

# L'ANALISI LINGUISTICA E LETTERARIA

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## THE SAVAGE PILGRIMAGE: D.H. LAWRENCE'S DIALOGIC JOURNEYS UPON MONTE VERITÀ, THE MOUNTAIN OF TRUTH

ROBERT BARSKY

In 1920, W.B. Yeats (1865-1939) published *The Second Coming* that imagined a modern world in which “the falcon”, the figure of a wild untamed being who is capable of disorderly motion and action, “cannot hear the falconer” who, through his inherited power and authority, had been charged with providing meaning and direction to its flight. As a consequence, “Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold”, and “Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world”. The description, from the perspective of he who invested so much faith in the ceremonies and traditions of the leisured, sporting classes, is apt. The Old Europe that is so much a part of Yeats’s nostalgia is recalled and even renewed, especially in his later poems (and especially in such books as *The Tower*), to great effect; but in reality, the old artifices are crumbling and succumbing to the murderous winds from the Irish Sea, just like Yeats’s own tower at Ballylee is resisting his efforts to faithfully recall and restore its image. And so, the poet’s effort to rebuild his tower’s leaky roof and uncertain foundation, like his resurrection and employment of foundational poetic devices from eras long-past for poems written therein, is doomed. While Yeats was rummaging in the artifacts of his native Ireland for truth and meaning, a younger but contemporary D.H. Lawrence (1885-1930) was also searching ever more-widely for transcendent symbols to represent in perspicacious and poetic language across literary genres and geographical borders in a world ravaged by war and utilitarian numbness. The crucial difference is that Lawrence looked inwards, towards his own body, rather than outwards towards the universe’s gyres or backwards to tradition and history, and the contrast helps us understand, perhaps, what made Lawrence so radical, and problematic, as evidenced in the many trials he undertook for his ‘pornographic’ approach to writing.

Lawrence, like Yeats, did find sustenance and inspiration in the esoteric and the transcendent, albeit from sources closer to Herman Hesse than Madame Blavatsky; but especially in the realms of novels, short-stories, and literary criticism, Lawrence experimented his way into the lust, the passion and the creativity of the body, a pathway that Yeats, particularly in his later years, seemed to reject. As Lawrence discovers in his own way the ludic creativity of dialogism and the carnivalesque that was powerfully theorized by a younger but also a contemporary, M.M. Bakhtin (1895-1975), Yeats, a self-described “dying animal,” seemed to abrogate his physical self, “a tattered coat upon a stick”, and memorably dreamt instead of being reconstituted by Grecian craftsmen, “hammered” out of gold and gold enameling, and then gathered up “into the artifice of eternity.” The posterity of these contrasting efforts is assured by the respective corpuses of work, but Lawrence’s

quest remains fraught, and largely misunderstood, because so little attention has been paid to what he learned about how to better understand his own body from people he met who had connections to Ascona and Monte Verità, in Switzerland. I will argue that what he learned in those places, both literally and through his relation to Emma Maria Frieda Johanna Freiin (Baroness) von Richthofen, haven't been clearly identified and explored as catalysts for the ever-increasing dialogic corporality that many critics wrongly identify as the crass, propagandistic and pornographic writing associated, for example, with *Sun* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Operating in the registers of cultural migration, this article thus recalls the anarchist, bohemian, nudist, sun-worshipping, vegetarian colony at Monte Verità as a crucial source for D.H. Lawrence's work, and concludes with an invocation of M.M. Bakhtin, whose work reads like a 'how-to' manual for readers willing to truly engage Lawrence's later earthy, fleshy, pagan, dialogic writing.

The distance between two notable short works by Lawrence, *Odor of Chrysanthemums* (written in 1909 and published in 1911) and *Sun* (written around 1920 and published in 1926), can be measured by both the travels Lawrence undertook on the continent, particularly in Prussia, Switzerland and Italy, and by the influence of his lover, and then wife, Emma Maria Frieda Johanna Freiin (Baroness) von Richthofen, (1879-1956). One of three daughters of Prussian Baron Friedrich von Richthofen and Anna Marquier von Richthofen, Frieda was raised in Metz, which had been annexed into the German Empire after the Franco-Prussian war. In 1898, she traveled to Freiburg with her mother and younger sister and it was there that she met Ernest Weekley who, smitten by her looks and intelligence, made a successful offer of marriage. They were wedded in 1899, and Frieda bore three children with Weekley but nonetheless, beginning in 1902, she took a series of lovers including, in 1907, Otto Gross, a key figure in anarchist, psychoanalytic and spiritual circles who will play an important role in bridging the gap between D.H. Lawrence and the bohemian community on Monte Verità.

