

D. H. Lawrence: 'Russia Will Certainly Inherit the Future'

D. H. Lawrence has always provoked strong and divisive reactions among his critics, his censors and his readers, being often dismissed for celebrating sexuality and rejoicing in the lubricious moments abundantly present in his works. Boldly innovative, deeply sensual and radically experimental, he was surprisingly prone to the whims of literary fashion; but, in distinction to the majority of the modernist oeuvre associated primarily with the high-brow aestheticism of the elite, his works did have a broader cultural impact on the readership of the time, being listed among the top literary bestsellers and the best examples of fiction written during the inter-war decades.¹

Lawrence never went to Russia, though his intention to make a trip to the country was persistently mentioned in his personal correspondence.² Just like almost the entire artistic world of the pre-World War I era, he was greatly affected by the vogue of Russomania: by the spellbinding otherness of the Russian novels and the glamour of Diaghilev's Paris and London seasons. These memorable shows found their most vivid representation in the pages of *Women in Love* (1920):

A servant came, and soon reappeared with armfuls of silk robes and shawls and scarves, mostly Oriental, things that Hermione, with her love for beautiful extravagant dress, had collected gradually [...] It was finally decided to do Naomi and Ruth and

1 Jane Bingham, *Popular Culture: 1920–1930* (London: Raintree, 2013), p. 36, 56.

2 See, for instance, letters to Samuel Kotliansky (1 May 1917, 6 December, 18 December 1925, 11 January 1926); to Catherine Carswell (17 December 1922); and to Carl Seelig (7 January 1926); D. H. Lawrence, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence* (respectively) III, p. 121; V, p. 365, p. 374; IV, p. 352; V, p. 271.

Orpah. Ursula was Naomi, Gudrun was Ruth, the Contessa was Orpah. The idea was to make a little ballet, in the style of the Russian Ballet of Pavlova and Nijinsky.³

Nijinsky entered Lawrence's artistic world through the connection fostered between the Ballets Russes and Ottoline Morrell, who was greatly impressed by the Russian seasons and in 1912 started inviting both Diaghilev and Nijinsky to her bohemian gatherings at Bedford Square. And although Lawrence would become friendly with Morrell only in two years' time (in spring of 1914), he himself took great pleasure in participating in the improvised amateurish *à la Russe* dancing shows arranged by David Garnett (the son of Edward and Constance Garnett, and an active member of Ottoline Morrell's circle), who in the summer of 1912 paid a visit to Lawrence and his wife-to-be Frieda in Icking. 'We are awfully fond of him,' Lawrence wrote about Garnett,

He imitates Mordkin, Pavlova's partner in Diaghilev Russian Ballet [sic], dancing with great orange and yellow and red and dark green scarves of F's, and his legs and arms bare, while I sit on the sofa and do the music, and burst with laughter, and F. stands out on the balcony in the dark, scared.⁴

Lawrence must have had warm recollections of these evenings, which later on were fictionalised in *Mr Noon*,⁵ his autobiographical novel drafted

3 D. H. Lawrence, *Women in Love* (New York: The Viking Press, 1920), pp. 83–4.

4 Lawrence, letter to Edward Garnett, 4 August 1912, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, I, p. 429.

5 The story tells of Gilbert and Johanna staying in a small Bavarian village; they are visited by 'a botanising youth of twenty-one [...] called Terry' (David Garnett), who in the course of long summer evenings enthusiastically coaches them in an uproarious Diaghilev scene of Judith and Holofernes:

The Russian Ballet with Anna Pavlova and Nijinsky had just come to London. Neither Gilbert nor Johanna knew it. But Terry drilled them. He was a brawny fellow. He stripped himself naked save for a pair of drawers and a great scarlet turban and sat in a corner intently playing knuckle-stones. Gilbert, feeling rather a fool, sat on the bed in Johanna's dressing-gown, turned the scarlet side outwards, and with a great orange and lemon scarf round his head, and being Holofernes. Johanna, handsomely rigged in shawls, was to be Judith charming the captain. So Terry, as a slave, squatted in his corner and buried himself

between 1920 and 1921 (the year of publication of *Women in Love*). The novel remained unfinished and unpublished during the author's lifetime, but this connection between the Russianness and the new expressive physical language, which gives voice to the deepest layers of the subconscious, became a key point in the configuring and projecting of his Russian point of view.

One of the key figures of the British modernist tradition, Lawrence belonged to the generation who had to face the so-called existential crisis of consciousness prevailing in the inter-war years: the demotion of the idea of man as an intellectual centre of the world, governed by the impersonal laws of reason. Against the downfall of rationalism and Western logo-centric modes of thinking, Nietzsche's reading of the human self as a dialectical unity of mind and the mysterious world of instincts – the true life force – came increasingly under the spotlight. For Lawrence, this type of complex ambivalence and polarisation – this naturally embedded desire for physical liberation, forever striving with the debilitating tendency towards intellectualisation, found its 'objective correlative' in the notion of the Russian, shaped and projected as a new model of the self and its ways of engagement with the 'otherness' of human civilisation.

Judging from his personal correspondence, his criticism and literary translations, Lawrence had a long-standing interest in the work of Russian authors: not only writers, but also philosophers such as Lev Shestov, Dmitrii Merezhkovsky and Vladimir Solov'ev. In September 1911 he was introduced to Edward Garnett (and later on, in June 1913, to his wife Constance Garnett),⁶ who was pivotal in promoting the works of

in his knuckle-stone business. Gilbert and Johanna were deeply impressed. Johanna began to swim forward like a houri or a Wagner heroine, to Gilbert, who was perched cross-legged, in the scarlet-silk wadded dressing-gown, upon the large bed. But Gilbert looked so uneasy and Johanna herself felt such a fool she fell to laughing, and laughed till her shawl arrangements fell away. Then the slave in the corner grew really angry, and it was all a fiasco (D. H. Lawrence, *Mr Noon*, ed. Lindeth Vasey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 255–6).

6 Richard David Garnett, *Constance Garnett: A Heroic Life* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1991), p. 273.

Russian literature in Britain, and whom Joseph Conrad even nicknamed the 'Russian Ambassador [sic] to the Republic of Letters.'⁷ Garnett was a valued friend and a crucial figure in launching Lawrence's career as a writer. When Lawrence fell in love with Frieda Weekley, a married woman at the time, Garnett became a confidant, and the couple even stayed at his house before eloping to Germany in 1912. As the young writer's literary mentor, Garnett secured a publishing contract for *The Trespasser* (1912), Lawrence's second novel, and then provided considerable assistance in editing the manuscript of his *Sons and Lovers* (1913). Whether Lawrence's work implies an intentional allusion to Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* is not definitively proven, but a certain homonymy in the title is difficult to disregard.⁸ Lawrence was intimately familiar with the writings of Turgenev, which had been available in several English translations since 1894.⁹ As a student, long before his acquaintance with the Garnetts he became enthusiastically engaged in reading the works of the Russian authors. Jessie Chambers (Wood), Lawrence's partner in his early twenties, maintains in her memoirs that 'He liked Turgenev immensely, and gave me his copy of *Fathers and Sons*, and impressed upon me that I must read *Rudin*.' She also recollects that

In the words of David Garnett, it was, in fact, long before 1911 that Lawrence knew about their family's literary tradition:

In the miner's cottage where he was brought up they 'regarded with a reverence amounting to awe' (E. T. (Jessie Chambers Wood), *D. H. Lawrence: A Personal Record* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1935), p. 92) a set of Richard Garnett's most imposing legacy to posterity, the twenty-volume *International Library of Famous Literature* (1899). Lawrence read widely in it and gained a good knowledge of the world's literature, though it was curiously weak in translations from the Russian, and when he first heard of Edward in September 1911 he mistook him for its editor (Richard Garnett, p. 268).

7 Kaye, p. 32.

8 The reference seemed transparent enough to John Galsworthy, one of the major proponents of Turgenev's writings in Britain (see Chapter 2 in this book), who did not hesitate to condemn Lawrence's novel (John Galsworthy, letter to Edward Garnett, 13 April 1914, *Letters from John Galsworthy 1900–1932*, p. 219).

9 *The Novels and Tales of Ivan Turgenev*, trans. Constance Garnett, 17 vols (London: Heinemann, 1894–1906); *The Novels and Stories by Ivan Turgéniéff*, trans. Isabel Hapgood, 13 vols (New York: Scribner, 1903–05).

Lawrence brought her 'his own copy of Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*', saying that it was 'the greatest novel in the world'.¹⁰ The reference to Gorky appears in Lawrence's first novel *The White Peacock* (1911), started as early as 1906;¹¹ and Lettie Beardsall, one of the main characters of the novel, uses an endearing Russian word for 'mother' – *matouchka* – in her conversation.¹²

At the time Lawrence must have been deeply moved by the Russians, for his letters of 1910 are also coloured by occasional insertions of emotionally charged Russian words: 'My affairs, like those of my friend [Ezra Pound], go a bit criss-crossy. It is very probable I shall have to return in September to home, to a little mining village in the midlands. *Bóhze moi* [my God]' (to Grace Crawford, 24 June 1910); 'I'm so miserable about my *'matouchka*' (to Louie Burrows, 14 December 1910); 'Well *golubchick* (pretty word!) – little pigeon – oh black swan' (to Louie Burrows, 28 December 1910).¹³ The word 'matouchka' is given in French, rather than English transliteration ('matushka'), which, perhaps, gives an indication of the language in which Lawrence read some of his first Russian novels. According to Natalya Reinhold, however, who was the first to draw attention to these Russian insertions in Lawrence's letters,¹⁴ he might have learned these words directly from Jessie Chambers, whose interest in Russian culture was deep enough for her to embark subsequently on literary translations.

10 E. T. (Jessie Chambers), p. 114, 121.

11 'I've been reading Maxim Gorky'; 'People must be ill when they write like Maxim Gorky' (D. H. Lawrence, *The White Peacock* (London: Heinemann, 1911), p. 165, 166).

12 'It's really my fault, in the end. Don't be pigging and mean and Grundyish, Matouchka' (Lawrence, *The White Peacock*, p. 265). Although the novel was rewritten several times and published only in 1911, it is likely that the Russian word was retained from the earlier drafts, as it was also used in Lawrence's play *A Collier's Friday Night*, written between 1906 and 1909: 'Is it a fact though, Matoushka? Why didn't you tell us before?' (D. H. Lawrence, *A Collier's Friday Night* (London: M. Secker, 1934), p. 20).

13 Lawrence to Grace Crawford, 24 June 1910; to Louie Burrows, 14 December 1910; to Louie Burrows, 28 December 1910, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, I, p. 166, 202, 217.

