

D. H. Lawrence's Travel Writing: Concept of Nudity and Sexuality with a Difference

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Abstract

In that he spent most of his life outside Britain, D. H. Lawrence often seems the least British of the British Modernists. His interest in and willingness to be influenced by Italy, Sicily, the American Southwest, Mexico and Australia can be easily explored in his travel books. Whereas his novels are too didactic in nature, his philosophies get naturally matured as he travels and they are expressed very succinctly in his travel writing. In various parts of his four travel books, namely *Twilight in Italy* (1916), *Sea and Sardinia* (1921), *Morning in Mexico* (1927), *Sketches of Etruscan Places* (1932) Lawrence depicts the difference between nudity and nakedness and how they influence him. The other contrast here is between art and life, with the nude standing for art and nakedness for life with the section on Florence and the art there. The essay focuses on how Lawrence views art differently when actually experiencing these works himself during his travels. I show different phases in his response to nudity/nakedness as shown in his four travel books and what accounts for these changes. The thesis is the examination of Lawrence's belief that the touch of amateurism and primitivism can inject new freshness into our lives and can salvage them from the clutches of habit, and the mechanized civilisation. Nudity and sexuality as part of primitive modes of life can balance and heal what Freud termed the discontents of civilisation. Situated on the thin line between nudity and sexuality, D.H. Lawrence's travel writing recounts man's true relationship with the cosmos. And finally, the paper shows some misunderstanding on the part of the second wave feminists on his representation of masculinity in nakedness.

Keywords: travel writing, nakedness, nudity, sexuality, feminism

"Sex is knowledge," writes Paul Fussell in *Abroad*, "and sometimes Lawrence images it in terms very close to travel terms. 'The greatest living experience for everyman, ' he tells Bertrand Russell, 'is his adventure into the woman'" (Fussell, 1980, p.146). In *Twilight in Italy* (1994), Lawrence shows the importance of flesh over spirit by mentioning two lines of William Blake's "The Tyger " ["Tiger, tiger, burning bright, / In the forests of the night"] from *Songs of Experience* (1789). He writes, "[i]t does not indeed burn within the darkness. But the essential fate, of the tiger is cold and white, a white ecstasy. It is seen in the white eyes of the blazing cat. This is the supremacy of the flesh, which devours all, and becomes transfigured into a magnificent brindled flame, a burning bush indeed" (Lawrence 1994, 117). A tiger sees through its desire: "The eyes of the tiger cannot see,

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except with the light from within itself, by the light of its own desire" (Lawrence 1994, 117). And this desire denotes hope and future. The 18th century moralists like Alexander Pope were fond of tracing a regular and benevolent design through nature. Blake challenges this world view in this poem. The tiger is an example of God's energy. The tiger is awe-inspiring, imposing, majestic, and august. And its symmetry is terrible. So how can it be reconciled with the thought of a neat and comfortable province? The tiger belongs to the paradigm or archetype of "terrible beauty." And "the forests of the night" means the darkness of the unconsciousness because darkness engenders creation. Unlike Conrad, darkness is positive with Blake and D. H. Lawrence. For Conrad prejudice flares in darkness, but for Lawrence it denotes the darkness of the pit, the darkness of the mother's womb. Another meaning of darkness is that black sets off white in contrast. In this way, Lawrence brings out the inner positive and creative darkness within the man and the cosmos by mentioning the resplendent body and ferocious strength of the tiger. Travel has been the stimulus for discovering this undiscovered territory of human mind.

Nudity of the inanimate objects had also been mentioned in a striking manner. In "The Lemon Gardens," he writes, "Naked pillars", "naked to the sky" (Lawrence 1994, 127). The word "naked" had been referred again and again almost in all the chapters. In "San Gaudenzio," he writes, "...whole *naked* trees full of lustrous, orange-yellow, paradisaic fruit, gleaming against the wintry blue sky" (Lawrence 1994, 154, emphasis mine). The tree is "naked" not in the sense that it had been stripped of its leaves and flowers or fruits. It is in the nude for its beauty, fruitfulness and ripeness. So, nudity is very positive with Lawrence, because it celebrates originality and connectivity with nature. At another point of the same chapter, he is discussing the separation of men caused by money ("The money alone made the real distinction, the separation"), but otherwise we belong to one same level: "We are all human beings like herself; *naked*, there was no distinction between us, no higher nor lower " (Lawrence 1994, 160, emphasis mine). So, nudity is a great leveller.