At the time of this affair, Otto Gross was also married, to Frieda Schloffer, and was considered a major force in the burgeoning field of psychoanalysis, leading to his being offered a chair in psychopathology at Graz university in 1906. In 1907, Gross's first son, Peter, was born, to him and his wife, and his second son, also Peter, was also born, from his relationship with Else Jaffé, born Else von Richthofen. In that same year, Gross also had an affair with Else's sister, Frieda Weekley, who was thereby introduced to the community in Ascona, where Gross spent a good part of his time. In Ascona, Gross had an important influence on many of the expressionist writers and artists, as well as the many anarchists and radicals who visited or lived there, initially inspired by Mikhail Bakunin, who had taken up residence in the adjacent community of Locarno in the 1870s. The actual bohemian community at Monte Verità, of which Gross was a notable member, was founded as an esoteric, alternative, vegetarian artists' colony in 1900 by the artists Henri Oedenkoven and Ida Hofmann. An array of European fringe intellectuals followed, including Raphael Friedeberg, who moved to Ascona in 1904, along with the famous anarchist Kropotkin, as well as an array of theorists and practitioners of the emerging fields of psychoanalysis. In 1913, Rudolf von Laban set up his nudist School of Natural and Expressive Dance within the

Monte Verità community, attracting Suzanne Perrottet, Mary Wigman, and others, and during and after World War I artists and pacifists flocked to Ascona from all over Europe.

The eventual catalogue of artists, psychoanalysts, radicals, dancers and notable intellectuals who frequented Ascona is remarkable, and came to include Hugo Ball, Karl Wilhelm Diefenbach, Isadora Duncan, Arnold Ehret, Stefan George, Hermann Hesse, Franz Kafka, Carl Eugen Keel, Paul Klee, Rudolf Laban, Else Lasker-Schüler, Thomas Mann, Carlo Mense, Erich Mühsam, Max Picard, Erich Maria Remarque, Fanny zu Reventlow, Walter Segal, Rudolf Steiner, Gustav Stresemann, Ernst Toller, Henry van de Velde, Max Weber, and Mary Wigman. Hermann Hesse, who brought insights from Indian philosophy, and the early precursors of modern dance (Duncan, Laban, Wigman) are of particular note here, on account of the important impact they had upon Frieda von Richthofen, and, in turn, upon D.H. Lawrence's worldview and writing. In the context of psychoanalysis, Carl Jung, who was deeply influenced by Herman Hesse, is a notable interlocutor here in terms of Otto Gross, and here too the overlaps are complex. In 1908, Gross underwent treatment at the Burghölzli where he was analyzed by Jung, and then, in turn, he analyzed Jung. Most people know about the importance of Jung for Freud, but Gross in fact could have been the central psychoanalytic figure of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, since Freud had expected him to be his successor, and the inheritor of the psychoanalytic flame. Instead, Gross became more overtly political, particularly in Ascona where, as Jung himself recalls, Gross had planned "to found a free college from which he thought to attack Western civilization, the obsessions of inner as well as outer authority, the social bonds which these imposed, the distortions of a parasitic form of society, in which everyone was forced to live from everyone else to survive"<sup>1</sup>.

So in terms of the psychoanalytic component of this narrative, we have here a complex story of admiration and betrayal worthy of long psychoanalytic examination, that is in fact represented as such in David Cronenberg's 2011 film *Dangerous Method*, based on a screenplay adapted by Christopher Hampton from his 2002 stage play *The Talking Cure*, itself based on John Kerr's 1993 book *A Most Dangerous Method: The story of Jung, Freud, and Sabina Spielrein*. As the film suggests, Gross was too radical, and unstable, to assume the full potential that Jung and Freud predicted. Instead, in 1911, as a result of his experiments with narcotics and his political and sexual views and activities, Gross was forcibly interned in a psychiatric institution, the beginning of a decline leading up to his death in 1919. His intention at that time had been to found a school for anarchists, in Ascona, as well as a journal on the psychological problems of anarchism, neither of which came to be. But the legacy of Ascona is nonetheless in my sense enormous, even if largely unaccounted for in the literature.

