to bourgeois psychology: the reward business (192:40)
83. Cezanne's last water-colour landscapes, made up of a few touches on blank paper, are a satire on landscape altogether. *They leave so much to the imagination*! – the immortal cant phrase, which means they give you the clue to a cliché and the cliché comes. That's what the cliché exists for. And that sort of imagination is just a rag-bag memory stored with thousands and thousands of old really worthless sketches, images etc., clichés. (215:4)

Pictures on the wall

84. The general public feels itself a hopeless ignoramus when confronted with modern works of art. It has no clue to the whole unnatural business of modern art, and is just hostile (262:12)

We Need One Another

85. I have loved or hated or truly known. I am born with the clue to my soul. The wholeness I must achieve… (301)

Autobiographical fragment

86. And if you want to know what the next generation will be like, you must fathom the secret dreams of your wife: the woman of forty or so. There you will find the clue. (54:1)

Introductions and Reviews

Review (periodical version) of *Gifts of Fortune* by H. M. Tomlinson

87. The sea itself tempts us to travel. But what is the real nature of the temptation? Mr, Tomlinson gives us the clue for his own case. (IR 293:21)

Foreword to *All things are Possible*, by Leo Shestov

88. In his paragraph on The Russian Spirit, Shestov gives us the real clue to Russian literature (5:1)

Review of Fallen leaves by V.V. Rozanov

89. There is the clue to the whole man's life: this "dreaminess" when he is like stone, insentient, and can do nothing, yet can do "anything." (IR 350:26)

The American Edition of New Poems (Poetry of the Present)

90. The clue to all his utterance lies in the sheer appreciation of the instant moment (CP 183)
91. The quick of all the universe, of all creation is the incarnate, carnal self. Poetry gave us the clue: free verse: Whitman (CP185)

Study of Thomas Hardy

The Future of the Novel

92. But these are novels with a clue for the future, a new impulse, a new motive, a new inspiration. They don't care about how it is just now, or how it was in the past… what they want is to put a new impulse into the world. (154: 23)

Art and Morality

93. and I, in my ego, am the seer and the clue to all things' (*ironic* reference to mankind) 234:38

Morality and the Novel

94. The relationship between man and woman will change for ever, and will for ever be new, and will forever be the central clue to human life, even more central than eating and drinking and reproducing (STH 242:30)
95. It is the *relation itself* which is the quick and the central clue to life, not any accompanying contingency like children, family, home (STH 242:32)

John Galsworthy, Fragment (The individual consciousness v the social consciousness)

96. The social consciousness can only be analytical, critical, constructive but not creative, sensational but not passionate, emotional but without true feeling. It can know but it cannot be. It is always made up of a duality to which there is no clue. And the one half of the duality neutralizes, in the long run, the other half. So that, whether it is Nebuchadnezzar or Francis of Assisi you arrive at the same thing, nothingness. (251:23) (NOTE to which there is NO clue)

Germans and English

97. That is the clue to the Englishman. He is born alone. He is proud of…

Preface to Touch and Go

98. The only clue-word is People's for all that (Plays)

Appendix 2: Dates of Composition for Lawrence's Non-Fiction

Date of Composition	**Name**	**Notes**
March 1908	Art and the Individual (1st version)	1st version prepared for the talk
Sept 1908	Art and the Individual: A Paper for Socialists	Version sent to Blanch Jennings
Feb 1913	Review of Georgian Poetry for Rhythm	Features one of Lawrence's own poems
1913	Foreword to Sons and Lovers	
1914	Study of Thomas Hardy	Published only in 1932 (and then only ch 3)
July - August 1914	A Chapel among the Mountains, A Hay-Hut among the Mountains, With the Guns	
1915	Goats and Compasses	Destroyed
	The Crown (1st version)	Slightly modified in 1925
July 1915	Twilight in Italy: The Crucifixion Across the Mountains	Rewriting of the 1913 version 'Christs in the Tyrol'
August 1915	Twilight in Italy: The Spinner and the Monks	1st drafts were in 1913
Sept 1915	Twilight in Italy: The Theatre, Lemon Gardens (2nd version)	
Oct 1915	Twilight in Italy: Il Duro, Italians in exile, the Return Journey	
1917	The Reality of Peace, Love, Life, Whistling of Birds	
1917	At the Gates	lost
1917	SCAL: Crevecoeur, Franklin (1st version)	
Feb 1918	SCAL; Poe (1st Version)	
June 1918	SCAL: Whitman (1st version)	
July 1918	SCAL: The Spirit of Place (1st)	Probably in July, but it is not known exactly when

