CHAPTER – II
D.H. LAWRENCE’S CRITICISM IN HIS TRAVELOGUES

D.H. Lawrence had travelled widely across many countries. His first travel outside England was due to his love affair with Frieda Weekly. She was the wife his old professor at Nottingham. She was six years older than him. Both of them loved each other so passionately and intimately that they had to elope to Germany to pursue their. Yet they had not remained in one place in Germany. They kept on moving from one place to another continuously. D.H. Lawrence’s experience in Germany was instrumental for the creation of travel writing later about which Margaret Drabble notes thus: They fell in love and eloped to Germany. They were always on the move, always short of money, and their life together was passionate and stormy. D.H. Lawrence’s nomadic life supplied him with material for much of his writing and he wrote travel books of very personal kind”.(1935).The Oxford Companion to English Literature, (Oxford: OUP, 1986).

Though he returned to London later, he was not happy there. The arrest and prosecution of German born wife and him during the war time was so intolerable for him that he wished to move elsewhere. However, in 1923 he got the opportunity for him to begin his serious travels. He had travelled to Ceylon, Australia, America and Mexico. His health began to deteriorate in such a manner that his dream of going to Arizona could not become true. He breathed his last at Nice in France. His rich experience of travelling outside England was
translated into the form of writing. His travelogues are part and parcel of the output of not only D.H. Lawrence’s non-fiction but also criticism. This chapter undertakes his travel writings to highlight the critical thoughts which are very personal kind.

D.H. Lawrence was a great genius. Like any other original and at the same time, revolutionary writer, he was restless. This could be spoken of his contemporary Samuel Becket and James Joyce, both Irish writers in exile. D.H. Lawrence picked up a quarrel with his country and people, and therefore, he had to wander from land to land the rest of his life. Probably his elopement with Frieda Weekley is symbolic of it. We know, he was not happy with his Midland country known for its coalfields. He eloped with Mrs. Weekley, apparently a German, which factor forced him to frequent Germany every year. Then as a ‘self-excommunicated’ man he had to travel. Travel was not only an urge for change with him. D.H. Lawrence as a writer, as Bacon says, finds travel as part of education. Probably travel, as P. B. Pinion thinks, provided him fulfilment. So D.H. Lawrence visited Germany, France, Italy, America, Australia, Sri Lanka and many more ‘new found lands.’

The idea behind the philosophy of travel is noble. George Santayana thinks life is but a form of motion and a journey through a foreign world. Mallikarjun Patil in his travelogue *In Shakespeare’s England* observes,

“Travel lends meaning to the images of the eye and mind.

Travel is the natural condition of all living beings. Only retarded life forms like politicians and urban middle class
long for the stagnation of stability. Those of us born with a soul as well as a body must travel to discover why we are here. Life is a quest and the wonders of the world (like the pleasures of literature) ease our trafficking. Migration is the most radical and hard form of travel. Yet migration to a dream like El Dorado and the Golden Age is worthy and heroic where our soul signs away her safety for a blank cheque. Such travel outweighs all sorrows and dangers. In this one can change one's moral climate and inner landscape. Old habits change. Life transforms thoroughly and heartily as both moral and material environments change and memories start afresh.\textsuperscript{1}

Travel is not new. It is as ancient as the man. In fact, it is man's instinct itself. Some people who traveled, for any reason, wrote their accounts. So we have travel accounts throughout human history. European travelers are more so known for travelogues, beginning with Marco Polo, up to modern days. Victorian writers like Charles Dickens, modern writers like Aldous Huxley, D.H. Lawrence, Graham Greene, and others have written travel literature extensively.

D.H. Lawrence's brief history speaks of his restlessness in life which led him to travel. David Herbert D.H. Lawrence was born into a miner's family in Eastwood, Nottinghamshire, in 1885, the fourth of five children. He attended Beavale Board School and Nottingham High School, and trained as an
elementary schoolteacher at Nottingham University College. He taught in Croydon from 1908. His first novel, The White Peacock, was published in 1911, just a few weeks after the death of his mother, to whom he had been extraordinarily close. His career as a schoolteacher was ended by serious illness at the end of 1911.

In 1912 D.H. Lawrence went to Germany with Frieda Weekley, the German wife of the Professor of Modern Languages at the University College of Nottingham. They were married on their return to England in 1914. D.H. Lawrence had published Sons and Lovers in 1913; but The Rainbow, completed in 1915, was suppressed, and for three years he could not find a publisher for Women in Love (1917).

After the war D.H. Lawrence lived abroad, and sought a more fulfilling mode of life than he had so far experienced. With Frieda, he lived in Sicily, Sri Lanka, Australia, New Mexico, and Mexico. They returned to Europe in 1925. His last novel, Lady Chatterley's Lover, was published in 1928 but was banned in England and America. In 1930 he died in Vence, in the south of France, at the age of forty-four.

D.H. Lawrence's life may have been short, but he lived it intensely. He also produced an amazing body of work: novels, stories, poems, plays, essays, travel books, translations, paintings, and letters. After his death Frieda wrote, "What he had seen and felt and known he gave in writing to his fellow men, the splendour of living, the hope of more and more life... a heroic and immeasurable gift."2
D.H. Lawrence is known both for his world-wide travels, and for his travel accounts. But there are points of differences with his travelogues. If a writer like Dickens, or Huxley wrote of accounts of travels, describing the places, persons and circumstances of travel more so of the physical, D.H. Lawrence describes of the philosophical, of the psychological, and of the aesthetic. Often his travel sketches are spoken of as essays. This is markedly a difficult and different trend in English literature. Philip Hobsbannm observes,

“One cannot classify the non-fictional prose of D.H. Lawrence onto neat compartments; not even the compartment called non-fiction. There is literary criticism in his travel sketches and philosophy in his criticism. The popular journalism of his later career often intensified into prophecy; the prophecy that characterizes the last stage of his life is criticism of a very high order indeed.”

