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ENVIRONMENTAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN D. H. LAWRENCE'S NOVELS

Abstract: For D. H. Lawrence, nature and the environment were a major source of inspiration. The author waged a war against the Machine Age and its utilitarianism, the profit-logic of which was utterly detrimental to both humans and nature. This article suggests that D. H. Lawrence's work represents a prime example of new environmental consciousness in literature. In order to unpack environmental consciousness in D. H. Lawrence's novels, I address three major issues. Firstly, I analyse Lawrence's idea of balance between nature and culture. Then, I discuss his concept of reawakening to humanity's primordial connection with the non-human world and nature. Finally, I detect the traces of 'future primitive' in his novels, which entails an imagined alternative reality that would not be based exclusively on scientific rationality, but rather include all the non-rational experience of the non-human realm.

Key words: future primitive, environmental consciousness, D. H. Lawrence, reawakening

A Brief History of Ecological Concerns in Literature

From the Judeo-Christian scripture to some of the basic tenets of humanist philosophy, the notion of human superiority over non-human nature is deeply embedded in the Western intellectual tradition. The Western world has taken anthropocentrism to the extreme, interpreting the non-human world almost exclusively in terms of human values and experience. Jacques Derrida argues that humanity has presumed to master the finitude it shares with the nonhuman world in ways presumably unavailable to the nonhuman sort, which are devoid of capacities such as language.² And yet, it cannot be denied that alternative

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² Jacques Derrida as cited in Cary Wolfe, *What is Posthumanism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), XXII.

world-views were part of this tradition too, not only acknowledging the environmental realities such as pollution, but also challenging humankind's dominance over nature.³

Although some of the early examples of alternatives to anthropocentrism can be seen as going back to the Romantic Movement in the eighteenth century, it will be argued in this paper that a convincing alternative to human supremacy over nature was not articulated before Modernism.⁴ The arguments of the scholars⁵ who maintain that the beginnings of environmental consciousness can be traced back to Romanticism are convincing to some extent. The Romantics such as William Wordsworth and Ralph Waldo Emerson indeed searched for spiritual truths beyond urban life and the civilised world.⁶ However, although they worshipped and deified nature, they also put a significant emphasis on the needs and aspirations of humans.⁷ Thus, while it is correct to say that they opposed the exploitation of nature, the Romantics still regarded it anthropocentrically, and with respect to its potential utility to humankind.⁸ Despite the fact that they played a very important role in the formation of the so-called 'green literature,' with their celebration of 'green life,' their lack of accountability for emerging ecological problems disqualifies them from being 'environmentally conscious.'⁹

Furthermore, many scholars¹⁰ would argue that the Victorian authors such as Charles Dickens with his *Dombey and Son* (1898), or Thomas Hardy with *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891), already exposed the atrocities of the industrial era. Still, we cannot talk about a proper environmental consciousness in their novels either. To be precise, while it is accurate to characterise Dickens' *oeuvre* as a poignant criticism and a mirror of the damage that 'progress' had initiated in England, there is a significant lack of consciousness¹¹ for the environmental (air and water pollution, urban sprawl, waste disposal) and psychophysical

³ See Del Ivan Janik, "D. H. Lawrence and Environmental Consciousness," *Environmental Review: ER*, 7, no. 4, (1983), 358.

⁴ Joshua Myers, "The Dirty Green: Joshua Schuster's The Ecology of Modernism," *Journal of Modern Literature* 2, no. 41, (2018): 175.

⁵ See Timothy Morton, *Ecology without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).

⁶ Charles Larmore, *The Romantic Legacy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 10; Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 368.

⁷ Lewis P. Hinchman, Lewis P., and Sandra K. Hinchman, "What We Owe the Romantics," *Environmental Values* 16, no. 3 (2007): 336.

⁸ Janik, "D. H. Lawrence and Environmental Consciousness," 359.

⁹ Joshua Schuster, *The Ecology of Modernism: American Environments and Avant-Garde Poetics* (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 2015), 3.

¹⁰ William A. Cohen, "Arborealities: The Tactile Ecology of Hardy's Woodlanders," *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century* 19 (2014); Allen MacDuffie, *Victorian Literature, Energy, and the Ecological Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

¹¹ Hinchman & Hinchman, "What We Owe the Romantics," 336.