At the end of *Twilight in Italy*, Lawrence was fascinated by the beauty of a girl's nude legs and it indirectly suggests his preference for nudity and natural life: "I saw a girl with handsome bare legs, legs shining like brass in the sun. She was working in a field, on the edge of a vineyard. I stopped to look at her, suddenly fascinated by her handsome naked flesh that shone like brass" (Lawrence 1994, 225). Not only does he stop to see her bare legs, he starts contemplating it long after seeing it: "I sat a long time among them, thinking of the girl with her limbs of glowing brass" (Lawrence 1994, 225). Two things can be observed about the above statement. First, in the poem, "Solitary Reaper," Wordsworth thinks of girl's melancholy song long after "it was heard no more." The last two lines of that poem are: "The music in my heart I bore / Long after it was heard no more." The romantic poet is deeply moved by the Highland girl's song which has left a lasting impression on his mind and gives birth to that beautiful poem. The above statement by Lawrence stands in stark contrast to the Wordsworthian experience. Lawrence's mind has stuck in the memories of bare flesh of the girl's leg who is also working in the field. Probably this provides the difference between romanticism and modernism, between abstract (music) and concrete (legs) and spirituality and sensuality. The travel from Wordsworth to Lawrence is a journey from spirit to flesh, art to life, from fixity to flux. The girl's legs are flux because it is organic and subject to change.

Another aspect of "limbs of glowing brass" is that, it can be comparable to the "divine attribute, as seen in visions: Daniel x. 6, Revelation i. 15 and ii. 18" (Lawrence 1994, 299). All that means, no matter Lawrence writes it consciously or unconsciously, that he wants to attach a divine quality to nakedness. When we do not cover our body artificially and reveal the goodness of it, we become closer to God. Tagore also writes after seeing a portrait of a nude girl that, "I saw a painting of a woman wearing no clothes by the famous French painter Kalou Dan Rua. What a beauty! The beauty of a pretty human body is peerless in the world.... The portrait reveals the fact that the animalistic nature of human being had concealed one glory made by God's own hand and the painter revived the strange divine beauty in his canvas by removing the man-made unholy veneer" (Self translation, Tagore 1969, 862-863). Now whether clothes conceal or reveal the beauty of human body—different Romantics think differently. French poet Baudelaire thinks that totally bare woman body is detestable. This topic can also be observed in the way that the clothes stand between naked female body and male gaze. And it is the "duty" of the patriarchal society to decide the way a female body should be clothed. This tendency on the part of male chauvinism had been criticised by the feminists down the decades and it is always being disapproved by present generation educated women in India and abroad when the question of dress code is broached anywhere in the world. But those all male artists who say about the bare female body and apparently try to ungender it by including naked male body and how far it is to be clothed or not to be clothed at all, their ultimate destination is the same: aesthetics or beauty of human body. Though sometimes the poets or artists are the "unacknowledged legislators" of human society, those who determine social codes are not always poets. For them, the social purposes and utilitarian aspects are primarily to be met and those aspects do not exactly convey beauty. The social codes are more concerned about its functionality that artists can easily neglect. This clash between beauty and functionality has been visualised in almost every art form.

We know that for Lawrence nakedness and paganism are very much connected. The ritual of sky-clad or being naked in public or in a group has been dominant in pagan societies. For them nakedness stands for truth and nearness to God. They earnestly believe that when they take off clothing, they strip off their all earthly artificiality, pride, and a self-imposed barrier to the connection with nature. And Italy has a natural trend for paganism, as Lawrence observes that "[t]he substratum of Italy has always been pagan, sensuous, the most potent symbol, the sexual symbol. The child is really a non-Christian symbol: it is symbol of man's triumph of eternal life of procreation. The worship of the Cross never really held good in Italy. The Christianity of the Northern Europe has never had any place there" (Lawrence 1994, 200). Though in his *Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays*, we get a different attitude to procreation (Lawrence 1985, 52-53), the paganism that Lawrence projected in various forms in his travel writings is very much prominent here and is the only answer to death and destruction. Sexual vitality and nakedness can combat death altogether.

