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## Premise

- 1 The historical tragedy of World War I brought about a deep malaise in contemporary civilisation and struck directly the French town of Arras, where, in 1917, a great battle was fought in which many young men lost their lives, at the service of governments who were just striving to achieve more power and used them as if they were pawns in a chess game. As a result, the world changed. Lawrence wrote in a letter to Lady Cynthia Asquith, 31 January 1915, "it seems like another life – we were happy – and since then, since I came back, things have not existed for me" (L ii 268). World War I played an important role in Lawrence's life and artistic output; I myself have written on it in "The Line and the Circle: Lawrence, the First World War and Myth," in Howard Booth (ed.), *New D.H. Lawrence and elsewhere*.
- 2 World War I haunts Lawrence's works, from his early stories and essays ("The Prussian Officer" and "The English and the Germans" for example) to his last novel, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and is a leitmotiv in his oeuvre. It is well known that he initially welcomed the war – just like most modernists and undoubtedly under the influence of Italian Futurism – as an opportunity for a radical change, for the rebirth of an old, decaying civilization. He soon realised, however, that the war was "a war of artillery, a war of machines" where human beings were just "the subjective material of the machine" (TI 84), as he wrote in the prophetic essay "With the Guns" (Michelucci 1997b and 2011).
- 3 After this disaster, a quest had to be undertaken, the search for a new place to start a new life and find an *ubi consistam*, either in Europe or, possibly, far away from it. In this paper I will focus not so much on the war itself, as on the role played by this quest in Lawrence's life and work. In his life he called his utopian project Rananim, and he pursued it in a variety of ways from the outbreak of World War I to the end of his life (Franks 2006). But he never managed to carry out this project and its failure is mirrored in the story "The Man Who Loved Islands."

## Utopia

- 4 In literary tradition Utopia, which is etymologically “a no man’s land” (*ou-topos*), a “no-place,”<sup>1</sup> and also “a happy place” (*eu-topos*), finds its ideal setting in remote islands usually ignored by maps, off the known routes, and is mostly identified with idyllic environments or virgin nature, as in Thomas More’s *Utopia*, and also in other works which are in varying degrees connected to the Utopian genre, such as Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*, Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* and even Homer’s *Odyssey*. This is not the case with D.H. Lawrence. In his works Utopia turns upside down, it becomes a dystopia and the dream results in a nightmare: what is initially thought of as a source of security and happiness turns out to be the place of an experience leading to death or to utter personal loss and disorientation (as in the Australian novels *Kangaroo* and *The Boy in the Bush*). The inversion through which Utopia turns into a dystopia is quite common in western literary tradition and has become more and more frequent from 1700 onwards, especially in narratives whose setting is, at least in part, an island. The examples which come to mind include Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726), H.G. Wells’s *Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896), William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* (1954), John Fowles’ *The Magus* (1966), or, finally, *The Island of the Day Before* by Umberto Eco (1994), where the author presents a journey in time and in the protagonist’s memory which is far from being an idyllic one. Even the most famous island in fairy tales, the non-existent island in *Peter Pan*, is only seemingly a happy place and is actually doomed to disappear.

## Real and metaphorical islands

- 5 In his life Lawrence had a very intense relationship with islands. He stayed in Sicily from 1920 to 1921 and visited Sardinia during a very brief journey (only one week in January 1921), which inspired the beautiful, although quite idiosyncratic travel book, *Sea and Sardinia*.<sup>2</sup> Away from Europe he visited Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), the source of the unfinished short story “The Man Who Was Through with the World,” whose very title suggests the semantic and symbolic association between isolation and island. Several other islands are found in Lawrence’s fiction: in his second novel, *The Trespasser*, the Isle of Wight is the destination of the elopement of a mediocre middle-aged musician with a young female student of his.<sup>3</sup> The elopement will lead to the protagonist’s suicide, which is the result of his inability to face the return to his old life on the mainland (Michelucci 2002). A tragic ending is also found in “The Man Who Loved Islands” (1927), the short story I will discuss in the final part of this paper, and, in various ways, in other stories where the island is thought of as the place of some absolute achievement (the fullness of passion, the realization of a Utopia, etc.), which inevitably proves to be unattainable, thus decreeing the tragic ending of the story. The same is true for some metaphorical islands or utopian sites, such as gardens and farms in his early novels (*The White Peacock* and *Sons and Lovers*), where the characters hope to find a shelter from the world, and to achieve a harmonious relationship with fellow human beings. These fictitious islands, however, turn out to be the source of a dangerous loss of contact with the outside world, besides being serious obstacles to the protagonists’ *Bildung*, for the achievement of which the confrontation with otherness and with difference is – anthropologically and culturally – an essential step (Lotman and Uspenskij 1987, Remotti 1990, 1993).