(alienation, depression, health issues) effects of industrialisation.¹² Thereby, the author becomes a mere observer, as evident in Dickens' novel *Dombey and Son*, where we can see that Dickens certainly recognises the “dire disorder” of modernisation, but he still does not acknowledge the need for opposition to the “mighty course of civilisation and improvement.”¹³

As suggested above, not until the emergence of the first Modernist writers, who questioned the anthropocentric view of the world present in both Romantic and Victorian literature, can we talk about a true environmental consciousness in fiction.¹⁴ This can be accounted for by the profound political societal, cultural, and scientific changes that occurred in the twentieth century, contributing to the Modernists developing a more acute sense of eco-issues, and sharpening the ecological critique that goes back to Romanticism.¹⁵ Since much scholarship has focused on Romantic ecological consciousness, and not nearly enough on the Modernist one, the aim of this paper is to address the oversight.

It can be argued that, according to the definition of environmental consciousness, modernist texts and their celebration of nature in all of its aspects truly foster the sense of responsibility and accountability for environmental issues. Modernist works epitomise their authors' intimate reactions to the avarice of the previous centuries, which can be seen in their opposition to the profit-logic of the eighteenth century that they saw as destroying nature. When David Herbert Lawrence in his novel *Kangaroo* (1923) wrote that “it was in 1915 that the old world ended,”¹⁶ the author conveyed the general sentiment amongst his fellow Modernists, putting the responsibility for the loss of one's place in the world' on the Second Industrial Revolution and The Great War. In these lines, Lawrence communicates scepticism of progress which is fundamental to those Modernists who did not share the same enthusiasm and idolisation of machines found in ‘Manifeste du Futurisme.’ Futurists believed in the power of machines, through which humanity would be able to build an improved world, and even gain a new consciousness. Regardless of this enthusiasm typical for the Avant-Garde movement, the Modernists were first to discern the idea of pollution and calamity impending on the civilisation because of the ‘Machine Age.’ Their works are works of rupture, equating civilisation with sickness, and painting a picture of the modern world as an “immense panorama of futility and anarchy.”¹⁷

¹² Janik, 360.

¹³ Charles Dickens, *Dombey and Son* (London: Penguin Classics, 2002), 62.

¹⁴ Schuster, *The Ecology of Modernism*, 3.

¹⁵ Schuster, 27.

¹⁶ Lawrence, 244.

¹⁷ T. S. Eliot, “Ulysses, Order and Myth,” *The Dial*, 1923.

Environmental Consciousness and D. H. Lawrence

The concept of ‘environmental consciousness,’ which refers to a way of perceiving nature, and responding to it at a heightened level of emphatic experience, is a comparatively recent addition to literary studies. The term started to gain importance in literary studies in the 1960s, at the advent of contemporary environmental politics, as a major response to the global ecological concerns. Generally speaking, a writer whose works address the issue of ecological responsibility is said to be environmentally conscious, or a ‘green writer.’¹⁸ Green literature can therefore be defined as a study of the correlation between literature and the environment.¹⁹ It is also interesting to trace the trajectory of green criticism, such as ecofeminism that developed in the 1980s and 1990s, but also the more recent animal studies and environmental studies, that emerged in the 2000s. We could suggest that the relationship between literature and nature developed and changed throughout centuries, ultimately resulting in the creation of literature that acknowledges human accountability for ecological problems in the period of Modernism.²⁰

While dealing with ecological questions, the Modernists were simultaneously absorbed in the idea of remodelling the society in opposition to the liberal-capitalist dogmas. In studying these traits in authors such as Lawrence, Zoran Kravar (2004) proposes the term ‘anti-modernism,’ which resembles the already existing concept of ‘primitivism,’ a world-view that sees the solution for the alienation of modern society in going back to human ‘essence,’ which according to them could be discovered by cultivating the ‘primitive.’²¹ Unlike Modernists, Anti-modernists are interested in the possibilities of sustainable development theories, ecological theories, and the critical analysis of social power.²² At the same time, they are strongly against liberal remodelling as they acknowledge its destructive effects on nature. In fact, Anti-modernists promote the return to what they see as a pre-historic or primitive state of thinking about life that, according to them, has the potential to reawaken humanity to its primordial connection with the non-human world.²³ Hence, Anti-modernism is defined by its animosity towards industrial production, urbanisation, and economic and technical development. Kravar points out that this is a reflection of Anti-modernist irrationality.²⁴ His

¹⁸ Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1995), 220.