Frieda von Richthofen, like so many others in this time, was profoundly influenced by Gross's worldview, and she can be seen as an important purveyor of the actions and ideals discussed and practiced on Monte Verità. She also clearly shared its ideals of free love, and, between 1902 and 1912, she engaged in a long series of affairs, interspersed with the birth

<sup>1</sup> A. Mitzman, *Anarchism, Expressionism and Psychoanalysis*, "New German Critique", X, 1977, pp. 77-104; p. 84.

of her three children. In 1912 she met D.H. Lawrence, then a student of her husband, and within a few months, she left her husband and eloped. They went first to Metz, and then traveled, often by foot, through the Alps and into Italy, undoubtedly passing through Ascona along the way and, more importantly, engaging in discussions about the ideas discussed therein. In 1913 they returned to England where Frieda attempted to see her children, but by then her husband had filed for the divorce, made final in May of 1914, that allowed her to marry Lawrence, in July, 1914. She wouldn't freely communicate with her children again until the late 1920s. Once married, Frieda and Lawrence traveled together extensively, and almost constantly, in France, Italy, Switzerland and Germany, staying with friends and borrowing money along the way to sustain themselves between payments for Lawrence's fiction. They were both ostracized and harassed, Frieda on account of her nationality, and Lawrence because of his growing reputation as a 'pornographer'.

This reputation that Lawrence had, for the bawdy representation of bodies, is in my sense the consequence of his learning, directly from Frieda and from his contacts at Monte Verità, that the language he sought for the adequate representation of his characters in the intense relations he so loved to portray was impoverished by the often wooden prose that authors employed to conform to prevailing literary standards. His subject matter, focused as it was upon close encounters between the sexes, needed the kind of regeneration he learned about via ideas discussed on Monte Verità. Lawrence's insistence upon adequately representing passion and sexuality, for which he was derided and eventually prosecuted, was in my sense informed in particular by what he learned from Otto Gross<sup>2</sup>, as well as from Herman Hesse and Carl Jung, who were both under Gross's spell. Arthur Mitzman, writing in "New German Critique", concurs, suggesting that "Otto Gross, as Jung's guru throughout most of this evolution and a man capable of exerting a remarkable charisma among the Bohemian artists and outcasts in Munich, Berlin, Ascona and Vienna, must be considered the principal source of the ideas inspiring Jung and his friends in the decade before 1920"<sup>3</sup>. The ideas to which Mitzman referred were appealing to people who "lived by the principles of hostility to all external authority, liberation from the conventions of bourgeois society and frequently, in the circles they formed, by the somewhat contradictory impulses of communitarian brotherhood"<sup>4</sup>.

For Lawrence, these bourgeois conventions limited what could be said, or represented, in art, which was deadening because, in his words, "real works of art are made by the whole consciousness of man working together in unison and oneness: instinct, intuition, mind, intellect all fused into one complete consciousness, and grasping what we may call a complete truth, or a complete vision"<sup>5</sup>. Completeness here does not mean detachment, or

<sup>2</sup> Otto Gross's sexual philosophy had a profound impact on literary expressionism, and his ideas on blood and sun struck a responsive chord in Lawrence, according to M. Green, *Otto Gross, Freudian Psychoanalyst, 1877-1920: Literature and Ideas*, Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston 1999, p. 353 and pp. 355-356.

<sup>3</sup> A. Mitzman, *Anarchism, Expressionism and Psychoanalysis*, p. 79.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.