D.H. Lawrence traveled to Germany, France, Italy America, Mexico, Australia, Srilanka and other countries. He has written four travel accounts namely Twilight in Italy, Sea and Sardinia, Morning in Mexico and Etruscan Places. D.H. Lawrence liked travel. He found some yearning to land on the coast of illusion. Novelty of life and scene was a gratification from the very start of his Odyssey. Travel was a literary stimulus as his letters and essays testify it abruptly.

D.H. Lawrence critic F. B. Pinion observes, “D.H. Lawrence’s visual response was swift and clear, and he could revive impressions with
extraordinary facility in his creative writing. 'What with Rockies and Indians and deserts... you ought to find something to paint and to write,' he told Jan Juta when he thought of leaving Sicily for Taos. In a letter to Catherine Carswell from Taos he stated that seeing the world excited only 'the outside' of him, adding very significantly,

"It is all a form of running away from oneself and the great problems: all this wild west and the strange Australia.'

Eventually he found it a relief to return to the Mediterranean, and gradually let the tight coils inside oneself come slack. There was much more life in a deep insouciance, which really is the clue to faith than in the frenzied, keyed-up care which was characteristic of western civilization, and found at its most intense in America."

F. B. Pinion comments,

"Novels such as Aaron's Rod and The Plumed Serpent are rich in travel impressions; a visit to Ceylon evoked the most ambitious descriptive poem in Birds, Beasts and Flowers; early impressions in Europe and later ones are the subject of descriptive essays; likewise, Indian dances and Taos, the exasperating malevolence of Mexico, and the merciless magnificence of New Mexico. Four of his works are commonly regarded as travel books. Of these, only one belongs strictly to that genre; two consist of sketches, and one is a guidebook of special quality and distinction."
This is right. As we know, D.H. Lawrence’s novels such as Kangaroo and The Plummed Serpent read like travel narratives. The former is about his life in Australia and the latter is about his life in Mexico. Both speak of exotic life vividly. D.H. Lawrence’s travel books are Twilight in Italy, Sea and Sardinia, Morning in Mexico and Etruscan Places. In these masterful, often rhapsodic impressions of the Italian countryside, D.H. Lawrence transforms ordinary incidents into passages of intense beauty. Twilight in Italy is a vibrant account of D.H. Lawrence’s stay among the people of Lake Garda, whose decaying lemon gardens bear witness to the twilight of a way of life centuries old.

TWILIGHT IN ITALY (1916):

Twilight in Italy is rather a hybrid, including D.H. Lawrence’s first outlines of his basic philosophy. The sketches were written from the end of 1912, after D.H. Lawrence had settled at Gargnano, to October 1913, and revised in 1915 for publication in book form. This book should not be packed by intending tourists to the Mediterranean as a convenient guide to Italy, Sicily, and Sardinia-with a bit of Bavaria, the Tyrol, and Switzerland for good measure; as D.H. Lawrence says, ‘I am not Baedeker.’ But it is an indispensable guide to the sensibility of one of the most astonishing writers of the 20th century. It is for visitors to D.H. Lawrence, a pretty large country, not for rubbernecker in mere southern Europe.
Moreover, the world which D.H. Lawrence describes has long disappeared—except, of course, for the unchanging human groundbass which is his main, perhaps only, concern in *Twilight in Italy* (an inept title, as D.H. Lawrence's biographer Richard Aldington says, for so sunlit a book) was first published in 1916, and it records aspects of the *vita nuova* that D.H. Lawrence was experiencing in 1912 and 1913. It was a happy, even ecstatic, time; though a penniless one. D.H. Lawrence, as a student in Nottingham, had fallen in love with the wife of Professor Weekley (author of *Adjectives and Other Words*) and persuaded her to elope with him. She was the aristocratic Frieda von Richthofen, cousin of the flying ace who was to be known as the Red Baron; D.H. Lawrence was a working-class intellectual with little more than an original mind and an appetite for life. He was, at the time of the experiences recounted in *Twilight in Italy*, responding with almost Adamic wonder to the new life and the new world of southern Europe. But his book is no river of uncritical lyricism. That sharp honesty which was to earn him hatred and suppression was early at work. He was in love with a German lady, but the Westminster *Gazette* rejected some of his travel sketches as 'too anti-German.' And that very Lawrentian approach to the Tyrolean Christ-icons must have shocked plenty of the conventionally pious in 1913, when the *Gazette* published one of the versions of what is called here 'The Crucifix across the Mountains.' This is the first essay in the book.

Indeed, the first essay in the book, "The Crucifix Across the Mountains" (1915), as an inspired adaptation of the "Christs in the Tirol" essay composed
three years earlier. The original description of the different wayside shrines and
effigies seen in a walk from Munich down to Merano is rewritten in such a way
as to emphasize the different racial characteristics of the various peoples along
the road. Bavaria one style of Christ, a peasant 'of middle age, plain, crude';
the blanks of the Austrian Isar another, a 'small hewn Christ, the head resting
on the hand'; while, on the road to Rome, D.H. Lawrence finds an elegant
Christus like 'Gabriele D'Annunzio's son posing as a martyred saint.

