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D. H. LAWRENCE, GERMAN EXPRESSIONISM, AND WEBERIAN FORMAL RATIONALITY

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I

"The book frightens me", wrote D. H. Lawrence on 7 November 1916 about *Women in Love* (1920), "it is so end of the world. But it is, it must be, the beginning of a new world, too" (Coombes 1973: 109). This mode of interpretation, mythical as it is and based on the history of apocalyptic thinking, is more than simply a sign of Lawrence's desperate situation during the First World War and of his growing interest in religious and occult ideas. It points towards a significant relationship between his work and the thought and art of the expressionist decade between 1910 and 1920. It was during this time that *The Rainbow* (1915) and *Women in Love* (1920), both written under strong German influence, were conceived. "The model of the two phases", says Christoph Eykman, "the end of the world and the birth of a new, purified humanity, can almost be seen as a topos of expressionist poetic art" (1974: 48).

The expressionist revolt looked towards the overthrow of bourgeois technological civilisation. Its ideal, free-floating artist placed his faith not in any institution or political movement, but rather in the inner "transformation" and "transcendence" of the individual. The artist's task was to penetrate the dissembling surface to the inner, substantial "core" of life. He must be both critic of the actual and evangelist of the potential —a mission which Lawrence's own work espoused.[1] Throughout Lawrence's writings we can detect that "aura of corruption" spoken of by Kurt Pinthus in the preface to his anthology *The Twilight of Humanity*, "the presentiment that the order of humanity built solely on the mechanical and the conventional is about to collapse" (in Rötzer 1976: 436). Absent from his first novel, *The White Peacock* (1911), the concepts of "corruption" and "mechanic" delineate the central experience of the new novel which Lawrence consciously and deliberately sought to create in *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*.

Lawrence's position within conventional literary history still vexes the critics.[2] Since, unlike Joyce and Woolf, he introduces no obvious narrative innovations, Lawrence seems to warrant the description of modernist only on the basis of his "modern" themes: criticism of an over-civilised social order, the "unchaining of the self" in a (mostly sexual) "Aufbruch" ["new direction"]. If, however, Lawrence is, as Frank Kermode maintains, a "master of the modern", one central aspect of his modernity lies, I would argue, in his deployment of a set of preoccupations characteristic of the expressionists. This is not to say that Lawrence is simply an "expressionist" *tout court*. The urgent, nervous striving forward, the abrupt transitions and the urgent dialogue and plot construction of expressionist prose are very different from the "organic" continuities of his narratives. Nevertheless, to think of Lawrence in the context of contemporary expressionist art is to open up some interesting opportunities of comparison and interpretation.

II

The genesis of these two key novels from a single narrative impulse is "expressionist" in a centrally aesthetic sense: "All the time, underneath, there is something deep evolving itself out in me. And it is hard to express a new thing, in sincerity [...]. In the *Sisters* was the germ of this novel: woman becoming individual, self-responsible, taking her own initiative" (Moore 1962: 273). The *novum* of the novel must reveal itself with the necessity and inner logic of an organic natural process. This is the reason for the continual discarding of drafts, continual fresh starts in order to ensure the appropriate form which is, so to speak, "true to nature", "true to life". German expressionist art, according to the philosopher Georg Simmel, posits that the "inner emotion of the artist" will find its immediate expression not through or "*in* the work (of art)" but "*as* the work (of art)" (1968: 156). Or, as Lawrence wrote, "The novels and poems *are* pure passionate experience" (1975: 15).

Lawrence's ideas about art share many assumptions with the expressionist position, and arguably derive from a common problematic. In the first case, Lawrence is emphatic that intense striving after artistry is quite different from the cult of art for art's sake: art must always act in the service of life. "Art for my sake"[3] is the motto Lawrence set provocatively over his

work. This is not to proclaim the egocentric self-centredness of artistic creation, but rather to characterise a literature which aims at a spiritual renewal and awakening in its readers by putting them in touch with the quick of life in the author. The inability to love and reach out to fellow human beings which manifests itself in the narcissistic self-reflexion of aestheticism should give way, as both Lawrence and the German expressionists demanded, to a new religious pathos, a new ethical disposition. This involves overcoming the "solely aesthetic disposition" (in Rötzer 1976: 245) of contemporary art, and the recovery of that "sense of joy, *joie d'être, joie de vivre*" (Rogers 1977: 104) lost in the nihilism and melancholy of the *fin-de-siècle* aesthetes. "We are Expressionists", is how Kurt Hiller put it in 1911: "Content, intention, ethos are important again" (in Rötzer 1976: 244).

Lawrence expressed similar sentiments when he wrote of "the depth of my religious experience" (Moore 1962: 243). Renouncing Christian dogmatism, while remaining firmly rooted in the Christian experience, the religious energy in Lawrence and numerous expressionists led to a cult of "life" and "nature", a *Lebensphilosophie* dedicated to a kind of religion of the flesh wholly opposed to the shallow scientistic positivism of contemporary thought. Sexual union in Lawrence's texts assumes, as in the work of his Expressionist contemporaries, the aspect of a mystery in which lovers are transformed into ecstatic gods, to suggest a cosmic significance to something essentially ineffable and transformative. "The frenzy of sexual intercourse is holy", wrote Georg Groddeck in his novel *Der Seelensucher* [The Soul Seeker] (1921), "and it would do our times good to show them the phallus so that they can worship it" (in Hamann and Hermand 1977: 102). As the great "book of life" (Inglis 1971: 185) the novel in particular should, in Lawrence's opinion, break through the reader's carapace and transform his coldness into warmth by linking him, through language, with the energies and currents of the whole, unmutilated life of the archaic unconscious. According to Lawrence, art becomes a therapeutic act for writer and reader at the moment that it opens itself to a life which cannot be expressed at all in the language of science.

