

C.S. Peirce, D.H. Lawrence, and Representation: Artistic Form and Polarities

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What does it mean when a major literary artist, D.H. Lawrence, is hostile to the very notion of aesthetic form? As I show below, Lawrence expresses the objection memorably in “Poetry of the Present” (1919) and goes on doing so trenchantly throughout the 1920s. One way to explain it is to see it biographically as part of his continuing reaction against Edward Garnett’s earlier mentorship, especially Garnett’s strong encouragement of realist techniques of fiction; but the feeling is evident also in mid-1913 (in Lawrence’s review of Thomas Mann’s *Death in Venice*) when Garnett’s influence was at its peak. Another answer is to reinscribe the hostility in Lawrentian terms as an instance of the dominance of the mind over the body (the artist’s imposition of a pre-encapsulating form over spontaneous feeling); but that is to collapse the explanation into the thing being explained. A third way is to offer a philosophical frame for Lawrence’s rejection of the notion of form.

The philosophy of Martin Heidegger, who was Lawrence’s near contemporary (1889–1976), has recently come into focus in relation to Lawrence. The Korean scholar

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Nak-chung Paik opened up the question of the Heidegger parallel in his Harvard Ph.D. dissertation of 1972, and he wrote a long article on the subject for the 1981 special Lawrence issue of the Korean journal, *Phoenix*. Michael Bell's recent book, *D.H. Lawrence: Language and Being* (1992), is an excellent study of Lawrence and Heidegger's notion of Being, and Anne Fernihough's *D.H. Lawrence: Aesthetics and Ideology* (1993) has two especially illuminating chapters. Although Lawrence had read nothing of Heidegger's, the parallels (at fundamental levels) are striking. In this debate, the relevance to Lawrence of the American Pragmatist philosopher, C.S. Peirce (1839–1914), has gone unnoticed; indeed, so far as I am aware, the two have never been put together for critical consideration.¹ The present essay reveals certain suggestive parallels between Lawrence's thinking and Peirce's, parallels that would justify a more thoroughgoing study. Its immediate aim, however, is to offer a philosophical frame for Lawrence's rejection of "form" and his adoption of polarity (dated properly, I will argue, from September 1915) as an alternative way of organizing the intellectual space of his writings and of pursuing his ideas.

Lawrence, Heidegger, and "That Beastly Kant"

In order to understand the relevance of Peirce to Lawrence, the Heidegger parallel first needs to be appreciated. Like Lawrence, Heidegger was deeply affected by the pre-Socratic philosophers. Their successors, Plato and Aristotle, eventually made possible the Kantian and Enlightenment tradition of rational argumentation based upon the subject–object split. Kant had posited the existence of innate, transcendental categories within the human mind (such as causation, quality, and time) that allow us to understand the sense impressions that we receive from the outside world. For Heidegger this artificial division into inner and outer was the root of the problem when the primordial dimension of Being circulated through both and was the prerequisite for any recognition. The Kantian tradition had sprung, in Heidegger's view, "not from a genuine perception of Being, but from a *forgetting of Being*, from a taking-for-granted of the central existential mystery" (Steiner 33). As soon as the essence of an object is recognized as an idea or meaning, its Being is consumed by being given directedness, as it almost automatically is, within traditional western processes of thought. Their idealism requires its essential being to be located elsewhere, whereas for Heidegger being is being-in-the-world, a living *of* time rather than liv-

ing *in* it; knowing is not a smash-and-grab raid on the object but what he calls a being-with, a concern, a not-having-power-over.

Accordingly, Heidegger was obliged to reinterpret all forms of knowledge as orientations towards Being. So he redefines truth not in terms, as philosophers traditionally do, of the correspondence between subject and object but in terms of what he calls discoveredness:

To say that a statement is *true* means that it discovers the beings in themselves. It asserts, it shows, it lets beings “be seen” . . . in their discoveredness. The *being true (truth)* of the statement must be understood as *discovering*. Thus, truth by no means has the structure of an agreement between knowing and the object in the sense of a correspondence of one being (subject) to another (object).