This first essay, a revision of "Christs in the Tirol," discusses variations
D.H. Lawrence noticed in crucifixes from Bavaria across the Alps, with special
attention to some half-dozen. Only high up did they express 'the old beauty and
religion.' Below the Brenner one was foppish; others were sentimental or
sensationally gory. D.H. Lawrence's essay is reverential; his sympathy is for
the Christ who resists suffering and finds no solution to his soul's anxiety in
death. The crucifix reflects the Bavarian peasant, mindless, mystically sensuous
in his physical experience, with the eternal negativeness or radiance of 'not-
being' in the snows above him. Hence his beauty and completeness for D.H.
Lawrence; for him there is no becoming and no passing away. Everything is,
now and for ever. The next essay is "On the Lago di Garda."

_Twilight in Italy_ has seven chapters like "The Spinner and the Monks,"
Duro," and "John." The seven studies of life around Lake Garda, where D.H.
Lawrence and Frieda lived from the fall of 1912 till the spring of 1913, and
they may be regarded as devices for affirming the here-and-now while D.H.
Lawrence, in the major work then proceeding, was being drawn back to his own past. For he was completing *Sons and Lovers* (of which Frieda started to write a parody called “Paul Morel, or Mother’s Boy”) as well as drafting *The Rainbow* and *The Lost Girl*. This was a period of immense creative activity for D.H. Lawrence, and that liveness of the sensorium and the imagination, given primarily to fiction, is manifested also in these essays, with their relish and humor and immense capacity for rapport with the mountains and the lakeside and the people. The last two items are “Italians in Exile” and “The Return Journey.”

The first of the Gargnano scenes is a poetical sermon by the priest of love. After meeting the aged spinner high above the lake, and discovering that she lives unselfconsciously in her own world, D.H. Lawrence climbs higher, gazing at the rocks and cypress spires high up in the sunlight, then at the mist of grey-green olives fuming down to the lake-side. Presently he sees below him two monks who seem to slide between the naked, bony vines of their garden. Snow on the mountains beyond them takes on a rosy glow; above it the rising moon gradually makes day and night one. The little old woman had gone; she lived for the sunshine, and knew nothing of the unknown, through the senses, under a superb moon. The monks continued their walk in a neutral shadow. Neither the completeness of night nor the flare of day reached them. Neither the blood nor the spirit spoke in them, only the law. ‘Where then is the supreme ecstasy, uniting day and night, soul and body, under the moon? Where is the meeting-point, day hovering in the embrace of the coming night like Persephone in the arms of Pluto?’
The next two essays, "The Lemon Gardens" and "The Theatre" have Gargnano settings. The former is little more than a pretext for two instalments of philosophy, followed by an attack on English industrialism. Fortunately the human interest of "The Theatre" outweighs the philosophy. Subjective no doubt but alive, it gives us a pictorial analysis of a community. D.H. Lawrence concludes that it is matriarchy which makes the young men emigrate to America. He sympathizes fully with the leading character in the local production of Ibsen's *Ghosts* whose spirit cries out helplessly through the insistent, inflammable flesh in a way which is alien to the mental and perverted approach to sex in Scandinavian writers. The rhetoric of D'Annunzio controls the current of the blood and makes him popular. D.H. Lawrence’s reaction to the suffering heroine of the stage is admirably revelatory though admittedly ambivalent. He is revolted by Hamlet’s sense of corruption in the flesh; and the question ‘To be, or not to be’ leads to a discussion of human fulfilment and a convenient historico-philosophical interpretation of the play in a context extending back to Orestes and from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century.

As winter passes, the sunshine is like iced wine; flowers appear, and bright colours change on Lake Garda and the snow-covered heights. With spring, we move to San Gaudenzio. The first main subject is the family with whom the D.H. Lawrences stayed in the farm on the headland overlooking the lake, particularly old Paolo, who had been driven by his mercenary wife Maria to the goldmines of America for the sake of her children. The elder son would go too, for the old order of Paolo (who had an instinctive reverence for
gentlemen, thinking they belonged to the aristocracy of the spirit) is changing, and San Gaudenzio is no longer prosperous. The essay "The Dance" testifies to Maria's cupidity and to the malicious humour of the local peasants under the influence of wine. F. B. Pinion thinks D.H. Lawrence's conclusion that II Duro, the expert vine-grafter who had made his money in America and had seen too much to marry, was a single, isolated being like Pan is less convincing than his sketch of John, who had given up his training as a civil engineer when his widower father, a courtly, handsome innkeeper, had wanted him to look after his shop. He had then emigrated to America, where, after almost killing a man for calling him a 'damn Dago,' he had become a foreman in a store. When D.H. Lawrence first saw him, he was long-haired and shabby in his American clothes, playing in the village band. He had returned to do military service, rather than be debarred from seeing his father, and was going back to America, perhaps for four or five years, leaving his wife and child.