As we have discussed earlier that Lawrence is not only concerned with the human nakedness, but also with the nakedness of almost all objects of nature. In *Sea and Sardinia* (1997), his second and less organised travel book, Lawrence mentions the nakedness of the town: "And suddenly there is Cagliari: a *naked town* rising steep, steep, golden-looking, piled *naked to the sky* from the plain at the head of the formless hollow bay. It is strange and rather wonderful, not a bit like Italy" (Lawrence 1997, 53, emphasis mine). If the town were not so "naked," it would not

appear so "strange" and "wonderful." Nakedness perhaps stands here for simplicity and beauty. And the phrase "naked to the sky" relates the town to the wholeness and the order of the universe. Here we get some lines that emphasise strange and various Lawrencean concept of nakedness (all emphasises mine):

(a) "Then you are very bored here?" say I.

"Yes."

And the quite intensity of that *naked yes* spoke more than volumes. (Lawrence 1997, 79)

(b) "...*a naked stone village* in the distance." (Lawrence 1997, 81)

(c) "Here and there a stone barn rose alone, or with a few *bare, windy trees* attached." (Lawrence 1997, 81)

(d) "... a boy came along the *naked* wide, grass-bordered high-road." (Lawrence 1997, 81)

(e) "...Ah, the dark, sombre grass, the *naked sky!*" (Lawrence 1997, 81)

(f) "Another *naked tree* I would paint is the gleaming mauve-silver fig" (Lawrence 1997, 86)

(g) "Apart from this, it was a high, dark, *naked* prison-dungeon" (Lawrence 1997, 97)

And so on.

The pictures or sculptures of the nude cannot be a proper symbol of nudity. The original nakedness and the nudity in art are totally different. After watching some paintings of nude women, Lawrence realises in *Morning in Mexico and Other Essays* (2009) that: "Oh, those galleries. Oh, those pictures and those statues of nude, nude women: nude, nude, intensely and hopelessly nude. At last, the eyes fall in absolute weariness, the moment they catch sight of a bit of pink-and-white painting, or a pair of white marble fesses [Sculptured buttocks (French *fesses*)]" (Lawrence 2009, 144). Those paintings and sculptures are tiring because they are not connected with life. And that is the reason when a man points out the beauty of the "marble hip of the huge marble female" (Lawrence 2009, 144) to his wife, she does not become jealous. The wife knows "that her own hip and the marble hip are the only ones he will stroke without paying various prices, one of which, and the last he could pay, would be the price of the spunk" (Lawrence 2009, 144). Lawrence probably talks of working or functional nudity. We cannot deal with the nudity of the marble sculptures or painted ladies apart from seeing it. This actually ratified the fact that aestheticism is only one single part of multi-dimensional nudity. Art only can capture this part. The various other aspects of real nakedness are beyond the reach of art. Human mind knows that. And spontaneously a possessive wife does not feel disturbed by her husband's watching a nude marble lady. On the contrary, that marble lady perhaps brings a little bit joy to her by emphasising the aesthetic aspect of a naked woman body and thereby making her proud of her own beauty which she can use to attract the attention of her husband. If it were a real lady, she felt absolutely different. This is a simple test on the failure of nude marble lady to convey real nakedness.

Nakedness in natural surroundings, as described by Lawrence has a different appeal which is totally absent when it is confined to a room or closed surroundings. What happened in a room or in closed artificial surroundings is that they make nakedness conspicuous by contrast. Nudity being an aspect of nature sets off the artificial conditions of a room. In these conditions, the effect

of nudity has been emphasised by contrast and at the same time, restricted because of its failure to connect itself to nature. Lawrence described a girl under the orange trees: "[t]here is a yard with heaps of maize in a shed, and two tethered bullocks: and a *bare-bosomed*, black-browed girl" (Lawrence 2009, 28, emphasis mine). And in the same essay ("Walk to Huayapa"), Lawrence heard some noise and went to look: "It is a woman, *naked to the hips*, standing washing her other garments upon a stone. She has a beautiful full back, of a deep orange colour, and her wait hair is divided and piled. In the water, a few yards upstream, two men are *sitting naked*, their brown-orange bodies giving off a glow below in the shadow, also washing their clothes" (Lawrence 2009, 31, emphasis mine). In the first sentence, the "bare-bosomed" girl and her effect necessarily combined with that of the bullocks, the heaps of maize, and "the oranges on the trees at the back" (Lawrence 2009, 29). The hard seeds of the maize offer a rough background to her soft bosom. The presence of the bullocks, the castrated male cow cancels nudity and sexuality as a means of procreation, and consequently attaches it to the aspect of recreation, and finally, the citrus fruits on the trees juices up her nakedness and converts it to the next level where nudity is juxtaposed with nature, its contrast less highlighted, its features more emphasised and its appearance passionately eloquent. In the second sentence also, Lawrence discovers the glow of nakedness of the woman and men washing clothes. These bare bodies are radiant because they are perfectly in tune with the natural surroundings.