Being-true as discovering is in turn ontologically possible only on the basis of being-in-the-world. This phenomenon . . . is the *foundation* of the primordial phenomenon of truth. (Heidegger 201)

The unmistakable strain in the exegesis only gets worse when he analyzes the operation of signs. He strikes the problem of having to explain how signs can be referential without admitting they refer to objects. So we read such phrases as “heedful association,” “the what-for of serviceability” (Heidegger 74, 73). The effort is heroic; his tool is an intellectual macroscope rather than an analytical microscope. Each phenomenon he has to account for balloons till with some new prepositional force or complementary coining it becomes more or less expressed by the foundational principle of Being. George Steiner refers to Heidegger’s “autistic rapture”²; certainly his thought does not translate into other methods of analysis.

Lawrence’s does not either. Very subtle and telling comparisons can be made between them which, without suggesting any direct influence, help establish Lawrence’s work on a contextualized philosophical footing. Both writers are visionary, earnest, revolutionary in their attempts to conceptualize fundamental ways of knowing and being. To read Lawrence sympathetically is to be invited to abandon a great deal—to abandon accepted, rational ways of understanding, as Lawrence’s gentleman-critics of the 1920s and 1930s were not slow to point out. Lawrentians tend to be more familiar with the contemporary defenses (for example, those by Carswell, Huxley, and Leavis); but it is worth reminding ourselves that many more commentators and reviewers found it impossible to pass unnoticed the “perversity”

of Lawrence's thinking (see, for example, Heywood Thomas, Eliot, and Tindall). One gauge of that perversity occurs in an essay of 1923 (usually known by the title given it by a magazine editor, "Surgery for the Novel—Or a Bomb") where Lawrence refers to the tradition of "Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas and that beastly Kant" (*Hardy* 154). Certainly Heidegger shared the reaction against Kant. As a result his philosophy tends, for a Lawrentian, to parallel rather than help one understand Lawrence's deep reaction against the competency of mental operations in general and thus of artistic form in particular. C.S. Peirce, on the other hand, did not reject Kant, nor is he in the mainstream tradition against which Heidegger was reacting. He offers a different kind of assistance.

C.S. Peirce

Peirce's writing is not claustrophobic as Heidegger's is apt to be, nor is he a totalizer in his thinking. He does not offer an ontological foundation such as Heidegger's Being; but he does offer a logical, semiotic foundation for metaphysics which is remarkably productive and can, I believe, be put to good use with Lawrence. Heidegger's intellectual tussle with the phenomenology of his teacher Edmund Husserl finally entailed his rejection of the subject-object binary of the Kantian tradition, a rejection on which most later post-structuralism would be built. What Derrida would later call Husserl's metaphysics of presence became the whipping post, as alternative foundations in writing as intertextual echo or in discourse were posited. Intriguingly, Peirce is over and apart from what is now this new mainstream, anti-Enlightenment tradition. He has not received his due, and in some ways he may be the more fruitful comparison to be drawn with Lawrence, even though Lawrence probably never read anything of his.³

In his period, Peirce was seen as something of an eccentric, and he signally failed to put the many branches of his philosophy into a systematic and fully elaborated form. He has always been the despair of his editors.⁴ His thinking, as evidenced by his manuscripts, would typically dart off in many directions; each successive redaction of an essay would start new hares running; and he would often fail to put his essays into a final, publishable form. Peirce bit off more than he could chew, but the fertility and sheer originality of his thinking have won him dedicated admirers ever since. In particular, Peirce is good on the question of representation. He does not collapse it, as Heidegger does, into a foundational principle. He

manages to portray its operations as fundamental to knowledge while nevertheless maintaining the concept of a basic, unrepresentable First world akin to Heidegger's notion of Being. Peirce's category of Firstness is the central point of comparison with Lawrence. It accords with Lawrence's proffering, from *Women in Love* onwards, of an unmixed source of life which the main male characters are at least occasionally in touch with, while simultaneously undercutting it in the mouths of jeering female characters who represent it as more familiar forms of prejudice, doctrine, or tyranny. In addition, Lawrence's attraction to dualism, witnessed in his use of polarities (discussed below), is more compatible with Peirce's philosophy than with the monism of Heidegger.