- 6 While in Lawrence's early works these metaphorical islands clearly show a decadent ascendancy, in the works written after World War I – a watershed in Lawrence's life and artistic career – they present different features, as they are closely linked to the increasing Lawrencian tendency to Primitivism – in line again with most Modernists<sup>4</sup> – but they are also, like the metaphorical islands in his early works, double-faced, ambivalent places. The liberating experience which the characters try to achieve in them, as far away as possible from their “home” culture, seems to be endangered by the total otherness of the primitive they come into touch with. In these later works the endings are therefore also tragic. In “The Woman Who Rode Away” the anonymous protagonist abandons her family and her civilized world to become a member of an Indian community which lives in utter isolation from the rest of the world.<sup>5</sup> She ends up by being the partly consensual victim of a rite, a sacrifice to the sun, which will – according to the Indians – delay the process of destruction which those of white European have set into motion. In another Mexican story, “The Princess,” a sophisticated middle-aged European woman stubbornly struggles to reach the heart of the Rockies in order to discover their wild aspect. She embarks on her quest with a determination equal to that of the heroine of “The Woman Who Rode Away”, demonstrating the same unawareness of what awaits her in an unknown land.<sup>6</sup> Instead of romance and adventure, she finds a brutal and crude initiation to Eros by a local guide, who has submissively obeyed her as long as they were in the realm of civilisation. In these savage places the social code is no longer valid; they are a sort of jungle where survival instincts rule. This story also ends tragically with the death of one of the protagonists, in this case not the Princess, but Domingo Romero, the local guide who has violated his role as submissive servant to the colonizing people (Widmer 1959, Draper 1966, MacDonald 1979, de Filippis 2000, Michelucci 2002).
- 7 The seemingly untouched and uncontaminated Australian bush is not very different from the American wilderness. It is a continent-island which has enshrined within it a kind of savage island which is the setting of *Kangaroo* and *The Boy in the Bush*, and which will turn out to be a sort of alluring but dangerous (or even fatal) maze. Here the protagonists either lose themselves (“the bush has got me [...] and now it will take life from me [...] I shall wander in the bush throughout eternity.” *BB* 287), or become aware that giving in to the bush, to the magic of its silence, would involve the loss of one's identity (“I don't want to give in to the place. It's too strong. It would lure me quite away from myself.” *K* 348). Only at the end of Lawrence's life and artistic career, that is in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, does a metaphorical island in the heart of Old Rural England, the gamekeeper's hut, become a place of rebirth for the female protagonist. It is the site of an inward regeneration closely linked to the fullness of erotic experience (Cenni and Ceramella 2010). It is interesting and paradoxical that Lawrence, worn away by his illness, when he is spending the last years of his life in rural Tuscany, should choose England as the setting of his last prophetic novel, which is clearly an attack on the prudery of his countrymen. Among many other islands, imagined, thought of, or even actually visited by the writer, England was the one he most whole-heartedly hated. It was the island where he had been born and where he grew up, a late-Victorian England where he received a Puritan, lower-middle-class education from his mother, to which, later on, after the rediscovery of the totally spontaneous and instinctual personality of his father, he would attribute all his psychological problems and insecurities (Worthen 1991). His inhibitions, which the Oedipal link with his mother made even worse (see *Sons and Lovers* for example), paralysed his vital impulse in the crucial period of early youth, turning him into a man

"crucified into sex," to quote John Middleton Murry (Murry 1931, 1933). It is undoubtedly paradoxical and ironic that such a man was to be the author of scandalous texts which were attacked by censorship, and the publication of which was forbidden for many years,<sup>7</sup> and that later he should be identified as a prophet of sexual emancipation.