Lawrence describes the nudity of the Indian dancers in Mexico with much favour and fervour and he titles the chapter as "the Dance of the Sprouting Corn." Lawrence had "first written 'Spring Corn' but revised it to read 'Sprouting Corn.' This ritual is sometimes called 'the Dance of Green Corn' to distinguish it from a celebration of yellow corn (a harvest dance)" ("Explanatory notes," Lawrence 2009, 263). Lawrence also sketches two illustrations to describe the beauty of those semi-naked female and male dancers. The sketch that describes two women dancers is named as "the Corn Dance" (Lawrence 2009, 69) and the second one depicts the beauty of an almost naked male dancer and is named as "Koshare" (Lawrence 2009, 72). He writes, "[w]hen you look at the women, you forget the men. The bare-armed, bare-legged, bare-foot women...clad in the black, prehistoric short gown fastened over one shoulder, leaving the other shoulder bare, and showing at the arm-place a bit of pink or white under-shirt" (Lawrence 2009, 73). Lawrence is so influenced by their attires ("The Explanatory notes," Lawrence 2009, 264) that he dresses Kate in *The Plumed Serpent* in this manner where she wears her wedding gown which has "no sleeves nor arm-holes" and she "remembered the old Indian way, and tied the string over her left shoulder: rather, slipped the tied string over her left shoulder, leaving her arm and part of her right breast bare, the slip gathered full over her breasts" (Lawrence 2011, 328). And about the dancing male, he writes, "[b]ut when you look at the men, you forget the women. The men are naked to the waist" (Lawrence 2009, 73). The dance is a rhythm and it is most charming when it can connect itself to the inner rhythms of the cosmos. There are various patterns in the cosmos and those orders can strongly be felt by the regular movements of the limbs. Dance brings together the dancer and its viewer in deep trance and makes them unaware of the surroundings. They both can feel the various energy levels of the world, the energies responsible for the creation and destruction of the world. And drapery restricts the free movement of the limbs and their display. The delicate curves and curls of the body when covered fail to express themselves freely. So, the minimum and loose clothing fastened up to their bodies fascinates Lawrence as he feels

the warmth of blood and true primitive and rhythmic logic in their dance which celebrates the time when the corns will sprout in a few days in fertile soil. Their seminude bodies represent the eternal rhythm of procreation and fruition.