To substantiate these claims about the relevance to Lawrence of Peirce's philosophy, some background is necessary. Analytical philosophy, as I have said, traditionally proceeds in terms of the subject and object—as, for example, in the account of how the subject comes to have knowledge of the object, or external world. The relation is thus dyadic or two-termed. Peirce, however, went back to the medieval scholastics, including St. Augustine and Duns Scotus, to retrieve a missing third term—semiotic, or the process of communication which mediates knowledge. The effect of inserting semiosis into the subject–object relation is that it becomes triadic: the object is not directly available to knowledge if it can only be represented by the sign. The sign, according to Peirce, is “determined” by its object; it functions by creating (“determining”) an interpretant which may itself stand *as* a sign to a later interpretant, and so on.

Peirce was trying to define the theory of the sign to stand as his logic and thereby as the basis of his epistemology and metaphysics.⁵ Here, his category of Firstness is the unrepresentable world, the limit of intelligibility; it is

What the world was to Adam on the day he opened his eyes to it, before he had drawn any distinctions, or had become conscious of his own experience—that is *first*, present, immediate, fresh, new, initiative, original, spontaneous, free, vivid, conscious, and evanescent. Only, remember that every description of it must be false to it.

The endless variety of the world has not been created by law When we gaze upon the multifariousness of nature we are looking straight into the face of a living spontaneity. A day's ramble in the country ought to bring that home to us. (*Collected Papers* 1. 302; 6. 553)

Peirce's concept of the Firstness which cannot be spoken is not based on an opposition to rationality; rather, it is a category. It comes, by definition, before representation, which, as he says, must be false to it. The results of Lawrence's rambles in the countryside, at least in the early fiction, would seem in their sometimes tedious literariness to bear out this warning. The reluctance of the male characters of his fiction of the 1920s to give voice to Lawrence's Firstness — this unmixed source of life — becomes more understandable in the Peircean context: Lawrence knew the risks. The characters can be insistent, bullying, or just absurd when they do.

Every experience, Peirce argues, has elements of Firstness. Secondness can be understood as presence in the world by virtue of causing a reaction: "A thing without oppositions," says Peirce, "does not exist" (*Collected Papers* 1. 457). So, for instance, facts have the quality of Secondness for they must fight their way into existence through the oppositions they evoke. Think of the many accounts Lawrence gives us of characters recognizing indefeasible otherness: compare Peirce who, in explaining the psychological events of shock, surprise, and sudden change, refers to "the strange intruder in his abrupt entrance" (*Collected Papers* 5. 53). Secondness also offers an explanation of contingency: a contingent event exists both in itself but also because of its being in dynamic relation with other actual events. Lawrence's polarities, in being made intelligible, also presuppose flux — after Empedokles — rather than separate identity. (This is further discussed below.)

The category of Thirdness occupies the area of meaning: it is the bringing of the First and Second into an intelligible relation. It necessarily comes after. In his study of Peirce, W.B. Gallie comments that "pure potentiality of being [Firstness], and what actually is [Secondness], are alike in that they can never be reduced to the status of mere instances of a definition or consequences of a law. On the contrary, they are ways of being — categories — which the conceptions of law, definition, class, and quality presuppose."⁶ Curiously, Peirce has left open the way here for chaos theory. If the laws of nature come after, then they are tendencies, not regularities or laws prescribed by divine fiat in a Newtonian universe. Another notable consequence is that Thirdness corresponds, in Peirce's semiotic, to the sign. Determined by the object, the sign temporarily completes the relation by producing an interpretant. As this is ongoing, meaning is by nature one of process rather than product or law. Similarly, Lawrence's polarities are a recognition of the intrinsic flux, and therefore of the wrongness of tying events, in one's understanding, to fixed principles or idealisms. It is impor-