<sup>5</sup> D.H. Lawrence, *Introduction to These Paintings, in Phoenix: the Posthumous Papers of D.H. Lawrence*, E.D. McDonald ed., Viking, New York 1968, p. 574.

some attempt to create masterpieces that are closed off from the world, but rather a more complete involvement in and representation of the process of creation, examples of the artist's struggle to live more abundantly. This approach coincides well with the expressionist mindset of this period, which appealed more strongly to the senses than the mind. To Kristian Sotriffer, expressionism's underlying characteristics concur with Gross's approach, and lead work that emphasize "an over-intensification of experience, a rejection of the classical canon, a distortion and exaggeration bordering on the hysterical, a shattering of traditional forms and the reordering of the fragments to make vehicles for changed thinking and sensation, and a new, more critical and empathic approach to the world"<sup>6</sup>. This statement is strikingly similar to Lawrence's own *Foreword* to his novel *Women in Love*: "Man struggles with his unborn needs and fulfillment. New unfoldings struggle up in torment in him, as buds struggle forth from the midst of a plant. [...] This struggle for verbal consciousness should not be left out in art. [...] It is the passionate struggle into conscious being"<sup>7</sup>.

Even a cursory reading of the Lawrence corpus reveals that his application of these ideals was directed in particular to his female characters, one of the very specific ways in which Lawrence can be seen to apply Otto Gross's insights. For instance, Gross notes that the dominant characteristic of the psychological development of women, particularly of the upper class, "is the incapacity to create a comprehensive and connected unity of the inner process, an uninterrupted continuity of psychological life – again, because of the continual frustration and repression of the sexual impulses central to such continuity"<sup>8</sup>. *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is of course an ideal representation of how one such woman from the upper class strove towards finding a more complete unity by accessing her own body, and learning dialogic relations with the other. But an earlier trenchant example of this can also be found in *Sun*, a story that I'm going to read almost as though it is a biography of Lawrence's own quest from England to Ascona, a move that shouldn't be overly problematic because Lawrence wrote with such detail about his own life in virtually all of his works, to the point where the very location of certain buildings or the characteristics of certain characters can be traced back to the villages in which Lawrence wrote.

Recall the opening lines of the story: "Take her away, into the sun', the doctors said. She herself was skeptical of the sun, but she permitted herself to be carried away, with her child, and a nurse, and her mother, over the sea". The journey is from NY to an unnamed island, perhaps Sicily, where Lawrence and Frieda eventually spent time. The voyage could be depicted as though it were the wretched wife in *Odor of Chrysanthemums* who has chosen to seek out truth beyond her Midlands existence in the far-away, exotic heat of the Mediterranean Isles. Upon arrival, the woman in *Sun*, Juliet, finally arrives, and comes at last into the sun; but at the outset of the story it is foreign to her, distant, inconsequential to the world she understands:

<sup>6</sup> K. Sotriffer, *Expressionism and Fauvism*, McGraw-Hill, New York 1972, p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> D.H. Lawrence, *Women in Love*, Viking Compass, New York 1964, p. viii. Subsequent references in my text are based on this edition.

<sup>8</sup> A. Mitzman, *Anarchism, Expressionism and Psychoanalysis*, p. 92.

Even she had a house above the bluest of seas, with a vast garden, or vineyard, all vines and olives steeply, terrace after terrace, to the strip of coast-plain; and the garden full of secret places, deep groves of lemon far down in the cleft of the earth, and hidden, pure green reservoirs of water; then a spring issuing out of a little cavern, where the old Sicules had drunk before the Greeks came; and a grey goat bleating, stabled in an ancient tomb, with all the niches empty. There was the scent of mimosa, and beyond the snow of the volcano. She saw it all, and in a measure it was soothing. But it was all external. She didn't really care about it. She was herself, just the same, with all her anger and frustration inside her, and her incapacity to feel anything real.<sup>9</sup>

Juliet's mother tries to encourage her to bathe naked in the sunshine, but she resists, and her mother, "hurt and incensed", retreats, leaving the island altogether. The next morning, Juliet awakes and watches as "the sun lifted himself naked and molten, sparkling over the sea's rim. The house faced south-west. Juliet lay in her bed and watched him rise. It was as if she had never seen the sun rise before. She had never seen the naked sun stand up pure upon the sea-line, shaking the night off himself." Inspired by this foreign setting Juliet's "desire sprang up secretly in her to go naked in the sun," as though it was a natural inclination that she had denied herself. Wanting to bathe alone, unseen by prying eyes, she finds a secluded spot by the sea, where she "sat down by the cypress trees and took off her clothes. The contorted cactus made a forest, hideous yet fascinating, about her. She sat and offered her bosom to the sun, sighing, even now, with a certain hard pain, against the cruelty of having to give herself".