1919	Clouds	
Aug 1919	Preface to 'Touch and Go'	
Aug 1919	Preface to 'New Poems' [Poetry of the Present]	
Sept 2019	Foreword to *All things Are Possible*, by Leo Shestov	
1919	Democracy	
Dec 1919 - Jan 1920	Psychology and the Unconscious	
1919 - 1921	David	Exact date of composition unknown
1920	Education of the people	
Dec. 1920	[America, Listen to Your Own], intended as the Foreword to *Studies in Classic American Literature* (1920)	Appeared in the *NEW Republic* under the title in square brackets
1921	Movements in European History	
Feb 1921	Sea and Sardinia	
June 1921	Fantasia of the Unconscious	Written in the woods near Baden Baden (intro xl11)
Dec 1921 - jan 1922	Intro to the memoirs of Maurice Magnus	
1922	The Future of the Novel	Probably around March 1922
Oct-Nov 1922	Certain Americans and an Englishmen; Indians and an Englishman; Taos	About the Bursum Bill Written late 1922; as part of pueblos and an Englishman, broken up also into Indians and an Englishman, Taos
1922	Studies in Classic American Literature (final version)	
1923	Au revoir, USA	
1923	The Proper Study	

1923	Review of A Second Contemporary Verse Anthology	Mid-September
Feb 1924	Review of John Oman's The Book of Revelation	
Feb 1924	Letter from Germany	
May 1924	Pan in America	1st version
1924	Paris Letter	
1924	On Coming home	
	On Being Religious	
1924	On Being a Man	
1924	On Human Destiny	
	Books	
1924	Epilogue to MEH	
	On Taking the Next Step	unfinished
1924	Climbing down Pisgah	
1925	Resurrection	Had just read Tolstoy's
1925	The Plumed serpent	
1925	Accumulated Mail	
1925	Art and Morality/ Morality and the Novel	
1925	The Novel	
1925	Why the Novel Matters	
1925	The Novel and the Feelings	
1925	The Crown (+ note)	redrafted
1925	…. Love was Once a Little Boy	
1925	Aristocracy	
	Him with his Tail in his Mouth	
	Blessed Are the Powerful	
1925	Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine	
Feb 1926	Paris Letter	Possibly revised later in the year.
Oct 1926	Introduction to The Memoirs of the Duc de Lauzun	Both versions

Oct 1926	Return to Bestwood	This date is not conclusively established, but it was probably written around this date.
Nov 1926	Review of Gifts of Fortune by H. M. Tomlinson	
Feb. – April 1927	Flowery Tuscany	
1927	John Galsworthy (and Fragment)	
1927	Mornings in Mexico	
April 1927	Review of *Solitaria* by Rozanov	
August 1927	Review of *The Social Basis of Consciousness* by Trigant Burrow	
June 1927 - 1929	Sketches of Etruscan Places	Writing Cerveteri,
Oct 1927	Autobiographical Fragment	
Dec 1927	Review of '*Pedro of Valvida - Conqueror of Chile* by Cunninghame Graham'	
April 1928	Introduction to Chariot of the Sun by Harry Crosby [Chaos in Poetry]	
Sept 1928	Hymns in a Man's Life	For a collection of essays
Nov 1928	Enslaved by Civilisation	
Nov 1928	Do Women Change	A later version was written in1929 for *Vanity Fair*
Nov 1928	Is England Still a Man's Country	Published in *The Daily Express*
Dec 1928	New Mexico	
Dec 1928	Introduction to Pictures	
Jan 1929	Introduction to These Paintings	
Feb. 1929	Introduction to *Bottom Dogs*	
Feb 1929	The State of Funk	
April 1929	A Propos of 'Lady Chatterley's Lover'	2nd draft October 1929
April 1929	Pornography and Obscenity	