14 Natalya Reinhold, 'The Russian Pigeons in the Groves of Eastwood', *Études Lawrenciennes* 44 (2013), pp. 97–110.

Generally speaking, Russia-centred discussions were fairly prominent in Lawrence's close circle of friends and personal connections. Firstly, one should mention the Hueffer (Ford Madox Ford) circle, with which Lawrence got in touch in 1908, following the publication of his poems in *The English Review*.¹⁵ Ford Madox Ford's sister, Juliet Hueffer, was married to David Soskice, a Russian revolutionary and exile, head of a Russian Law Bureau in Lincoln's Inn Fields. Through Soskice, as well as through his own friendship with the Garnetts, Lawrence started off numerous and almost uniformly cordial relationships with a number of prominent members of the Russian anarchist groups. Among others, he spoke very highly of Fanny Stepniak (Sergei Stepniak-Kravchinsky's widow), portraying her as 'a beauty infinitely lovelier than the beauty of the young women I know. [...] She *knows* what life consists in, and she never fails her knowledge.'¹⁶ In January 1914, when staying in the small village of Albergo delle Palme, Lawrence and Frieda spent a month in the company of Felix Volkhovsky's wife Vera, who accompanied Constance Garnett on her Italian visit. Vera's arrival attracted a series of new encounters at some highly cosmopolitan social soirées, among which there was a memorable gathering, hosted by a popular and prolific Russian writer Alexander Amphiteatrov – 'a motley of tutors and music teachers for the children – an adopted son of Maxim Gorky [Zinovii Peshkov], little dark, agile, full of life and a great wild Cossack wife whom he had married for passion and come to hate.'¹⁷ And although the odd assortment of this 'rum show' made Lawrence suddenly feel 'English and stable and solid in comparison', he seemed to love these people 'for their absolute carelessness about everything but just what interested them.'¹⁸ Lawrence was very fond of Maxim Litvinov, the husband of his close friend Ivy Litvinov *nee* Low (married to Litvinov in 1916), who had been living in exile in London since 1908, and after the revolution was

15 Ford Madox Ford was the founder (1908) and the first editor of the journal.

16 Lawrence, letter to Sallie Hopkin, 22 April 1917, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, III, p. 116.

17 Lawrence, letter to Arthur McLeod, 14 March 1914, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, II, p. 155.

18 *Ibid.* p. 155.

appointed Foreign Representative of the Bolshevik State (to be People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs from 1930 to 1939). 'As for Russia, I still think I should like to go, in spite of all these "rulers"', he wrote to Samuel Kotliansky in 1925, 'Don't I remember Litvinov in a steam of washing and boiled cabbage?'¹⁹

Samuel Kotliansky, or 'Kot,' as he was affectionately known among the Bloomsbury circle, was the person who in many ways was pivotal regarding shaping Lawrence's view of Russia and its culture. As a Ukrainian emigrant, Kot arrived in England in 1911 to escape Tsarist anti-Semitic repression and started working as a translator for the Russian Law Bureau in London (and later for Leonard and Virginia Woolf's Hogarth Press). In July 1914 Lawrence and Kot found themselves in the company of two other friends on a walking tour in the Lake District. Kotliansky would later tell Catherine Carswell that Lawrence was described to him as 'a writer chap with ideas about love' and that on the second night of the walk,

they had to be put in a cottage where there was only one bed [...] Lawrence, as the delicate one, was made to sleep in the bed and Kotliansky as the visitor was urged to share it. He was very unwilling. Never in his life had such a thing befallen him. But Lawrence was so gay and easy that all shyness vanished.²⁰

Lawrence also had some vivid recollections of the occasion, depicting it in full detail to Cynthia Asquith:

I had been walking in Westmorland, rather happy with water-lilies twisted round my hat – big, white and gold water-lilies that we found in a pool high up – and girls who had come on a spree and who were having tea in the upper room of an inn, shrieked

19 Lawrence, letter to Samuel Kotliansky, 18 December 1925, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, V, p. 355.

20 Quoted in Galya Diment, *A Russian Jew of Bloomsbury: The Life and Times of Samuel Kotliansky* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press 2011), p. 52. Lawrence's relationship with Kotliansky is discussed in great detail in Diment's study; see also George J. Zytaruk, Introduction to George J. Zytaruk, *The Quest for Ranim: D. H. Lawrence's Letters to S. S. Kotliansky* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1970); and Harry T. Moore, *The Priest of Love: A Life of D. H. Lawrence* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1974), p. 111.

with laughter. And I remember also we crouched under the loose wall on the moors and the rain flew by in streams, and the wind came rushing through the chinks in the wall behind one's head, and we shouted songs and I imitated music-hall turns, whilst the other men crouched under the wall and I pranked in the rain on the turf in the gorse, and Koteliansky groaned Hebrew music – Ranani Sadekim Badanoi.²¹

Almost instantly they became friends and collaborated on various projects. Koteliansky assisted in arranging the translation of Lawrence's works into Russian, and even suggested 'Rananim', a Hebrew word for 'rejoice', as the name for Lawrence's idea of a utopian commune. Lawrence, on the other hand, took part in a number of Koteliansky's English translations, including Lev Shestov's *All Things Are Possible*, Ivan Bunin's *The Gentleman from San Francisco*, Dostoevsky's notebooks, and Maxim Gorky's *Reminiscences of Leonid Andreyev*. In 1930 Koteliansky translated *The Grand Inquisitor* as a free-standing work and asked Lawrence to write a preface. According to George Zytaruk's pioneering study of Lawrence's response to Russian literature, Lawrence, generally speaking, read and often acted as an unacknowledged editor for almost everything that Koteliansky attempted to translate.²²

This, of course, fell on the fertile ground of the writer's own fascination with the subject, and during his lifetime Lawrence acquired an extensive knowledge of the Russian literary oeuvre: from Russian classics to the less known contemporary authors such as Rozanov, Artsybashev, Kuprin and Bunin. His perception of these writings, however, differed considerably throughout the years. In the introduction to Koteliansky's translation of *The Grand Inquisitor* he wrote,

It is a strange experience, to examine one's reaction to a book over a period of years. I remember when I first read *The Brothers Karamazov*, in 1913, how fascinated yet unconvinced it left me [...] Since then I have read *The Brothers Karamazov* twice, and each time found it more depressing because, alas, more drearily true to life. At

21 Lawrence, letter to Cynthia Asquith, 31 January 1915, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, II, p. 268.

22 Zytaruk. *Lawrence's Response to Russian Literature*, pp. 13–36.

first it had been lurid romance. Now I read *The Grand Inquisitor* once more, and my heart sinks right through my shoes.²³

Being known for his ruthless attacks on Dostoevsky,²⁴ whom he did not cease to criticise in his essays, letters and fiction, Lawrence nonetheless claimed to have a 'subterranean love' and 'the greatest admiration'²⁵ for the Russian author, pitched in this type of a love–hate duality mode straight after his first reading of *Crime and Punishment* in 1909 (the French translation): 'I remember how he frowned in a puzzled way and said', he wrote in the memoirs of Jessie Chambers, 'It's very great, but I don't like it, I don't quite understand it. I must read it again.'²⁶ A somewhat more judgemental response to the novel can be found in Lawrence's letter to Blanche Jennings (May 1909), where he deplored the work as a 'tract, a treatise, a pamphlet compared to Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* or *War and Peace*.'²⁷ Lawrence read Tolstoy as a university student, acclaiming *Anna Karenina* as the greatest novel of frank sexuality;²⁸ later on he recommended it to May Holbrook, Jessie Chambers' elder sister, as a remedy for the provincial isolation and narrowness of Eastwood, praising the author as a 'great man' of the same calibre as Balzac and Ibsen.²⁹ Not unlike his further reflections on Dostoevsky, Lawrence subsequently dismissed Tolstoy's futile moral objectives and social

23 D. H. Lawrence, Introduction to *The Grand Inquisitor*, in D. H. Lawrence, *Introductions and Reviews*, ed. N. H. Reeve and John Worthen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 127–36 (p. 127).

24 Lawrence's response to Dostoevsky was analysed in detail by Peter Kaye (Kaye, pp. 29–65).

25 Lawrence, letter to Samuel Koteliensky, 8 April 1915, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, II, p. 314.

26 E. T. (Jessie Chambers), p. 123.

27 Lawrence, letter to Blanche Jennings, 8 May 1909, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, I, p. 126.

28 E. T. (Jessie Chambers), p. 114.

29 Lawrence, letter to May Holbrook, 2 December 1908, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, I, p. 96.

preaching: 'His *Resurrection* is the step into the tomb', he wrote, 'And the stone was rolled upon him.'³⁰

Around 1912 (at the time he was writing his own plays) his attention was drawn to Chekhov, whose plays he characterised as 'exceedingly interesting [...] – a new thing in drama.'³¹ He even drew a parallel between his own works and those of the Russian author: 'Just as an audience was found in Russia for Tchekhov, so an audience might be found in England for some of my stuff.'³² Yet again, he changed his opinion later, describing Chekhov as 'a second-rate writer.'³³

By 1914, Lawrence seemed to be less convinced by the writing of the entire cohort of the Russian authors:

The certain moral scheme is what I object to. In Turgenev, and in Tolstoi, and in Dostoevsky, the moral scheme into which all the characters fit – and it is nearly the same scheme – is, whatever the extraordinariness of the characters themselves, dull, old, dead.³⁴

30 D. H. Lawrence, 'Resurrection', in *Phoenix*, ed. Edward D. McDonald (London: Heinemann, 1936), pp. 737–39 (p. 737). For Lawrence's response to Tolstoy, see George J. Zytaruk, *Lawrence's Response to Russian Literature*, pp. 59–60.

31 Lawrence, letter to Philip Smith, 22 April 1912, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, I, p. 385.

32 Lawrence, letter to Edward Garnett, 1 February 1913, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, I, p. 509.

33 Lawrence, letter to Rhys Davis, 25 December 1928, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, VII, p. 94.

34 Lawrence, letter to Edward Garnett, 5 June 1914, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, II, pp. 182–3.

Jessie Chambers points out that Lawrence never cared much for Gorky (E. T. (Jessie Chambers), p. 121); while Lawrence himself states the opposite in his letter to Edward Garnett: 'I've read all the 4i[d] Maxim Gorky's, I believe – I love short stories' (Lawrence, letter to Edward Garnett, 2 March 1913, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, I, p. 524). As regards other contemporary authors, as he put it in his letter to Katherine Mansfield: 'Kot gave me a Kuprin. It reads awfully well. But I don't think much of these lesser Russians' (Lawrence, letter to Katherine Mansfield, 11 March 1916, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, II, p. 577).

It was a certain degree of insincerity that he sensed in the Russian literary endeavour, finding it exceedingly didactic, intellectually overblown and emotionally contrived. On 2 December 1916 he wrote to Catherine Carswell,

Oh, don't think I would belittle the Russians. They have meant an enormous amount to me; Turgenev, Tolstoi, Dostoevsky – mattered almost more than anything, and I thought them the greatest writers of all time. And now, with something of a shock, I realise a certain crudity and thick, uncivilised, insensitive stupidity about them, I realise how much finer and purer and more ultimate our own stuff is.³⁵

Lawrence, of course, was not the first who saw reflective intellectualism as a 'tragic flaw' of the Russian literary oeuvre. Since the first half of the nineteenth century the Russian cultural elite had been divided into so-called Westernisers (including such figures as Peter Chaadaev, Alexander Herzen and Vissarion Belinsky) and Slavophiles (represented by Aleksei Khomiakov and Konstantin Aksakov, and then followed by the poet Fedor Tiutchev, the lexicographer Vladimir Dahl and the composers of the 'Mighty Five' group). The latter were convinced that the Western drive to discover and explain grated against the Russians' inherited instinct for the preservation of mystery and distrust of analytical dissection. It is not that understanding was irrelevant to Russians, but certain things demanded a different kind of understanding than that offered by the enlightened Western approach. To someone with a traditional Russian sensibility, the Western methods of analysis seemed to trample on the sacred and destroy beauty through meticulous analysis and systematisation: the essential holistic quality of the being, or truth, seemed to be given up in the very process of inquiry and cognition.

Although it is unlikely that Lawrence was aware of this long-term socio-philosophical division, his doubts concerning the excessive analytical didacticism of the Russian classics appears to be surprisingly in tune with the tenets of the Slavophiles' doctrine. At first glance, his reasoning was fairly schematic: as a paragon of Western civilisation ('Since Peter the Great

35 Lawrence, letter to Catherine Carswell, 2 December 1916, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, III, p. 45.

Russia has been accepting Europe [...] What she has actually uttered is her own unwilling, fantastic reproduction of European truths³⁶), Russia was drowned in intellectual reflexivity, completely alien to the natural sensuality of the Russian soul, as one reads in his 1925 essay *The Novel*:

how boring, in a great nation like Russia, to let its old-Adam manhood be so improved upon by these reformers, who all feel themselves short of something, and therefore live by spite, that at last there's nothing left but a lot of shells of men, improving themselves steadily emptier and emptier, till they rattle with words and formulac.³⁷

Lawrence's conception of the Russian theme and the Russian spirit, however, turns out to be more nuanced and more complex. Essentially it had deep parallels in the theories of Lev Shestov, a contemporary Russian philosopher, whose essays he was editing in Koteliansky's translation (published under the title *All Things Are Possible* in 1920³⁸). Lawrence was clearly captivated by Shestov's punchy style and the broad spectrum of his vision, which had a crucial impact on substantiating and configuring his own socio-cultural thoughts:

I have been editing, for a Russian friend of mine, a rather amusing, not very long translation of a book of philosophy by one of the last of the Russians, called *Shestov*. It is by no means a heavy work – nice and ironical and in snappy paragraphs. Would it be in your line?³⁹

One of the key points of Shestov's philosophical stance consisted in the uniqueness of the Russian socio-historical path, which, according to the thinker, stemmed from the nation's relatively short-term exposure to

36 D. H. Lawrence, Foreword to Lev Shestov, *All Things Are Possible*, trans. S. S. Koteliansky (London: M. Secker, 1920), pp. 7–12 (pp. 7–8).

37 D. H. Lawrence, 'The Novel', in D. H. Lawrence, *Selected Critical Writings*, ed. Michael Herbert (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 179–90 (p. 187).