This programme of redemption, of what might be called a detached irrational activism, explains why Lawrence could simultaneously accept and reject futurism. He appreciated, as letters of 2nd and 5th June 1914 demonstrate (Coombes 1973: 89-91), the futurist's impatience with linguistic and moral models of interpretation and evaluation. In his critique of futurism, however, characteristic expressionist reservations become apparent. The futurist's glorification of the machine and of the mechanical principle is rejected equally by Lawrence and the expressionists. Both alike argue that futurism reduces reality to abstract intellectual and mechanical relations and thus miss precisely what constitutes the essence of the human being, which is his living, natural power. The object *and* the formal principle of the new novel is for Lawrence just this living power of the human being, his supposedly "natural" self, which unfolds itself in its own rhythmically organised temporality. The bifurcation of the self into a "social" and a "natural" identity, reminiscent of Rousseau, takes a specifically modern form in its assumption of a "black", threatening nature, as depicted by by Schopenhauer and Nietzsche.[4]

In his critique of futurism, Lawrence sets up an antithesis of "rhythmic form" and "naivety". The longing for the "naivety" and "simplicity" of a supposed "natural state" or of primitive cultures is a symptom of a "*malaise* in our culture" encountered everywhere in the expressionist movement. The young Gottfried Benn, for example, urges the redemptive return to evolutionary origins to escape the torments of consciousness: "Oh, that we were our forefathers/ A little lump of mud in a warm swamp" (Benn 1978: 25). Lawrence's admiration for the physical power and mystery of the "non-human" in nature is axiomatic, and links the aesthetic primitivism of painters such as Max Pechstein and Schmidt-Rottluff to the artistic debates of *Women in Love*, with its idea of a creative regression to recover the archaic strata of experience in art and consciousness alike. In *The Rainbow* and in *Women in Love* Lawrence's characteristic oscillation between abstract and logical discussion and ritualised, lyrical and magical evocation[5] reveals, much more than the African statuette,[6] the central tension in the expressionist critique of a self-conscious civilisation. Insisting on the organic unity of the human being, Lawrence finds the nexus of spirit and thought anything but incidental. The irrationalist Lawrence who preaches, under the influence of Nietzsche, the wisdom of the body, and, like any Expressionist exotic, visits places far removed from modern society,[7] drags the reader of *Women in Love* through long, complexly argued theoretical debates about such matters as real and decadent sensuality, productivity for its own sake in a market economy, intellectuality and spontaneity, and, most centrally, the authentic relations between man and woman.

The basic expressionist pattern in Lawrence's writings is most clearly revealed in his conflict with the mimetic method of the realist novel. He criticises H. G. Wells for writing "books of manners", reproducing shallow, socially-determined models of behaviour and identity: "He is like Dickens. None of his characters has a real *being* —*Wesen*— *is* a real being —something never localised into a passionate individuality" (Moore 1962: 128). The fact that Lawrence uses the expressionist slogan *Wesen* to clarify his meaning is not gratuitous. The idea of a reality hidden behind the simulacrà of convention, which the novel has to expose, is referred to in another letter as "vision or being" (Moore 1962: 291), reproducing the typically expressionist phrase "*Vision oder Wesen*" to speak of a reality which evades the usual sociological, individual, psychological and moral categories. Paul Kornfeld's cry, "On no account realism! On no account psychology" (Hamann and Hermand 1977: 12) finds its echo in Lawrence's condemnation of the "certain moral scheme" in fiction.[8] The visionary reduction employed by Lawrence and the expressionists transforms the ordinary citizen into an elementary natural being.

This "natural" aspect is, however, an abstraction, the artificial and intellectual construction of a supposedly "original Self" in a specific cultural nexus. This "original Self" seems to consist of two components, the libido and the will-to-destroy, rejecting traditional concepts of man as a social being. The expressionists' "primitive" nature leads in painting —including Lawrence's— to a preference for exotic and erotic motifs and, in form and the aesthetics of production, a peculiar dialectic of regression and abstraction. For instance, in a self-portrait, Schmidt-Rottluff stylizes his features in a crudely geometrical negro mask, while, in his lyrics, Georg Trakl compulsively disrupts with discordant image sequences the normal continuities of the form. The novel, since it requires a certain amount of depth and fullness of reality, blocks this tendency towards abstraction much sooner than poetry or painting. Even so, critics quite rightly point out that *Women in Love* is substantially more abstract and schematic than Lawrence's earlier novels.

At least since *The Rainbow*, the dialogues and the deliberate direction of the reader's feelings in Lawrence's fiction implicate the reader in a fundamental cultural conflict. In *Women in Love,* the assault on the reader is made explicit by the introduction of a preacher figure (Birkin), who proclaims the new philosophy of salvation. This, too, is a figure which finds numerous correspondences in the missionary stereotypes of expressionist texts, and the immature and questionable fantasies of power and leadership of the later Lawrence find their equivalent in the nebulous radicalism which characterizes the political thought of the expressionist writers. The expressionist René Schickele observed in his 1933 study of Lawrence that "[I]f Lawrence did not possess the genius of a poet, he would be a fool, and one could leave it to the fools to deal with him" (Schickele 1959: 709). Nevertheless, Schickele was impressed by Lawrence as moralist and thinker, and praised his "relentlessness in the fight for the free conscience, responsible only to itself", and his "final truthfulness" (Schickele 1959: 744). For Schickele, it was Lawrence's "expressionist turn" in 1912 which set free those artistic and intellectual powers which enabled him to write *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*.

III

In line with the expressionist model (particularly apparent in the texts of Ernst Stadler discussed below), stagnation and *Aufbruch* are the key motifs in *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*. Ursula's and Birkin's actions are prompted by their conflict with the social and cultural limits of their situation, which obstruct the full realisation of identity. But it is their self-consciousness of their disjunctive relation to their social environment, and the recognition of how deeply nevertheless they are emotionally and intellectually implicated in it, which makes for the essential modernity of these characters, and distinguishes them from the older generation represented by Tom Brangwen or Anna. This disjunctive relation between subjective and objective being represented by Ursula and Birkin has a specifically expressionist quality, indicated, for example, at the beginning of *Women in Love*, by Ursula's reaction to the parental home: "Ursula was aware of the house, of her home round about her. And she loathed it, the sordid, too-familiar place! She was afraid of the depth of her feeling against the home, the milieu, the whole atmosphere of this obsolete life. Her feeling frightened her" (1960: 11). If the bourgeois home in Victorian literature was an oasis of refuge from an inhospitable external reality, for the rebellious heroine of *Women in Love* it is a place frozen in senseless routine, "dirty" in both an aesthetic and moral sense, locked in the predictable and habitual patterns of everyday life.