- 8 The liberating encounter with Frieda von Richthofen, a free, open-minded woman, who was also the friend of intellectuals like Otto Gross (1877-1920), a disciple of Sigmund Freud, helped Lawrence to exorcize his deepest fears and to cut the umbilical cord binding him to his homeland. With her, he could begin an existential and artistic quest, in an attempt to find an alternative homeland, an *ubi consistam* modelled on Nature and on the life of instincts, on what he called the "wisdom of the blood," a wisdom almost totally suppressed in industrialised and mechanised England.

## Rananim or the non-existent island

- 9 After the apocalypse of World War I, Lawrence develops the utopian project of founding Rananim ("an isle of the Blest, here on earth" *L* iii, 90). This island was to accompany and persecute him as a man and as a writer for the rest of his life.<sup>8</sup>
- 10 As hinted above, at first Lawrence – like most avant-garde artists and modernist writers – welcomed the war as the opportunity for a radical change, for a break with the old world, on the ruins of which the new one was to rise (like the phoenix from its ashes). His stance clearly betrays the influence of Italian Futurism (he had read some of the Futurist Manifestos during his first Italian journey in 1912-1913). It clearly echoes, above all, the provocative words of Marinetti, which sounded like apocalyptic drums or the trumpets of the last judgement, in the context of the outbreak of the Great War: "we want to glorify the war as the only hygiene of the world and to free this country from the stinking blight of professors, archaeologists and antiquarians" (Marinetti 1909, my translation). However the hope of radical change through the war would however soon give way to a sense of despair, disorientation and hopelessness, when the war turns into the nightmare of a personal persecution. We need only think of the humiliation of the medical examination board, which declared Lawrence unfit for service, his arrest in Germany, evoked in the essay "How a Spy is Arrested" (*TI* 11-15), the persecution during his stay in Cornwall where he was suspected of being a spy, and the ban of *The Rainbow* for obscenity, whereas the real reason was Lawrence's anti-militarism.
- 11 In line with the elitism typical of most modernist writers, Lawrence saw Rananim not as a project for the whole of society but as a little community of the "happy few," completely detached from the rest of the world. It may seem a paradox, but as happens in the story "The Man Who Loved Islands," the planner claims the right to choose and select those people destined to shape and forge this ideal community. This aristocratic, elitist prejudice is already evident in the initial planning of the project when, in a letter to Koteliensky (January 3, 1915), Lawrence writes:
- We are going to found an Order of the Knights of Rananim. [...] I want to gather together about twenty souls and sail away from this world of war and squalor and found a little colony where there shall be no money but a sort of communism as far as necessities of life go. [...] We keep brooding the idea – I and some friends. (*L* ii 252-259).
- 12 The project of the "happy island," as these words make clear, recalls Coleridge's pantisocracy, with which it shares, in addition to the idea of common property, its

location in the New World and the fact that it is an escape from an epochal crisis (The French Revolution for Coleridge, World War I for Lawrence). The choice of the New World, which Lawrence had never previously visited, is inspired by the mythical ideal of America as a virgin or promised land. Since the discovery of the New Continent, most islands across the Atlantic ocean had been identified with the *locus amoenus tout court* in Western imagination. The florid, lush land, isolated and protected from time and progress, was seen – in a way that betrays Lawrence's puritan background – as a Promised Land or as an Eden where human beings could find freedom from the anxieties and neurotic fears which a mechanised and teleologically organized existence had brought about.<sup>9</sup>