38 The book was positively reviewed by Benjamin de Casseres ('Shestov's Challenge to Civilisation', *New York Times Book Review and Magazine*, 3 October 1920, p. 19), highlighting Lawrence's 'brilliantly written foreword'.

39 Lawrence, letter to Martin Secker, 2 September 1919, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, III, 481–2.

the 'civilising' influence of the European tradition ('our simplicity and truthfulness are due to our relatively scanty culture'⁴⁰):

Scratch a Russian and you will find a Tartar. Culture is an age-long development, and sudden grafting of it upon a race rarely succeeds. To us in Russia, civilisation came suddenly, whilst we were still savages. At once she took upon herself the responsibilities of a tamer of wild animals, first working with decoys and baits, and later, when she felt her power, with threats. We quickly submitted. In a short time we were swallowing in enormous doses those poisons which Europe had been gradually accustoming herself to, gradually assimilating through centuries. Thanks to which, the transplanting of civilisation into Russia turns out to be no mild affair.⁴¹

This is not to say that Shestov tended to align himself with the classic framework of Slavophile ideas. His vision could be reduced to neither a simple rejection of the external Western impact, nor mechanical acceptance of the European cultural scheme. The essence of his understanding of the Russian cultural hybridity lay in the notion of creative dynamism and transformation – in forging a national identity that exists in between the two, capitalising on both polarities of the spectrum (without merging them), and raising this encounter onto a new level of dialectical interaction, to the effect that the whole is greater than the elemental sum of its parts. 'That is why', he argues, 'we have always taken over European ideas in such fantastic forms. Take the sixties, for example' – the era of such influential thinkers as Turgenev, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky: 'with its loud ideas of sobriety and modest outlook, it was a most drunken period. Those who awaited the New Messiah and the Second Advent read Darwin and dissected frogs.'⁴²

Lawrence's Foreword to the collection of Shestov's essays (as well as his later writing on the subject⁴³) displays his keen understanding of the philosopher's concept of the synergy of elements in the Russian identity hybrid, the dangers of any distortive excess, and the advantages of the

40 Lev Shestov, *All Things Are Possible*, trans. S. S. Koteliansky (London: M. Secker, 1920), p. 233.

41 Shestov, *All Things Are Possible*, p. 39.

42 Ibid. p. 238.

43 *The Novel* (1925), *On Being in Love* (1925), *The Crown* (written in 1915, revised for publication in 1925); The Review of 'Solitaria' by V. V. Rozanov (1927).

dialectical balance: 'Our speech and feeling are organically inevitable to us', he argued,

With the Russians it is different. They have only been inoculated with the virus of European culture and ethic [...] What she has really to utter the coming centuries will hear. For Russia will certainly inherit the future. What we already call the greatness of Russia is only her prenatal struggling.⁴⁴

Formally speaking, the text of the foreword hardly gives any specific indication of what exactly Lawrence understood by the indigenous Russian paradigm and the genuine Russian spirit. His fiction, his critical essays and translations suggest a clearer and a wider projection of his viewpoint, which, as will be shown, is closely affiliated with Shestov's concept of Russia's liminality (the inseparability and distinctness of its Slavic and Western sides) and the implications of its 'otherness' in the European social context.

In this regard, the area of Lawrence-Koteliansky translational collaboration requires further, more in-depth consideration, for Lawrence's contribution to this work should be seen as much more complex than that of a native-speaker editor and proof-reader. Like many other modernists, who revolutionised translation methods and strategies in ways that questioned the notion of accuracy and blurred the boundaries between the target and the source texts, Lawrence saw translation as a unique avenue of intercultural communication.⁴⁵ Apart from his general interest in languages and cultures, each with its own peculiar way of rendering the idea of the real, he was preoccupied with projecting the distinct spirit and distinct quality of the foreign culture, which he termed as 'the spirit of the place' (in the essay that opens *Studies in Classic American Literature*, 1923):

Every continent has its own great spirit of place. Every people is polarised in some particular locality, which is home, the homeland. Different places on the face of the earth have different vital effluence, different vibration, different chemical exhalation,

44 Lawrence, Foreword to Lev Shestov, *All Things Are Possible*, pp. 7–8.

45 G. M. Hyde, *D. H. Lawrence and the Art of Translation* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1981), pp. 11–35.

different polarity with different stars: call it what you like. But the spirit of place is a great reality.⁴⁶

The above words imply that any cultural product, including a work of literature and art, is meant to reflect this intrinsic synergy between the place, its inhabitants and their language; as Lawrence further specified in his essay 'Morality and the Novel' (1914): 'The business of art is to reveal the relation between man and his circumambient universe, at the living moment. [...] And this perfected relation between man and his circumambient universe is life itself, for mankind.'⁴⁷ It is in the exploration of this specific synergy and this intimate relation that Lawrence saw the purpose of any aesthetic endeavour; and it is in accordance with this notion of rendering 'the spirit of the place' that one should look at his editor's touch when he worked on Koteliansky's translations.⁴⁸

According to George Zytaruk there were three instances of their active collaboration: the first time was in 1919 when they worked on *All Things Are Possible* by Shestov; the second was Ivan Bunin's *The Gentleman from San Francisco* in 1922, followed by Maxim Gorky's *Reminiscences of Leonid*

46 D. H. Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature* (London: Heinemann, 1964), pp. 5–6.

The same concept is mentioned earlier in his *Sea and Sardinia* collection (1921): 'The spirit of place is a strange thing. Our mechanical age tries to override it. But it does not succeed. In the end the strange, sinister spirit of place, so diverse and adverse in differing places, will smash our mechanical oneness into smithereens, and all that we think the real thing will go off with a pop, and we shall be left staring' (D. H. Lawrence, *Sea and Sardinia*, ed. Mara Kalnins (Cambridge: University Press, 2002), p. 57).

47 D. H. Lawrence, 'Morality and the Novel', *Phoenix*, pp. 527–32 (p. 527).

48 As Koteliansky put it, Lawrence was not keen on positioning himself as a translator, feeling that it would be damaging for his reputation with publishers as a creative writer (Moore, p. 347): 'I don't want my names printed as a translator. It won't do for me to appear to dabble in too many things. If you don't want to appear alone – but why shouldn't you? – put me a nom de plume like Richard Haw or Thomas Ball' (Lawrence, letter to Samuel Koteliansky, 10 August 1919, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, III, p. 381).

Andreev in 1924.⁴⁹ In many ways, Bunin's *The Gentleman from San Francisco* (published in Russian in 1915) was, arguably, the highlight of this trio, for here Koteliansky managed to bring together two real literary giants with similar sensibilities and artistic talents.

In early June 1921, Koteliansky wrote to Lawrence asking whether he would "English" a translation he had made of a Russian story.⁵⁰ Two months later the translation was complete. Lawrence liked the story so much that he wrote to Koteliansky, expressing his wish to proceed with other stories from Bunin's collection, but by then Koteliansky had already begun working on *Gentle Breathing, Kazimir Stanislavovich and Son* with Leonard Woolf. The translation first appeared in the *Dial* and then was included in the 1922 Hogarth Press volume. Woolf was full of praising comments for Lawrence's version, calling it 'a masterpiece or near-masterpiece.'⁵¹ Lawrence, on the other hand, was not that flattering about Woolf's work: 'Some of Wolf's [sic] sentences,' he noted, 'take a bit of reading.'⁵² In this opinion he was joined by *The Times* reviewer: 'The other three stories in the book are in comparison, slight,' he claimed, commenting on the positive synergy of the Lawrence-Bunin association:

In the Russian it is written as a kind of prose-poem, a style of writing well adapted to express the heated yet sombre imaginative glow with which the story is suffused. But the present translation, by D. H. Lawrence and S. S. Koteliansky, although it cannot reproduce precisely the style of the original, is a remarkably able piece of

- 49 George J. Zytaruk, 'D. H. Lawrence's Hand in Translation of Maxim Gorki's "Reminiscences of Leonid Andreev"', *The Yale University Library Gazette* 46.1 (1971), pp. 29–34. Zytaruk maintains that in the first two cases it has not been possible to identify Lawrence's specific contributions, despite the fact that the entire manuscript of *All Things Are Possible* has been preserved in Lawrence's handwriting; the *Reminiscences of Leonid Andreev* is different in this regard: there is a typescript with Lawrence's handwritten revisions.
- 50 Lawrence, letter to Samuel Koteliansky, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, IV, p. 23.
- 51 Leonard Woolf, *Beginning Again: An Autobiography of years from 1811 to 1918* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1964), III, p. 248.
- 52 Lawrence, letter to Samuel Koteliansky, 9 July 1921, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, IV, p. 275.

work. A better translation is hardly possible [...] The other three stories in the book are in comparison, slight⁵³

In his restrained and dignified way, Bunin, who excelled not only as a prose writer, but also as a musician and a first-rate poet, was one of the greatest stylists in the Russian language. His prose unmistakably reflects the poet's sensitivity in his cool verbal precision and his keen eye for accurate detail. All short-story writers rely on significant detail, but Bunin's images are particularly sharp; and his fluent economy of diction was rarely matched by any of the Russian authors. This type of writing found a very particular resonance in Lawrence's own mode of expression. Both linguistically and poetically, his English text represented Bunin's style with a remarkable exactness of tonal gradations. Compare for instance, Lawrence's artistically nuanced translation with a somewhat plainer version produced by Yarmolinsky in 1918:

The rest of the tourists hardly deserved any attention. There were a few Russians, who had settled on Capri, untidy, absent-minded people, absorbed in their bookish thoughts, spectacled, bearded, with the collars of their cloth overcoats raised.⁵⁴

And in Lawrence we read:

There were other arrivals too, but none worthy of notice: a few Russians who had settled in Capri, untidy and absent-minded owing to their bookish thoughts, spectacled, bearded, half-buried in the upturned collars of their thick woollen overcoats.⁵⁵

Lawrence, himself a painter and a poet, obviously responded to the graphic aestheticism of the Russian author. Moreover, in Bunin's story, Lawrence's

53 'Ivan Bunin', *The Times*, 17 May 1922, p. 16.

54 Ivan Bunin, 'The Gentlemen from San Francisco', in *Lazarus* by Leonid Andreev and *The Gentlemen from San Francisco* by Bunin, trans. Abraham Yarmolinsky (Boston: The Stratford Company Publishers 1918), pp. 32–58 (pp. 43–44).

55 Ivan Bunin, *The Gentleman from San Francisco and Other Stories*, trans. S. S. Koteliansky and Leonard Woolf (Richmond: Hogarth Press, 1922), pp. 1–40 (p. 19); the book contains a note saying: 'Owing to a mistake Mr Lawrence's name has been omitted from the title page.'

sensibility and mastery in projecting ‘the spirit of the place’ came across with an almost uncanny degree of insight and perception. Not without an implicit reference to the overwhelming vastness of the Russian land and the iconic wildness of the Russian spirit, the uncontrollable realm of the gale-swept sea was juxtaposed to the man-made power of the ship (on which the gentleman travels across the Atlantic) – an embodiment of the eternal war waged between the elemental forces of nature and the artificial mind-constructs of modern civilisation. In the narrative, this opposition takes on a spiritual or even metaphysical dimension, for the ship is ruled by a mysterious captain, akin to a pagan idol; while the devil himself watches the struggle of the ship against the sea from the shoreline. It is, on the other hand, made very clear that modern civilisation has now created its own gods and its own man-made devils, next to which the elemental Old World’s notion of Hell seems almost irrelevant and powerlessly unimportant:

still they danced, amid a storm that swept over the ocean, booming like a funeral service, rolling up mountains of mourning darkness silvered with foam. Through the snow the numerous fiery eyes of the ship were hardly visible to the Devil who watched from the rocks of Gibraltar, from the stony gateway of two worlds, peering after the vessel as she disappeared into the night and storm. The Devil was huge as a cliff. But huger still was the liner, many storeyed, many funnelled, created by the presumption of the New Man with the old heart. The blizzard smote the rigging and the funnels, and whitened the ship with snow, but she was enduring, firm, majestic and horrible. On the topmost deck rose lonely amongst the snowy whirlwind, the cosy and dim quarters where lay the heavy master of the ship, he who was like a pagan idol, sunk now in a light, uneasy slumber.⁵⁶

- 56 Bunin, *The Gentleman from San Francisco and Other Stories*, pp. 37–38. Compare with Yarmolinsky’s version:

On the second and the third night there was again a ball – this time in mid-ocean, during a furious storm sweeping over the ocean, which roared like a funeral mass and rolled up mountainous seas fringed with mourning silvery foam. The Devil, who from the rocks of Gibraltar, the stony gateway of two worlds, watched the ship vanish into night and storm, could hardly distinguish from behind the snow the innumerable fiery eyes of the ship. The Devil was as huge as a cliff, but the ship was even bigger, a many-storied, many-stacked giant, created by the arrogance of the New Man with the old heart. The blizzard battered the ship’s rigging and its broad-necked stacks, whitened with snow, but it

Through Lawrence's encounter with Bunin, his understanding of the Russian theme acquired yet another degree of reflective assertion. It appeared as if, quite suddenly, he glimpsed exactly what for years he had been trying to capture and conceive. Firstly, one of the most fundamental aspects of Bunin's world-view was an acute sense of the precariousness of existence, an omnipresent awareness of the impermanence of all human constructions and achievements, and a constant recognition that everything one values can be snatched away at any moment (like the fully accidental and inconsequential death of the gentleman from San Francisco). Yet this sense of volatility and doom does not lead to apathy and despair, but draws attention to the most vivid appreciation of the sensual experience, the physicality of life and the spontaneity of human emotions. In this respect, Lawrence's first reaction to Bunin's story was quite telling and revealing: 'In spite of its lugubriousness', he maintained, 'it is screamingly good of Naples and Capri: so comically like reality';⁵⁷ and it was this very type of sensation that several years later would acquire a definitive shape in his reflective comments on Rozanov's *Solitaria*:

He is the first Russian, as far as I am concerned, who has ever said anything to me. And his vision is full of passion, vivid, valid. He is the first to see that immortality is in the vividness of life, not in the loss of life. The butterfly becomes a whole revelation to him: and to us. When Rozanov is wholly awake, and a new man, a risen man, the living and resurrected pagan, then he is a great man and a great seer, and perhaps, as he says himself, the first Russian to emerge.⁵⁸

remained firm, majestic – and terrible. On its uppermost deck, amidst a snowy whirlwind there loomed up in loneliness the cosy, dimly lighted cabin, where, only half awake, the vessel's ponderous pilot reigned over its entire mass, bearing the semblance of a pagan idol. He heard the wailing moans and the furious screeching of the siren, choked by the storm, but the nearness of that which was behind the wall and which in the last account was incomprehensible to him, removed his fears (Bunin, in *Lazarus* by Leonid Andreev and *The Gentleman from San Francisco* by Bunin, pp. 56–7).

57 Lawrence, letter to Samuel Koteliensky, 16 June 1921, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, IV, p. 37.

58 D. H. Lawrence, 'Solitaria, by V. V. Rozanov', in *D. H. Lawrence: Selected Criticism*, ed. Anthony Beal (New York: Viking Press, 1956). pp. 247–9 (p. 248); the review was

Secondly (though very much connected with the previous point), it was the spirit of pagan Russianness incarnated in the uncorrupted power of natural physicality (as in Bunin's portrayal of the sea), which for Lawrence was missing in the works of the Russian literary classics: 'Instinctive animal Russia, with its miseries and splendours', had been replaced by 'a thinking, or pseudo-thinking Russia, enacting a few old thoughts, the best spontaneity destroyed.'⁵⁹ In Dostoevsky, for instance, Lawrence saw a writer, who was torn between 'the complete selflessness of Christian love' and the 'complete self-assertion of sensuality', and, instead of forging a productive unity of the two, took both principles to destructive extremes:

Dmitri Karamazov and Rogozhin will each of them [...] obtain the sensation and the reduction within the flesh, add to the sensual experience, and progress towards utter dark disintegration, to nullity. Myshkin on the other hand will react upon the achieved consciousness or personality or ego of everyone he meets [...] obtaining the knowledge of the factors that made up the complexity of the consciousness [...] [then] reduce further and further back, till himself is a babbling idiot, a vessel full of disintegrated parts⁶⁰

This division, leading to the perilous dissolution of one's personal self, was regarded by Lawrence as a purely mental construct:

If there were no ascetics, there'd be no lewd people. If you divide the human psyche into two halves, one half will be white, the other black. It's the division itself which is pernicious. The swing to one extreme causes the swing to the other [...] But you can't blame the soul for this. All you have to blame is the craven, cretin human intelligence, which is always seeking to get away from its own centre;⁶¹

first published in *Calendar of Modern Letters* (July 1927). For a more detailed analysis see George J. Zytaruk, 'The Phallic Vision: D. H. Lawrence and V. V. Rozanov', *Comparative Literature Studies* 4.3 (1967), pp. 283–97.

59 D. H. Lawrence, 'On Being in Love', in D. H. Lawrence, *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine and Other Essays*, ed. Michael Herbert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 386.

60 D. H. Lawrence, 'The Crown', in D. H. Lawrence, *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine*, pp. 251–307 (p. 282).

61 Lawrence, 'Solitaria', p. 249.

and was seen as characteristic of almost all Russian nineteenth-century authors. He referred to this as a peculiar 'Russianitis' disease – a spiritual and psychological affliction, which manifests itself as a love of one's own split-personality, a love 'to be dual, and divided against themselves.'⁶² To give but a few examples: according to Lawrence, this triumph of reflexive consciousness revealed itself most evidently in the failure of free love in Tolstoy's writings, when the tragic love of Anna and Vronsky turns out to be pointlessly destroyed by 'the judgement of men', as opposed to the 'judgement of their own souls or the judgement of God.'⁶³ Consequently, he was very critical of Tolstoy's 'poetic' support of those, in his view, pathetic figures like Prince Nekhlyudov (*Resurrection*), who having engaged himself in a calculated routine of moral penance, eradicated the authentic sensual part of his identity and his soul. 'All that is quick, and all that is said and done by the quick, is, in some way, godly', Lawrence argued in the *Novel*,

So that Vronsky's taking Anna Karenina we must count godly, since it is quick. And Prince in *Resurrection*, following the convict girl, we must count dead. The convict train is quick and alive. But that would-be-expiatory Prince is as dead as lumber.⁶⁴

In Tolstoy, as in Dostoevsky, Lawrence saw a writer whose unbalanced duality manifested itself through the celebration of an overly rational and moralistic concept of the human – a perverse denial of desires and an excessive exaltation of the mind without appropriate 'grounding' in the physicality of carnal instincts. It is symptomatic in this sense that the original title of Shestov's essay – 'The Apotheosis of Groundlessness', rejected by

62 Ibid. pp. 247–8.

The reason for Lawrence's attraction to such a writer as Rozanov lies largely in the fact that he was drawing not from the reflective framework of mental postulations, but from the vast old sensual background of pagan Russia: 'Rozanov has more or less recovered the genuine pagan vision, the phallic vision, and with those eyes he looks, in amazement and consternation, on the mess of Christianity' (Lawrence, 'Solitaria', p. 248).

63 Zyatruk, *Lawrence's Response to Russian Literature*, p. 83.

64 Lawrence, *The Novel*, p. 183.

Lawrence as unsuitable for the English reader⁶⁵ – is echoed almost directly in *Women in Love*'s narrative (published in 1920, the same year as the translation of Shestov), when Gudrun comments, rather insightfully, on the 'rootless life of the Russians.'⁶⁶

An insightful attempt to reflect upon this innate duality within the notion of the Russian (as an essentialist model, which can be expanded into the area of any intercultural, ethnic and sexual interaction) is projected in Lawrence's own fiction.⁶⁷ In *Women in Love* it comes across in its most direct way in the figure of Maxim Libidnikov – a 'prim young Russian,'⁶⁸ whose name in itself suggests an interesting interplay of the body-soul ambivalent associations, referring to 'libido' as a physical connotation on the one hand, and to Dostoevsky's Lebezyatnikov – on the other. The latter is a relatively minor character in *Crime and Punishment*, who serves as a mouthpiece for certain allegedly 'superfluous' Western ideas (such as for instance, Nihilism and Utilitarianism), received with a degree of criticism by the Russian author.⁶⁹

Maxim's first appearance in the gathering of the middle-class London intellectuals asserts the ambivalence of the division. His features are described in unambiguously sensual terms: 'He was dark, and smooth-skinned, and full of a stealthy vigour' with 'smooth, warm-coloured face and

65 'His [Shestov's] attitude amuses me – also his irony, which I think is difficult for the English readers [...] "Apotheosis of Groundlessness" will never do. What can one find instead, for a title?' (Lawrence, letter to Samuel Koteliansky, 9 August 1919, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, III, p. 380).

66 Lawrence, *Women in Love*, p. 203.

67 Ben Richardson's unpublished MA Thesis 'Unwrapping the Enigma: Russia in the Works of Wyndham Lewis, T. S. Eliot, and D. H. Lawrence, 1912–1939' (University of Canterbury, New Zealand, 2012) presents an interesting and detailed account of Lawrence's engagement with the Russian theme, albeit he takes a different line from that taken in this study.

68 Ibid. p. 62.

69 The meaning of the name was explained by Dostoevsky in the drafts of the novel: 'Lebeziatnikov – fawning, being obsequious or servile'; followed by an important clarification: 'Nihilism is a servitude of thought' (E. A. Shklovsky, Notes to Fedor Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment* (Moscow: Olma-Press, 2005), pp. 744–62 (p. 744)).

black, oiled hair.⁷⁰ At the same time he is shown to be self-controlled and socially restrained, for, in the company where almost everyone appears to be drunk, he strikes Gerald Crich as 'the only one who seemed to be perfectly calm and sober.'⁷¹ Similarly, his voice 'sounded in the blood rather than in the air',⁷² but his speech suggested a high level of carefully cultivated intellectual sophistication, expressed in a 'precise', 'refined', 'quick', 'hushed' and 'elegant manner.'⁷³ There is a clear allusion to Maxim's homoerotic relationship with Julius Halliday, as Gerald discovers 'the young men by the fire stark naked.'⁷⁴ However, the Russian's tendency to struggle with, and ultimately suppress the inherent physicality of his nature becomes evident in the episode where Maxim takes an affrontingly cynical stance against Birkin's idea of the divinity of sexual desire (denigrating it as a form of 'religious mania'⁷⁵); and his spontaneous interest in the subject ("Go on – go on," said Maxim. "What comes next? It's really very interesting"⁷⁶) is shown to be concurrently suppressed and kindred ('go on reading'⁷⁷) through the conflicting mental and instinctive pulses: "'Yes, yes, so do I", said the Russian. "He is a megalomaniac, of course, it is a form of religious mania. He thinks he is the Saviour of man – go on reading."⁷⁸

This inherent duality characteristic of the Russian psyche is maintained throughout the novel and is linked to a more general, culturally significant discourse of the East (primeval) – West (rational) juxtaposition.⁷⁹ Maxim's cultural liminality, in this respect, comes across by the way in which he fulfils the role of a symbolic meta-textual mediator (in Gerald's

70 Lawrence, *Women in Love*, p. 62.

71 Ibid. p. 62.

72 Ibid. p. 62.

73 Ibid. p. 374, 69, 63.

74 Ibid. p. 70.

75 Ibid. p. 375.

76 Ibid. p. 375.

77 Ibid. p. 375.

78 Ibid. p. 375.

79 In the novel Maxim's appearance often acquires a connotational quality of the natural world: 'with the black hair growing fine and freely, like tendrils, and his limbs like smooth plant-stems'; 'the Russian golden and like a water-plant' (Ibid. p. 71).

mind) between the European and the pagan pre-Christian (African) civilisation. Thus, for instance, Gerald finds the physicality of Maxim's naked body humiliating and prohibitively repulsive ('Gerald looked at him, and with a slight revulsion saw the human animal, golden skinned and bare, somehow humiliating'⁸⁰) in the same way as he is repelled by the sight of the wooden statue of an African woman 'abstracted' in utter physical stress ('It was a terrible face, peaked, abstracted almost into meaninglessness by the weight of sensation beneath'⁸¹). What is significantly striking in this context is that the description of the sculpture – 'a statuette about two feet high, a tall slim, elegant figure from West Africa, in dark wood, glossy and suave'⁸² – is cast by reference to a set of epithets almost identical to those used for the portrait of the Russian: 'his suave, golden coloured body'; 'in his quick, hushed, elegant manner.'⁸³

To Lawrence, African art expresses the history of an ancient race older than Christianity, which has sensual rather than spiritual values to offer – something 'of the extreme of physical sensation, beyond the limits of mental consciousness'⁸⁴ (or as he remarks later in the novel: the statue 'had thousands of years of purely sensual, purely unspiritual knowledge behind her. It must have been thousands of years since her race had died, mystically'⁸⁵). When stylistically associated with the statue, Maxim is, metaphorically speaking, bridging the gap between the civilised and the savage; and the fact that in the novel he is more often called 'the Russian', or 'the young Russian', rather than by his proper name, signifies that his liminal identity is seen as ethnically archetypal and paradigmatic, rather than singular and person-specific.