At first, Juliet feels that her breasts were like fruits that would wither and never ripen, a sentiment that we find echoed in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, when Connie talks about her body as being "a little greyish and sapless", as though "it had not enough sun and warmth": and her breasts, like Juliet's, are described as "unripe, a little bitter, without meaning hanging there"<sup>10</sup>. Juliet finds a cure in *Sun*, for she eventually feels her breasts to be warm inside as they never had been before, and feels the sun as it "faced down to her with his look of blue fire, and enveloped her breasts and her face, her throat, her tired belly, her knees, her thighs and her feet". Eventually,

[s]he could feel the sun penetrating even into her bones; nay, farther, even into her emotions, her thoughts. The dark tensions of her emotion began to give way, the cold dark clots of her thoughts began to dissolve. She was beginning to feel warm right through. Turning over, she let her shoulders dissolve in the sun, her loins, the backs of her thighs, even her heels. And she lay half stunned with wonder at the thing that was happening to her. Her weary, chilled heart was melting, and, in melting, evaporating.

<sup>9</sup> This and all other citations from *Sun* are cited from <http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/l/lawrence/dh/l41wo/chapter3.html> (last accessed June 30, 2014).

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.online-literature.com/dh\\_lawrence/lady\\_chatterley\\_lover/7/](http://www.online-literature.com/dh_lawrence/lady_chatterley_lover/7/) (last accessed June 30, 2014).

The experience transforms her, and turns her away even from her own child, for she feels that she's discovering emotions she'd never been able to access:

She was thinking inside herself, of the sun in his splendour, and her mating with him. Her life was now a whole ritual. She lay always awake, before dawn, watching for the grey to colour to pale gold, to know if cloud lay on the sea's edge. Her joy was when he rose all molten in his nakedness, and threw off blue-white fire, into the tender heaven.

She also felt in the universal experience of the sun, the specificity of her own relationship to it, an emotion expressed by Herman Hesse in his writings, inspired also, presumably, from his experience sunbathing on Monte Verità. And Juliet felt newly-embodied and complete, for "[w]ith her knowledge of the sun, and her conviction that the sun knew her, in the cosmic carnal sense of the word, came over her a feeling of detachment from people, and a certain contempt for human beings altogether. They were so un-elemental, so unsunned. They were so like graveyard worms". And then, in one of the multitude of moments in which repetition invokes the 'otherness' that is described throughout Bakhtin's writings as being at the very heart of dialogism, Juliet recognizes her own awakening and transformation:

When, out of the sun at noon, sometimes she stole down over the rocks and past the cliff-edge, down to the deep gully where the lemons hung in cool eternal shadow, and in the silence slipped off her wrapper to wash herself quickly at one of the deep, clear green basins, she would notice, in the bare green twilight under the lemon leaves, that all her body was rosy, rosy and turning to gold. She was like another person. She was another person.

This otherness, the recognition of herself and of herself in relation to others, allows her a deeper sense of empathy with her son, whom she invites to share the experience, and who recognizes the profundity of the experience. In one of the most remarkable of all of Lawrence's writing, she describes the revelation of sunbathing as follows:

It was not just taking sunbaths. It was much more than that. Something deep inside her unfolded and relaxed, and she was given to a cosmic influence. By some mysterious power inside her, deeper than her known consciousness and her known will, she was put into connection with the sun, and the stream of the sun flowed through her, round her womb. She herself, her conscious self, was secondary, a secondary person, almost an onlooker. The true Juliet lived in the dark flow of the sun within her deep body, like a river of dark rays circling, circling dark and violet round the sweet, shut bud of her womb.

She had always been mistress of herself, aware of what she was doing, and held tense in her own command. Now she felt inside her quite another sort of power, something greater than herself, darker and more savage, the element flowing upon her. Now she was vague, in the spell of a power beyond herself.



himself who is writing these lines. Although a story involving dead fictive characters, it is for our purposes a condensation of what I think Yeats was honestly looking for: "An image of mysterious wisdom won by toil; / And now he seeks in book or manuscript / What he shall never find".