In the chapter, "Hopi Snake Dance," (Lawrence 2009) Lawrence alludes the snake-sexuality relationship very forcefully and shows that the basic entertainments of the Indians are related to sexuality in its most primitive form. First, while giving description of the priests, he writes, that "[t]he grown men are all heavily built, rather short, with heavy but shapely flesh, and rather straight sides. They have not the archaic slim waists of the Taos Indians. They have an archaic squareness and a *sensuous heaviness*" (Lawrence 2009, 85-86, emphasis mine). The very description of the priest's body resembles the shape of an erect male penis. The well-known relations between snake and male penis because of its semblance of shape had been referred here and above all, "serpent's" association with sensuality is an established concept. In the journal, *Eve and the Identity of Women*, Christopher L.E.C. Whitcombe shows the biblical origin of the concept and the paintings and frescos and sculptures by great artists of the world who used those allusions in their art. In the chapter, "Serpents," Lawrence writes that "[t]he serpent/penis association certainly adds a sexual twist to the Genesis narrative, with Eve tempted and seduced as much by the (Adam's) snake-penis as by the promise of the fruits of the tree of knowledge" (no pagination). And as per the usual analogy in the Bible, where "snake" is conventionally associated with Adam's penis, "snake in the grass" with pubic hair, and "apple," the forbidden fruit with Eve's breast. "If Eve was tempted by Adam's "serpent" (see, for example, Michelangelo's *Temptation and Fall* on the Sistine Chapel ceiling) then Adam was seduced by Eve's 'apple'. Although Genesis makes no mention of what sort of fruit Eve plucked from the Tree of Knowledge, tradition has long identified it as an apple. It is but a short Freudian step to identify the apple with Eve's breast" ("Serpents," *Eve and the Identity of women*). "[S]nake in the mouth" in Lawrence's writing can be associated with oral sex which does not serve the purpose of procreation but is purely recreational. Let us consider two lines for example: (i) "All had been launched, after their circuits in the mouth" (Lawrence 2009, 90) and (ii) "At last all the snakes had been mouth-carried" (Lawrence 2009, 91) by the priests. And those snakes that do not kill by poison kill by coiling round the prey in order to asphyxiate it, because "the bull snake is not poisonous. It is a constrictor" (Lawrence 2009, 89). That means snakes are powerful in two ways. One power is venom. Another power is force. Both can be associated with man and thereby penis. This twin nature of snakes—venomous and constrictive—makes a conceptual connection between sex and violence. Penis not only injects semen into a woman's body, it also hurts and is pleasurably wanted (Cf. Cleopatra's speech in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*: "The stroke of death is as a lover's pinch / Which hurts and is desired" (Shakespeare 2005, 5.2.289-290). The play of the sensuous priests with the snakes shows that sex is not only related to procreation, but also recreation. This sex positivity as shown in primitive rituals and interpreted by Lawrence is remarkable for our civilisation that suffers from irrational fear of strangers along with virulent sex negativity. Though feminist critics attack Lawrence for his phallic assertion and this assertion reaches the climax in his last travel book. Peter Balbert rightly argues that "[d]octrines about phallic assertion are dismissed as merely *macho*, or branded as the product of subversive sexual politics--'at a time when Freud's Victorian illusion that women have penis envy has been replaced in up-to-date America by penis hatred'" (emphasis author's). As a heterosexual man or woman, we should invite and enjoy the attention from the opposite sex.

Though as a student of Gender Studies and a sex radical male feminist I believe very few people belong to the group that we call hetero-normative and that has been normalized in our country like elsewhere in the world. And this normalization is really a threat to the women and other groups of people who have been minoritized for their sexual orientation and this forced normalisation and minoritization stand as barriers to read Lawrence as a sex positive writer in his representation of sexuality and nakedness in his travel books.

Apart from that, Lawrence connects snakes with the original vitality of the cosmos: "[i]n the core of the first of suns, whence man draws his vitality, lies upon as bitter as the rattle-snake's. *This poison man must overcome*, he must be master of its issue" (Lawrence 2009, 92 emphasis mine). In the journey of acquiring manhood, some great venomous challenges are necessary to face. By the encounter with them, men get nutrition and nourishment for brawn and brain. "[T]he strange den of the cosmos" is full of iridescent colours like various snakes, full of danger like an encounter with the snakes—some are venomous, some are constrictor. The true knowledge of the cosmos is in some way related to the snakes as when they go back to the earth after the encounter with man; they bear the message of courage and resistance and tenderness of man. Snakes connect the true nature of men with the cosmos: "Rays that quiver out of the earth as serpents do, *naked with vitality*" (Lawrence 2009, 92, emphasis mine). And thus nakedness, vitality and cruelty are interlinked and the capacity to control snakes determines the occupation on the nature and its revolving resources, because "only the heroes snatch manhood, little by little, from the strange den of the cosmos" (Lawrence 2009, 92) and "cruelty is coiled in the very beginnings of all things" (Lawrence 2009, 93).

The unadorned, plain, simple, and rocky beauty of the Etruscan tombs as Lawrence describes them in his last and unfinished travel book, *Sketches of Etruscan Places and Other Italian Essays* (1992) is masculine in its appeal. It offers a contrast to our habitual concept of beauty that basically involves an intense, mystical, or trance-like experience. Etruscan beauty is concrete, direct, and physical: "...but on the whole, here all is plain, simple, usually with no decoration, and with those easy, natural proportions whose beauty one hardly notices, they come so naturally, physically" (Lawrence 1992, 17). What is very positive about the civilisation is that Etruscan structures and arrangements refuse to impress the mind. Unlike Greek and Gothic, the underground Etruscan constructions allow the free space of mind without inciting or forcing any particular intended emotion. It is made possible by undecorated, plain, simple, and masculine design that only instils "ease, naturalness, and an abundance of life" (Lawrence 1992, 19). Lawrence is afraid that perhaps the civilisation has been destroyed because of its adherence to the physical world (Lawrence 1992, 20). The world of the body is sharply in contrast with the world of the mind. Their impulse, their rhythm is a clear threat to the superficial facts of modern civilisation. The presence of Etruscan civilisation would only ignite the primitivism lurking under our "civilisation."