¹⁹ *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, edited by Harold Fromm and Cheryl Glotfelty (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1996), 23.

²⁰ Schuster, 3.

²¹ Molly Patricia Hite, “Primitivism in Modernist Literature: A Study of Eliot, Woolf And Lawrence,” PhD diss, Cornell University, 2012, 1.

²² Zoran Kravar, *Antimodernizam* (Zagreb: AGM d.o.o, 2004), 13.

²³ Zoran Kravar, “Uvod u antimodernizam,” *Kolo 2*, 2003, 223.

²⁴ Kravar, *Antimodernizam*, 17.

definition of irrationality refers to an understanding of the world in which the traditional demarcation between fiction and fact is abolished. The irrationality of the Anti-modernists lies in their insistence on the instinctive cognition of the world, as evident in their interest in spirituality and mysticism, both of which refer to extrasensory apprehension of knowledge that is inaccessible to reason, or rational cognition.

Lawrence reaches for the figurative forms of irrationalism (intuition, the subconscious, emotion) as found within religious systems, and traditions of myth and folklore.²⁵ He also considered the benefits of the tribal organisation of life and the return to the primitive as he was faced with ecological disasters brought about by the industrial revolution. Consequently, anti-modernism, as found in D. H. Lawrence, can be regarded as an ideology caused by the failure of the utopian expectations of modernisation and industrial revolution.²⁶ For these reasons, many literary scholars, such as Tague, Salter, and Lachapelle, consider D. H. Lawrence a pioneer amongst green writers. His posthumanist philosophy,²⁷ as reflected in the expansion of ethical concerns beyond the human species, and his environmental ideas (balance, return to the primitive) marked the beginnings of environmental consciousness in Modernist literature. His awareness of the non-human world, as reflected in his characters' sensitivity to entities such as the sun and the moon, and the author's evocative prose with its performative dimension, make Lawrence's novels "philosophically responsible."²⁸ Leo Salter finds this responsibility in the author's acute sense of accountability for the environment, as Lawrence despairs over the destruction of nature by humans.²⁹ He is not only aware of environmental problems, but also possesses a profound understanding of the conflict between nature and culture. In his novels, he resolves this discord by siding with nature, which he envisions as the only possible source of contentment and satisfaction in life. Therefore, Lawrence's novels, as well as other works, attest to his respect and love of nature, marking him down in history as one of the first green writers.

Balance

Lawrence was inclined to look at the world around him in terms of dichotomies, something that goes in favour of Lawrence being regarded as a Modernist. Expectedly, the fundamental

²⁵ Kravar, *Antimodernizam*, 27.

²⁶ Kravar, *Antimodernizam*, 29.

²⁷ Jeff Wallace, *D. H. Lawrence, Science and the Posthuman* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Deanna Wendel, "There Will Be a New Embodiment, in a New Way': Alternative Posthumanisms in *Women in Love*," *Journal of Modern Literature* 36, no. 3 (2013).

²⁸ Leo Salter, "Lawrence and the Environment; the Poetics of Honesty and Despair," *Études Lawrenciennes* 14–15, (1997): 185.

²⁹ Salter, "Lawrence and the Environment," 185.

opposition for him was between ‘nature’ (non-rational, emotions, body) and ‘culture’ (reason, intellect, civilisation). This is what Lawrence wrote in a letter to a friend: “My great religion is a belief in the blood, the flesh, as being wiser than the intellect. We can go wrong in our minds. But what our blood feels and believes and says is always true. The intellect is only a bit and a bridle.”³⁰ Though it may seem that Lawrence’s position is rigidly flat and definite, the author’s attitude was far more complex and nuanced. Lawrence maintained that the only way to achieve a successful life in spiritual terms is by making sure that there is a balance between ‘nature’ (blood) and ‘culture’ (intellect).

Lawrence was extremely adamant in his opinion that humanity cannot survive without a balanced and creative co-existence of these two sides. For him, that was the only way to achieve what he identified as ‘spiritual fulfilment.’³¹ Together with the development of his environmental poetics, he examined the need for balance in *Sons and Lovers* (1913), a story of Gertrude and Walter Morel and their sons. Lawrence uses the marriage of Gertrude and Walter Morel to demonstrate that their marital unhappiness results from the partners’ inability to achieve and maintain balance, with her insisting on the mind (culture) and him on blood (nature).