tant to realize that Peirce offers a theory of communication and a metaphysic, not a psychology; and one needs to remember that he (b. 1839) is nearly a generation before Freud (b. 1856) and two generations before Lawrence (1885). Nevertheless, the metaphysical map he lays down provides an angle on Lawrence, and some elements of a usable vocabulary, that we otherwise do not have.

So far I have mentioned some parallels between the two, in particular a respect for the category of Firstness, a willingness to give it categorical priority over action and representation. I also want to use Peirce's map to suggest their non-linearity, their aparallelism. First, Lawrence is much more alive than Peirce to the dangers of Thirdness. He is more intent on defrocking the assumed capacities of systems of cultural meaning, of the codes of rational explanation, and of cultural monuments. In *Etruscan Places* for instance, having told us that he likes to "think of the little wooden temples of the early Greeks and of the Etruscans: small, dainty, fragile, and evanescent as flowers," he asks:

Why has mankind had such a craving to be imposed upon!
Why this lust after imposing creeds, imposing deeds, imposing buildings, imposing language, imposing works of art? The thing becomes an imposition and a weariness at last. Give us things that are alive and flexible, which won't last too long and become an obstruction and a weariness. Even Michelangelo becomes at last a lump and a burden and a bore. It is so hard to see past him. (*SEP* 32–33)

The sin, in other words, is to become category-bound, to become stuck in that Third dimension. The monument cuts off the way back.

Lawrence was a category hopper. He wanted to make representation participate in Secondness. Witness his account, again from *Etruscan Places*, of how we see a horse:

what, after all, is the horsiness of a horse? What is it that man sees, when he looks at a horse? . . . a man who sees sees not as a camera does when it takes a snapshot, not even as a cinema-camera, taking its succession of instantaneous snaps; but in a curious rolling flood of vision, in which the image itself seethes and rolls; and only the mind *picks out* certain factors which shall *represent* the image seen. We have made up our minds to see things *as they are*: which is camera vision. But the camera can neither

feel the heat of the horse, his strange body; nor smell his horsiness; nor hear him neigh. Whereas the eye, seeing him, wakes all our other sensual experience of him: not to speak of our terror of his frenzy, and admiration of his strength. The eye really “sees” all this. It is the complete vision of a child, full and potent. But this potent vision in us is maimed and pruned as we grow up, till as adults we see only one dreary bit of the horse, his static external form. (*SEP* 127–28)

What Lawrence is trying to do, even as he communicates the problem as an act of Thirdness, is to manoeuvre us into a position of would-be Secondness: a position, to borrow Heidegger’s phrase, of being-in-the-world with the horse rather than seeing him merely in the position of an object contained by a habitual form of camera vision, of supposedly “adult” representation. Lawrence wants to give representation the resistance of fact, to make us *experience* the experience: he wants, in other words, to import Secondness into Thirdness.

Artistic Form and Intellectual Betrayal

How, then, does this Peircean line of argument allow one to reconfigure Lawrence’s hostility to the notion of aesthetic form? First, what is the evidence? In his writings, Lawrence’s opposition starts early and lasts long. Already in his review in July 1913 of Thomas Mann’s *Death in Venice* and speaking in an ironically condescending voice that is not *quite* his, Lawrence distances himself from what he calls “that craving for form in fiction . . . that will of the writer to be greater than and undisputed lord over the stuff he writes, which is figured to the world in Gustave Flaubert.” He goes on to say that form “is impersonal like logic” (*P* 308) and to picture Mann as the victim of an overcommitment to form: “with real suicidal intention, like Flaubert’s, he sits, a last too-sick disciple, reducing himself grain by grain to the statement of his own disgust, patiently, self-destructively, so that his statement at least may be perfect in a world of corruption” (*P* 312). In “Poetry of the Present” (1919), Lawrence contrasts the poetry of the beginning and the end—the “finality and the perfection” of the gemlike moments captured by such poets as Shelley and Keats—with the poetry he is trying to make room for, the poetry of the “immediate present” with “life surging itself into utterance at its very wellhead” (*P* 218–20). It would in a