Lawrence's hostility is not so much towards particular individuals, social groups or grievances, but towards the idea and practices of modern civilisation itself: an aversion to the unengaged, mindless routine of social and professional life, towards industry, the cultural drive, state institutions, and, finally, to the ideologies which dissimulate individual or social selfishness. Such undifferentiated criticism levels out all historically specific social forms, practices, ideas and organisations to an undifferentiated uniformity, and excludes the possibility of any solution from within the given order. Both novels progress towards a utopian vision of apocalyptic renewal after the death of the old world, which they can neither sustain nor even depict in concrete form. This visionary order is implicit in the eschatological symbolism[9] at the end of *Women in Love*, and extremely explicit in *The Rainbow*:

> And the rainbow stood on the earth. She knew that the sordid people who crept hard-scaled and separate on the face of the world's corruption were living still, that the rainbow was arched in their blood and would quiver to life in their spirit, that they would cast off their horny covering disintegration, that new, clean, naked bodies would issue to a new germination, to a new growth, rising to the light and the wind and the clean rain of heaven. She saw in the rainbow the earth's new architecture, the old brittle corruption of houses and factories swept away, the world built up in a living fabric of truth, fitting to the overarching heaven. (1968: 495)

Jost Hermand has pointed out that "expressionism repeatedly [tends] to see the salvation of humanity merely in the total overthrow of all existing orders" (Hamann and Hermand 1977: 261). Lawrence's individual and social rebirth, steeped in religious pathos ("rainbow", "clean rain of heaven") leads at the end of Melchior Vischer's novel *Sekunde durch Hirn* [Second through brain] (1920) to the Promised Land of "nature", "purity" and "freedom":

> On the sun-moon-day, on which culture crashes with the shameless bastard civilization, then I will kneel down on sea plain desert, stretch (my) hands out in pure wide air, shout wildly strongly loudly: WE ARE YOUNG AGAIN! (Hamann and Hermand 1977: 261)

The distinction between "culture" and "civilization" indicates that Vischer derived his conceptual model from Oswald Spengler's enormously influential *Untergang des Abendlandes* [*Decline of the West*] (1918-22). *Dies Irae*, the Biblical "Day of Wrath", was a title Lawrence considered for *Women in Love*, where too, as in Spengler, organic nature provides the context for the unfolding of a mythic vision of history in which, out of "corruption" and "disintegration", a "new life" may emerge.

"Simply that which the critical and the constructive, the apocalyptical and the utopian have in common, constitutes the totality and essence of German Expressionism".[10] Klaus Ziegler's formula describes the basic thematic opposition of Lawrence's novels, stirring memories of Blakean apocalypse and Rousseauist evocations of the natural man, certainly, but drawing its essential leitmotifs from "extreme intensifications of traditions almost as old as bourgeois society itself" (in Rötzer 1976: 309).

The generational movement of *The Rainbow* can be represented as three concentric circles, corresponding to the generations Tom/ Lydia, Will/ Anna, and Skrebensky/ Ursula. The radial expansion of the circles, like the image of expanding ripples from a stone thrown at the moon's reflection in a pond, reflects the expansion of their successive lives, the unending formation and transcendence of limits. The progenitors Tom and Lydia find a partial fulfillment and the foreigner Lydia is integrated within the almost pre-industrial innocence of the family circle. The impulse which takes Anna and Will, the second generation, out of the security and closeness of Marsh Farm itself finds its limits in the monotony of a lower-middle-class existence. Ursula's trajectory, which takes up the final and longest section of the novel, consists of a series of deliberate new departures, in which one conventional mode after another of stabilising and fulfilling her life is rejected: first the parental home, then the teaching profession, university studies, and finally the bourgeois marriage to Skrebensky. Nor does the combination of enlightenment and cynicism of the "new woman" Winifred Inger any better withstand Ursula's critical gaze. The "unchaining of the Self" about which the expressionists enthuse is the central feature of her story. The novel discharges into the symbol of the rainbow, the promise of a new covenant between heaven and earth, after the apocalyptic end of this world, prefigured in the scene of the horses. The book's final transcendence (*Aufbruch*) envisages a utopian no-man's-land where the new self has shed the carapace of the old civilisation in a painful process of rebirth.

That this *Aufbruch* of individual striving for fulfillment is brought about by education and intellectual development distinguishes Lawrence's protagonists from the amoral assertions of strength of Kurt Edschmid's heroes in such short stories as "Der Lasso" ["The Lasso"]. Lawrence's characters grow beyond traditional forms of feeling and social being into a quasi-religious form of non-estranged communication which encompasses both the other person and the circumambient natural world. By keeping the bohemian milieu of many expressionists at a determined distance Lawrence maintains a continuity with the puritan moral traditions which shaped him.[11]

Ursula's aloofness from the "corrupt" forms of a "mechanical" system protects the self from corrupting relationships. But such a self is difficult to grasp. At its most determined, it finds expression largely through acts of negation. The more determinedly Ursula rejects the social roles offered to her, the less she seems a traditional character of the realist novel, and the more she reveals her true identity as an expressionist representative of authentic life, above all of authentic natural, sexual being. But for the same reason, she becomes progressively more abstract as a character towards the end of the novel. When, for example, she declares the brightly-lit town, the symbol of civilization, to be a mere pretext, a mere nothing even, and the dark, unlimited flow of life to be the true reality, she becomes the mouthpiece of an abstract, radicalized, undifferentiated criticism of civilized society such as

is offered by the expressionists: "The stupid, artificial, exaggerated town, fuming its lights. It does not exist really. It rests upon the unlimited darkness [...] but what is it? —nothing, just nothing".[12] Ursula's self is seen as simultaneously an insatiable sexual drive and a continually fluid and vulnerable sensibility, which suffers under the torpidity of middle-class life: "She was not afraid nor ashamed before trees, and birds, and the sky. But she shrank violently from people, ashamed she was not as they were, fixed emphatic, but a wavering, undefined sensibility only, without form or being" (1968: 335). Her repeated crossing of (social) borders is a rejection of form for the sake of the vitality of life. Her transcendence of the old life is presented in the end with rhetorical intensity as the creation of a "living God", the emergence of the "kernel" of the "true" natural life from the shell of a "false" civilization, and as the discovery (in almost Blakean terms) of "Eternity in the flux of Time". However, since this purpose can be thought only as life continually reproducing itself, its destination is never an idyllic stasis, but the perpetual movement of transcendence itself, *Aufbruch* for its own sake.[13]