The novel’s protagonist Paul is unable to decide between these two sides. He is controlled by his mother who is responsible for his appreciation of the environment and arts. However, as he matures and starts to gain a greater understanding of the world, he becomes aware of the fact that his mother’s Puritanical education is an inadequate foundation for spiritual fulfilment.³² Thus, his choice of partners, who represent his parents’ best qualities, mirrors his search for the balance through which he would obtain ‘spiritual success.’ For instance, while he is able to fulfil his intellectual needs in his relationship with Miriam Leivers, his needs for sensual realisation remain unfulfilled. Similarly, while in his partnership with Clara Dawes he finds the sexual fulfilment he lacked with Miriam, he is unable to satisfy his intellectual needs.³³ Hence, Lawrence’s insistence on the need for balance between the non-rational and rational becomes evident when Paul tries to describe the difference between Miriam and himself:

He talked to her endlessly about his love of horizontals: how they, the great levels of sky and land in Lincolnshire, meant to him the eternity of the will, just as the bowed Norman arches of the church, repeating themselves, meant the dogged leaping forward of the persistent human soul, on and on, nobody

³⁰ D. H. Lawrence as cited in Janik, 360.

³¹ Janik, 360.

³² Janik, 360.

³³ Janik, 361.

knows where; in contradiction to the perpendicular lines and to the Gothic arch, which, he said, leapt up at heaven and touched the ecstasy and lost itself on the divine. Himself, he said, was Norman, Miriam was Gothic.³⁴

In his attempt to establish the difference between himself and his lover, Paul uses architectural terms to explain his stance on spirituality. While his self-portrayal does not ignore his spiritual side, since he uses the church to represent himself, what he does reject is the type of spirituality that results in losing touch with one's surroundings and wandering away into the unknown of abstraction. Therefore, he compares himself to Norman arches that achieve balance through standing still and steady on the land (rational), while, at the same time, reaching up into the unknown and unfamiliar (non-rational). The inability of his partner to do the same is why Paul ultimately leaves Miriam.³⁵ In this example, Paul speaks about the importance of unity and balance between culture and nature. This speaks in favour of Lawrence's own views that criticize modern life in discord with nature as the main reason for the lack of libido and our increasing alienation from non-human surroundings.

Reawakening

In *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928), Lawrence once more returns to his idea of balance between 'culture' and 'nature.' The novel's protagonist, Oliver Mellors, embodies this balance. It is true that he is primarily associated with nature and its wilderness, being a gamekeeper who spends all his time in nature, surrounded by animals. However, he is also a well-educated and well-read man, a commissioned lieutenant in the army. Therefore, the balance between the two sides of human existence is what makes Mellors able to recognise the necessity for a re-awakening of man's non-rational potential, which is disregarded by the industrial 'rational' society.³⁶ Constance Chatterley, who is to a much larger extent implicated in the drive for mechanical progress, shares similar views. Hence, Mellors and Connie engage in an extramarital affair which ultimately surpasses mere physical affection. Together, they move towards self-restoration, as they start to seek a simpler life based on a direct and unmediated relationship with nature. They demonstrate their connection with the natural world through their physical interaction. For example, in a scene where they decorate each other's naked bodies with flowers, we can see that their physical engagement with both each other and nature is almost ritual-like. Through adorning their bodies with flowers after love making, an act that resembles pagan wedding rituals, Connie and Mellors rise "through the

³⁴ Lawrence, 177.

³⁵ Janik, 361.

³⁶ Janik, 369.

physical body to an almost cosmic consciousness in the communication with natural entities.”³⁷ By achieving this last step of consciousness, they are able to “move intimately into awareness of nature, the environment”³⁸ and consequently re-awaken their non-rational potential, and contemplate the ‘restoration of nature.’