13 Twelve years later, the failure of this Utopian project of an ideal society based on brotherhood and friendship was to inspire the story "The Man Who Loved Islands," where at the end of the first year the microcosm created by the protagonist on the first island and the idea of a perfect society crumble as a result of a series of unexpected natural calamities: the virgin land is not always easily mastered, as is noted by Sergio Perosa in *From Islands to Portraits: Four Literary Variations*, while the people whom the Master has chosen become more and more hostile to the intended imposition of an abstract social model, a model which they experience as a violation of human nature.<sup>10</sup> Since Utopia is by definition the perfect state, the Master in the story had tried to select only perfect people and has fatally ended up discarding all humanity, except himself. In other words there is something of a mad Nietzschean *übermensch* lurking in him, something inhuman in the superhuman Master.

14 Over a remarkably short period of time (February-September 1915), for Lawrence, Bertrand Russell and the group of intellectuals gravitating around Lady Ottoline Morell, Ranim evolved into a project aimed at changing the world from within ("they say, the island shall be England, that we shall start our new community in the midst of this old one" *L ii 227*). The Lawrencian image of social revolution, which disappeared forever after he broke with Russell, was influenced by the ideas of a British tradition of social reformers, from Thomas More in the 16<sup>th</sup> century to John Ruskin and William Morris in the Victorian period. The basic postulate is that everyone should have "food and clothing and shelter as a birth-right, work or no work" (*L ii 292*) and, as mentioned above, the abolition of private property. After the break with Russell, Lawrence went back to the Romantic idea of Ranim as a happy island far away from the world, an idea which slowly turned into a dream of the past, as the nostalgic tone the writer uses in some letters to Koteliensky makes clear:

In my Island, I wanted people to come without class or money, sacrificing nothing, but each coming with all his desires, yet knowing that his life is but a tiny section of a Whole: so that he shall fulfil his life in relation to the Whole. [...] but I can't find anybody. (*L ii 266*)<sup>11</sup>

15 Despite this failure, Lawrence does not abandon the search for a happy island. Here he realises however that the place should not necessarily be the New World, Virgin America: it could be anywhere (Michelucci 1997a). "After then trying Sydney and New South Wales, if I don't like that we shall go across the Pacific to San Francisco [...]. Now I have started, I will go on and on [...]. And if I like none of the places I shall come back to Europe with my mind made up and settle down permanently in England or Italy." (*L iv 228*)

16 Like Lawrence, some of his characters, especially in the works written after World War I, look for a happy island, a place for rebirth, but their projects fail, or even lead them to

death. At the basis of this collapse there are perhaps Lawrence's ideological contradictions, since he perceived Utopia sometimes as a place for a radical democracy and sometimes as the embodiment of authoritarian, or even totalitarian ideas. As a matter of fact, many of Lawrence's works of the twenties, often called *leadership novels*, are focused on leaders who are aristocrats by nature and not by birth, destined to be voluntarily and spontaneously followed by masses in their projects of radical social and political renewal. This natural superiority is never however convincingly shown by these would-be leaders, who are often prisoners of their arrogance and their vague intellectual speculations.<sup>12</sup> In a sense they are the *doppelgänger* of Lawrence himself, who did not succeed in convincing a group of friends to join him in the foundation of Rananim. Because of their spiritual isolation, these characters are forced either to renounce their utopian project or to reformulate and rethink it as a Utopia for a few people or even for one person (just the opposite of John Donne's idea that "no man is an island"). This happened to Lawrence himself, who in a letter to Koteliansky, dated 7 November 1916, wrote: "my Rananim, my Florida idea, was the true one. Only the *people* were wrong. But to go to Rananim, *without* the people is right, for me, and ultimately, I hope for you." (L iii 23)