Aug 1929	The Risen Lord	
Aug 1929	Men Must Work and Women as Well	
Sept 1929	Nottingham and the Mining Countryside	
Oct 1929	Nobody Loves Me	Exact date unknown (between 1927 and 1929)
Nov 1929	We Need One Another	
Nov 1929	The Real Thing	
Nov 1929	Fragment 1, Fragment 2 Apocalypse, Apocalypsis II	
1929-30	The Dragon of the Apocalypse by Frederick Carter	Ms sent 6 Jan 1930
December 1929	The Apocalypse	
Jan 1930	Introduction to the Grand Inquisitor	
February 1930	Review of Eric Gill's 'Art Nonsense and Other Essays'	

Appendix 3: Catalogue of Abstractions

Apocalypse

1. Then again the cosmos became anathema to the Protestants after the Reformation. They substituted the non-vital universe of forces and mechanistic order, everything else became abstraction, and the long, slow death of the human being set in. (79:10)
2. [More positive use of the word by Lawrence] It was a knowledge based not on words but on images. The abstraction was not into generalisations or into qualities, but into symbols. (91:30)
3. We must remember that the old human conscious process has to see something happen, every time. Everything is concrete, there are no abstractions. (95:13)
4. With the Orphics, the tedious idea of "escaping the wheel of birth" had begun to abstract men from life. (131:31)
5. Man has several beings, not only one. When I get to heaven, no doubt that shall have no passport, I shall be a naked soul indistinguishable from the naked soul of the negro or a Chinaman. But that is a great abstraction. And abstractions get us nowhere. (161:31)
6. … later Christianity reverted to Protestantism, and particularly Puritanism, to the old abstraction which cared for nothing but the soul of man, and sin… (178:16)
7. All our consciousness starts with sensual experience, call them perceptions or what you will, and ends with abstractions, from this experience (197:8)

Twilight In Italy

8. Neither the blood nor the spirit spoke in them, only the law, the abstraction of the average. (112:8)
9. [According to Pope] A man is right, he is consummated, when he is seeking to know Man, the great abstract; and the method of knowledge is by the analysis (120:23)

Psychology and the Unconscious

10. Here we have no concepts to deal with, no static objects in the shape of ideas. We have none of that tiresome business of establishing the relation between the mind and its own ideal object, or the discriminating between the ideal thing-in-itself and the mind of which it is the content. We are spared that hateful thing-in-itself, the idea, which is at once so all-important and so nothing. We are on straightforward solid ground; there is no abstraction. (27:29)
11. But the unconscious is never an abstraction, *never to be abstracted*. It is never an ideal entity. It is always concrete. (38:23)

Fantasia of the Unconscious

12. There is no such thing as an actual norm, a living norm. A norm is merely an abstraction, not a reality. (88:38)
13. [Positive use of the word abstraction] The child distorts inevitably and dynamically. But the dynamic abstraction is more than mental. If a huge eye sits in the middle of the cheek, in a child's drawing, this shows that the deep dynamic consciousness of the eye, its relative exaggeration, is the life-truth, even if it is a scientific falsehood (122:13)
14. They should never be told that the earth is round. It only makes everything unreal to them. They are balked in their impression of the flat good earth, they can't get over this sphere business, they live in a fog of abstraction, and nothing is anything. Save for purposes of abstraction, the earth is a great plain, with hills and valleys. Why force abstractions and kill the reality, when

there's no need? As for children, will we never realize that their abstractions are never based on observations, but on subjective exaggerations? If there is an eye in the face, the face is all eye. It is the child soul which cannot get over the mystery of the eye. If there is a tree in a landscape, the landscape is all tree. Always this partial focus. The attempt to make a child focus for a whole view — which is really a generalization and an adult abstraction — is simply wicked. Yet the first thing we do is to set a child making relief-maps in clay, for example: of his own district. Imbecility! (122:25)