Ursula's acts of perpetual negating correspond to the expressionist sense of "*Aufbruch*" described by Gunter Martens in his book *Vitalismus und Expressionismus* (1971). In 1918 Georg Simmel, referring to expressionism, analysed the refusal to give a final form to life, and the striving to maintain, in both life and art, the dynamic and unshaped character of reality. Modern life, he said, had no generally meaningful cultural forms. Consequently one confronts the "conflict of modern culture", the "fight of life against form itself" (1968: 150) —a formula with clear application to Lawrence. In place of obsolete moral, political or social forms, Lawrence's novel is posited on the relativity of all Being and the commanding power of the dialectic of life and death, death in life (mechanized, instrumentalized being) set against life in death (rebirth, upheaval).

In Ursula's case, the "conflict of modern culture" requires that the narrator always signals an unmistakable betrayal of "life" when Ursula resorts to socially accepted modes of speech and behaviour. This applies just as much to the "authoritarian" style which, for reasons of self-preservation, she adopts as a school teacher as to the language of subjection and self-accusation she resorts to, accepting the role conventionally ascribed to women, in her letter to Skrebensky: "since you left me I have suffered a great deal, and so have come to myself. I cannot tell you the remorse I feel for my wicked perverse behaviour. It was given to me to love you [...]. But instead of thankfully, on my knees, taking what God had given [...]. I must insist on having the moon for my own [...]. I do not know if you can ever forgive me"

(1968: 485). In expressionist fashion, Ursula's apparently sober self-recognition is a mere momentary triumph of her false "bourgeois" self over the true "dark vital self" (1968: 449). This explains the self-parody of such phrases as "my wicked perverse behaviour", "thankfully on my knees" or "you are natural and decent all through".

At the level of linguistic construction, this determined reaching for a "natural" as opposed to a "social" self, issues in a rhetoric of abstractions. Words like "reality", "unreality", "being", "perfection", "life", "self", "ecstasy", "light", "darkness", "organic", "mechanic", "corruption" form the significant semantic nexus of the text. The attempt to translate the non-intellectual substrates of life into articulate language leads on the one hand to intellectual abstraction, and on the other to organic and biological metaphors, expressed in such words as "sterility", "root", "barren". As a result, the battle of the sexes between Anny and Will Brangwen —this, too, an expressionist motif— is set at a remove from the historical context, as an abstract situation in which a conflict between elemental powers is expressed in the metaphor of fighting birds (1968: 163). The linguistic repertoire of the traditional novel, capable of differentiating real social situations, is unsuitable for the new task. The organicist metaphors of a contemporary *Lebensphilosophie* —blossoming, spring, wind, giving birth, flame, blood, earth, animals and the moon— are common to both Lawrence and the German expressionists. Seen from this perspective, the well-known scene in *The Rainbow* where Tom Brangwen proposes marriage to Lydia, offers a vital renewal, transcending emotional and spiritual stagnation like that identified by Ernst Stadler in poems such as "Resurrectio", "*Aufbruch*", or "Liberation". Stadler's "Early Spring" is a characteristic instance:

> In this March night I left my house late.
> The streets were upset with the smell of Spring and of the rain of green seeds.
> Winds struck up. Through the disturbed incline of houses I went far out
> As far as an uncovered wall and felt: my heart swelled towards a new beat.
>
> In each waft of air a young new Being was stretched out.
> I listened to the strong whirls rolling in my blood.
> Already prepared fields stretched themselves out. Already burnt into the horizons
> Was the blue of early dawn hours, which were to lead out into the distance.
>
> The lock-gates creaked. Adventure broke in from all the far sides.
> Over the canal, waved by young sailing winds, clear tracks grew,
> In whose light I moved. Fate stood waiting in wind-blown stars.
> In my heart lay a turmoil as if from unfurled flags.
> (*Dichtungen* [Poems] 1974: 124) (See introduction to Notes)

In The Rainbow Tom Brangwen answers "nature's call" when he visits Lydia at the Vicarage on a stormy night in March after a wintry period of stagnation and indecision. As in Stadler, the wind is a sign of returning vitality, orchestrating (in phrases such as "the wind was moaning" (1968: 42), "the wind boomed" (1968: 45) an event that unfolds with the deliberation of ritual. The dialectic of stasis and redemptive action dominates the proposal scene. Lydia, at first dazed by the proposal of marriage, still undecided in the conflict between habit behaviour and novelty, turns to her suitor with a "sudden flow", and awakes from the "lap" of the unconscious's "fecund darkness" as if "newly-born". Whilst the speaker in Stadler's poem strides towards the light in the transit from night to day, Lawrence inscribes the new beginning as "the dawn" of the "new life", whose "light" blazes in the eyes of the lovers (1968: 45-46). In Lawrence the episode is much more subdued (and psychologically more differentiated) than in Stadler, and lacks the latter's verbal dynamics ("adventure broke", "streets were upset"); whereas for Stadler the point of rest is merely an impediment, for Lawrence it implies not only the link of formal restriction and stagnation, but also that creative pause which precedes decisive action. While Stadler's writings, like Lawrence's, represent the powers hostile to life in images of death, barrenness, cold, monotony, ice and dissolution, the latter's conception of a marriage which enables individual freedom and self-fulfilment is not something found in the expressionist writers.[14] In Lawrence, such semantically charged vocabulary tends to dissipate its impact in rhythmical repetition, beginning to revolve around itself, as in much expressionist and modernist writing. But whereas in Joyce's Ulysses, for example, the "real" primarily affords opportunities for the parodic and associative wordplay, Lawrence's writing, like that of the expressionist novelist, aims to engage with the reality the language reveals.