sense be more like the sacred river Alph than even Coleridge had envisaged. The problems associated with the deferral of meaning that Saussurean structuralism would depict as the fate of all efforts to represent would, Lawrence evidently hoped, be bypassed—just as Coleridge reported they had in the prologue to “Kubla Khan.” He said he had composed in his drug-induced sleep “from two to three hundred lines; if that indeed can be called composition in which all the images rose up before him as *things*, with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions, without any sensation or consciousness of effort.”⁷ Lawrence would do it by not respecting the constricting conformities of preordained formal requirements. Free verse, he concludes idealistically, “should be direct utterance from the instant, whole man” (P 220).

By the time of his 1928 preface to Giovanni Verga’s collection of short stories, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, we find Lawrence declaring that “any wholesale creed in art is dangerous” (P 247); and in his “Introduction to These Paintings” of 1929 he describes with mock-outrage and then mock-pity the young English painter, a “really modest young man” who says to him: “But I do think we ought to begin to paint good pictures, now that we know pretty well all there is to know about how a picture should be made. You do agree, don’t you, that technically we know almost all there is to know about painting?” There follows what is probably the longest sentence in all of Lawrence’s writing, an accumulating list linked by colons, growing, it seems endlessly: it is a list of the many and various dimensions and branches of technique in painting, concluding: “all these things the young man knew—and out of it, God help him, he was going to make pictures” (P 582–83).

Form and its servant, technique, are cast as a mentalized organization of expression, a betrayal that lies in wait for the artist who would attempt to say anything real. The alternative, Lawrence is telling us, is for the artist to remain as close to the unmixed source of life as possible (Peirce’s Firstness, Heidegger’s Being), and to *attend* to it (an act of Secondness) rather than to the received wisdoms (the Thirdness). Lawrence is advocating a hyper-Romanticism, a rejection, apparently, of everything we have learned in the period since his death about social conditioning, historical contextualization, and epistemic and discursive formation. For him, such considerations would come after; they should not shape the operations of subjectivity in the living moment, although that is their danger. As mental operations posing as something else—as something confrontingly analytic—they are best thought of as descriptive statements that analyze what has already happened. For

Lawrence, the living moment is now.

Polarities and Extremes

Hypostatization of this unmixed source of life has its consequences for a novelist. However urgent or defensible the need to worship at this temple, quite a lot of baggage has to be left outside. I do not only mean the interest in manners and mores that the nineteenth-century novel had developed to a sort of perfection, nor the detailed social positioning of character in which the realist novel had specialized. I mean, rather, the very act of thinking in social or ethical terms at all, putting *any* trust in their capacity to tell the truth, or at least enough of the truth to be worth the telling.

A simple comparison shows a gradual development towards a position such as this in Lawrence's writings. In the many accounts of flowers and woodside scenes in *The White Peacock* or *The Trespasser*, and in some of the early short stories, there is an intention to draw on a source in Nature which would embody emotion or mood not brought out sufficiently by conversational scenes; but Lawrence often fails in this, distractingly drawing attention to his own literariness. On the other hand, by the time of *Aaron's Rod*, "The Captain's Doll," *The Boy in the Bush*, "The Border-Line," and *The Plumed Serpent* in the 1920s, Lawrence is inventing characters who are radically out of touch with a social world that is itself disrupted—for "the war cancelled most meanings," says Lawrence in *Etruscan Places* (SEP 119). Captain Hepburn gazes off into space through his telescope; Jack Grant at the end of *The Boy in the Bush* is off to set up a colony in the vast, nearly unpopulated North-West, forsaking the Anglo-Australian civilization of Perth; Alan Anstruther in "The Border-Line" is literally dead, but more vitally effective than anyone else in the story. There are many other examples. Each main character is drawing from a source that, we are to understand, is unknown because unknowable: it can be gestured at, praised in ritual and religious song as in *The Plumed Serpent*; but it represents itself mainly through negation, whether a refusal of ordinary speech (as in the case of Hepburn) or a railing against the ordinary proprieties and moderations of marriage, society, or politics.