"Italians in Exile" describes the first part of D.H. Lawrence's, second walking tour through the Alps, with particular reference to a group he met rehearsing a play near Lake Zurich. They were members of a colony of Italian families who worked at a silk factory. On the stage the party seemed like magic in a barren country. They were passionately fond of Italy, but would never go back. D.H. Lawrence thought it strange that, when northern Europe was turning back on its own Christianity, the Italians should be ready to suffer 'a death in the flesh' for the sake of riches and greater freedom. His return to Italy is continued in the final sketch. It has a general and biographical interest, but little
of special significance. An Englishman, with snow-burned face, driven by his will into 'cruel self-torture of fatigue,' seems, in conjunction with mountain-tops like death with transcendent snow, a forestalment of Gerald Crich. D.H. Lawrence's joy of progression southwards and his sense of Pan on the southern Alpine slopes are diminished by modern developments such as tourism, villas, cubical houses, mechanization, navy-work, and a terrifying disintegration of the old stability. The main idea in the title of this rather uneven collection is posed pictorially in the concluding pages of "The Spinner and the Monks."

Philip Hobsbaum says, "D.H. Lawrence's masters in his youth included Tolstoy, George Eliot and Dickens. And now where is the influence of Dickens more evident than in D.H. Lawrence's first impressions of Germany and Italy. There is the same mixture of descriptive comment and anecdote that could be encompassed only by a true novelist. Consider Dickens's description of the puppet-show at Genoa depicting Bonaparte imprisoned on St Helena: 'it was the finest spectacle I ever beheld, to see his body bending over the volume, like a bootjack, and his sentimental eyes glaring obstinately into the pit' (Pictures from Italy). A kindred vivaciousness suffuses D.H. Lawrence's Twilight in Italy. Consider the essay on "The Theatre" which portrays Enrico Persevalli, unemployed chemist, as Hamlet:

"He had become a hulking fellow, crawling about with his head ducked between his shoulders, pecking and poking, creeping about after other people, sniffing at them, setting traps for them, absorbed by his own self-important self-consciousness. His legs, in their black knee-breeches, had crawling, slinking look..."
SEA AND SARDINIA (1921):

D.H. Lawrence’s next travel account of the same land Italy is Sea and Sardinia. It is said, “In Sea and Sardinia, D.H. Lawrence brings the life the vigorous spontaneity of a society as yet untouched by the deadening effect of industrialization.”

D.H. Lawrence’s Sea and Sardinia first appeared in 1921, when D.H. Lawrence and Frieda had been through the nightmare recorded so vividly in Kangaroo. D.H. Lawrence was now rejecting finally all ties with an England that had treated him with brutality. The Rainbow had been prosecuted for immorality in 1915; he had been humiliated and bullied by military authorities well aware that the state of his lungs rendered him unfit for the Army; he and Frieda had been expelled from Cornwall in 1917 on a suspicion of espionage. If England had no love either of him or of his writings, it was curiously reluctant to let him go into the exile he now passionately sought, and it was not until November 1919 that he was permitted to have a passport. From then on his estrangement was permanent. He made a few trips back to see family or friends, but his readership became mainly an American one—it was already, in the early days of the peace, drawing him out of a long penury—and his home was wherever his restlessness led him.

D.H. Lawrence’s brief winter trip to Sardinia on January 4-10, 1921 was born of such restlessness. Living in Taormina, on the eastern shore of Sicily, sick of a January in which ‘it thunders and lightnings for twenty-four hours and hailstorms continually,’ he could not really have expected to escape from
winter weather in Sardinia. It is conceivable that he was sick of the other English-speaking exiles in Taormina, sick indeed of the whole of self-pitying postwar Europe (soon he was to go to Mexico by way of Ceylon and Australia), conducting the first of his searches for some unspoilt pocket of strangeness. Anthony Burgess adds,

"Whatever the motive, the sea trip to Sardinia produced a small miracle of a book. A single week's visit was enough for him to extract the very essence of the island and its people, and six weeks were enough to set it all down in words—without a single note as an aide-mémoire. This feat anticipates a greater one, which still makes Australian writers gloomy—the reenactment of a whole continent, along with a wholly accurate prophecy of its political future, out of a few weeks stay in a suburb of Sydney."8

Francis Hackett wrote in his review of Sea and Sardinia in New Republic in 1922 that this book is simply beautiful. He notices that the travelogue provides us a fine account of the author. He adds,

"Because he is everlastingly faithful to this personality of his, his Sardinia notebook gives one an excellent idea of D.H. Lawrence. We have him for a week, close-up, with a pointedly seen and swiftly changing background of Sardinia. Also we have a silhouette of his accompanying wife, a mere outlander who prices vegetables and shops for saddle-bags
and wants to go to the marionette show and is rather annoyingly interested in the native. She is a German. After the English fashion, she is never really introduced to us, but Mr. D.H. Lawrence nods at her with a vague head. He calls her the q-b, queen bee. Had he come from Peoria he’d indicate her as the squaw. But in essence if not in the idiom of his facetiousness D.H. Lawrence does come from Peoria. He is the Middle Westerner athirst for beauty, aflame with imagination, and aching with ideas as with apples devoured green.9

Sea and Sardinia was written within six weeks of D.H. Lawrence’s return from his excursion to the island with Frieda in January 1921. She thought he has described every minute of it with extraordinary accuracy. F. B. Pinion says,

“He relied entirely on memory, and the work bears wonderful testimony to his sharp powers of observation and recall. Few writers have transcribed life more vividly and dramatically. Undoubtedly D.H. Lawrence’s enthusiasm flagged towards the end of his island journey, but that was due to tiredness, the monotony of a long bus journey, and the declining interest of the countryside. The book is often more enjoyable than were the experiences.”10
It narrates; there are few pages in it which are not sparkling or dynamic. The vital immediacy of its impact is strengthened, particularly in the first half, by the predominance of narrative in the present tense and often in a staccato style.