IV

Expressionist criticism of the industrial system plays a predominant role in the "form"/ "life" conflict described above. According to the expressionists, no civilization has failed to understand the reality of human existence more drastically than that unleashed by industrial mass-production. Certainly the expressionist critique of industrialism reveals much aesthetic snobbism of the kind which characterised the Romantic movement and its nineteenth-century heirs, and the alternative therapies of a "return to nature" and sexual emancipation have their comic aspect, from which Lawrence is not entirely free. But his pastoral counter-images have to be viewed, not simply as practical alternative life-styles but as polemic antitheses to conventional bourgeois moralisms. In *Women in Love* he explores not only the effects but also the preconditions of industrialism in the structure of the supposedly private individual, particularly through the figure of the mine owner, Gerald Crich.

This exploration is accomplished as discursive narrative (in the chapter entitled "The Industrial Magnate"), through abstract, authorial disquisitions, and symbolically through the external and psychological behaviour of Crich. The Nordic hero stereotype, distinguished by his apparent rationality and will-power, Crich attempts to compensate for his emotional and spiritual emptiness in a liaison with the artist Gudrun Brangwen. The relationship unleashes latent aggressions, and finally ends with Gerald's death in the eternal ice of the Alps, an expressionist vision of horror and final things *par excellence*. With Gerald's end in an environment inimical to life Lawrence signals nothing more nor less than the end of Western civilization. The *fiasco* of the personal relationship reveals both the professional identities and the public achievements of the couple to be forms of corruption hostile to life, doomed to destruction. The characteristically expressionist schematic configuration of Gerald/ Gudrun and Birkin/ Ursula underwrites that allegory in which the will-to-power of the instrumental reason drives towards death, in contrast to the life-affirming, organicist mysticism represented by Rupert Birkin.

Gerald, as a symbol of rationality and the will-to-power embodied in the industrial exploitation of nature, reproduces a *cliché* of expressionist vitalism which was ubiquitous in pre-Great War Germany, expressed most forthrightly, perhaps, in the writings of Ludwig Klages,[15] and its subsequent role in Nazi ideology has rendered Lawrence's own deployment of the *topos* a little suspect. What has largely been ignored up to now is the extent to which he draws, in his chapter "The Industrial Magnate", on the respectable critique of capitalism made by contemporary German sociologists. Certainly,

the academic and objective analysis offered by Max Weber in *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* [*Economics and Society*] (1922) and *Die Protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus* [*The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*] (1920), is given a demonic inflexion by Lawrence, who, in expressionist mode, turns Weber's insights against their originator. In this he resembles, surprisingly, Georg Lukács, whose *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein* [*History and Class Consciousness*] starts from a Weberian proposition to develop his communist critique of alienation in a capitalist society (1971: 187ff.). It also links Lawrence with that scion of the Frankfurt School, Herbert Marcuse, who in a remarkable confrontation with Talcott Parsons at the Heidelberg Sociologist Conference in 1964 accused Weber, Parsons's model and ideal, of having "irrationally" sanctioned the existing industrial system by ignoring the question of the significance and purpose of industrial societies. Lawrence summarizes Gerald's activities, in contrast to the traditional paternalism of Crich senior's practice, as "Modern Capitalism". The term occurs in a letter Lawrence wrote to Lady Asquith from Upper Bavaria in August 1913: "It's Frieda's brother-in-law's home. He's staying here now and then. He's a professor of Political Economy among other things. Outside the rain continues. We sit by lamplight and drink beer, and hear Edgar [Jaffé] on Modern Capitalism" (Aldington 1954: 57).

Gerald reorganizes the inefficient business which his father had run on paternalist lines by applying Weber's principle of formal rationality. What, according to Max Weber, is specific to "modern capitalism as opposed to [that] ancient kind of capitalist business is: the strictly rational organisation of work on the basis of rational technology" (Weber 1971: 323). It is this recipe to which Gerald adheres. The teachings of the Professor for Political Economy, Edgar Jaffé, apparently fell on fruitful ground. Thomas Crich fails to overcome the unsolved contradiction between paternalist Christian love for one's fellow men and the interests of the factory owner. His successful son Gerald, on the other hand, organizes a well-functioning system of production in which means and ends are carefully calculated according to the principles of efficiency and profitability. This system is both mechanical and is itself like a machine because it can be expressed in terms of quantifiable equations, in pounds sterling and in tons. Equally calculable, on this reckoning, is the human activity embodied in labour and the relations of production. The factory's relations of command and subordination are functional and intrinsic to production, and are guaranteed, in Weber's analysis, by the authoritative leadership of the factory or (in this case) mine owner: "In function and process, one man, one part, must of necessity be subordinate to another"

(1971: 254); "[Gerald] knew that position and authority were the right thing in the world [...]. They were the right thing for the simple reason that they were functionally necessary [...]. It was like being part of a machine [...]. What mattered was the great social productive machine" (1971: 255); "It was pure organic disintegration and pure mechanical organization. This is the first and finest state of chaos [...]. [The colliers] were not important to him, save as instruments, nor he to them, save as a supreme instrument of control" (1971: 260).