For Lawrence Etruscan civilisation stands for masculinity, mystery, wildness, strength, wonder, and of course romanticism, may be of a different kind. Peter Balbert argues that "Lawrence's emphasis on a 'priapic' ethos of masculine assertion and independence is widely regarded as inappropriate to the fashionable androgyny of contemporary culture." Probably for Lawrence, masculinity is not a gendered word here and stands for heroic virtues and simplicity.

Through apt romanticism of the paintings, he recreates history and revives a whole civilisation, of which only tombs remained.

His transaction with Etruscan tombs consummates with the presence of local women around the necropolis of Cerveteri. They said goodbye to the travellers and visitors. The full-figured, curvaceous body and cheerful and friendly look of the women resurrects "life-loving Etruscans" (Lawrence 1992, 22) from the tombs. With the last rays of the sun their dark, mature faces flamed with certain mysteriousness that typifies the untouched tombs yet to be dug out. The highly eroticised imposing faces of these women "ripe with the phallic knowledge and the etruscan carelessness" (Lawrence 1992, 22) clearly say that they still live in the cheerful physical world of those Etruscans, surrounded by phallic symbols everywhere. They sparkle with pleasure and excitement with the full perception of male body. A vivid small real drama staged before departing Lawrence in the dying sun by these fresh easy-going women. An intensely pleasurable sensation engulfed him.

Smearing the body with red colour was not only a convention to Etruscans, it also symbolises strength and truth that categorise Etruscans. And that were very much connected to nature could be established by that. As the Etruscans "went a good deal naked" (Lawrence 1992, 51), the sun coloured them with sacred red hue. This can easily be tested by watching the Italian beaches with almost nude Italians, who became "of a lovely dark ruddy colour" (Lawrence 1992, 51). Lawrence argues that Italians are also given to nudity perhaps approving their inheritance of Etruscan civilisation and its redness.

The city of Florence as well as the statue of David tingles great emotion in D. H. Lawrence. On the last day of the year, and it is a rainy day, sitting in his room, Lawrence is anticipating an orgasm on the New Year's midnight when people gather in the streets for celebration. On a rainy day, this fiery festive spirit reminds Lawrence of the mythology of marriage of fire and water or dew that gives birth to Dionysus, the Greek god of fertility and wine. David is, according to *Hebrew Bible*, the second king of the United Kingdom of Israel, and according to the *Gospel of Matthew* and the *Gospel of Luke*, an ancestor of Jesus. The statue of the Biblical king is a master piece of Renaissance sculpture created between 1501 and 1504 by the Italian artist Michelangelo. It is a 17 ft marble statue of a standing male nude. In the essay "David," Lawrence relates past (the statue of David, so many great ancient artists like Michelangelo mythologies), present (the Florence city awaiting New Year's night), and future where he predicts the passing of David's adolescence. David is a boy of sixteen and experiencing this evanescent effervescent adolescent orgasm for centuries. One day he must achieve adulthood:

The moment of adolescence—gone. The subtle evanescent lily-soul. They are wistful, all of them: Botticelli's women, Leonardo's, Michelangelo's men: wistful, knowing the loss even in the very moment of perfection. A day-lily, the Florentine. David frowning, Mona Lisa sadly, subtly smiling, beyond bitterness, Botticelli getting rapture out of sadness, his Venus wistfully Victrix. Fire and dew for one moment proportionate, immediately falling into disproportion. (Lawrence 1992, 188)

The eternal life circle Lawrence suddenly discovers on the New Year's Day. So many men and women have orgasm every day to quench their perpetual thirst of life but the life itself never reaches its consummation. It is an unattainable, unquenchable thirsty moment that exudes interminable juices of life. This libido is the pride of life. The pride consists of two complementary parts. One is fulfilled individual self and another is unfulfilled human soul which is eternally chasing its unattained maturity, eternally await the most fiery and fruitful consummation. The rain, the art city Florence, the darkness of the New Year's night, the stark-naked statue of David at his adolescence, the anticipating fiery participation of people, great mythologies—all these elements are woven together to represent the natural texture of eternal life force.