Moreover, Mellors directly shares with Connie what the ‘restoration of nature’ represents for him. He calls for a reawakening of England and its people to the non-rational experience so they could regain their consciousness of the natural world and long-lost potential. According to him, this can be achieved by giving a greater importance to experience (non-rational) than money (rational). This would amount in liberating oneself from “the whole industrial life”³⁹ where, according to Mellors, people in their search for money, forgot how to “live in handsomeness.”⁴⁰ Consequently, people would start restoring their relationship with nature, as they take advantage of living with it in harmony. Mellor’s views embody what Kravar identified as the ‘irrationalism’ of the Anti-modernists. That is to say, Mellors sees progress as something unrelated to technological advancement and economic stability. For him, spiritual, non-rational affluence (experience) is much more important than the rationality of material prosperity. He tells Connie:

(...) if [the men] could dance and hop and skip, and sing and swagger and be handsome, they could do with very little cash. (...) And that’s the only way to solve the industrial problem: train the people to be able to live, and live in handsomeness, without needing to spend.⁴¹

The re-awakening, according to Mellors, needs to be a starting point for the re-formation of the entire society where both natural and cultural values would be able to flourish. On the one hand, human beings would not ignore the previously accumulated knowledge, such as the art of building, planting, etc. On the other hand, they would utilise this knowledge in a way that does not affect nature negatively but, in fact, enables humans to live in synergy with it. Consequently, humans would be able to get rid of the monstrosities of industrial settlements and erect “a few beautiful buildings, that would hold us all. An’ clean the country.”⁴²

³⁷ Gregory M. Tague, *Character and Consciousness: George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, E. M. Forster, D. H. Lawrence, Phenomenological, Ecological and Ethical Readings* (Bethesda: Academica Press, 2005), 235.

³⁸ Tague, *Character and Consciousness*, 238.

³⁹ D. H. Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* (Herts: Wordsworth Editions Ltd, 1928), 240.

⁴⁰ Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, 372.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

These utopian views, specific to the anti-modernist construction of the world, are also held by the author, since Lawrence had also addressed the issue of humanity's need to return to a primitive version of our future. In his *Autobiographical Fragments*, written in 1927, the author envisages himself falling asleep in a small cave in his native village, and waking up a thousand years later to an altered England. In his dream, his country consists of several tiny, but self-sufficient and beautiful communities, whose people live in harmony with the land they cultivate.⁴³ This is what Mellors seeks, too. A world where culture and nature would co-exist, balancing each other to the benefit of both.

Although neither Mellors nor Lawrence address the practical aspects of the new society they envisioned, they propose several guidelines. Firstly, the nation-states should be supplanted by local communities; they propose a tribal organisation of the society, where each 'tribe' would live separately from other communities. With this, they acknowledge the alienation of human beings in larger social systems, while at the same time recognising the bond that gets established between humans in smaller groups. Furthermore, every aspect of human life should be based on a direct contact with nature. Humans should make love, bear children, eat, sleep, and live in harmony with their natural surroundings.⁴⁴ Finally, they stress the importance of ritual-like ceremonies, and their role in the creation of the bond between the individual and the community, and consequently, between the individual and the world as a whole.⁴⁵ They acknowledge the power of natural entities, such as the sun and the moon, and emphasize their influence on humankind (fertility, insomnia, depression). Moreover, Mellors talks about a hierarchically managed system of human relations that is based on pagan views and rituals. According to Mellors, a pagan and tribal organisation of life would liberate humans from the modern social hierarchies and their pollution, overpopulation, and infertility.⁴⁶ Through re-awakening, humans would be able to achieve the balance between nature and culture, and subsequently realize the potential of the primitive.

Future primitive

Evidently, Lawrence was critical of the modern times and new ways of life. Witnessing the effects of industrial revolution, such as health issues, poverty, and pollution, he calls for a cosmic unity between humans and nature. For him, the modern way of living, in discord with

⁴³ Janik, 370.

⁴⁴ Janik, 370.

⁴⁵ Janik, 370.

⁴⁶ Kravar, "Uvod u antimodernizam," 233.

nature, is responsible for the lack of sensuality, and disheartening dehumanisation and alienation from the natural world.⁴⁷ Lawrence suggests returning to the primitive, as he writes in *The Plumed Serpent* (1926):

No! It's not a helpless, panic reversal. It is conscious, carefully chosen. We must go back to pick up old threads. We must take up the old broken impulse that will connect us with the mystery of the cosmos again, now we are at the end of our tether.⁴⁸