Because, according to Weber, these new conditions correspond to the internalized work ethic of the workers, they are able to adapt themselves in a way that supposedly causes little friction. The more perfect the instrumentalisation and functionalisation of the workers, the more perfect is the system of, to quote Weber, "congealed spirit" (Israel 1972: 412). Weber's analyses correspond in many points —at least at a descriptive level— to those of Werner Sombart, whose large-scale work *Der moderne Kapitalismus: Historisch-systematische Darstellung des gesamteuropäischen Wirtschaftslebens von seinen Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* [*Modern Capitalism: an historical and systematic representation of European economic life from its beginnings up to the present day*] (1902) had a sustained contemporary impact. John A. Hobson's study *The Evolution of Modern Capitalism: A Study of Machine Production* (1894) provided a further source. Gerald Crich embodies the principles which, according to Sombart and Hobson (who emphasize machine production), characterize the period of "capitalism at its peak". An historically unique phenomenon, explained in the end in terms of the "Faustian" character of the European bourgeoisie, this "peak" of capitalism depends, according to Sombart, on the well-calculated policies of the factory owner, who subjugates everything to the pursuit of money. For efficient production, it is necessary to reduce all the commercial and personal relationships involved in the process to a level where they are quantifiable and based only on material values. Only money, an abstract measure, makes this reduction possible. According to Sombart, the spirit of the employer/factory owner unites the "striving for power and profit" (1902: I, 1, 329). The exploitation and subjection of nature are as much expressions of this striving for power as the unlimited accumulation of goods and the establishment of a production line. The kind of person this requires is described by Sombart in terms which, unlike Weber's, allow for criticism of the system:

> What capitalism needed for its purposes was a "new race" of men. Men who were able to fit themselves into a large unit —a capitalist undertaking or even a factory, these miracles of relationships between those in command, the subordinates and those of equal standing, these ingenious constructions of part-people. The economic constitution needs such part-people: lifeless, depersonalized, dispirited beings capable of being parts, or rather cogs in a complex mechanism [...]. The individual is slotted into a system of work, in which he is obliged to carry out the part-task allotted to him punctually, regularly and smoothly, so that the whole mechanism does not stop running. (1902: III, 1, 424)

Gerald Crich's ideas and methods originated in no small measure from Germany, at that time the world's most highly developed industrial rival to Britain after the USA.[16] Gerald expressly avoided Oxford to study mining engineering at German universities (1960: 249). In Germany, he learned the ethos of stringent, objective scientific method appplied to industry: "There, a curiosity had been aroused in his mind. He wanted to see and know, in a curious objective fashion, as if it were an amusement to him" (1960: 249). In this perspective, *Women in Love* reads like a critique of Weberian ideas in a vocabulary derived from Expressionist cultural critique. Contemporary with Lawrence, Georg Kaiser was reducing the principle of empty productivity *ad absurdum* in the *Gas* dramas. Here the chaos, which Lawrence only envisages metaphorically as a consequence of Gerald's system, actually breaks out: a gas explosion blows up the factory. Gerald's personal catastrophe, failing to find a purpose to life beyond mere response to consumer demand, is of a similar order. Efficiency and productivity for their own sake, or "the plausible ethics of productivity" (1960: 62), as Birkin, Lawrence's mouthpiece, ironically calls them, are incapable of providing an answer to the larger issues of meaningfulness. In Gerald's "consumerist" model, personal relationships are reduced to the connection between "idea and prostitution" (Vietta and Kemper 1975: 170), which the expressionist Carl Einstein declared to be the essence of modern, estranged sensuality. Gerald's reflexive sexuality (1960: 48), issuing from the will and related to pornography, does not liberate but corrupts, because each party uses the other merely as an object. After the strain of running the mine, Gerald seeks relaxation in sexual encounters with easy women. But "He felt that his mind needed accute stimulation before he could be physically roused" (1960: 262). Finally, Gerald and Gudrun come together in a cynical and aggressive encounter, which the book repeatedly calls "obscene" (1960: 273). The strict separation assumed by Weber between public, functional roles and the realm of private morality betrays for Lawrence the idea of wholeness of being. As the symptom of a specifically modern schizophrenia and alienation, it is something to which Gerald's bosom returns an echo:

> The great social idea, said Sir Joshua, was the *social* equality of man. No, said Gerald, the idea was, that every man was fit for his own little bit of task —let him do that, and then please himself. The unifying principle was the work in hand. Only work, the business of production, held men together. It was mechanical, but then society *was* a mechanism. Apart from work, they were isolated, free to do as they liked.
> "Oh!" cried Gudrun. "Then we shan't have names any more —we shall be like the Germans, nothing but Herr Obermeister and Herr Untermeister [...]".
> "Things would work very much better, Miss Art-Teacher Brangwen", said Gerald [...].
> "You don't admit that a woman is a social being?" asked Ursula of Gerald.
> "She is both", said Gerald. "She is a social being, as far as society is concerned. But for her own private self, she is a free agent, it is her own affair, what she does".
> "But won't it be rather difficult to arrange the two halves?" asked Ursula. (1960: 114-115)

Birkin accompanies Gerald's "sociological" concepts with sarcastic deprecation. For Birkin, corruption begins precisely here, in the fragmentation of society and the individual into unrelated functions and parts, preventing the wholesome integration of intellect and sensuality. Both Western civilized culture, founded in the principle of rationality, and primitive cultures, rooted in sensuality, fail to unite the sundered parts. Birkin comments on Gerald's lack of cohesion: "part of you wants Minette, and nothing but Minette, part of you wants the mines, the business and nothing but the business —and there you are— all in bits" (1960: 108). From this it follows that neither expressionist neo-primitivism nor a mechanistic functionalism inspired by industry could satisfy the author of *Women in Love* (cf. note 16). Although Lawrence was clearly influenced by the cultural milieu of German Expressionism he encountered through his aristocratic-bohemian German wife,[17] his criticisms of the new-style pictures from the Munich art scene before the First World War are symptomatic. For him ("Christs in Tirol"), they express a loud, strained, provocative intellectuality, "shrill and restless" (1967: 82) which betrays the basic intuitions of the expressionist revolt. Lawrence's own aesthetic practice, however, by no means closes the gulf between sensuality and intellect.

It is, in conclusion, important to recall the dialectic character of Lawrence's own definition of life. The antithesis of death (Gerald/ Gudrun) and life (Ursula/ Birkin) is only ostensibly unequivocal in moral terms.