One can say that the effect of Lawrence's exploration of the Russian cultural hybridity is at least two-fold. On the one hand, it certainly sheds light on his vision of the complexity of the Russian psyche, with its innate

80 Ibid. p. 70.

81 Ibid. p. 71.

82 Ibid. p. 245.

83 Ibid. p. 71, 63.

84 Ibid. p. 67.

85 Ibid. p. 245.

sensuality tarnished by the dominance of consciousness and intellectual pursuits. On the other, attention is drawn to the fact that Lawrence's projection of this interethnic or intercultural mixing is implicit within a tendency to keep all their elements separate from each other, or to use effects of hybridity to emphasise the intransitiveness of the division. Thus, for instance, Gerald Crich finds the presence of the young Russian profoundly disturbing ('He was so healthy and well-made [...] why did one feel repelled?'⁸⁶), especially in distinction to his English homoerotic partner, Julius Holliday, who, in contrast to the Russian's human–animal hybridity, is perceived in terms of the comforting aestheticism of the Western tradition: 'heavy, slack, broken beauty, white and firm. He was like a Christ in a Pieta.'⁸⁷ The encounter with foreign hybridity here becomes an imperative catalyst for self-assertion – for reaffirmation of Englishness and the implicit purity of one's own line. In this regard, a parallel comes to mind with Lawrence's own experience in such a cosmopolitan, Anglo–Russo–Italian, context. As he described it in a letter, the motley assortment of this 'rum show' made him suddenly feel very 'English and stable and solid in comparison.'⁸⁸

Lawrence's specific perspective on the concept of intercultural hybridity is, of course, ideologically motivated: it reflects a clear tendency towards ethnic and cultural essentialism, which, according to many critics, was a distinct and noticeable feature of his work. Fiona Becket, for instance, argues that such essentialism is in keeping with Lawrence's more general preoccupation with polarisation of the opposites, seen in the context of the Heideggerian notion of

Intimacy, whereby the relationship [...] between any two factors [...] is not to be understood as synthesis. Focused on opposition, Lawrence's concentration is typically on separateness, nearness, and distance that 'nearness' paradoxically implies, between the two elements or bodies that figure at any point in his thought.⁸⁹

86 Ibid. p. 71.

87 Ibid. p. 70.

88 Lawrence, letter to Arthur McLeod, 14 March 1914, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, II, p. 155.

89 Fiona Becket, *D. H. Lawrence: The Thinker as Poet* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), p. 156.

This conjunction of ‘inseparability’ and ‘distinctness’ in Lawrence is requisite to the productive interaction of difference – to a dynamic tension rather than equalising synthesis or syncretic merge. To illustrate, one finds this conceptual structure in Birkin’s idealisation of love as ‘pure duality of polarisation’ – as a union of ‘two strong beings’, man and woman, who are ‘constellated like two stars.’⁹⁰ Moreover, Howard J. Booth argues that for Lawrence, the notion of this dynamic union goes far beyond the framework of gender relations. He draws attention to the fact that, in 1917 (the year when *Women in Love* was being substantially revised), Lawrence’s thought manifested a shift away from viewing the heterosexual relationship as the source of transformational encounter. Instead, he moved towards exploring ‘racial differences and cultural otherness’ as a potential trigger of the transformative change.⁹¹

The Rainbow and *Women in Love* represent, arguably, the most comprehensive and sustained reflection of Lawrence’s perspective on the potency of such a transformative intercultural mixing (as a dynamic tension of the elements), in which the notion of Russian ‘otherness’ is employed as a ‘buoying up’ of the author’s philosophical views. The Brangwen sisters’ personal drama, their difficulties in finding equilibrium between their convoluted inner selves and the surrounding social milieu, stems directly from their original ethnic liminality – their intercultural hybridity formed of Slavic emotional physicality and the rationalism of the English mind. The formation, as well as the detailed examination of the interaction of elements in such a mixture is explored in *The Rainbow* – the 1915 ‘prequel’ to *Women in Love*, which follows the social and spiritual evolution of three generations of the Lensky women – the ‘well born’ descendants of Polish ‘landowners,’⁹² integrated through their marital relations into the English family of Brangwen men.

90 Lawrence, *Women in Love*, p. 201.

91 Howard J. Booth, ‘Lawrence in Doubt: A Theory of the “Other” and its Collapse’, in *Modernism and Empire*, ed. Howard J. Booth and Nigel Rigby (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 197–223 (p. 203).

92 D. H. Lawrence, *The Rainbow* (New York: Modern Library, 1915), p. 34.

The fact that the Lenskys – Lydia, Anna and then Ursula and Gudrun – happen to be of Polish rather than Russian extraction is, perhaps, of low importance in this context, as there are several factors suggesting that Lawrence's portrayal of them should be largely considered on a paradigmatic level – as an archetypal projection of his Russian or, generally speaking, pan-Slavic point of view. Firstly, to anyone familiar with the Russian literary oeuvre, the family name Lensky will sound intimately Russian, through its reference to Vladimir Lensky, the main character in Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*. Secondly, at the time when Lawrence was working on the novel Poland was still an assimilated part of the Russian Empire. And finally, and perhaps more importantly, it is worth bearing in mind that for Lawrence the concept of nationality was inherently connected to ethnicity; as his characters affirm in *Women in Love*, at least in Europe 'nationality roughly corresponds to race.'⁹³ Similarly, in *Movements in European History* he claims that in the development of mankind it is 'a different spirit and idea' of the race that configures its evolution (or in Lawrence's terms, 'its own growing tip') as a nation: 'Every branch has its own direction and its growing tip [...] for each branch is, as it were, differently grafted by a different spirit and idea, which becomes its own spirit and idea.'⁹⁴

In Lawrence's fiction, this specific 'spirit and idea' of the Slavs is often highlighted through the 'otherness' of their mode of self-expression. When they need to find a voice for their inner selves they move away from the European logo-centric tradition and express the inexpressible through the gestural language of dance, akin to the irrational world of their pagan forebears.⁹⁵ In this regard one can mention Anna Brangwen's outburst of

93 Lawrence, *Women in Love*, p. 22.

94 D. H. Lawrence, *Movements in European History*, ed. Philip Crumpton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 256.

95 During these years Lawrence was galvanised by the studies of primitive cultures and more specifically by Edward B. Tylor's anthropological study, *Primitive Culture*: (London: John Murray, 1903), which traces the emergence of language systems back to the expression of states of mind through shared gestures. On 7 April 1916 he wrote to Ottoline Morrell: 'It is a very sound substantial book, I had far rather read it than *The Golden Bough* or Gilbert Murray' (Lawrence, letter to Ottoline Morrell, 7 April 1916, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, II, p. 593). The laudatory comment is repeated

frustration with her marriage when, pregnant and naked, she dances all by herself in front of the mirror in an intensely charged private moment of self-determination: 'She would not have had anyone know. She danced in secret, and her soul rose in bliss. She danced in secret before the Creator. She took off her clothes and danced in the pride of her bigness;⁹⁶ or Gudrun's dance before the bull, where her feminine power is fused with some kind of bestial potency and the elemental irrationality of the sun and the moon:

quicker, fiercer went Gudrun in the dance, stamping as if she were trying to throw off some bond, flinging her hands suddenly and stamping again, then rushing with face uplifted and throat full and beautiful, and eyes half closed, sightless. The sun was low and yellow, sinking down, and in the sky floated a thin, ineffectual moon.⁹⁷

It is not certain whether Lawrence ever attended a performance of *The Rite of Spring*, based on the Russian pagan sacrificial ritual. He started working on *The Rainbow* in 1913, in the year after the ballet's riotous premiere in Paris. According to certain scholars, however, his imaginative depiction of the dancing scenes certainly brings to mind the writer's fascination with the physicality of the Diaghilev dancers; and his heroines' language of inner expression 'uncannily suggests (even unconsciously) the performance strategies' of the Russian *Rite*.⁹⁸ As Hugh Stevens argued in his study, 'Ursula at times is like a dancer in the *ballets russes*, dancing madly to the powerful wild colours and smells of nature.'⁹⁹ The conflicting relationship between the Lenskys' natural sensuality and the Brangwens'

in a letter to Thomas Dunlop, written over three months later (Lawrence, letter to Thomas Dunlop, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, II, p. 630).

96 Lawrence, *The Rainbow*, p. 171.

97 Lawrence, *Women in Love*, p. 158.

98 Jones, p. 113. In her study Susan Jones draws a strong connection between Lawrence's fiction and the work of Diaghilev's company (pp. 109–27).

99 Hugh Stevens bases his claim on the following quote from *The Rainbow*: 'the scents of autumn were like a summer madness to her. She fled away from the little, purple-red button-chrysanthemums like a frightened dryad, the bright yellow little chrysanthemums smelled so strong, her feet seemed to dither in a drunken dance' (Lawrence, *The Rainbow*, p. 289). The extravagant colour scheme (the purple-red and bright yellow), he argues, serves to 'suggest the influence of the visual aesthetics of Bakst

'rule of mind' displayed in *The Rainbow* is crucial for understanding the way in which Lawrence conceives the prospects of interaction between Western civilisation and the 'otherness' of the Slavs. As he once explained it to his close friend Dorothy Brett, the rainbow is 'the meeting half way of two elements. The meeting of the sun and of the water produce [sic] at exactly the right place and moment, the rainbow. So it is in everything, and that is eternal.'¹⁰⁰

The first two generations of the Brangwens and the Lenskys quintessentially embody the principle of opposites that attract, but cannot master their co-existence in a balanced and self-preserving mode. The passionate and emotionally charged 'otherness' of the Lenskys' women is mesmerising and almost mystically enticing to the Brangwens, but any interaction between them turns out to be disastrously destructive for both sides. Both couples (Tom and Lydia, as well as Lydia's daughter Anna and Will) live their lives in a permanent psychological battle. While trying, subconsciously, to reclaim their autonomy from the 'other', they happen to be unable to reject the urge towards self-sacrificial effacement imposed by the very concept of the bond. Thus, most of the time Tom and Lydia's relationship is characterised by antagonism, unrelieved hostility and strain. Tom is haunted by the feeling that he is incapable of penetrating the true essence of Lydia's being, and consequently cannot 'bear to be near her, and know the utter foreignness between them, know how entirely they were strangers to each other.'¹⁰¹ Lydia, in turn, is psychologically afflicted in her husband's presence:

and almost savagely she turned again to life, demanding her life back again, demanding that it should be as it had been when she was a girl, on the land at home, under the sky. Snow lay in great expanses, the telegraph posts strode over the white earth,

and the Ballets Russes' (Hugh Stevens, 'From Genesis to the Ring: Richard Wagner and D. H. Lawrence's *Rainbow*', *Textual Practice* 28.4 (2014), pp. 611–30 (p. 621)).

100 Norman Page, *D. H. Lawrence: Interviews and Recollections* (London: MacMillan, 1981), II, p. 241.

101 Lawrence, *The Rainbow*, p. 42.

away under the gloom of the sky. And savagely her desire rose in her again, demanding that this was Poland, her youth, that all was her own again.¹⁰²

Being desperate for her own emotional freedom and self-realisation, she nonetheless negates the very idea of granting the same to her other half: 'it irritated her to be made aware of him as a separate power.'¹⁰³ Anna's irrational conflict with Will also goes off into obscure accusations, power games and mutual hatred ('Every moment of your life you are doing something to me, something horrible, that destroys me'¹⁰⁴), which, paradoxically, leads to a striking thought of non-existence or even self-annihilation in the absence of the 'other': 'He hated her for what she said [...] And the shame was a bitter fire in him, that she was everything to him, that he had nothing but her.'¹⁰⁵

According to Lawrence this type of interaction, in which both parts have to surrender their personalities in a self-annihilating act of syncretic merging, is suffocating and destructive. As he maintains in *Aaron's Rod* (1922), such a relationship fosters 'abysses and maudlin self-abandon and self-sacrifice, the degeneration into a sort of slime and merge [...] wherein the soul and body ultimately perish.'¹⁰⁶ This type of union is essentially corrupt. And although in *The Rainbow* there is a clear emotional attraction within the families, which transcends their ethnic differences and the lack of cultural affinity (Lydia feels that 'there was an inner reality, a logic of the soul, which connected her with' Tom; and Anna senses a 'fragile flame of love came out of the ashes of this last' quarrel with Will¹⁰⁷), such mode of intercultural synthesis can hardly be interpreted (within the symbolic framework of the novel) as a viable way forward.