It seems sudden impulse prompted this trip. Free from 'the hemmed-in life' and the horror of human tension which has been a long-drawn-out agony among resistant people on land, D.H. Lawrence wishes he could sail for ever, on a small, quiet, lonely ship, from land to land and isle to isle sauntering through the spaces of 'this lovely world.' The openness of Sardinia is like liberty itself, after the peaky confines of Sicily. At Mandas he was reminded of Cornwall and the Derbyshire uplands; it was Celtic country, far more moving, disturbing, than the glamour of Italy and Greece. On the road to Nuoro, seeing frost among the tangled, still savage bushes, he was thrilled again; Italy had given him a knowledge of the past. Life is not only a process of rediscovering backwards but a move forwards; there are unknown, unworked lands where the salt has not lost its savour.

According to Francis Hackett Sea and Sardinia is also a fine sketch by D.H. Lawrence of the Italian people. He writes, "Because what D.H. Lawrence communicates is his own feeling. He gives us the stone-damp houses, the innkeeper with a wine-dripped shirt-front, the nerve-drained bus driver who is yet such a smooth master of his machine, the priest with a long nose who spits, the young wife restless from her bridal bed, the little cabin in the ship with a paneled slide-door and no room to move, the icy dawn that is like the kiss of a
corpse, the kid roasted in front of a roaring oak-root fire, the impudent peddler packed with *aqua vitae*, the Italians sugary with sympathy and linked together in fondness, with feelings as nude as sausages. Whatever D.H. Lawrence experiences he experiences with full savour, and he has retrieved an astounding number of his experiences in this book of Sardinia.\textsuperscript{11} Hackett thinks *Sea and Sardinia* is a book of an aesthetic parvenu.

Colour excites D.H. Lawrence, even in fruit and vegetable markets. On the ship at Palermo he watches pale gold clouds and turquoise sky over Monte Pellegrino, and yellow carts on the quayside, drawn by mules nodding their high weird plumes of scarlet. In Cagliari the red of the full-petti-coated peasant woman goes flash-flash-flash, like a bird showing its colours. For colourful detail nothing surpasses the description of the Sunday procession at Tonara; D.H. Lawrence regards the women closely, noticing the studs of gold filigree which fasten the full-bosomed white shirts at the throat, and great white sleeves billowing from scarlet, purplish-and-green-edged boleros. Yet all the strange magic of Sardinia is in the sight of a solitary peasant in his black and white costume, like a magpie on the landscape. D.H. Lawrence sees naked trees he would like to paint: poplars of a ghostly, almost phosphorescent luminousness in the shadow of a valley, and the gleaming mauve-silver fig, coldly incandescent, tangled, like some sensitive creature emerged from the rock. As he writes, the recollection of almond trees poising sky-rosy on the sun-pale land near Orosei has the pure glamour of a lost pearl.
There were amusing incidents. Few can forget the wife who wandered too far at a station, and was last seen raising her arms to heaven, then bringing them down in utter despair on her head as her train drove off with her fat, furious husband; or the man who, after trying to travel free on the bus with two black squealing piglets, was speechless with rage and flung them like two bottles over the saddle of an attendant ass. The driver, whose seriousness earns him the sobriquet of Hamlet or Rochester, takes vindictive delight in malting someone who has kept him waiting think he has lost his bus. D.H. Lawrence is full of admiration for his driving, but not that of his inexpert assistant, who entertains the hope that D.H. Lawrence would employ him as his chauffeur in England. Critics think on the whole however, close contact with humanity was not pleasing for D.H. Lawrence rarely were accommodation and food satisfactory. Those who served on the ship to Sardinia were voracious blowflies; and so it was at Sorgono, nestling high up among wooded slopes ironically reminiscent of Hardy’s Wessex country. One walk, while he and Frieda waited for dinner, took them without warning into the public lavatory of a lane. The finishing touch comes with the long wait in the dungeon of a room, seeing a kid roasted expertly until it is done to a turn, then, after further delay, being served with cold portions, mainly of bone. No wonder they envied the soldiers on the boat for Italy their plentiful portions of roast fowl, kid, legs of lamb, and bread, with wine.

In Sardinia it had been reassuring to find manly peasants, though it was a reminder that the race of men was extinct in Europe, with its ‘Christ-like
heroes,' woman-worshipping Don Juans, and rabid equality mongrels. D.H. Lawrence was glad that tenderness did not seem to be a Sardinian quality, preferring the old salty way of love to sentiment and the macaroni slithery-slobberyness of modern adorations. At Nuoro it had been a blessed relief to find really well-bred people who did not show off, and knew a man stands alone despite all attributes; equally, a relief to see life as it really is, without affectation and sights, even Peruginos. In contact with more worldly citizens, D.H. Lawrence was continually irritated - with talk of liras buzzing round his ears like venomous mosquitoes, barbed remarks on an exchange rate in England's favour, and till on post-war Europe which convinced him that, deep down, the envious Italians were full of hatred towards Britain. The sight of the towering Sicilian coast, with its old Grecian magic, raised his spirits; he was glad to get off the ship at Palermo. With the marionette show, and the old witch who, like snow-capped Etna, has occupied man's soul and estranged it from his body, he was his old self. The audience hated her, and D.H. Lawrence loved their generous, hot southern blood, so subtle and spontaneous, that asks for blood contact, not for mental communion or spirit sympathy.