This amounts to a crisis for the would-be artist: how is representation possible in a situation where speech lies, where conventions of artistic form betray, where social living deforms, where civilization renders barbarous? Hannele's representation of Hepburn as a doll and then the Worpswede

painting of the doll must both, she realizes, be destroyed, for representation is typically a fixing of what should not be fixed down. But how to evoke this thing that should not be fixed down? What Lawrence continually does is to set up situations where it is evoked—not directly, but rather by the energy of negation and to some extent in the terms of the negation. To render an extreme of consciousness or being *as* a negative (which he had learned, in part, from Dostoevsky) is to create the vacuum that generates its opposite. Polarity reorganizes the narrative space, energizing everything in it differentially, distending the significance of every detail. Polarities became, for Lawrence, a way of propelling but also organizing his imaginative energy, of keeping it alert. They would not be an artistic form—a Thirdness—to be painstakingly imposed. In Peirce's terms, Lawrence would try to keep the categories referring backwards to the source.

This reconfigured defense of the “perversity” of Lawrence's thinking begs the question of whether polarizing is any excuse for the dubious terms (such as the flesh, blood or phallic consciousness, power, and male leadership) that are provisionally generated by the force field in any one fiction to do service as the positive pole, as the hypostatization of “life.” Ever since the ill-disguised anger of Lawrence's gentleman-critics of the 1920s and the sharp disputes among the memoirists in the 1930s, readers have been tempted either to shield Lawrence from criticism by trying to take the full force of his visionary nostrums; or alternatively to translate them back into more ordinary, straightforwardly objectionable forms of irrationalism, macho bullying, and deliberate mystification, said to be not far from fascist notions of the race and the leader.

Polarity begets polarity; but what many readers (on both sides of the dispute) have ignored is, first, the provisionality, the willingness to revise, rethink, renew—the temporariness of the textual medium which Lawrence's every writing, however strongly worded, actually inhabited. Study of Lawrence's manuscripts and typescripts has been bringing such information to light for the last twenty years as the Cambridge edition of his works has proceeded: editors have abundant evidence that if there was a tendency towards hypostasis in Lawrence's thinking, there was no reification in his actual writing practice. Second, such responses to subject matter ignore Lawrence's tricky dealings with his readership and the dialogic of his proceeding, especially from *Women in Love* onwards.⁸ These significant qualifications of Lawrence's so-called extremism ought by now, I believe, to be taken for granted.

The Genesis of the Polarizing

Lawrence's pre-War interest in dualisms had deepened during his mid-1914 revision of the *Prussian Officer* stories to the point where they were becoming structural to his imagination and to his organization of the narrative space. They helped him to relativize time, to follow subconscious states of being to their deepest psychic levels in rewriting *The Rainbow* in late 1914 and early 1915. But a row with Bertrand Russell in August 1915 lifted the philosophical stakes for Lawrence. The argument was about the efficacy of a "spirit of unanimity in truth" (*L* ii. 380)—a version of the new covenant symbolized by the rainbow with which Lawrence had only very recently ended that novel. Could not something like a Hegelian synthesis of the principles of Flesh and Spirit be retrieved from the present disintegration figured in *The Rainbow* by the alienated selves of Skrebensky, Uncle Tom Brangwen, and Winifred Inger—or what Lawrence refers to as "our late experience of death, universal death?" (Lawrence had experimented historiographically and metaphysically with such a synthesis in "Study of Thomas Hardy.") In August 1915, in an intensity of optimism, he prophesied: "there is a new world for us to create, to bring into being . . . in Eternity exists a great world of truth which here, in this falsity and confusion, is denied and obscured. And it is our business to set the whole living world into relation to the eternal truth." I take these quotations from the two-page fragment of "The Lemon Gardens" (*TI* 252)—not the version of 1913 in that set of sunny travel essays he wrote at Lake Garda in northern Italy, but from his 1915 revision of them which he was preparing for Duckworth for the *Twilight in Italy* volume which would be published in June 1916.