The ability to transcend the tension and to capitalise on the inseparability and distinctness of the opposites, surpassing the damaging self-sacrificial aspect of the coming together, manifests itself in the character of Ursula

102 Ibid. p. 46.

103 Ibid. p. 54.

104 Ibid. p. 174.

105 Ibid. p. 174.

106 D. H. Lawrence, *Aaron's Rod* (New York: Penguin, 1976), p. 201.

107 Lawrence, *The Rainbow*, p. 34, 163.

– the first born of the third generation of the Anglo–Slavic intercultural hybrid of the Lenskys and the Brangwens.

She was the naked, clear kernel thrusting forth the clear, powerful shoot, and the world was a bygone winter, discarded, her mother and father and Anton, and college and all her friends, all cast off like a year that has gone by, whilst the kernel was free and naked and striving to take new root, to create a new knowledge of Eternity in the flux of Time. And the kernel was the only reality; the rest was cast off into oblivion.¹⁰⁸

Not unlike her ancestors, Ursula is clearly aware of her essential ethnic 'otherness', as she overtly identifies 'herself with her Polish' line.¹⁰⁹ From a broader perspective, however, she is portrayed as manifesting all traits of her cultural forebears accumulated equally from both sides (mind/flesh, consciousness/sensuality): being endowed with a 'quick, intelligent' and 'instinctive' mind,¹¹⁰ her 'blazing heart was fierce and unyielding'¹¹¹ and it 'burnt in isolation, like a watchfire lighted.'¹¹² In the course of her personal journey she is enabled to trace a median line in between the paradoxically related opposites, making the most of the competing principles of English rationalism and passionate sensuality of the Slavs. The examples are manifold: towards the end of her schooling, for instance, she manages to configure her worldview as a form of metaphysical dualism, applying the form of rational reasoning to the need of human aspiration for the divine: 'They [Ursula together with her school teacher] took religion and rid it of its dogmas, its falsehoods [...] Gradually it dawned upon Ursula that all the religion she knew was but a particular clothing to a human aspiration.'¹¹³ Similarly, in her decision to engage in the study of botany she essentially combines the rigour of taxonomy with the inexplicable variety of natural manifestation:

108 Ibid. p. 464.

109 Ibid. p. 240.

110 Ibid. p. 253.

111 Ibid. p. 451.

112 Ibid. p. 451.

113 Ibid. p. 322.

She would take honours in botany. This was the one study that lived for her. She had entered into the lives of the plants. She was fascinated by the strange laws of the vegetable world. She had here a glimpse of something working entirely apart from the purpose of the human world.¹¹⁴

Moreover, Ursula's increasing sense of balance within the duality of her personal self, allows her, unlike her mother and her grandmother, to reject the prospect of a marital union with Anton Skrebensky, 'who was attractive, but whose soul could not contain her in its waves of strength, nor his breast compel her in burning, salty passion.'¹¹⁵ This union, she feels, does not offer enough capacity, enough space for the wholeness of her multi-dimensional nature. It would be suffocating for her identity and her individual self-expression, leading to a reductive self-abandonment in affiliation with a man, whose personality is uniformly more simplistic and more plain, lacking, as Ursula claims, 'a sort of strong understanding [...] a dignity, a directness [...] a jolly reckless passionateness.'¹¹⁶

Capitalising on her ethnic liminality, rather than attempting to blur the distinction between the parts, Ursula is shown to become psychologically more self-contained and more complete, rising above the metaphysical necessity to be attracted to 'the other' in order to attain a sense of wholeness and fulfilment. The potency of such a complex dialectical identity, forged out of the dynamic tension of the opposites, is symbolised by the rainbow, which she sees shining above the town of Beldover in the concluding lines of the novel:

The arc bended and strengthened itself till it arched indomitable, making great architecture of light and colour and the space of heaven, its pedestals luminous in the corruption of new houses on the low hill, its arch the top of heaven.¹¹⁷

The array of colours in the rainbow comes out as a symbol of the ideal unity based on inseparability and distinctness of the elements; which according

114 Ibid. p. 411.

115 Ibid. p. 451.

116 Ibid. p. 449.

117 Ibid. p. 467.

to R. S. Sharma, can be seen as Lawrence's 'vision of immediate salvation' of the West,¹¹⁸ achieved through its productive encounter with the 'otherness' of Slavic culture.

Lawrence's defence, as well as the desire to reanimate and cultivate this Russian 'otherness' for the purposes of the prolific dialogical interaction with the West, was one of the reasons for his initial support of the Bolshevik October Revolution. He saw Bolshevism as a visceral populist force, drawing Russia away from the corrupt materialism of European civilisation, and towards the primeval naturalism of the pagan Slavs, as he put it in one of his 1918 letters:

As for Russia, it must go through as it is going. Nothing but a real smelting down is any good for her: no matter how horrible it seems [...] chaos is necessary for Russia. Russia will be all right – righter, in the end, than these old stiff senile nations of the West. I do not think chaos is any good for England. England is too old.¹¹⁹

In the same vein, his Foreword to Shestov's *All Things Are Possible*, published in 1920, was instilled with enthusiasm for the new system, which, it seemed at the time, could not be anything but auspicious for the indigenous Russian spirit:

It seems as if she had at last absorbed and overcome the virus of old Europe. Soon her new, healthy body will begin to act in its own reality, imitative no more, protesting no more, crying no more, but full and sound and lusty in itself. Real Russia is bom. She will laugh at us before long. Meanwhile she goes through the last stages of reaction against us, kicking away from the old womb of Europe.¹²⁰

Generally speaking, given Lawrence's working-class background, his predominantly left-wing social milieu and some serious problems with conservative state censorship (his novels were suppressed for immorality), his overall opposition, ethical as well as political, to the Western bourgeois

118 Radhe S. Sharma, *The Rainbow: A Study of Symbolic Mode in D. H. Lawrence's Primitivism* (Hyderabad: Trust Publishers, 1981), p. 107.

119 Lawrence, letter to Samuel Kotliansky, 16 September 1918, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, III, p. 284.

120 Lawrence, Foreword to Lev Shestov, *All Things Are Possible*, p. 8.

system was scarcely surprising. He was a long-term champion of a broadly socialist-orientated position, critical of the exploitative capitalist classes and supportive of a certain form of communism with regard to a planned economy and the abolition of money (though against the intellectualised form of what might be termed the ‘champagne socialism’ of the Fabians¹²¹). These views were conveyed, for instance, in his letter to Bertrand Russell in 1915:

There must be a revolution in the state. It shall begin by the nationalising of all ... industries and means of communication, and of the land – in one fell blow. Then a man shall have his wages whether he is sick or well or old ... no man amongst us, and no woman, shall have any fear of the wolf at the door, for all wolves are dead;¹²²

and to Catherine Carswell in 1922: ‘I belong to Europe, though not to England. I think I should like to go to Russia in the summer. After America, it appeals to me. No money there (they say).’¹²³

In 1918 Lawrence was seriously thinking of providing active assistance to the leading figures of the Independent Labour Party (‘I want to know Robert Smillie, Philip Snowden, Mary Macarthers and Margaret Bondfield’, he wrote to Koteliansky, ‘I must find somebody to bring me to them. It is no good. One cannot wait for things to happen’¹²⁴); and to the Bolsheviks in Russia: ‘I am so glad that Litvinov has got this office [...] It pleases me immensely. I sit here and say bravo’, he wrote to Catherine Carswell, ‘I almost feel like asking Litvinov if I can’t help – but I don’t suppose I’m of much use at this point.’¹²⁵ In mid-1919 he also kindled a long-term friendship with Douglas Goldring – an international leftist radical, who at the time was

121 Lawrence, letter to Cynthia Asquith, 11 December 1916, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, III, p. 49.

122 Lawrence, letter to Bertrand Russell, February 1915, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, II, p. 282.

123 Lawrence, letter to Catherine Carswell, 17 December 1922, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, IV, p. 362.

124 Lawrence, letter to Samuel Koteliansky, 18 September 1918, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, III, p. 284.

125 Lawrence, letter to Catherine Carswell, 16 February 1918, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, III, p. 210.

describing himself as 'an uncompromising anti-war propagandist, rapidly turning into a Socialist revolutionary.'¹²⁶ Not unlike Goldring, who was an active member of the '1917 Club', created (December 1917) in support of the Russian Revolution by Leonard Woolf and Oliver Strachey,¹²⁷ Lawrence welcomed the downfall of Tsarism in February (March) 1917, placing on Russia his 'chiefest hope for the future' and calling it the 'young country', which he loved 'inordinately'.¹²⁸ At that time he started contemplating a visit to this country and was even attempting to learn the language: 'We will go to Russia. Send me a Berlitz grammar book, I will begin to learn the language – religiously.'¹²⁹

It is not unlikely (judging from the subsequent changes in his position) that out of all the possible reasons for his optimism and hopes, the main one was that related to the prospects of revival of the primeval sensuality of the Slavic spirit. For Lawrence, the Bolshevik uprising represented a wild outpouring of the natural, previously repressed energy always bubbling within popular masses – the revolt against the imposed framework of social conventions, forged by the rational consciousness of the bourgeois: 'It is, finally, a passionate, mindless vengeance taken by the collective' he wrote in *Kangaroo* (1923), 'vertebral psyche upon the authority of orthodox MIND. In the Russian revolution it was the EDUCATED classes that were the enemy really: the deepest inspiration the hatred of the conscious classes.'¹³⁰ This belief went as far as hailing (in 1921) the country's political and economic isolation, imposed on Bolshevik Russia by the European powers, which he saw as a kind of incubational environment and a considerable asset in terms of fostering the inward-looking regeneration of the primeval. 'Russia with her Third International', he claimed,

126 Quoted in James T. Boulton and Andrew Robertson, Introduction to *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, III, pp. 1–12 (p. 5).

127 Victoria Glendinning, *Leonard Woolf: A Biography* (New York and London: Free Press, 2006), p. 192.

128 Lawrence, letter to Samuel Koteliensky, 1 May 1917, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, III, p. 121.

129 Ibid. p. 121.

130 D. H. Lawrence, *Kangaroo* (London: Martin Secker, 1923), pp. 337–8.

is at the same time reacting most violently from all other contact, back, recoiling on herself, into a fierce, unapproachable Russianism [...] I am glad that the era of love and oneness is over: hateful homogeneous world-oneness. I am glad that Russia flies back into savage Russianism, Scythism, savagely self-pivoting.¹³¹

Quite soon, however, Lawrence came to realise that Bolshevism could not be further removed from a liberating and a naturally driven social movement; and the period of the early 1920s displayed a gradual change in his hopes and views. As early as 1921, he mentioned in a letter that apparently ‘only some sort of Bolshevism is inevitable’ for Europe, which ‘is having a slight reactionary swing, back to conservatism.’¹³² A distinctly critical vision was projected in his *Movements in European History* (written in 1918 and 1919 and first published in 1921), which suggested that the Bolsheviks’ policies and actions were in contradiction with the very notion of socialism *per se*, designed as a system based on:

1. A desire for the welfare of all people.
2. A hatred of all masters and of all authority, a hatred of all superior.¹³³

The Bolsheviks, in Lawrence’s opinion, displayed a remarkable ineptitude in both of the above aspects. ‘I believe,’ he maintains regarding the latter, ‘that a good form of socialism, if it could be brought about, would be the best form of government. But let us come down to experience.’¹³⁴ Concerning the egalitarian society, when ‘the communists succeeded in forcing *their* will’ on other people, Bolshevism deteriorated ‘into a mere worship of Force.’¹³⁵ At the same time (referring to the first aspect), they had arrived at a fairly dammed down welfare system based on strictly utilitarian considerations, whereby: ‘Every family is rationed, for food, clothing, and even house-room. That is what commonsense works out to. For rationing

131 Lawrence, *Sea and Sardinia*, p. 89.

132 Lawrence, letter to Samuel Kotliansky, 27 May 1921, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, III, p. 728.