ETRUSCAN PLACES (1927):

Philip Hobsbaum writes this,

"In Etruscan Places (1927) D.H. Lawrence sketches the life of the people who flourished before the mechanistic Romans and the idealistic Christians. He sees the Etruscans as a
people who developed neither gods nor nationhood; who kept life fluid and changing; whose pictures on the walls were an evocation of all we have lost. 'Here, in this faded Etruscan painting, there is a quiet flow of touch that unites the man and the woman on the couch, the timid boy behind, the dog that lifts his nose, even the every garlands that hang from the wall.' The tombs are badly damaged, and yet they are full of hints and suggestions. The spoliation and blue are actually turned to account. Half in inspired inference, half in fiction, D.H. Lawrence makes his tour. Further, the lightness and color of his prose turn what might have been a funereal topic into a celebration. The Etruscan survives as a quick ripple of life- 'Fragments of people at banquets, limbs that dance without dancers, birds that fly in nowhere, lions whose devouring heads are devoured away...!' The archaeology may be hypothetical, but the prose is instinct with energy and life.\textsuperscript{12}

It is said, "Etruscan Places is a beautiful and delicate work of literary art, the record of a dying man drinking from the founts of a civilization dedicated to life."\textsuperscript{13} Etruscan Places (1932) is the last of all his travel books, which may be taken to include not only these Italian ones but also the novels Kangaroo and The Plumed Serpent (formal categories don’t matter much in D.H. Lawrence), as well as Mornings in Mexico. As early as 1920 D.H.
Lawrence had become fascinated by the Etruscans, but it was not until his return from Mexico in 1927 that he went, with his American friend Earl Brewster, to the sites of their lost and intriguing civilization—Cerveteri, Tarquinia, Grosseto, Volterra. He planned a bigger Etruscan book than the one we have, but he recognized that he could not compete—on the level of observation and scholarship—with the authorities in whose work he had already read deeply—D. Randall-Maciver’s *Villanovans and Early Etruscans*, Pericles Ducati’s *Etruria Antica*, and the classic survey by the English man, and hence potential competitor, George Dennis. D.H. Lawrence always lacked the discipline and objectivity of approach which mark the true scholar. His book on European history, for instance, is more Lawrentian interpretation than solid fact. Nevertheless, his highly idiosyncratic approach to the Etruscans has probably been more influential—among nonspecialists, of course—than the works of the true scholars. Anthony Burgess writes,

“There is a special poignancy about *Etruscan Places*, the poignancy of our knowledge that a dying man is drinking from the founts of a civilization dedicated to life. He was a year or two off death when he wandered among the tombs of the Etruscans. The book itself was published posthumously, in 1932.”

Burgess thinks the Etruscan tombs have not changed, nor have the baroque churches and the legionaries’ roads, but the Italy D.H. Lawrence knew is different in so many respects from the Italy of today that, entering his books,
we enter a remote world which, to use a paradox, touches modernity only through its perennial antiquities. Travel was slow and painful, Mussolini had not yet taught the trains to run on time, there were no Agip motels. The inn food was usually filthy-stewed-out meat fibres, the skimmed meat fat used to warm overtired spinach and the beds were dirty and verminous. D.H. Lawrence's journeys by post-bus or cold late train or on foot are in that great laborious tradition which produced genuine travel books—the eye slowly taking it all in, the aching feet imposing the leisure to observe the common people in the smoky inn kitchen. At the end of *Twilight in Italy* D.H. Lawrence is already sounding the note which was to become shrill in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*: under the vivid street faces of Milan he saw 'the same purpose stinking in it all, the mechanizing, the perfect mechanizing of human life.' Although he shows a certain minimal appreciation of a good Italian automobile and a good Italian road, he would not have taken kindly to the delights of modern Italian travel, the despair at not being able to park in Spoleto, the abstract motor roads, and he would have raged at the industrial smog over Ravenna. He would see all this as the ultimate victory of Rome, that depersonalizing force which destroyed the Etruscans and threw up monsters like Mussolini.

It is said, "For-in Etruscan Places most, but in the other books too at one level or another-D.H. Lawrence brings to the pageant of Mediterranean life an eye not wholly innocent. He has what he calls a philosophy, meaning a highly emotional conviction
about the location of human values, and he tends to impose this most often lightly, but occasionally with tub-thumping and boring earnestness on what he observes. Instinct is more important than reason; the loins, not the brain, are the center of life; a mechanized civilization is evil. He went to the Etruscans longing to find that perfect 'natural' people he had sought also in Mexico; he was, as he says, instinctively attracted to them, and the Lawrentian instinct justifies everything, even the building of a big ramshackle philosophy.¹¹⁵

He can be bitterly sarcastic about what we may term anti-Etruscanism (meaning anti-life or anti-Quetzalcoatl or anti-D.H. Lawrence), either in a scientific historian like Mommsen or in the people who were ruled by Messalina and Heliogabalus and such-like snow-drops and, because the Etruscans were vicious (or life-loving), ruthlessly exterminated their civilization. In the Etruscan remains he finds not just joy of life but the very Lawrentian metaphysic of 'phallism.' As for anti-joy, antiphallism, he was finding it as early as 1912 in those Tyrolean crucifixes: "This is the worship, then, the worship of death and the approaches to death, physical violence, and pain. There is something crude and sinister about it, almost like depravity, a form of reverting, turning back along the course of blood by which we have come."¹¹⁶ Everywhere he goes he finds symbols for his Manichaeism; even Sardinia and Italy are turned into facile emblems of the good and bad aspects of
the human spirit. D.H. Lawrence was more a symbol-seeker than a thinker (indeed, he disapproved of thinking, except with the loins or instincts). He was, of course, that best kind of philosopher, a poet.