In this particular example, Lawrence displays his profound and continuous relationship with nature, based on his recognition of the importance of humanity reconnecting with the primordial mysteries of the cosmos. When Lawrence, writing about Thomas Hardy, questions the real hero of Hardy's *Return of the Native* (1878), he concludes that the beginning of all life is in the "primitive, primal earth."⁴⁹ In a true anti-modernist fashion, Lawrence advocates the return to nature as a way of reclaiming what he saw as 'wholesomeness,' lost by the modern industrial society. However, his primitive is not about going back, but rather about living forward. Gorsline and House (1974) describe this state as the future primitive.⁵⁰ For example, Lawrence suggests through Mellors that humans need to be reawakened to the richness and complexity of a 'primitive mind.' In this new state, nature and culture will be integrated, forming a new ecosystem. According to Lawrence, the success of a culture is determined by humankind's relationship with the environment. His new society would use nature for its model, and humanity would transition to the future primitive, a condition that can be defined as:

(...) having the attributes of a mature ecosystem: stable, diverse, in symbiotic balance again (...) a community of beings joined by rim and basin, air and watershed, food-chains ceremonies (...) There is no separate existence.⁵¹

Anthropologist Stanley Diamond writes that among primitives "the sense of reality is heightened to the point where it sometimes seems to 'blaze.' It is at this point that the experiences of primitive and mystical converge, for mysticism is no more than reality, perceived at its ultimate subjective pitch."⁵² One of the ways in which Lawrence's primitive was translated into his writing was thanks to his deeply innate understanding of the sun and

⁴⁷ Kravar, "Uvod u antimodernizam," 213.

⁴⁸ D. H. Lawrence, *The Plumed Serpent* (Herts: Wordsworth Editions Ltd, 1926), 48.

⁴⁹ D. H. Lawrence, as quoted in Dolores Lachapelle, *D. H. Lawrence: Future Primitive* (Denton, Texas: University of North Texas Press, 1996), XII.

⁵⁰ See Jeremiah Gorsline and Linn House, "Future Primitive," *Planet Drum*, 1974.

⁵¹ Gorsline & House, "Future Primitive," 1.

⁵² Stanley Diamond as cited in Dolores Lachapelle, *D. H. Lawrence: Future Primitive* (Texas: University of North Texas Press, 1996), 22.

the moon as the primary pacemakers of all biological rhythms.⁵³ His whole life, Lawrence was extremely sensitive to the full moon. Because of that, he reduced neither the sun nor the moon nor any other natural entity to a mere symbol in his novels.

For Lawrence, the natural entities such as the sun and the moon are not “suggestive evocations of timeless spiritual reality,” but rather “material and focal expressions of those vague but powerful forces of nature which occur, quite patently, in time.”⁵⁴ For instance, in his novel *The Rainbow* (1915), Lawrence so masterfully conjoins three important mystic powers: place, time, and natural entity. In this novel, we follow a story of the Brangwens, a dynasty of Midland farmers. Their family saga and the industrial progress of the country develop simultaneously, starting with Tom Brangwen who has no contact with the industrialised world, and ending with Ursula, a teacher in the progressively capitalist England. In this novel, Lawrence first uses the power of a particular place, in this case ‘the downs,’ whose importance had been acknowledged by humans since the Megalithic Era (druid rituals and stone circles). Furthermore, he utilises the power of a specific date, such as the summer solstice or midsummer, an ancient celebration of the sun that includes bonfires and dance. And finally, he relates place and time with an animate relationship of two lovers as the sun slowly rises:

The sun was coming. There was a quivering, a powerful terrifying swim of molten light. Then the molten source itself surged forth, revealing itself. The sun was in the sky, too powerful to look at.⁵⁵

For Lawrence, the sun represents healing, but also the beginning of a new life. The sunrise that Ursula Brangwen and her lover experience gives “peace to their souls.” Facing the “golden creation,” tears start running down Ursula’s face, as the world is “newly washed into being.”⁵⁶ The two lovers experience what Lawrence wrote about in his *Apocalypse* (1931), stating that the only way for humans to re-establish the lost organic connection with the cosmos is to renew their relationship with the sun and the earth. The last sentence of his final novel reads: “Start with the sun and the rest will slowly, slowly happen.”⁵⁷

Lawrence also recognised the power of the moon and moon changes. In *The Rainbow*, the full potential of the moon and its influence on the characters is revealed. Since this novel shows the love affairs of the Brangwens overlapping with the progressing industrialisation of

⁵³ Dolores Lachapelle, *D. H. Lawrence : Future Primitive* (Texas: University of North Texas Press, 1996), 23.