Now one question may arise that the orgasm Lawrence mentioned at the earlier part of the essay is an orgasm exactly on whose part? If David is really a boy and, in his adolescence, his orgasm might be very tender, fearful and short-lived. And the desire to grow mature would be intense and stronger by his present limited ability to have a really very strong orgasm. Or, the city that titillates David to orgasm can itself be provoked to have it. In her case, given to her maturity and long experienced aestheticism, she is waiting for a long, intense orgasm; all day rain makes her already wet and her people, a huge gathering on New Year's night would shout the groan of sexual ecstasy. Or, the city and David are both in a union to conjugally experience that? These questions remain open. One thing may be mentioned that Lawrence does not like the city much. In the next essay, "Looking Down on the City," it is clear. He is with David. He is with a stark naked sixteen-year-old boy: "Revealed. Too big, too naked, too exposed" (Lawrence 1992, 186). And the essay ends also hoping David "finishes his adolescence" (Lawrence 1992, 189). This art city had nothing interesting to offer to Lawrence expect a sense of disgust and loathing. Those long-worshipped arts—Bargello, the Medici Chapel, the Pitti Place, Santa Croce—only develop a resistance within him. Neurasthenia engulfs him: "It is easy still to deal out a certain intellectual-aesthetics appreciation for established works. But it is all a stunt. Even Lippo Lippi does not touch me" (Lawrence 1992, 193).

The general aversion to great artistic works poses a real challenge for Lawrence to taking the city naturally. Florence appeared to him as a maiden in pain and misery, as a girl sprawling under convulsion: "Florence! Beautiful, tender, naked as a flower—and why the grief?" (Lawrence 1992, 195).

So, if the sorry city is unable to get her feet wet and experience orgasm, it is all David alone. He has to take the responsibility imagined by Lawrence and encounter the orgasmic pleasure and year-awaited consummation. David feels his tenderness and limitation to get the full pleasure and longs for maturity. The city gets relaxed and out of convulsion and Lawrence seems happy. The ending remains open.

In the essay "Fireworks," Lawrence writes about a young man and his girlfriend. Standing amid the festivity of St. John's Day Lawrence suddenly realises by seeing a young man caressing his girlfriend that love making is no longer a private event but a "public proceeding" (Lawrence 1992, 206). It saddens Lawrence that even the stag moves into the depths of the forest for mating. But a young civilised man clad with urbanisation does not conceal his hand stroking the body of her lover. This is a scene that entrances Lawrence when he compared this with other animals.

In "Flowery Tuscany," the globe-shaped flower and nipple-shaped white sparks remind Lawrence of Magna Mater, the Phrygian goddess of the Earth and fecundity. He writes that "[t]hey would rise above us thick and succulent, and the purple globes would push the blue ones up, with white sparks of nipples, and we should see a god in them" (Lawrence 1992, 231). From the famous book *The Golden Bough* (1890-1915, part IV, i. 263) by Sir James Frazer, we come to know that she was generally represented as a "robust pregnant woman; she was also portrayed with many breasts symbolising the nutriment that all living creatures receive from the earth, and was worshipped as a Great Mother (Magna Mater) by the Romans from 204 BC" (Lawrence 1992, 329). This concept has further been established by comparing those flowers with "many-breasted Artemis" and discovering resemblance between grape-hyacinth flower "at the bosom" and the "Cybele of Ephesus, with her clustered breasts" (Lawrence 1992, 231).

In the first version of the essay "The Painted Tombs of Tarquinia", Lawrence compares semi-nudity with the east. He observes that "the women dancers especially, in this tomb, either almost nude, or wearing the swinging, dark-lined mantle over a transparent robe, suggest the east" (Lawrence 1992, 265). Lawrence perhaps means the direction where the sun rises by the word "east." Now how can women suggest the east? They were dancers dancing almost in the nude or wearing exciting transparent robe. Let us concentrate on two words: "almost" and "transparent." The Etruscan concept of beauty and nudity very much resembles the aesthetic concept of the nineteenth century French poet Charles Baudelaire (1821-67), one of the pioneers of French Romanticism. To express his sexual sensibility, he states:

La femme est sans doute une lumière, un regard, une invitation au Bonheur, une parole quelquefois; mais elle est surtout une harmonie générale, non-seulement dans son allurevet le mouvement de ses membres, mais aussi dans les mousselines, les gazes, les vastes et chatoyantes nuées d'étoffes dont elle s'enveloppe, et qui sont comme les attributs et le piédes de sa divinité....