133 Lawrence, *Movements in European History*, p. 262.

134 *Ibid.* p. 262.

135 *Ibid.* p. 263.

is commonsense. But do we like it? Did we like it during the war? – We didn't. We hated it.¹³⁶

It is difficult to say what exactly constituted the turning point in Lawrence's vision, but his correspondence of 1923 to 1926 shows that Bolshevism was no longer regarded as a way forward, but as a dogmatic, mechanical and essentially rationalistic social doctrine, hardly different from that prevailing in the West, apart from its denial of the free market economy practice.¹³⁷ 'My desire to go to Russia has died again,' he conveyed bitterly to Carl Seelig in May 1925, 'I hear such dreary accounts of it. Moscow so Americanised, the proletariat are becoming Yankee and mechanical. That bores me.'¹³⁸ The same thoughts were affirmed in January 1926: 'I wonder if Russia has had all her troubles and her revolutions, just to bring about a state of complete materialism and cheapness. That would be sad. But I suppose it's on the cards';¹³⁹ and later the same year: 'My desire to go to Russia disappeared again. I feel that Bolsheviks are loutish and common – I don't believe in them, except as disruptive and nihilistic agents. Boring!'¹⁴⁰

It is within the framework of this critical viewpoint that the image of the new Soviet Russia was projected in Lawrence's writings of the time. 'Each man a machine-part, and the driving power of the machine, hate ... hate of the bourgeois. That, to me, is Bolshevism,' he remarks in *Lady*

136 Ibid. p. 260.

137 James T. Boulton and Andrew Robertson remark that it was a period when Lawrence started developing his 'distinctly anti-collective viewpoint. He was making a beginning on some of the essays on Classic American Literature, in which he deplored American democracy for its encouraging a mass identity and its opposition to individualism.' His 'Reality of Peace' articles (published in the *English Review* May–August 1917) were also significant in terms of articulating his contempt for the 'egoism of the flock' (Boulton and Robertson, p. 4).

138 Lawrence, letter to Carl Seelig, 21 May 1925, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, V, p. 461.

139 Lawrence, letter to Samuel Koteliensky, 4 Jan 1926, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, V, p. 367.

140 Lawrence, letter to Samuel Koteliensky, 17 May 1926, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, V, p. 455.

Chatterley's Lover (1928).¹⁴¹ His attitude comes across strongly in a long narrative poem *Hibiscus and Salvia Flowers*, written as early as 31 January 1921.¹⁴² The author's praising of the Bolsheviks' ascent to power is underscored by the rhetorical question casting doubts on the genuineness of the cause ('How do we know then, that they are they?'):

Hark! Hark!
The dogs do bark!
It's the socialists in the town.

Sans rags, sans tags,
Sans beards, sans bags,
Sans any distinction at all except loutish commonness.

How do we know then, that they are they?
Bolshevists.
Leninists.
Communists.
Socialists.
—Ists!—Ists!¹⁴³

The ironic gap between the experience and the idea is gradually intensified throughout the poem, culminating in the conspicuous rejection of the doctrine:

But not a trace of foul equality,
Nor sound of still more foul human perfection.
You need not clear the world like a cabbage patch for me;
Leave me my nettles,
Let me fight the wicked, obstreperous weeds myself, and put
them in their place,¹⁴⁴

141 D. H. Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (London: Collector's Library, 2005), p. 61.

142 James T. Boulton, Comments to *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, III, p. 659.

143 D. H. Lawrence, 'Hibiscus and Salvia Flowers', in D. H. Lawrence, *The Complete Poems of D. H. Lawrence*, ed. Vivian de Sola Pinto and Warren Roberts, 2 vols (New York: Viking Press, 1971), I, p. 313.

144 Lawrence, 'Hibiscus and Salvia Flowers', p. 316.

and a personal appeal to stay away from such a system:

Never
To be a bolshevist
With a hibiscus flower behind my ear.¹⁴⁵

This poem ties in well with Lawrence's, to a certain degree auto-referential, irony regarding naïve enthusiasm for the Soviet regime, expressed through the character of Jim Bricknell in *Aaron's Rod* (1922). Bricknell's self-confessed advocacy of the Bolshevik 'revolution and the triumph of Labour' is perceived as nothing but a sheer mockery in the context of his other political absurdities, such as, for instance, the rising hegemony of Ireland and Japan as 'the two poles of the world,' which would 'settle' everything for other nations.¹⁴⁶ It would be a bit of a speculation to see Lawrence's own letter as a source-text of this statement, but a parallel with the writer's credulous assertion concerning the prospects of Russia's dominance is difficult to overlook: 'Russia seems to me now the positive pole of the world's spiritual energy, and America the negative pole. But we shall see how things work out.'¹⁴⁷

Speaking of Lawrence's projection of the image of Russia at that time, attention should be drawn to a series of his later poems, put together in the collection *Pansies* of 1929. The title of this collection is in many ways revealing. Lawrence generally saw poems as an expression of personal sentiments and emotional moments; and the sense of spontaneity, emblematised by the flower, was in this regard particularly vital. More importantly, the title was simultaneously a pun on the French word 'panser' (meaning 'to dress' or 'to bandage a wound') and a reference to Blaise Pascal's *Pensées* (as Lawrence made explicit in the introduction to *New Poems*):

These poems are called *Pansies*, because they are rather *Pensées* than anything else. Pascal or La Bruyère wrote their *Pensées* in prose, but it has always seemed to me

145 Ibid. p. 317.

146 Lawrence, *Aaron's Rod*, p. 87.

147 Lawrence, letter to Samuel Koteliensky, 3 July 1917, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, III, p. 136.

that a real thought, a single thought, not an argument, can only exist in verse, or in some poetic form.¹⁴⁸

The author's thoughts on the Russian theme, presented in the collection, were indeed charged with the sense of disillusionment and incessant pain, as if coming from an unhealing wound. Yet again the image of Russia was cast along the lines of traumatic 'in-betweenness': Russia was portrayed as being torn apart by the opposing forces of its intrinsic Slavic humanity and the Bolsheviks' Utilitarianism, which, in Lawrence's perception, came into being due to the *laissez-faire* attitude of the Russian cultural elite.

One of the central poems of the collection *Now It's Happened* refers to the October upheaval directly as 'her crisis', as a result of which the best qualities of this inherently passionate and vibrant nation – 'The big, flamboyant bewildered Russia'¹⁴⁹ – have been effaced. The society is indoctrinated by Marxism – a profoundly mechanistic and pragmatic doctrine, which renders human beings 'cold and devilish hard like machines.'¹⁵⁰ In Lawrence's poem, the responsibility for such an impoverishing transformation is placed on the Bolshevik governing regime, on the one hand ('spy-government everywhere'¹⁵¹), and on the leading Russian intellectuals, on the other; the latter should have

stood up for themselves, and
seen
Russia across her crisis,
instead of leaving it to Lenin.¹⁵²

The Russian intelligentsia (especially the literary figures) were seen by Lawrence as an influential class of opinion makers. Consequently, it is the intelligentsia whom he finds guilty of not stopping the Bolsheviks' rise

148 D. H. Lawrence, Introduction to *Pansies*, in D. H. Lawrence, *The Complete poems of D. H. Lawrence*, I, pp. 417–24 (p. 423).

149 Lawrence, 'Now It's Happened', in *The Complete Poems*, p. 536.

150 Ibid. p. 537.

151 Ibid. p. 536.

152 Ibid. p. 536.

to power and allowing Marxist theories to 'leak' into the group mentality of the nation. In this series of poems Lawrence evidently returns to his old criticism of the Russian intellectuals as prone to being superfluous, remote from real life and, in other words, infected by the virus of 'Russianitis', as he termed it in his essays of the late 1920s. Those to blame include the major creators of the literary gallery of superfluous people (which 'ruined a nation's fibre'):¹⁵³ Tolstoy, who was toying with the populist theories:

But Tolstoi was a traitor
to the Russia that needed him most,
the clumsy, bewildered Russia
so worried by the Holy Ghost.
He shifted his job on to the peasants
and landed them all on toast;¹⁵⁴

Dostoevsky – with his false over-reflective version of Christianity ('sham christianity' written specifically with a small letter):

Dostoevsky, the Judas,
with his sham christianity
epileptically ruined
the last bit of sanity
left in the hefty bodies
of the Russian nobility.¹⁵⁵

153 The concept acquired its official literary designation in 1850, with the publication of Turgenev's *Diary of a Superfluous Man* and its protagonist Chulkaturin. The term became widespread in literature through the articles of Alexander Herzen 'Ochen' opasno' ('Very Dangerous', 1859) and 'Lishnye lyudi i zhelcheviki' ('Superfluous People and the Venomous Men' 1860), where he introduces the paradigmatic series of the superfluous men that formed the literary canon – Onegin, Pechorin, and Oblomov. The notion was developed by N. A. Dobroliubov and D. I. Pisarev who, though without using the term, extended the series by incorporating into it Alexander Herzen's Bel'tov and Turgenev's Rudin. Considering Lawrence's critical reception of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, Stepan Trofimovich Verkhovensky (*Demons*), Andrei Bolkonsky (*War and Peace*) and Dmitrii Nekhliudov (*Resurrection*) may fit into the set.

154 Lawrence, 'Now It's Happened', p. 536.

155 Ibid. p. 537.

Both authors are accused of being drowned in unnecessary philosophising, instead of offering a stronger forward-looking model to follow:

Too much of the humble Willy wet-leg
and the holy can't-help-it touch,
till you've ruined a nation's fibre
and they loathe all feeling as such.¹⁵⁶

The image of the Russian intelligentsia as largely outdated and inept – an effigy of the past rather than a vanguard of the future – is persistently highlighted in Lawrence's verse and prose of the time. Thus, for instance, in *Kangaroo* (1923) he claims that 'in the Russian revolution it was the educated classes that were the enemy really.'¹⁵⁷ The same idea comes across in the poem 'Fate and the Younger Generation': a list of canonical icons drawn from the Russian classics is presented as a sequence of meaningless non-entities, 'wiped out' from the pages of the nation's history and its future:

It is strange to think of the Annas, the Vronskys, the Pierres,
all the Tolstoyan lot wiped out.
And the Aloyshas and Dmitris and Myshkins and Stavrogins,
the Dostoevsky lot all wiped out.
And the Tchekov wimbly-wombly wet-legs all wiped out.
Gone! Dead, or wandering in exile with their feathers
plucked.¹⁵⁸

This is not to say that Lawrence calls for the dismissal of the entirety of the Russian cultural oeuvre, belittling its artistic value and its contribution to the development of European literary thought. The idea of effacing, or being 'wiped out', concerns not the oeuvre *per se*, but the superfluous archetypes configured within the framework of this oeuvre, which are in no way comparable with the new realities of the day:

156 Ibid. p. 537.

157 Lawrence, *Kangaroo*, p. 338.

158 D. H. Lawrence, 'Fate and the Younger Generation', in *The Complete Poems*, pp. 533–4 (p. 533).

Anyhow the Tolstoyan lot simply asked for extinction:
'Eat me up, dear peasant!' – so the peasant ate him.
And the Dostoevsky lot wallowed in the thought:
'Let me sin my way to Jesus!' – So they sinned
themselves off the face of the earth.
And the Tchekov lot: 'I'm too weak and lovable to live!'¹⁵⁹

Having shaped its self-identity along the lines of these archetypal literary models, the Russian intelligentsia, in Lawrence's view, was turned into nothing but a self-parody – a self-gratifying figment of their own mind, totally insubstantial and detached from the flesh and blood people. He therefore puts under the spotlight the absurdity of the widespread Western fascination with Russia as an icon of pagan splendour, which, arguably, lacks a real life referent and, consequently, is fundamentally contrived. This fascination, in the first place, was launched into fashion by the English middle-class circles, often shallow, poorly informed and indiscriminating in their perception. More importantly, it was largely solicited by the vogue of the Russian literary oeuvre, centred on the figures of weak and impotent intellectuals, who could not be further removed from the idealised image of the 'blessedly exotic'. The generation of these intellectuals was doomed, in Lawrence's opinion, and any attempt to imitate them would be fatal for the Europeans (the poem mentions the French – 'the Proustian lot' and the English – 'our little lot'):

Now the Proustian lot: Dear darling death, let me
wriggle my way towards you
like the worm I am! – So he wriggled and got there.
Finally our little lot: 'I don't want to die
but by Jingo if I do!'
– Well, it won't matter so very much either.'¹⁶⁰

It seems that when reflecting on the role played by Russia in the world-wide social and cultural arena, Lawrence, in distinction from H. G. Wells, was more concerned with the limitations rather than the progressive potential

159 Ibid. p. 534.

160 Ibid. p. 534.

of the Russian intellectual vanguard. As regards his image of the Russian revolutionary leaders (a specific branch of the intelligentsia) this offers yet another degree of complexity to the writer's point of view.