Looking back to Lawrence, and to *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, we find another form of male power, and wisdom, embodied in the figure of Lord Chatterley who, in studying dry technical works, government reports and research in chemistry, feels "a new sense of power flowing through him: power over all these men, over the hundreds and hundreds of colliers"<sup>12</sup>. In engaging in this disembodied technical work, he finds the universal and transcendent meaning that Yeats describes is searching for, in such poems as *The Phases of the Moon* and in *Sailing to Byzantium*, but not because, in the first case, it's mysterious, or in the second, because Yeats wants like the golden bird to embody pure artistry, but rather because Chatterley lives in and for production. "And he seemed verily to be re-born. Now life came into him! He had been gradually dying, with Connie, in the isolated private life of the artist and the conscious being. Now let all that go. Let it sleep. He simply felt life rush into him out of the coal, out of the pit. The very stale air of the colliery was better than oxygen to him. It gave him a sense of power". The result of his efforts is that Chatterley, like Yeats, is looking to discover meaning outside of the body, and states, quite literally, that finding it made him feel "triumphant". "He had at last got out of himself. He had fulfilled his life-long secret yearning to get out of himself". Unlike Yeats, of course, Lord Chatterley specifically states that "Art had not done it for him. Art had only made it worse. But now, now he had done it".

Lawrence himself seems to employ male characters, in particular Juliet's husband or Lord Chatterley, as paper tigers against which he argues the 'feminine philosophy' advocated by Gross, that approach to the world which is associated with the truth of experience of the body. Juliet and Connie, like D.H. Lawrence himself, both describe experiences of coming into their bodies as being the ultimate objective; and, recalling the place in which he experienced this truth, we note that such efforts were part of the therapy undertaken on Monte Verità, where medical treatment was offered for the illness caused by civilization, through a radical lifestyle that was closely tied to nature. Guests paid for a rigorous life, which meant freedom from many social constraints but, at the same time, deprivation of many modern comforts. Herman Hesse, a longtime resident who created so many anarchistic wandering bohemian characters in his writings, frequently engaged in the kind of treatments that were advocated by residents and guests of Ascona, and his own approach was often akin in its details to what Juliet found upon her island. In *Seekers of Truth: Herman Hesse and Monte Verità*<sup>13</sup>, treatment through sunlight is described in detail. Guests stayed in huts, but

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.online-literature.com/dh\\_lawrence/lady\\_chatterley\\_lover/9/](http://www.online-literature.com/dh_lawrence/lady_chatterley_lover/9/) (last accessed June 30, 2014).

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.seriehesse.usi.ch/allaricercadellaverita/en/pdf/monte\\_verita\\_EN.pdf](http://www.seriehesse.usi.ch/allaricercadellaverita/en/pdf/monte_verita_EN.pdf) (last accessed June 30, 2014).

in the “air and light” baths, divided by sex, guests could take off their clothes and take part in the sun cult naked. A complete treatment for the first 30 days amounted to 100 francs, the equivalent of 60/70 euros today. After the first thirty days, the treatment was paid with 3 francs per day.

Consistent with the careful attention paid to diet, “the statutes promoted the treatments with no medicines, with no surgical interventions, based on a vegetarian diet, contact with nature and physical activities such as working on the land, mountain climbing and rowing.” So there’s a very tangible connection here that connects Hesse and Lawrence through seeking the sun as therapy, and there’s a more thematic link as well, evident in such passages as “We are sun and moon, dear friend; we are sea and land. It is not our purpose to become each other; it is to recognize each other, to learn to see the other and honor him for what he is: each the other’s opposite and complement.”<sup>14</sup>

The description of the sunshine is but one of the themes that we can trace to Monte Verità, and Herman Hesse, another being the appearance, in *Sun*, of the snake. Hesse makes references to snakes frequently in his corpus and, in regards to this story, it’s particularly appropriate that we recall that the snake is associated with Demeter and Isis, conceptions of the Goddess in Antiquity, and, moreover, that in India it represents female energy, Shakti, that lies dormant in everyone. This female energy, that Juliet recovers through her relationship with the sun, and that Connie discovers with the games keeper, Mellors, changes her irrevocably, as Ascona/Monte Verità did Lawrence. And in both cases, the women are invoking their bodies against the deadened souls that surround them. This modern era, so aptly and constantly described – in very different ways – by Yeats and by Lawrence, glorifies calculation, prediction, and the quantifiable, against intuition, magic and the body. When Connie visits Tevershall, she is in shock, for it’s the very epitome of this modern hell.