- 17 Utopia must be founded in a very remote place, where only Nature is sovereign. But in such a place, whether in the heart of the Rockies, as in "St Mawr" or in "The Princess," or the uncontaminated Australian bush, as in *Kangaroo* or in *The Boy in the Bush*, the Lawrencian protagonists are invariably defeated. This is also due to their inability to come to terms with that mysterious entity which, in *Studies in Classic American Literature*, Lawrence described as the "spirit of place." Because of this entity, a place which had been thought of as a virgin land, ideally suited to the creation of the *novum*, actually turns out to be something extremely hostile, which either forces the characters to escape (as in "The Princess") or which breaks their vital strength, as in "St. Mawr": "The gods of those inner mountains were grim and invidious and relentless, huger than man, and lower than man. Yet man could never master them." (*Mawr* 150).
- 18 Lawrence himself was overcome by the relentless "spirit of place" in the solitary Lobo Ranch in New Mexico, where he stayed from March 1924 to September 1925 with Frieda and Dorothy Brett, living day by day "with the hills and the trees [...] up against these Savage Rockies" (L v 148-150) and finding himself more and more oppressed by something indefinable and strange, which sucked all his energy, his vital strength and gnawed at the core of his life ("I feel bitter in America – it makes one suffer, this continent, a nasty, too-much suffering." L iv 387). Eventually he felt compelled to escape.

## "The Man Who Loved Islands"

- 19 Towards the end of his literary career Lawrence had learned to mistrust "happy islands". We find evidence of this in the story "The Man Who Loved Islands," where the idea of founding a perfect society is rejected as both presumptuous and unfeasible.<sup>13</sup> The story follows the three-part structure typical of fairy tales (Propp 1971, Franks 2006). Its setting on three different islands thus allows the author to represent three illusory "happy islands," three kinds of Utopia: the first is the happy, self-sufficient community, the second an Eden with a few obedient, serving people, while in the third the protagonist chooses total isolation from the human and natural world, thus overturning Utopia, which should be a perfect *society*, into the dystopia of nightmarish loneliness. Here the

protagonist, who has flown away from the world and who had dreamt of founding a perfect community, ends up dying alone under a snow storm, an extremity which is a metaphor for his cold egocentrism. As many critics have pointed out (Karl 1959, Turner 1983, Harris 1986 and also Kinkead-Weekes 2004), the story is an allegory of human isolation, seen in characteristically Lawrencian terms, as the outcome of the despotism exerted by the mind over the *living* part of man, that is over the soul and the body, a despotism engendering sterility and ultimately death (Michelucci 1998).

- 20 In "The Man Who Loved Islands," the protagonist selects – as Lawrence himself had planned to do – only those people he thinks suitable for the accomplishment of his project. However when he attempts to carry it out, he ends up discarding all of them except himself. What Lawrence is trying to show here is that perfection and uniformity are incompatible with Nature, because Nature is inevitably imperfect, heterogeneous, perpetually changing. Thus the protagonist's stubborn attempt to create "a minute world of pure perfection, made by man himself" (WRA 153) is doomed to collapse. The cause of this failure is not only his refusal to adapt his ideal world to the laws of Nature, but also the fact that the community which he is trying to create has no roots in the place, no tradition behind it on which to base habits, customs, behaviour. The members of the community are therefore doomed either to be utterly disoriented by the lack of cultural references on which to base the creation of a new community, or to import their rules and customs from the imperfect world they come from (La Cecla 1988, Norberg-Schulz 1985). Ironically, the protagonist, who flatters himself with the idea of creating a new society – albeit a very small one – does not realize that what he is actually looking for is a condition of total solitude, a solitude he will eventually attain in the last island. Yet he is alone even when he buys the first island, where the few people he has chosen are not the participants in a shared project, but are rather the objects over which he exerts his absolute, arrogant power. In other words, the Master (he insists on being called Master), is not very different from Robinson Crusoe (or even from Prospero in *The Tempest*, although he lacks the latter's magic powers), the model of the coloniser who imposes his relentless will on Nature and on all the people surrounding him, going so far even as to attempt to usurp God's power (as many early colonizers did when they violently imposed their religion and destroyed entire heathen communities all over the world). Thus the story implies, along with Lawrence's self-criticism of the Rananim project, his condemnation of colonialism at the heart of which lies the lack of respect for cultural diversity.<sup>14</sup>
- 21 Once defeated on the first island – the jungle he had carefully tamed and turned into a garden reverts to its former state, subject to the old uncontrollable natural laws and to the indigenous human customs – the protagonist makes a second attempt on a smaller island. Here Lawrence's focus shifts from the realm of political and social activities to the relationship between the sexes and to the protagonist's interaction with a girl from whom he gets a child. The experience on this second island finds its symbolic epiphany in the flower they observe together, the saxifrage. This flower can grow among stones, defeating them. It can even – as suggested by the etymology of its name – break them. It symbolizes the love which Flora is offering to the protagonist, but which will be unable to break the hard crust of his selfishness and egotism. He does not however respond to her love. On the contrary, he is frightened by it. He experiences their relationship and, above all else, the baby which is the fruit of their love, as an unforgivable weakness, a degrading capitulation to base instincts which has turned him from the God he thought himself to