Russell evidently told Lawrence that he was speaking through his hat, that there was no reason to cherish such hopes.⁹ Lawrence dug in his heels long enough to write this first optimistic version of the revised "Lemon Gardens" essay; he then got half-way through rewriting "The Theatre" essay with its devastating diagnosis of Hamlet's condition, before realizing that the "Lemon Gardens" hopefulness that he had just written could not stand. Receiving typed copies of it, he immediately rewrote a page and a half, crossing-out the earlier typed text.¹⁰ In *The Rainbow*, Ursula had mused: "If the lamb might lie down with the lion, it would be a great honor to the lamb, but the lion's powerful heart would suffer no diminishing" (*R* 317–18). This idea measures the change in philosophical stance between the writing and the revision of the essay. His first rewriting in 1915 of "The

Lemon Gardens” had been in accord with Ursula’s optimism, but in the revised pages we read: “They are two Infinities, twofold approach to God. And man must know both. But he must never confuse them. They are eternally separate. The lion shall never lie down with the lamb” (*TI* 252). This was September 1915. The tensions between opposing principles would no longer need to be capped by a fruitless appeal to some future ideal state of affairs (where “the whole living world [would be set] in relation to the eternal truth”); rather, the polarities would work out their own logic.

This shift, which would prove fundamental, reflects Lawrence’s having gone beyond the fragments of Herakleitos in John Burnet’s *Early Greek Philosophy* (which he was reading, with relief, by 14 July 1915; *L* ii. 364–5) to those by Empedokles—or perhaps the quarrel with Russell pushed him to reconsider them. The exact chronology is uncertain; but it is clear that Lawrence relished the primitive reasonings of these pre-Socratic thinkers who sought to explain the universe according to the operation of fundamental principles that could be in conflict with one another. The intellectual space that Plato and Aristotle had been able to open by their idealism and analytical reasoning—that rationalist capacity to put oneself aside as one contemplated the problem—did not exist for their forebears. For them, there was no subject–object divide. Attributed to Herakleitos is the famous dictum that “All flows.” For him, “reality is both many and one, and is kept together by Hate and Love” (Burnet 159); for Empedokles there was a movement, as one principle gained the ascendancy over the other and ran on to its conclusion; when exhausted, it would give way to the other. We find Lawrence actively adapting this idea in “The Crown” which he was writing in tandem with *Twilight in Italy*. It helps explain, in “The Crown,” the women’s fascination with the soldier on the pier who has returned from the war. Having experienced its deepest meaning—having witnessed the extreme run its course—he has been born anew. This also helps explain why Lawrence had such apparently perverse respect for creatures such as Loerke and for the con-artist, Maurice Magnus; it explains why he believed corruption had to be plumbed, dissolution undergone. Only that way lay the truth: the way of purgation was best if there was no cure.

The War brought on the crisis which saw Lawrence reject not only the ethical pieties of his civilization but also the tradition of Enlightenment rationality which underlay it. The pressure on artistic form would be equally severe. The difficulties of representation would be nearly insurmountable: what was it, after all, that representation would have to represent? What flesh could be put on a foundational principle of the Flesh? Which way to

clarify the mud of the equally foundational principle of corruption, if both principles were instinct in the living moment? Lawrence's sense of artistic form as betrayal, and his sense that the pursuit of polarities offered a clarifying and liberating way forward, are not so surprising once this context is appreciated. Form as the antithesis of utterance in the living moment can be seen then, from this point of view, as only another manifestation of his more fundamental habit of polarized thinking.