15. The dynamic abstraction of a child's precepts follows no mental law, and even no law which can ever be mentally propounded. (125:6)
16. Has President Wilson, or Karl Marx, or Bernard Shaw ever felt one hot blood-pulse of love for the working man, the half-conscious, deluded working man? Never. Each of these leaders has wanted to abstract him away from his own blood and being, into some foul Methuselah or abstraction of a man. (141:15)
17. So that in dream-activity sensation or abstraction, abstract law or calculation occurs as the predominant or exclusive image. In the dream there may be a sensation of admiration or delight. The waking sensation is fear. Because the soul fears above all things its fall from individual integrity into the mechanic activity of the outer world, which is the automatic death-world. And this is our danger to-day. We tend, through deliberate idealism or deliberate material purpose, to destroy the soul in its first nature of spontaneous, integral being, and to substitute the second nature, the automatic nature of the mechanical universe. (184:7)

Mornings in Mexico

Pan in America (early version)

18. The great Pan was not even a God. He was not even *he*. Only Pan, All. And that, even that was an abstraction. (201:32)
19. But before the mind was born into separateness, with a power of creating its own abstract reality, its own spiritual world, or imaginary world, or ideal world, before the first Word, or Logos was uttered, then mankind lived in the world of the unconceived, unspoken Pan. Mankind himself *was* Pan, along with all the rest. (202:11)

Pan in America (later version)

20. [Positive use] In this state of abstraction, and subtle, hunter's communion with the quarry — a weird psychic connexion between hunter and hunted — the man creeps into the mountains. (161:26)
21. He used to make himself master by a great effort of will, and sensitive, intuitive cunning, and immense labour of body. Then he discovered the "idea." He found that all things were related by certain laws. The moment man learned to abstract, he began to make engines that would do the work of his body. So, instead of concentrating upon his quarry, or upon the living things which made his universe, he concentrated upon the engines or instruments which should intervene between him and the living universe, and give him mastery. This was the death of the great Pan. (162:15)

Study of Thomas Hardy

22. When a young painter studies an old master, he studies, not the form, that is an abstraction which does not exist: he studies maybe the method of the old great artist: but he studies chiefly to understand how the old great artist suffered in himself the conflict of Love and Law. (90:25)

23. [tendencies in modern art, Correggio became] more and more preoccupied with that which he knows, till his knowledge tends to become an abstraction, because it is limited by no unknown. (68:16)
24. In the "Madonna degli Ansidei" the child is drooping, the mother stereotyped, the picture geometric, static, abstract. (68:39)
25. When there is any union of male and female, there is no goal of abstraction: the abstract is used in place, as a means of a real union. (69:1)
26. And reacting upon his [RAPHAEL'S] own desire, the male reacting upon itself, he creates the Abstraction, the geometric conception of life. The fundament of all is the geometry of all. Which is the Plato conception. (69:37)
27. So Raphael […] closes his eyes and his mind upon experience, and abstracting himself, reacting upon himself, produces the geometric conception of the fundamental truth, departs from religion, from any God idea, and becomes philosophic. (70:1)
28. The pure male is himself almost an abstraction, almost bodyless, like Shelley or Edmund Spencer But, as we know humanity, this condition comes of an omission of some vital part. In the ordinary sense, Shelley never lived. He transcended life. But we do not want to transcend life, since we are of life. (71:5)
29. And to single out one cycle, one moment, and to exclude from the moment all context, and to make this moment timeless, is what Raphael does and what Plato does. So that their absolute Truth, their geometric Truth, is only true in timelessness. (72: 37
30. to Raphael she [Woman] existed either as a minor part of his experience, having nothing to do with his aspiration, or else his aspiration merely used her as a statement included within the Great Abstraction. (73:8)
31. … he [Michael Angelo] must seek for the great female principle in an abstraction. But the abstraction was not the geometric abstraction, created from knowledge, a state of Absolute Remembering, making Absolute of the Consummation which had been, as in Raphael. It was the desired Unknown… (84:19)
32. …it becomes an abstraction. But this, in Turner, is the abstraction from the spiritual marriage and consummation, the final transcending of all the Law, the achieving of what is to us almost a nullity. If Turner had ever painted his last picture, it would have been a white, incandescent surface. (86:14)
33. But I cannot look at a later Turner picture without abstracting myself, without denying that I have limbs, knees and thighs and breast. (87:12)
34. Whenever art or any expression becomes perfect, it becomes a lie. For it is only perfect by reason of abstraction from that context by which and in which it exists as truth 87:21
35. If there had never been the extravagant Puritan idea, that the Female Principle was to be denied, cast out by man from his soul, that only the Male Principle, of Abstraction, of Good, of Public Good, of the Community, embodied in "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," really existed, there would never have been produced the extreme Cavalier type… (100:11)
36. And why must Jude, owing to the conception he is brought up in, force her to act as if she were his 'ordinary' abstraction, a woman. She was not a woman. She was Sue Brideshead, something very particular. (122: 17)