_Etruscan Places_ was planned as a book of twelve sketches, only six of which were completed. These six are “Carveteri,” “Tarquinia,” “The Painted Tombs of Tarquinia 1,” “The Painted Tombs of Tarquinia 2,” “Vulci” and “Volterra.” Ill-health made it impossible for D.H. Lawrence to visit all the sites he wished to see, and the book was published posthumously (1932). He first thought of it in April 1926, having been attracted to ‘Etruscan things’ in the museum at Perugia. One of his principal reasons for moving to Villa Mirenda, Scandicci, was to be better situated for travelling in pursuance of his research, but it was not until April 1927 that he was able to visit Cerveteri, Tarquinia, Vulci, and Volterra, in the company of Earl Brewster. It was the danger of malaria which made him choose this season (and resist the temptation to live in the foothills near Vulci). D.H. Lawrence’s affinity with the Etruscan spirit, together with his knowledge of the subject from visits to Italian museums and from English and Italian writers (particularly George Dennis and Pericle Ducati) enabled him to form his impressions rapidly. The essays were completed before the end of June.

According to F. B. Pinion,

“Much space is devoted to descriptive accounts of the visits to the sites, and those to Vulci and Volterra are impressive; but the vivacity of _Sea and Sardinia_ has gone, and the
personal element is less to the fore. The appeal of wild flowers, especially the asphodel, cannot be withstood. D.H. Lawrence artfully associates with the scene before him evocations of the Etruscan past; and it is his obsession with blood-consciousness which explains the beauty of proportion in the underground chambers at Cerveteri, and the vivid, warm faces of some of the local peasants. The painted legend *Mussolini ha sempre ragione* amuses him. Some are born infallible, some achieve infallibility, and some have it thrust upon them, he comments, adding that it is not for him to interfere in foreign affairs: Let those rule who can rule. He is no museum-lover, is obviously disappointed to find Vulci tomb-rifled, and thinks that, if there must be museums, they should be small and local. What one wants is contact with the past; the Etruscans are not a theory or a thesis but an experience. For D.H. Lawrence systematization of knowledge tends to destroy the vital touch.”17

The painted tombs of Tarquinia evoke his most lyrical descriptions. The walls of the Tomb of Leopards are ‘a dance of real delight,’ the art of which, like that of D.H. Lawrence’s prose, is lost in the communion. ‘You cannot think of art, but only of life itself, as if this were the very life of the Etruscans dancing and fluting along through the little olive-trees, out in the fresh day.’ He finds a real sense of touch, one of the rarest qualities, in life as well as in art, in the Etruscan figures. Painting after painting expresses a vitality, a natural
flowering of life which reflects the Etruscan religion. The whole cosmos was alive; it had its great soul or anima. The active religious idea behind all the great old civilizations was that man could absorb life from the cosmos until he blazed-like a god. For this reason the old kings and the Etruscan Lucomones are clothed in scarlet. They are the vermilion clue to the mystery and the delight of death and life, the life-bringers and the deathguides. The Etruscan people gained a sense of these mysteries from ritual and such symbols as the tombs display. Balancing the inner fire of the earth, for example, was the sea, out of which all things emerge and into which they return. The dolphin, which gives up the sea’s rainbows only when he dies, leaps suddenly in and out of it. D.H. Lawrence’s poems ‘They Say the Sea is Loveless’ and ‘Whales Weep Not!’ explicate this phenomenon. The poet writes,

They say the sea is loveless, that in the sea
love cannot live, but only bare, salt splinters
of loveless life.

The other poem ‘Whales Weep Not!’ begins with this:

They say the sea is cold, but the sea contains
the hottest blood of all, and the wildest, the most urgent.¹⁸

Beyond the sea and the ultimate fire lay that oneness which only the Lucomones knew. It was because the fish was the anima of the sea that it came to represent Jesus, especially in Italy, where the people still thought in Etruscan symbols. The continual repetition of lion against deer represents the polarized activity of the divine cosmos, the process of destruction and creation which D.H. Lawrence accepted as a principle of life.

D.H. Lawrence thought that the strange potency and beauty of Etruscan art was due to its symbolical profundity. It demonstrates the nonmorphic
quality of all those natural forces which go to the building up and the destroying of the soul. The undivided Godhead is symbolized in the *mundum*, the plasm-cell with its nucleus, so different from the Christian conception of the word; it remains alive and unbroken to the end, the eternal quick of all things, the source of nature which changes through division and subdivision. The Etruscans lived by the subjective control of these great natural powers; they fell before the objective power of the Romans. With the supervision of Greek and Roman thought came the idea of a gloomy Hades, a hell and purgatory. To the peoples of the great natural religions the after-life was a continuing of the wonder-journey of life. How far the Etruscan religion harmonized with D.H. Lawrence’s may best be seen in some of his last great poems.

D.H. Lawrence’s three Italian travel accounts — *Twilight in Italy*, *Sea and Sardinia* and *The Etruscan Places*—are a wonderful trilogy about the ‘art country Italy.’ It is said, one edition of these three is called, ‘an indispensable guide to the sensibility of one of the most astonishing writers of the 20th century.’ This trinity of travel books may be offered very reasonably as a unity. It is of less importance that we should be able to pencil an ellipse around Italy and her dependencies and neighbors, saying D.H. Lawrence visited Italy, than that we should take pleasure in the response of a highly idiosyncratic temperament to the impact of new places he visited.