Tevershall! That was Tevershall! Merrie England! Shakespeare’s England! No, but the England of today, as Connie had realized since she had come to live in it. It was producing a new race of mankind, over-conscious in the money and social and political side, on the spontaneous, intuitive side dead, but dead. Half-corpses, all of them: but with a terrible insistent consciousness in the other half. There was something uncanny and underground about it all. It was an under-world. And quite incalculable. How shall we understand the reactions in half-corpses?<sup>15</sup>

Half-corpses are men and women who aren’t really alive, to their environment and, moreover, to their own bodies. They have become bestial, machine-like, as dry as the knowledge of Lord Chatterley; but even worse than beasts or machines, these men are neither connected to nature nor meticulously lifted from it, but instead are like some other ‘race’ that, in spite of potential genetic endowments, slink to the level of half-corpses, beings that are barely alive. Female knowledge offers the opposite, an elevation into higher awareness that is not metaphysical, it’s physical, and here indeed is where Lawrence’s writings intersect so

<sup>14</sup> H. Hesse, *Narcissus and Goldmund*, Molinaro U, New York 1968, pp. 248-249.

<sup>15</sup> [http://www.online-literature.com/dh\\_lawrence/lady\\_chatterley\\_lover](http://www.online-literature.com/dh_lawrence/lady_chatterley_lover) (last accessed June 30, 2014).

clearly with Bakhtin. Bakhtin insists, in answerability, situatedness and dialogism, upon the human being's active engagement with her environment, in the broadest sense, unfolding in a particular chronotope that is, by virtue of time passing, in constant creative flux. And so, by way of conclusion and as a gesture towards future work, I'll invoke his work to provide an even stronger sense of what Lawrence may in fact have been seeking, at Monte Verità and beyond.

*From Ascona's Expressionism to M.M. Bakhtin*

There is no evidence that D.H. Lawrence knew anything about the work of M.M. Bakhtin, or vice versa; nonetheless, upon close examination, I would suggest that Lawrence's approach, particularly in the controversial scenes of his later short stories and novels, is well-described with reference to M.M. Bakhtin. This is an insight that hasn't captured the attention one might expect, given the plethora of Bakhtin and Lawrence scholarship. There has been an (unsatisfactory) full-length treatment of the subject by Matthew Leone, that offers a few cursory insights.<sup>16</sup> But here, as elsewhere, discussions of the really strong parallels between the worldview Lawrence developed via Monte Verità and that articulated through much of Bakhtin's work are nowhere addressed. Nonetheless, there are some useful forays that can serve as starting points for a critical analysis of Lawrence's dialogic prose, and its relation to what he might have learned in Ascona and Monte Verità. As J.C.F. Littlewood argued back in 1976, and Watson and Sargent recall, there's evidence that Lawrence isn't just engaged in monologic questing in final revisions he made in 1914 *Odour of Chrysanthemums*, in which Elizabeth Bates examines the naked body of her dead husband and realizes

what a stranger he was to her. [...] She looked at his face, and she turned her own face to the wall. For his look was other than hers, his way was not her way. She had denied him what he was – she saw it now. She had refused him as himself.<sup>17</sup>

There are overlaps in terms of consideration of linguistic material, as well. For instance, in *D.H. Lawrence and Narrative Viewpoint*,<sup>18</sup> Violeta Sotirova insists upon the dialogic nature of Lawrence's work by undertaking a 'linguistic' analysis of his free, indirect style and the 'discursive ties' that generate responsiveness between characters. Focusing upon 'referring expressions' (pronouns and noun phrases that name characters); 'sentence initial connectives' (coordinating conjunctions used at the beginning of sentences), and 'lexical repetition' used to connect differing viewpoints, Sotirova suggests that Lawrence programs

<sup>16</sup> M. Leone, *Shapes of Openness: Bakhtin, Lawrence, Laughter*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle Upon Tyne 2010.