When Lawrence finally abandoned, in 1915, his capping law of unanimity in action—that the lion would *not* lie down with the lamb—he was realizing the impossibility, in Peirce's terms, of Thirdness dictating to Firstness and Secondness. The polarized essences that he would come to deploy are of the First world; they are revealed in the Second in action and would reveal themselves truly in the Third except that their fate is to be warped or fixed by conventional norms of historical interpretation, rational analysis and subject-object philosophizing. This fate is what, at a fundamental level, Lawrence's fictions are a protest against. If he could depict action and character amidst the distending force of polarized essences then there would be a chance of releasing the reader into a commerce with Firstness that the western tradition, as Lawrence saw it, had conspired to prevent. And if things really do hang together in the deepest sense, then polarity might replace causation and realist specification: as *his* "form," it would not necessarily betray.

Notes

1 The online MLA International Bibliography brings together the terms "Lawrence" and "Heidegger" only in reference to a dissertation by Lashof. It yielded no additional listings when checked in January 1998.

2 Steiner 60. See also Habermas 185.

3 No references appear in Lawrence's letters. However, in 1907 he read *Pragmatism* by William James (1842–1910), the far better-known American pragmatist whose early thinking was influenced by Peirce. There are references to James in "A Modern Lover" and in *Twilight in Italy*. According to Worthen, the experience of reading James helped Lawrence to get over the pantheistic doctrine of Monism which he had found attractive when reading Haeckel (*EY* 179–80). In its positing of a substance common to all animal and vegetable life, which is both body and spirit, God and nature, Monism was part of Lawrence's way of thinking his way out of conventional Christianity. James maintained monism was unintelli-

gible; claims for a deep alignment of Lawrence with Heidegger's principle of Being are surely qualified by that fact.

4 The Peirce Edition Project at Indiana University is preparing a thirty-volume edition, *Writing of Charles S. Peirce: A Chronological Edition*, gen. ed. Nathan Houser. A two-volume selection of his philosophical writings has recently appeared in advance from the Project (*Essential Peirce*).

5 To humanize or psychologize the operation of the sign would compromise this fundamentality. Thus, the interpretant is not a person; strictly speaking, it is the counterpart of the sign or representamen and stands in an equivalent or developed relation to the object. The sign as a whole is therefore a relation not a thing, although a thing may become a sign if it takes on that relational function. Nevertheless Peirce sometimes despaired of being able to explain his conception. In a letter of 23 December 1908 to Lady Welby he wrote that a sign is "anything which is so determined by something else, called its Object, and so determines an effect upon a person, which effect I call its Interpretant, that the latter is thereby mediately determined by the former." He goes on to say, "My insertion of 'upon a person' is a sop to Cerberus, because I despair of making my own broader conception understood" (*Essential Peirce* 2. 478).

6 Gallie 197. For other commentaries on Peirce's philosophy, see Apel, Hookway, and Keeler. I thank Mary Keeler for her encouragement and assistance in my coming to some sort of terms with Peirce.

7 Coleridge 120. Unfortunately, the famous "person on business from Porlock" called upon Coleridge, causing him to forget most of his work.

8 See Eggert and Worthen.

9 Cf. his letter to Ottoline Morrell of 20 June 1915 (*L* ii. 359) with that to Cynthia Asquith of 16 August 1915 (*L* ii. 378–81).

10 Reproduced in facsimile in *TI* 251–2. See *TI* xlix–l for the reasons why, of all the pre-proof stages of the 1915 *Twilight* essays, only these two superseded leaves are still extant; and see liii–lvii for a more detailed account of this change in Lawrence's thinking and writing within the context of *Twilight in Italy*.

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