Since the early twenties Lawrence had been developing his hierarchical theory of leadership, largely akin to Raskolnikov's ideas in *Crime and Punishment* and to Nietzsche's concept of the *Übermensch*. Richard Somers, a semi-autobiographical character in *Kangaroo* (broadly based on Lawrence's own experience of travelling in Australia), claims, for instance, that society ought to be fundamentally based on the idea of the 'mystic recognition of difference and innate priority, the joy of obedience and the sacred responsibility of authority'.¹⁶¹ These ideas surfaced in a number of Lawrence's writings of the time, including such novels as *Fanny and Annie* (written in 1919, published in 1921), *Kangaroo* (1923), *The Plumed Serpent* (1926), and his collection *The Woman Who Rode Away and Other Stories*, published in 1928. They found their most ardent defence in Lawrence's Introduction to Dostoevsky's chapter *The Grand Inquisitor* (from *The Brothers Karamazov*), translated by Koteliansky and published as a self-standing work in 1930.

In his penetrating analysis of Lawrence's response to the writings of Dostoevsky, Peter Kaye¹⁶² claims that Lawrence defends the arguments put forward by the Grand Inquisitor as 'the final and unanswerable criticism of Christ',¹⁶³ reflecting a fairly correct judgment of human limitation. Lawrence, who shares the Inquisitor's stance, recognises that the masses lack the strength to live 'free and limitless'.¹⁶⁴ He has ascertained their essential and unalterable need for mystery, miracle and authority antithetical to freedom best served by bread and a heroic authority to worship. According to Lawrence, the vision of the universal state led by a select superior few is born of compassionate realism. The Inquisitor seeks to provide for the popular majority, in contrast to Christ, who overestimates human abilities. His 'inadequacy [...] lies in the fact that Christianity is too difficult for men,

161 Lawrence, *Kangaroo*, p. 115.

162 Kaye, pp. 54–5.

163 Lawrence, Introduction to *The Grand Inquisitor*, p. 127.

164 Ibid. p. 129.

the vast mass of men.¹⁶⁵ It offers a strictly speaking unattainable ideal, for 'it makes demands greater than the nature of men can bear.'¹⁶⁶ The man who would be saviour offered a freedom nearly impossible to achieve, unlike The Inquisitor, who loved humanity 'more tolerantly and more contemptuously than Jesus loved [...] for itself, for what it is and not for what it ought to be.'¹⁶⁷ Christ's idealism imposes too heavy a burden on the masses, thus entailing destructive consequences: 'Most men cannot choose between good and evil because it is extremely difficult to know which is which.'¹⁶⁸ Lawrence argues that Christ undermines the very notion of the so-called visionary leaders, who alone can give meaning to the life of the masses. His insistence on free choice does not 'let the specially gifted few make the decision between good and evil, and establish the life-values against the money-values'¹⁶⁹ (which the majority would be naturally inclined to prioritise). 'The many', as Lawrence put it, would 'accept the decision with gratitude, and bow down to the few in the hierarchy.'¹⁷⁰ The question now comes down to the ability to recognise these naturally superior authoritarian figures and to distinguish them from a long line of imposters.

It is within the framework of these ideas that one should look at Lawrence's poem 'When Wilt Thou Teach the People?', which conveys the author's reflections on Soviet Russia, and Lenin's leadership in particular, as a further example of salvation on offer. The preceding instances included Napoleon and the republicans, who while getting rid of the power of the nobility, put people under the new, dehumanising power of industrial capitalism and material possessions:

165 Ibid. p. 128.

166 Ibid. p. 128.

167 Ibid. p. 129.

168 Ibid. p. 134.

169 Ibid. p. 134.

170 Ibid. p. 134.

You are saved,
 therefore you are our savings, our capital
 with which we shall do big business.¹⁷¹

On the one hand, the author seems to be gripped by the idea of socialism as an alternative to bourgeois modernity; and at the same time he is acutely aware that such an alternative mirrors the modernity it would aspire to replace. Lenin's regime, therefore, is regarded as nothing but yet another link in the historical sequence:

Or Lenin says: You are saved, but you are saved wholesale.
 You are no longer men, that is bourgeois;
 you are items in the soviet state,
 and each item will get its ration,
 but it is the soviet state alone which counts
 the items are of small importance.¹⁷²

While drawing people out of the capitalist system, he hands them over to another, equally dehumanised, 'Soviet state' of dead materialism, which turns them into the nuts and bolts – the 'items' – of the socialist machine:

The items are all of small importance,
 The state having saved them all.¹⁷³

The series of political fiascos depicted here does not imply that Lawrence calls his theories of leadership into question. The issue, yet again, inheres in the discrepancy between the concept *per se* and its practical realisation. Within the context of Lawrence's authoritarian theory, Lenin features as a fairly accurate impersonation of the gap between to 'be' and 'to appear'. In his reflections Lawrence rarely goes in for analysing the Bolshevik tenets, but the reasons for Lenin's failure as a naturally superior leader are most frequently and unambiguously discussed in his critical essays. In contrast to

171 D. H. Lawrence, 'When Wilt Thou Teach the People?', in *The Complete Poems*, pp. 442–3 (p. 442).

172 *Ibid.* p. 443.

173 *Ibid.* p. 443.

Attila the Hun, Napoleon and George Washington, who, as Lawrence put it, possess 'the old divine power' and who, even if they were a scourge, were at least a 'scourge of God', Lenin is regarded as lacking all the credentials of a leader, having 'never had the right smell, [...] never even roused real fear', nor 'real passion'.¹⁷⁴ Lawrence was clearly drawn to the controversial nature of Lenin's power; and some more elaborate considerations on this subject are presented in *Apocalypse and the Writings on Revelation* – Lawrence's very last book, written between 1929 and 1930. 'Lenin', Lawrence argues,

sincerely wanted the well-being of every individual in the State. He was, in a sense, the god of the common people of Russia, and they are quite right, in the modern sense, to worship him. 'Give us this day our daily bread.' And Lenin wanted above all things to give them their daily bread. And he could not do even that. What was love in theory became hate in practice. He loved the people because he saw them powerless – and he was determined that power should not exist on earth. He himself was the final power which should destroy power. It was the Church of Christ in practical politics. And it was anomaly, it was horrible. Because it was unnatural.¹⁷⁵

Among others, two points are of particular importance in this statement. The first one concerns Lawrence's framework of analysis, which is clearly derived from *The Grand Inquisitor's* model, namely from the distinction between 'earthly' and 'heavenly' bread and temptation by power. This in itself is a noteworthy implication, casting light on the deep impact which Dostoevsky produced on Lawrence's track of thinking and ideas, despite all the controversy in his response to the writings of the Russian author. As regards the authenticity of Lenin's power, according to Lawrence, the leader of the Russian Revolution fails both aspects emphasised in *The Grand Inquisitor's* model: 'It was the Church of Christ in practical politics. And it was anomaly', he claims.¹⁷⁶ The question, yet again, is considered from the essentialist perspective: Lenin is shown to be unable to master the dialectical

174 D. H. Lawrence, 'Blessed Are the Powerful', in *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine*, pp. 319–38 (p. 328).

175 D. H. Lawrence, *Apocalypse and the Writings on Revelation*, ed. Mara Kalnins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 165.

176 *Ibid.* p. 165.

polarity of the body and the spirit. Firstly, this applies to the ‘earthly’ and ‘heavenly bread’ opposition (‘And Lenin wanted above all things to give them their daily bread. And he could not do even that’¹⁷⁷), which effectively refers back to what Lawrence specified earlier in the Introduction to *The Grand Inquisitor*: ‘Lenin, surely, rose to great power simply to give men – what? The earthly bread. And what was the result? Not only did they lose the heavenly bread, but even the earthly bread disappeared out of wheat-producing Russia.’¹⁷⁸ Secondly (but intimately connected to the first issue), Lenin’s authority was not supported by authentic popular recognition, but reduced to sheer coercion and the exaltation of force – ‘what was love in theory became hate in practice.’¹⁷⁹ The latter is different from the notion of real power, which, in Lawrence’s view, is a deeply humanistic concept, rooted in apostolic trust, devotion and love – akin to the ‘heavenly bread’, which Lenin fails to deliver to the masses. ‘We only know dead power, which is force,’ he wrote. ‘Mere force does not commend our respect. But power is not mere force. It is divine like love. Love and power are two divine things in life.’¹⁸⁰

To sum up, one can see that Lawrence did not have much time for the specific content of the Bolshevik doctrine as such, but it nonetheless provided him with a useful paradigm of political intervention and thereby made a significant contribution to the development of his socio-philosophical thoughts. ‘Most men are wage-slaves,’ he maintained in a letter in 1928,

Under Bolshevism, it is pretty much the same: they are still slaves, machine-slaves, party-slaves. The real activity of life is the great activity of *developing consciousness*, physical, mental, intuitional, religious – all-round consciousness. This is the real business of life, and is the great game of grown men. All that other affair, of work and money, should be settled and subordinated to this, the great game of real living,

177 Ibid. p. 165.

178 Lawrence, Introduction to *The Grand Inquisitor*, p. 131.

179 Lawrence, *Apocalypse and the Writings on Revelation*, p. 165. As he argued earlier in *Movements of European History*, Bolshevism ‘has denigrated into a mere worship of Force’ when ‘the communists succeeded in forcing *their* will’ (Lawrence, *Movements in European History*, p. 263).

180 Lawrence, *Apocalypse and the Writings on Revelation*, pp. 164–5.

of developing ourselves physically, in subtlety of movement, and grace and beauty of bodily awareness, and of deepening and widening our whole consciousness, so that we really become men, instead of remaining the poor, cramped, limited slaves we are.¹⁸¹

Up to the very end, Russia for Lawrence was to remain the country of unrealised potential, the country still to overcome its adolescent fascination with the sophistication of reason and its exaltation over natural, down to earth human feelings. But it was this potential that mattered the most: he was convinced that 'Russia will certainly inherit the future', as soon as it learns to break away from 'her own unwilling, fantastic reproduction of European truths'.¹⁸²

None of the great twentieth-century writers were at all kindly disposed towards Western industrialism and its inevitable social corollaries, which included urbanism, liberalism, egalitarianism, the spread of religious scepticism and dehumanisation. Of all haters of the modern world, Lawrence was, perhaps, one of the most intense and unremitting. In the context of his radical criticism of Western civilisation, shaped by man's unbalanced commitment to the rule of reason, which resulted in society's alienation from the natural world, Russia was seen as a potent bearer of energy, capable of rejuvenating the decadent and corrupt culture. The concept was not new, but in Lawrence's frame of thinking, this revitalising power of the 'other' was no longer linked to the country's iconic exoticism and its personification of the 'savage', but rather to its liminality and cultural hybridity – to its inherent potential to forge a more complex and powerful whole that can be raised to a higher level than the simple sum of its parts. Lawrence was convinced that one day this powerful whole would find its practical realisation. 'But wait! There is life in the Russians. Something new and strange will emerge out of their weird transmogrification into Bolsheviks', he claimed.¹⁸³ In Lawrence's essentialist vision of society and human nature, consistently argued out from book

181 Lawrence, letter to Charles Wilson, 28 December 1928, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, VII, pp. 103–04.

182 Lawrence, Foreword to Lev Shestov, *All Things Are Possible*, p. 9.

183 Lawrence, 'The Novel', p. 187.

to book and essay to essay, Russia featured prominently as a model or an 'objective correlative' of his evolving theories, views and convictions. And what is, perhaps, most significant in relation to this model is that in place of viewing Russia as a pathogenic threat to the purity of European tradition, he offered a remarkably advanced vision of Anglo–Russian and, generally speaking, multi-cultural interactions, based on the self-preservation and autonomy of the components devoid of any hierarchical connections – the dialogue of truly liberated men, 'who are distinct and easy in themselves like stars.'¹⁸⁴

184 D. H. Lawrence, 'The Reality of Peace', in *Phoenix*, pp. 669–94 (p. 687).