<sup>17</sup> <http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/l/lawrence/dh/prussian/chapter12.html> (last accessed June 30, 2014).

<sup>18</sup> V. Sotirova, *D.H. Lawrence and Narrative Viewpoint*, Continuum, London 2011. For a critical review of this work see R. Granofsky, *D.H. Lawrence & Bakhtin*, "English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920", LIV, 2011, 4, pp. 557-560.

a form of dialogism into *Sons and Lovers*. Even more useful for our purposes, despite their oddly prudish observations about Lawrence's work,<sup>19</sup> is Elizabeth M. Sargent and Gary Watson's discussion of the dialogic qualities of Lawrence's writing, which offers some examples, from Lawrence's own *Why the Novel Matters*,<sup>20</sup> of distinctly Bakhtinian notions. The idea of the chronotope, and the sense that characters are constantly unfolding and being realized in dialogue with the world, are nicely exemplified by his observation that he is "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. If the one I love remains unchanged and unchanging, I shall cease to love her." This is typical of Lawrence's rejection of mechanized behavior, for, indeed, "it is only because she changes and startles me into change and defies my inertia, and is herself staggered in her inertia by my changing, that I can continue to love her. If she stayed put, I might as well love the pepper pot"<sup>21</sup>.

In the next example, that reiterates Marc Angenot's Bakhtin inspired approach to Social discourse, Sargent and Watson recall Lawrence suggesting that "the novel is the highest complex of subtle inter-relatedness that man has discovered. Everything is true in its own time, place, circumstance, and untrue outside of its own place, time, circumstance. If you try to nail anything down, in the novel, either it kills the novel, or the novel gets up and walks away with the nail"<sup>22</sup>. And finally, in an approach that so clearly articulates not just Bakhtin but the entire idea of the Russian novel, Lawrence suggests that

it was the greatest pity in the world, when philosophy and fiction got split. They used to be one, right from the days of myth. Then they went and parted, like a nagging married couple, with Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas and that beastly Kant. So the novel went sloppy, and philosophy went abstract-dry. The two should come together again, in the novel<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> Elizabeth M. Sargent and Garry Watson note that "in 1991 Jonathan Dollimore characterized D.H. Lawrence as an 'increasingly disregarded and often despised writer'. All the evidence indicates that Dollimore was not exaggerating. Over the last couple of decades, Lawrence's reputation among those who teach literature in higher education has been in sharp decline. Thus, the idea that he might have anticipated an important part of our current literary, cultural, and critical agenda will probably strike most readers today as being, on the face of it, highly implausible". Sargent and Watson themselves are deeply critical of Lawrence's work, suggesting, with what seems like an astonishing degree of prudishness, that "[d]eny[ing] that some of Lawrence's work is indeed as embarrassing and as offensive as his critics have maintained would be as foolish as continuing to ignore the contribution he can make to our thinking on many of the issues that now concern us". E.M. Sargent – G. Watson, *D.H. Lawrence and the dialogical principle: "The strange reality of otherness"*, "College English", LXIII, 2001, 4, pp. 409-436: 409.

<sup>20</sup> D.H. Lawrence, *Why the Novel Matters*, in *Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays*, B. Steele ed., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1983, pp. 191-198.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 196-197.

<sup>22</sup> D.H. Lawrence, *Morality and the Novel*, in *Study of Thomas Hardy*, p. 172.

<sup>23</sup> D.H. Lawrence, *Surgery for the Novel – Or a Bomb*, in *Study of Thomas Hardy*, pp. 154-155.

Philosophy and the novel do co-exist, of course, in Dostoevsky, and, I would argue, in the profoundly self-aware, dialogic, philosophizing writing of D.H. Lawrence. Although there's agreement about this, amongst the likes of Wayne Booth and David Lodge, among others, there's also the sense that examples of dialogism are certainly more evident in *Women in Love*, *Sons and Lovers*, and, to a lesser degree in *The Rainbow*, but not, it would seem, in the manifestly 'embarrassing' *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. I passionately disagree.

*Keywords*

Lawrence David Herbert, Monte Verità, Bakhtin Mikhail.