(Woman is doubtless a light, a glance, an invitation to happiness, a word sometimes; but she is above all a general harmony, not only in her carriage and the movement of her limbs, but also in the muslins, the gauzes, the vast glistening clouds of cloth, in which she swaths herself and which are as the attributes and pedestal of her divinity). (Translation Editor's) (Anthony 1968, Vol. III, 339)

Anthony Hartley, the editor of the book rightly comments:

Evidently, for Baudelaire, these sensuous trappings of woman held as much charm as she herself, and this fetishism is continually displayed in those of his poems with a sexual theme, where the sensual communication with his mistress is usually achieved via her hair, her perfume, or something she is wearing. What might be called mere woman is repugnant to him: 'La femme est *naturelle*, c'est-à-dire abominable.' (Woman is natural, that is abominable) (Translation Editor's). (Anthony 1968, 339)

Women, even the yellow-haired courtesans, hardly appear stark nude in Etruscan tomb paintings as Lawrence depicts in his last travel book. The transparent or translucent robe that wraps their bodies just adds a little bit of inhibition only to intensify the overwhelming impression

of strangeness. The uninhibited aesthetic sense of the Etruscan painters and their apparent casual approach to the figures make these paintings very normal, "exquisite" and close to heart. Lawrence realizes that the "drawing is beautiful, exquisite, full of life and verve, and impulse, absolutely real in its archaic style" (Lawrence 1992, 263). But the paintings are not faultless: "The drawing looks at a glance excellent—and really is good. But examine closely, and time after time you find divergence, a foot wrongly placed, wrongly modelled, a line 'beautified' and spoilt, a gesture just missed" (Lawrence 1992, 264). Perhaps the primary aim of the painter was not to represent a photographic reality. As the relationship between "signifier" and "signified" is arbitrary, the Etruscan artist chooses an apparently wrong "signifier" to represent a correct "signified." Probably an Etruscan artist is not under the obligation of "'improving' or 'beautifying' or 'Greekifying' a lively and naïve work of art" (Lawrence 1992, 264). They just play with the paintings as they very surprisingly and originally play with their lives and inevitable death. That is why Lawrence concludes that "[a]n intense temporary earnestness, coupled with a complete *inward* freedom, seems characteristics of the Etruscan artist" (Lawrence 1992, 264).

The inevitable theme of their painting is revelry and that too is expressed in a carnivalesque mood where the social hierarchy is turned upside down, master and slave drink together, wives and prostitutes celebrate together. Authority is suspended and subverted, rules are kept in abeyance. Now if this spirit were represented by technically faultless lines and curves, it might fail to give the soul of the spirit, particularly when it aims to drown death and kiss off the fear irresistibly associated with it. They try to represent the soul at the expense of the body. And in this way the semi-exposure of women's bodies denotes the east, the sun rising, the braking of a new animated life after death.

From the above discussion, we can clearly understand that Lawrence's concept nudity differs from his concept of nakedness and how these are used in Lawrence's travel writings. The other contrast here is between art and life, with the nude standing for art and nakedness for life. This is clear in the section on Florence and the art there. Lawrence views art differently when actually experiencing these works himself during his travels. These more spontaneous moments in his travel writings represent breakdowns in the ideology typically present in his fictional works. And the discussion about his four travel books differently demonstrates different phases in his response to nakedness, and what accounts for these changes. Travel for Lawrence was journey—as in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*—which was both geographical and psychic. Lawrence's restless travels should be read not only as his ceaseless explorations in quest of primitive modes in exotic locales that would help him understand what might constitute true civilization, but also as quests into the fecund darkness of his own mind and being. These modes of life, these mysteries of the hidden self, he believes, can balance and heal what Freud terms the discontents of civilization. Lawrence strongly believes that a new place brings out a new thing in a man (*Aaron's Rod*). And finally, we can say that Lawrence rejects the pecuniary standard of life in all of his four travel books and in its place, he establishes the standard of spontaneous human tenderness as the corner stone of relationship. And this helps him re-imagine man-woman relationship too with some new insights that second wave feminists misunderstand. As Sanatan Bhowal concludes his essay, "Lawrence and Feminism" that "[n]otwithstanding the misreading of his work by second-wave feminists, Lawrence's engagement with the feminine offers third-wave feminists' solid ground on

which to fall back on, given the affinities between his writings and the thrust of a critical feminist project." (Bhowal 2019)

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