The Future of the Novel

37. You've got to find a new impulse for new things in mankind, and it's really fatal to find it through abstraction. (154:37)

38. The novel has […] got to have the courage to tackle new propositions without using abstractions; it's got to present us with new, really new feelings… (155: 18)

Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine

Democracy

39. Rights of man, Equality of Man, Social perfectibility of Man, all these sweet abstractions, once so inspiring, rest upon the fatal little hypothesis of the Average. (63:20)
40. Ideals, all ideals and every ideal, are a trick of the devil. They are a superimposition of the abstracted, automatic, invented universe of man upon the spontaneous creative universe. (69:21)
41. This Supreme Being, this Anima Mundi, this Logos was surely just invented to suit the human needs. It is surely the magnified Average, abstracted from men, and then clapped on to them again, like identity-medals on wretched khaki soldiers. (70:15)
42. Where do you see Being? — In individual men and women. Where do you find an Anima? — In living individual creatures. Where would you look for a soul? — In a man, in an animal, in a tree or flower. And all the rest, about Supreme Beings and Anima Mundis and Oversouls, is just abstractions. Show me the very animal! — You can't. (72:33)
43. Every living creature is single in itself, a ne plus ultra of creative reality, fons et origo of creative manifestation. Why go further? Why begin to abstract and generalize and include? There you have it. (73:12)
44. An idea is an abstraction from reality, a generalization. And you can't generalize the incommutable. (73:29)
45. Your idealist alone is a perfect materialist. This is no paradox. What is the idea, or the ideal, after all? It is only a fixed, static entity, an abstraction, an extraction from the living body of life. (76:7)
46. Once you abstract from this, once you generalise and postulate Universals, you have departed from the creative reality, and entered the realm of static fixity, mechanism, materialism. (77:3)
47. [Positive sense] Our life, our being depends upon the incalculable issue from the central Mystery into indefinable presence. This sounds in itself an abstraction. But not so. It is rather the perfect absence of abstraction. The central Mystery is no generalized abstraction. It is each man's primal original soul or self, within him. And presence is nothing mystic or ghostly. (78:22)

Education of the People

48. In no sense whatever are men actually equal. […] True, all men have noses, mouths, stomachs, and so on. But then this is a mere abstraction. Every nose, every stomach is different, actually, from every other nose and stomach. It is all according to the individual. Noses and stomachs are not interchangeable. (101:3)
49. So where does equality come in? Men are palpably unequal in every sense except the mathematical sense. Every man counts one: and this is the root of all equality: here, in a pure intellectual abstraction. The moment you come to compare them, men are unequal, and their inequalities are infinite. But supposing you don't compare them. (102:27)
50. Every man must learn to be proud and single and alone, and after that, he will be worth knowing. Mankind has degenerated into a conglomerate mass, where everybody strives to look and to be as much as possible an impersonal, non-individual, abstracted unit, a standard. (151:19)