be, on the first island, into an Adam. Appalled by this idea, he decides to abandon this second island and to move to a third one, which proves to be not only smaller than the previous two, but also colder and more barren. In other words, he has become increasingly dissatisfied with the man in himself, with his basic, natural instincts, which cannot measure up to the demands of the Nietzschean *Übermensch* constantly lurking in him. Now he has severed all connections with mankind and therefore he thinks he will now eventually be able to achieve perfection, embodied by the sterile, aseptic mental life which subconsciously he has always been longing for. At the end of the story, once he has become a cursed king in exile, a Lear without a Fool beside him, he is lashed by a snow storm, submerged by the never-ending night of polar winter, obsessed by the noise of the thunder, in a place where life has disappeared and he himself dies. The body he has rejected takes revenge on him by refusing to obey his absurd orders, eventually leading him to a condition of delirious lack of consciousness, a condition involving an utter defeat of the mind, which has now lost all its privileges and is no longer an object of idolatry. On this island even language is rejected (Michelucci 1998): the Master is disturbed, annoyed and exasperated by the sound of his own voice, which will eventually burst out into an agonising cry expressing the horror of his desperate and hopeless loneliness, his loss of contact even with the place where he moves and acts. Before dying, his mind turns to a completely different place, at the opposite pole of the desert of snow and ice which has become his prison: "it is summer [...] and the time of leaves." (WRA 173). Whereas the protagonist's lonely death on this frozen land evokes Cocytus in Dante's *Inferno*, where Satan, punished for his pride, is stuck for eternity (Lawrence had read Dante's *Comedy* in these years), the protagonist's last thought conveys the impression of an irrepressible nostalgia for Nature and for the world.

- 22 In this process that is ultimately leading him to isolation and death, language plays a crucial role as it gradually sheds its function as an exchange of experiences with other human beings (Perosa 2000, Doherty 1992). Already on the first two islands, language is used only to sanction a master/servant relationship. This emerges clearly when the Master expounds his project to the bailiff; the latter expresses his approval without really listening to the Master's words and his answer is nothing but a mechanic formula: "Yes, Sir! Yes, Sir! You're right, Master" (WRA 157). Even written language is actually dead on the first island: what the Master writes is not a response to the life of the island, but a sterile classification of the flowers mentioned by Latin and Greek authors: dead flowers, dead men, dealt with, supposedly, in a dead language, here conceived, in a Bergsonian way, as an instrument designed to impose an intellectual order on the living chaos of life, thus killing life itself. On the second island, the verbal flattery he was the object of on the first island is replaced by the silent service of people reduced to obedient tools. With Flora there is hardly any real communication: there are only some infrequent, short sentences, because she has become accustomed to responding in the most economical and matter-of-fact way to his questions and remarks: language is minimal, reduced to less than basic communication, and the only sound they can hear is the mechanical and lifeless noise of the typewriter (again something he has imported from the world he wanted to leave behind, La Cecla 1988). On the third island, once he has rejected everything that is alive around him, even language becomes repulsive to him. He does not give up the idea of constructing a world that is the image of the ideal one harboured in his own mind, a perfect world which by now coincides with himself, thus constituting a sort of identification between man and place, an anthropomorphic island, echoing examples in the literary tradition such as *The Purple Island, or the Isle of Man* (1633) by