⁵⁴ Mark Spilka as quoted in Dolores Lachapelle, *D. H. Lawrence: Future Primitive*, 23.

⁵⁵ D. H. Lawrence, *The Rainbow* (Herts: Wordsworth Editions Ltd, 1915), 224.

⁵⁶ D. H. Lawrence, *The Rainbow*, 224.

⁵⁷ D. H. Lawrence, *Apocalypse* (Herts: Wordsworth Editions Ltd, 1931), 389.

England, we can contrast the moon's influence on Anna Brangwen with that of her daughter, Ursula.

On the one hand we have Anna and Will's union under the moon, where the two lovers are able to enter a situation fully with both their reason and their emotions. Moreover, in their union with each other, they also connect with the moon. Consequently, according to Lawrence, they achieve mutual metaphysical fulfilment, "darkness and shine, he possessed it all."⁵⁸ On the other hand, in a scene between Ursula and Skrebensky, the lovers are unable to achieve the fulfilment experienced by Anna and Will in the physical act of their love. According to Lawrence, this is because they were not in a complete emotion-reason balance with one another and the moon. That is to say, Lawrence tries to highlight the importance of experiencing the beauty of the moon with both reason and emotion, which would then lead to sexual satisfaction and spiritual peace.⁵⁹ Only when the two lovers fully experience nature, their union under the moonlight will become a serene, life-filled ritual (Anna and Will) rather than a tragedy as it is with Ursula and Skrebensky:

There was a great whiteness confronting her, the moon was incandescent as a round furnace door, out of which came the high blast of moonlight (...) a dazzling, terrifying glare of white light. (...) She gave her breast to the moon, (...) She held him pinned down at the chest, awful. The fight, the struggle for consummation was terrible. It lasted till it was agony to his soul, till he succumbed. (...) Gradually, she lifted her dead body from the sands, and rose at last. There was now no moon for her, no sea. All had passed away.⁶⁰

Ursula and Skrebensky are unable to experience the beauty of the moon and, therefore, their union "was agony to his soul," and for her "all had passed away." Unlike Anna and Will, the two lovers from this example, neither engage with the moon nor experience it as a primordial mystery of the cosmos. Therefore, their separation from the natural forces, such as the moon, causes their sense of alienation from each other. They feel alone in "the struggle for consummation," therefore, "there was no moon for her, no sea." According to Lawrence, only by reconnecting with nature and its forces will humans be able to live what he calls 'wholesomeness.' Through this scene, Lawrence tried to convey what Edward O. Wilson meant when he wrote: "Only in the last moment of human history has the delusion arisen that people can flourish apart from the rest of the living world. Primitives struggled to

⁵⁸ D. H. Lawrence, *The Rainbow*, 124-127.

⁵⁹ Lachapelle, 30.

⁶⁰ D. H. Lawrence, *The Rainbow*, 498-501.

understand the most relevant parts, aware that the right responses gave life and fulfilment, the wrong ones sickness, hunger and death.”⁶¹

Despite everything, Lawrence is not pessimistic about the future. What he suggests in *The Rainbow*, but also in his other works, is that humans did not lose the connection with the primitive, primal earth. We have just hidden it deeply within ourselves, in order to conform to the modern societal demands. He demonstrates his belief in the restoration of the relationship with the primitive in the lyrical ending of *The Rainbow*, in which Ursula Brangwen contemplates the possibility for a new beginning:

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 of 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 over-arching heaven.⁶²

In the last lines of his novel, Lawrence makes use of the rainbow as a symbol of hope in the rebuilding of the relationship between human and non-human nature. Through the events in Ursula's life, Lawrence shows that if one gets in touch with one's deepest sexual nature, one attains the awareness of the totality of nature. According to him, the human society can only be rebuilt in harmony with the greater cosmos. Therefore, the rainbow at the end of the novel represents not only hope, but also a promise for a new beginning, an alternate reality that would be built on the non-rational potential of nature, and a more intense experience of life than the one provided by modern capitalist societies.

⁶¹ Edward O. Wilson, *The Future of Life* (Harvard: The Belknap Press, 1992), 92.

⁶² D. H. Lawrence, *The Rainbow*, 514-515.

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