51. Yet we all wear boots made for the abstract "perfect" or standard foot, and coats made as near as possible for the abstract shoulders of Mr. Everyman. I object to the abstract Mr. Everyman being clapped over me like an extinguisher. (151:26)
52. [Less negative] If we are teaching arithmetic, let us teach pure arithmetic, without bothering with piles of sham pennies and shillings and pounds of sham sugar. In actual life, when we do our shopping, every one of our calculations is made quickly in abstraction: a pure mental act, everything abstracted. (155:31)
53. Pure physical experience takes place at the great affective centres, and is de facto pre-mental, non-mental. Mental experience on the other hand is pure and different, a process of abstraction, and therefore de facto not physical. (155:39)
54. It is all wrong to mix up the two modes of consciousness. To the physique belongs the mindless, spontaneous consciousness of the great plexuses and ganglia. To the mind belongs pure abstraction, the idea. To drag down the idea into a bulging athletic physique; and to drag the body up into the head, till it becomes an obsession: horror. (158:8)
55. If you have an enemy, even a national enemy, go for him in your own skin. Meet him, see him, come into contact and fierce struggle with him. What good is an enemy if he's only abstract and invisible? That's merely ideal. If he is an enemy he is a flesh-and-blood fellow whom I meet and fight with, to the death. I don't blow bombs into the vast air, hoping to scatter a million bits of indiscriminate flesh. God save us, no more of that. (162:1)
56. [imagined dialogue; men closer to abstraction than women] I've got most of the thinking, abstracting business to do, and most of the mechanical business, so let me do it. I hate to see a woman trying to be abstract, and being abstract, just as I hate and loathe to see a woman doing mechanical work. You hate me when I'm feminine. So I'll let you be womanly; you let me be manly. You look after the immediate personal life, and I'll look after the further, abstracted, and mechanical life. You remain at the centre, I scout ahead… (165:27)
57. There, in these womanless regions of fight, and pure thought and abstracted instrumentality, let men have a new attitude to one another. Let them have a new reverence for their heroes, a new regard for their comrades: deep, deep as life and death. Let there be again the old passion of deathless friendship between man and man. (166:9)

The Crown

58. I have seen a soldier at the seaside who was maimed. One leg was only a small stump, with the trouser folded back on it. He was a handsome man of about thirty, finely built. His face was sun-browned, and extraordinarily beautiful, still, with a strange placidity, something like perfection, abstract, complete. He had known his consummation. It seemed he could never desire corruption or reduction again, he had had his satisfaction of death. He was become almost impersonal, a simple abstraction, all his personality loosed and undone. (291:3)

Love was once a little boy

59. Collapse, as often as not, is the result of persisting in an old attitude towards some important relationship, which, in the course of time, has changed its nature. Love itself is a relationship, which changes as all things change, save abstractions. (331:1)
60. Unless of course, you abstract them. It's easy enough to balance a citizen against a citizeness, a Christian against a Christian, a spirit against a spirit, a soul against a soul. (332:29)
61. … you can announce that men and women should be equal and are equal. All right. Put them in the scales. Alas! my wife is about twenty pounds heavier than I am. Nothing to do but to abstract. L'homme est né libre: with a napkin round his little tail. (336:38)

62. It is a pity we have insisted on being individuals only in the communistic, semi-abstract or generalised sense: as voters, money-owners,' 'free'' men and women: free in so far as we are all alike, and individuals in so far as we are commensurable integers. (341:12)

Studies in Classic American Literature

63. In his 'human' self, Melville is almost dead. That is, he hardly reacts to human contacts any more; or only ideally: or just for a moment. His human-emotional self is almost played out. He is abstract, self-analytical and abstracted. And he is more spell-bound by the strange slidings and collidings of Matter than by the things men do. (134;18)
64. Melville keeps up his disquisition about 'whiteness'. I The great abstract fascinated him. The abstract where we end, and cease to be. White or black. Our white, abstract end! (139:1)
65. God save me, I feel like creeping down a rabbit-hole, to get away from all these automobiles rushing down the ONE IDENTITY track to the goal of ALLNESS. A woman waits for me- He might as well have said: 'The femaleness waits for my maleness.' Oh, beautiful generalization and abstraction! Oh, biological function. 'Athletic mothers of these States —' Muscles and wombs. They needn't have had faces at all. (152:19)

The Two Principles

66. In the cosmic theories of the creation of the world it has been customary for science to treat of life as a product of the material universe, whilst religion treats of the material universe as having been deliberately created by some will or idea, some sheer abstraction. (263:31)

A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover

67. Buddha, Plato, Jesus, they were all three utter pessimists as regards life, teaching that the only happiness lay in abstracting oneself from life, the daily, yearly, seasonal life of birth and death and fruition, and in living in the 'immutable' or eternal spirit. But now, after almost three thousand years, now that we are almost abstracted entirely from the rhythmic life of the seasons, birth and death and fruition, now we realise that such abstraction is neither bliss nor liberation, but nullity. It brings null inertia. (330:34)
68. The world of reason and science, the moon, a dead lump of earth, the sun, so much gas with spots: this the dry and sterile little world the abstracted mind inhabits. The world of our little consciousness, which we know in our pettifogging apartness. (331:14)
69. We have abstracted the universe into Matter and Force, we have abstracted men and women into separate personalities – personalities being isolated units, incapable of togetherness – so that all three great relationships are bodiless, dead. (331:35)