Gerald is anything but a mere carved figure of negativity. In fact, the socialist Sir Joshua, a caricature of Bertrand Russell, comes off much worse. Birkin feels the loss of his friend deeply, and the fact that the role of intimate (potentially homosexual) friend was given to Gerald is a further indication of the ambivalent intimacies and mutual entanglements of a "decadent" culture which for Lawrence and his expressionist contemporaries was incompatible with the demands of "authentic life". In the expressionist decade, the "stumbling-block of D. H. Lawrence" as René Schickele has rightly called it (1959: 703), proves to be the stumbling-block of a whole historical epoch. If we define an epoch with René Wellek, as a "time section dominated by a system of norms whose introduction, spread and diversification, integration and disappearance can be traced", (Wellek and Warren 1973: 265) then with regard to expressionism the main problem lies in defining the moment of its disappearance. The Laurentian critique of a fragmented labour process, of functionalism, bureaucratization, technology, the bourgeois code of behaviour and modern "reflexive culture" (Arnold Gehlen), in the name of a myth of "authentic life" or the "natural human being" is currently enjoying a revival in an increasingly global culture. Embedding Lawrence's texts in their original contexts both historicises them and suggests their importance to a continuing and contemporary debate.

The preceding analysis has sought to throw light on what connects Lawrence with "expressionism" and what separates and distinguishes him from it, possibly deliberately on his part. Lawrence shares in no small part the strengths and weaknesses of expressionism. Those weaknesses lie not least in the expressionist refusal to acknowledge the social character of human existence, and its inevitable "externalisation" in automated actions and institutions, as demonstrated by Max Weber.[18] What I hope to have shown, however, is that the authority with which Lawrence writes of social forms in *Women in Love* is reinforced by his acquaintance with the "sociological ideas" (1960: 249) of Weber and cognate German thinkers, adding a depth and continuing relevance to his work which is missing from comparable expressionist texts.

NOTES

An earlier version of this paper was given as an Inaugural Lecture at the University of Bochum in 1978. It was published in 1982 in *Sprachkunst* in German. The translations from the German, including the poetic texts, are largely

by John Fowler, who teaches at the University of Stuttgart. I wish to thank him for his cooperation. I also wish to thank Jennifer Birkett and Stan Smith for their generous help.

[1] Lawrence's relationship to expressionism has been treated in two contributions from the thirties (Reichwagen 1935; Wildi, 1937). Reichwagen's remarks on the expressionist view of man and its reflexion in Lawrence's novels are useful only in their general tendency. Both studies suffer from the fact that they cannot build upon any properly analytical tradition of research into expressionism. Wildi's concept of expressionism remains vague: "a term here used in its widest sense to cover all anti-realist as well as anti-idealist movements, irrespective of national and personal origin, from Strindberg in the North to Marinetti in the South and covering many '"isms", of which the original "expressionism" (applied in 1901 to groups of painters both in Paris and Germany) is but one of many forms" (1937: 241). Given such vagueness, it is not surprising that research since 1945 has abandoned this explanatory framework. Nevertheless the concept has reappeared in more recent marginal studies, with predominently negative results (Furness 1973: 94; Mitchell 1973: 180). Long after the publication of this paper in German (1982) I discovered an article by Visnja Sepcic entitled "*Women in Love* and Expressionism" published in two parts in *Studia Romanica et Anglica Zagrabiensia* in 1981 and 1982.

[2] The hesitantly groping remarks of Peter Faulkner are typical. He rightly distinguishes between Lawrence and the modernists (e.g. Joyce and Eliot), yet cannot conceptualize the distinction or place it in a literary-historical context. See Faulkner (1977: 60-65).

[3] Coombes (1973: 69). Letter dated December 24, 1912.

[4] For this concept, see Marquard (1973: 85-106).

[5] The scene of Tom Brangwen's wooing of Lydia in *The Rainbow* should be considered in this context. Tom, in harmony with the springtime awakening of Nature, asks for Lydia's hand in marriage. Another relevant scene is the dance of the naked and pregnant Anna before the Lord. See in this connection Bell (1972: 20): "In rendering the emotional density of the Brangwens' inner lives, particularly at moments of crisis, Lawrence has an apparently spontaneous recourse to those modes of feeling and thought by which many anthropologists have believed primitive man to have ordered his experience, the prominent features of which are animism, natural piety and ritual."

[6] *Women in Love*, (1960: 87, chap. "Totem"). All references to *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* are to the Penguin edition. We have here to do with a favourite motif of expressionist (but also in some cases surrealist) artists. Max Pechstein periodically withdrew among the Polynesians to be able to work in a congenial