Phineas Fletcher or *The Isle of Man* (1620) by Richard Bernard. However after getting rid of the sound of sheep and the cat, he is surprised and irritated by the sound of his own voice, and if he cannot stand written words it is probably because of their link with the human world: "The print, the printed letters, so like the depravity of speech, looked obscene: He tore the brass label from his paraffin stove" (WRA 170). Yet his mind is still awake and active, and continues to use language to analyze events around and within himself, to study his own feelings and reactions (with the mind observing and registering the body under a sort of schizophrenic and voyeuristic wreckage of his senses). He still indulges the illusion of possessing the power to master reality, until, at the end, control collapses and he dies as a victim of the revenge of the Nature which he had tried to submit and tame.

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## NOTES

1. This is quite different from the "no-place" that is theorized by the anthropologist Marc Augé in *Non-Lieux. Introduction à une anthropologie de la surmodernité*, where the "no place" is a crowded contemporary place without identity like modern airports, for example.
2. Even Australia, where he stayed from May 4 to August 11, 1922 and which inspired the novels *Kangaroo* and *The Boy in the Bush*, is an island, although a huge one.
3. The two characters yearn to embody the romantic myth of Absolute Love, and refer to Wagner and to the German romantic poets as their models, but their longing to live up to these musical and literary models turns their experience into something unauthentic and therefore frustrating.
4. There are many studies on Primitivism in the early 20th century both in literature and the visual arts (Torgovnick, Carr, Stewart, etc.). Most modernists "invented" their own primitivism, that is, they used it for their experiments and it turned out to be a constructed primitivism. See also Todorov 1984.
5. To reach the Indian village, the protagonist has to cross a ravine in the mountains, in a sort of "rite of passage" to another world. "To look down on the brilliant whiteness of the pueblo, in that other world, is both to be frightened by a sense of a whiteness quite different from hers and to judge her deathliness by it" (Kinkead-Weekes 1990: 256).
6. In a way they are a metaphor for the western white man and for the process of colonization which Lawrence implicitly condemns in these stories. The colonisers feel free to go everywhere without questioning either their authority, or their ability to come to terms with the unknown.
7. This happened to *The Rainbow*, to Lawrence's last poems, to his paintings (which were confiscated by the police during the exhibition at the Warren Galleries in London in 1929), to *Lady Chatterley's Lover*; which was published only in 1960 after a trial and became the bible of the Sixties generation. See Rolph 1961, M.H. Hyde 1990 and Matthews 2009.
8. Jill Franks points out that Lawrence's idea of founding Rananim takes shape in three phases, all of which play a very important role in the writer's life; despite the collapse of the Rananim project, he did not give up his ideal, as shown by the happy island he had in mind with Bertrand Russell, by the little community made up of four people in Cornwall with his wife Frieda, Katherine Mansfield and John Middleton Murry and eventually by the isolated life at Del Monte and at the Lobo Ranch in New Mexico (Franks 2006: 105-138).
9. The *topos* of the island has been discussed in several texts; see, in particular Fowles 1978, Glaser 1996, Perosa 2000. See also Franks 2006.
10. For a detailed analysis of this story, see Michelucci 1997c and 1998.
11. Lawrence himself had problems in finding supporters and real followers, as happened during the famous episode at Café Royal (December 1924), when only Dorothy Brett accepted the writer's invitation to follow him to New Mexico. The other intellectuals and friends who refused and found excuses were Catherine Carswell and her husband Donald, Mary Cannan, John Middleton Murry and Mark Gertler. See Ellis 1998 and Franks 2006.

12. See Michelucci 2009 and Ellis 1994.

13. On the various readings of the story see Franks 2006 and Kinkead-Weekes 2004.

14. This opposition between uniformity and diversity characterizes Lawrence's last travel book, *Sketches of Etruscan Places*, which is focused on the contrast between the Roman sterile uniformity and the Etruscan fertile diversity and plurality (Michelucci 2012).

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