Poetry of the Present

70. Whitman truly looked before and after. But he did not sigh for what is not. The clue to all his utterance lies in the sheer appreciation of the instant moment, life surging itself into utterance at its very wellhead. Eternity is only an abstraction from the actual present. (CP 183)
71. The ideal — what is the ideal? A figment. An abstraction. A static abstraction, abstracted from life. It is a fragment of the before or the after. It is a crystallized aspiration, or a crystallized remembrance: crystallized, set, finished. (CP 185)

Collected Poems

72. Going over these poems makes me realize that my teens and my twenties are just as much me, here and now and present, as ever they were, and that pastness is only an abstraction. The actuality, the body of feeling, is essentially alive and here. (CP 849)

Late Essays and Articles

Making Love to Music

73. And there is not the slight element of abstraction, of inhumanity, which underlies all Greek expression, the tragic will. (46:29)

Introduction to These Paintings

74. entering into glory: I just was puzzled, for what did it mean? […]. How could I enter into glory, when glory is just an abstraction of a human state, and not a separate reality at all? (200:8)
75. Spectres we are to one another. Spectre you are to me, spectre I am to you. Shadow you are even to yourself. And by shadow I mean idea, concept, the abstracted reality, the ego. We are not solid. We don't live in the flesh. Our instincts and intuitions are dead, we live wound round with the winding-sheet of abstraction. (203: 21)
76. So that Cezanne's apple hurts. It made people shout with pain. And it was not till his followers had turned him again into an abstraction that he was ever accepted. Then the critics stepped forth and abstracted his good apple into Significant Form, and henceforth Cezanne was saved. (203:33)

Insouciance

77. They certainly never live on the spot where they are. They inhabit abstract space, the desert void of politics, principles, right and wrong, and so forth. They are doomed to be abstract. Talking to them is like trying to have a human relationship with the letter x in algebra. (97:9)
78. There was a direct sensuous contact between me, the lake, the mountains, cherry trees, mowers, and a certain invisible but noisy chaffinch in a clipped lime tree. All this was cut off by the fatal shears of that abstract word Fascism, and the little old lady next door was the Atropos who cut the thread of my actual life this afternoon. (97:15)

Women need work and man as well

79. The film, the radio, the gramophone were all invented because physical effort and physical contact have become repulsive to man and woman alike. The aim is to abstract as far as possible. And science is our only help. And science still can't wash the dinner-things or darn socks, or even mend the fire. Electric heaters or central heating, of course! But that's not all. What, then, is the result? In the abstract we sail ahead to bigger business and better jobs and babies bred in bottles and food in tabloid form. (277:33)
80. Now then we see the trend of our civilization, in terms of human feeling and human relation. It is, and there is no denying it, towards a greater and greater abstraction from the physical, towards a further and further physical separateness between men and women, and between individual and individual. (282:16)
81. The amazing move into abstraction on the part of the whole of humanity — the film, the radio, the gramophone — means that we loathe the physical element in our amusements, we don't want the physical contact, we want to get away from it. (283:21)
82. The only thing to do is get your bodies back, men and women. A great part of society is irreparably lost: abstracted into non-physical, mechanical entities whose motive power is still recoil, revulsion, repulsion, hate, and, ultimately, blind destruction. (284:21)

Movements in European History

83. This is the business of scientific history: the forging of a great chain of logically sequential events, cause and effect demonstrated down the whole range of time. Now this is all very well, if we will remember that we are not discovering any sequence of events, we are only abstracting. The logical sequence does not exist until we have made it, and then it exists as a new piece of furniture of the human mind. (8:8)

Introductions and Reviews

The Grand Inquisitor

84. And what are the limits? It is Dostoevsky's first profound question. What are the limits to the nature, not of Man in the abstract, but of men, mere men, everyday men? (128:12)

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