environment. Hermand writes: "the archaic African tribal sex-cults, the world of the negro fetishes were especially popular. They were interpreted as symbols of uninhibited sexuality" (Hamann 1977: 100). Birkin defends, against Gerald, the aesthetic quality of the carved wooden representation of a woman giving birth: "It is an awful pitch of culture, of a definite sort [...]. Pure culture in sensation, culture in the physical consciousness, really ultimate *physical* consciousness mindless, utterly sensual [...]. But Gerald resented it. He wanted to keep certain illusions, certain ideals like clothing" (1960: 87). The narrator takes Birkin's side of the argument ("illusions"). The concept here presented of an unreflective, purely sensual culture is a typical paradox of expressionistic wish-fulfilment projected back in time. On *Women in Love*, see the essays of J. M. Murry, G. Ford, F. Kermode and C. Clarke (Clarke, 1969). In *Women in Love*, Lawrence subordinates the historical content of the novel, that is, the spiritual-intellectual condition of European society at that time, to the typological schema of the Apocalypse. Through this interpretation, Kermode and Clarke make a decisive advance in the understanding of the novel. But their observations remain isolated and fragmentary until brought into the context of the basic expressionist dialectic of destruction and renewal, death and rebirth, Hell and Paradise. Because these concepts stand, for the expressionist artist, not merely in an antithetical but a dialectic relationship, the phenomena of decline, decadence, paralysis, death and disintegration in the psychic, social and cultural domains are evaluated not only negatively but also positively, as necessary preliminary stages of renewal. Ambivalence of this sort, which can easily be seen as contradictions, thread their way through *Women in Love* in particular. Birkin, in the chapter "Moony", rejects the unreflective, non-phallic sensuality of the "awful African process" (1960: 286) as "knowledge in dissolution and corruption" —all this incorporated in the fetish-object. Yet it is precisely the practical exercise of this "corruption" with Ursula in the chapter "Excurse" that helps him to his new identity as "son of God" (1960: 353). Gudrun on the other hand, who, following the example of Expressionist artists, creates "African" carvings ("I thought it was savage carving again." "—No, hers [...]" 1960: 105) is not favoured with such a saving rebirth. This opens up new ambiguities. As Lawrence also shows the German sculptor Loerke (to whom Gudrun feels herself attracted) in a negative light, one receives the strong impression that he includes modern autonomous art (1960: 504) in its neo-primitivist (Gudrun) and abstract-constructivist (Loerke) forms, among the sickly blooms of modern industrial society. Loerke favours a form of art geared to the example of mechanical-industrial labour, yet which should only be evaluated on criteria derived from its immanent aesthetic principles. By means of Birkin, a self-portrait, Lawrence seems to be exploring the problem of "true" expressionism. For such an expressionism, the quest for autonomous form must always be subordinate to the quest for "organic" life: "You think we ought to break up this life, just start and let fly?", he asked. "—This life. Yes, I do. We've got to bust it completely, or shrivel inside it, as in a tight skin. For it won't expand any more [...]. When we really want to go for something better, we shall smash the old" (1960: 60 ff.). One should compare this plea of Birkin's for the blowing-up of traditional cultural structures in order to set life free to objectify itself in new forms with the argument of Stadler's poem "Form ist Wollust" (Stadler 1974: 127).

[7] On the relationship between expressionism and exoticism see Reiff (1975: 128).

[8] Clarke (1969: 28). Letter dated June 15, 1914. Traditional typifications and schematisations of character are presumably meant. On the other hand a consideration of character in the light of modern psychological-genetic concepts has been attempted in Lawrence research (Cavitch, 1969 and others), yielding valuable new insights.

[9] See on the apocalyptic element Frank Kermode (in Clarke 1969: 203-218).

[10] Klaus Ziegler, "Dichtung und Gesellschaft im deutschen Expressionismus", in Rötzer (1976: 311).

[11] This conclusion is obvious from the way our sympathies are steered in *Women in Love*. Birkin maintains contact with London's Bohemia (1960: 65) and introduces Gerald (in the chapter entitled "Crème de Menthe") to this marginal group which is held together by its contempt for the bourgeois world. But however much Birkin may sympathise with that contempt, he cannot (in contrast to the expressionist coffee-house *literati* of Hasenclever's type) reconcile himself to the generous, yet superficial conversational and social conventions of the artistic circle. Lawrence is known to have rejected promiscuity, and his hero finds his way out of Bohemia. Birkin's ambiguous attitude to Bohemia and modern art seems to correspond to the author's own. "I hate Munich art", writes Lawrence (Boulton 1979: 548). However, compared with English art, he still perceives "Munich art" as liberating.

[12] *The Rainbow* (1968: 449). The metaphor of light and darkness combined with water-imagery representing the boundary between conscousness and life is also found in Ludwig Klages "Bewußtsein und Leben" (1956: 30): "Meanwhile, we do not even need to look outside ourselves for confirmation, that consciousness resembles nothing so much as lightning, which flames again and again above the waters of life, illuminating each time a narrow circle, yet leaving the whole distant horizon in the obscurity of unconsciousness. This we know from our own daily experience". See also *The Rainbow*, (1967: 437).

[13] Neither can Birkin in *Women in Love* set any goal for the journey. "" But where can one go?" she asked anxiously. "After all, there is only this world, and none of it is very distant." "Still", he said, "I should like to go with you —nowhere. It would rather be wandering just to nowhere. That's the place to get to —nowhere. One wants to wander away from the world's somewheres, into our own nowhere"" (1960: 355).

[14] See *Women in Love* (1960: 65, 67 [Birkin]). Modern civilization, including London, is understood as a Sodom condemned to destruction. Gudrun and Loerke play cynically with the thought of mankind's self-destruction (1960: 510). On the motif "end of the world in expressionist literature", see Eykman (1974: 44).

[15] "Mensch und Erde" (1920), *Aufsätze aus den Jahren 1910-20; Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele* (1929-32) where Klages develops, among other themes, the hypothesis of a pre-rational, Pelasgian man. The lecture (held on the mountain *Hoher Meissner* in 1913) on "Man and Earth" is particularly rich in implication. It attracted much attention and developed, discursively and in detail, what is basically the ideology of *Women in Love*. It ends one year before the outbreak of the war with an apocalyptic vision of an unprecedented battle, from which, in the end, the earth will be resurrected in her unspoilt original condition. Klages emphasizes the aggressive, destructive character of Western civilization, sees in ""progress", "civilization", "capitalism", merely different aspects of a single volition" (1956: 19), and comes to the conclusion that "man, as bearer of the calculating will to appropriate" (1956: 20), intends, "in reality, the destruction of life" (1956: 12).

[16] See Hobsbawm (1968), chapter "The Beginning of Decline".

[17] Lawrence read Nietzsche, knew the Bohemian sub-culture in Munich shortly before the First World War, and very probably saw up-to-date publications in the library of the art-patron Jaffé.

[18] See on this point Helmuth Plessner's admittedly uncompromising conclusion in "Das Problem der Öffentlichkeit und die Idee der Entfremdung": "The distance which role-playing produces —whether in family or in professional life, in the workaday world or in official functions, is the specifically human way of making contact. Anyone who sees, in role-play, self-alienation, has mistaken the essential nature of man, and attributes to him as a possibility, a mode of life that is available to beasts on the earthly level, and to angels on the spiritual level. Angels play no roles, but neither do animals [...]. Only man appears as his own double, outwardly visible in the figure of the role he plays, and inwardly conscious of himself as self" (1974: 20).

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