Anthony Burgess observes, “Finally there is what D.H. Lawrence renders so marvellously and so mysteriously the spirit of place. This spirit, he
says, 'is a strange thing. Our mechanical age tries to override it. But it does not
succeed. In the end the strange, sinister spirit of the place, so diverse and
adverse in differing places, will smash our mechanical oneness into
smithereens, and all that we think the real thing will go off with a pop, and we
shall be left staring.' What D.H. Lawrence means—and means when he talks of
love and phallism and loins and instinct—is certain gods, unconquerable numina,
which we oppose at our peril. It is the sense of these gods that permeates his
writing and makes this little trilogy of travel books—so ordinary on the surface,
so much the sort of thing an author will turn out for a living—rather awesome to
read, as well as brilliantly informative, educative, entertaining, and moving.”

MORNINGS IN MEXICO (1927):

The last brief sketch Mornings in Mexico is a recollection of D.H.
Lawrence’s ranch, which was written at Spotorno on the evening of St
Catherine’s Day, 1925, in an attempt to round off a bifurcated assemblage of
Mexican and New Mexican subjects. The first four are related, and were
written at Oaxaca in December 1924. The three which follow are on ritualistic
Indian dances, the first providing a general introduction to the corn dance
which D.H. Lawrence saw at San Domingo in March 1924, and to the Hopi
snake dance which he may have seen the following August.

Few readers will find “Corasmin and the Parrots” as diverting as D.H.
Lawrence seems to have done when he wrote it. He indulges the fancy that an
explosion theory accounts for new species and mutations better than the theory
of evolution, finding support in the Aztec succession of Suns (worlds created and destroyed), and applying it to the parrots and the dog Corasmin, to monkeys and men, and to the communication barrier between himself and his young Indian servant Rosalino. The walk from Oaxaca to Huayapam presents prospects of Mexican country and interesting glimpses of village life; Rosalino may be a dumb-bell, but he is shrewder than D.H. Lawrence in judging the Mexicans. A brief analysis of the Indian conception of the white monkey race leads in “The Mozo” to an account of Rosalino’s habits. The Aztec goddess of love brought forth an obsidian knife; the image is applied to young Mexican men with their taut, keen bodies and black flinty eyes, and to Rosalino when a reptilian gloom envelops him after his visit to Huayaapam; nostalgia inspired by the Indian hill-village had intensified the conflict within him which began when, on receiving his photograph from Frieda, his mother had asked him to return home. Marketing makes him feel happier, and ultimately he wishes to stay, even to go to England, with the D.H. Lawrences. He is afraid that he will be caught and ill-treated by soldiers of one party or another, as had happened to him in the last revolution. ‘Market Day’ has interesting bargaining scenes, but its theme is the need for contact which motivates the centripetal flow of Indians from the country. The market is the centre where life concentrates, and the intimacy it renews is more important than sale or purchase.

To understand Indian dances, D.H. Lawrence tells us to dispense with the kind of consciousness with which we look on stage productions as if we were little gods in a democratic heaven. Indian song and dance are not
individual but tribal, an experience of the blood-stream, the spirit seeking identification with the life-forces of sky and earth. There is no god in Indian religion; creation is for ever flowing; all is godly. Virtue lies in the heroic response to this creative wonder. "Dance of the Sprouting Corn" illustrates this magnificently; D.H. Lawrence's art is more conscious, and his prose more rhythmic, here than anywhere else in this volume. His first description of the Hopi snake dance is a satirical *jeu d'esprit* on the American sight-seer; how far it differs from the views of the D.H. Lawrence who wrote *The Plumed Serpent* can be seen in *Mornings in Mexico*. The snakes of the dance return to the earth with man's messages of tenderness, of request, and of power, which are then transmitted to the dark heart of the first of suns. Only from this come the rays that make men strong and glad, gods who can range between the known and the unknown. The old animistic ideas inspiring Indian ritualistic dance were akin to D.H. Lawrence's own cosmic vision.

Richard Aldington in his Introduction to D.H. Lawrence's last travel account *Mornings in Mexico* in 1950, observes,

"It often happens that in producing a book an author finds he has spare material left over or has written minor things related to his main theme; and thus *Mornings in Mexico* should be read always in conjunction with *The Plumed Serpent*."

The recent discovery of D.H. Lawrence's rough diary of jottings covering the years of his life from 1920 to 1924, enables us to give the exact date, 5th November, 1921, when D.H. Lawrence received the invitation to go
to Taos, New Mexico, and he noted laconically: 'Want to go.' Luckily he did not go direct, but by way of Ceylon and Australia, experiencing to the full one of the few great remaining thrills-getting out of the European world. The D.H. Lawrences left Sicily in February 1922, and reached New Mexico on his birthday, 11th September. On the way he had written his Australian novel, *Kangaroo*.

Soon once in Mexico, D.H. Lawrence was asked for a four-day' trip to the Arizona desert in order that he might at once begin to write about the Indians. He found himself at a ceremonial gathering of Apaches who 'have a cult of water-hatred' and hence emit 'an unbearable sulphur-human smell,' while this unstaged primitive ceremony had native guards posted to warn off rudely any intrusive white man. For some reason D.H. Lawrence did not include in *Mornings in Mexico* his admirable and beautiful sketch of this experience which under the title “Indians and an Englishman” appears in the enormous hold-all of *Phoenix*, along with the articles entitled “Taos,” “America,” “Listen to Your Own,” “See Mexico After,” “Europe v. America” and “New Mexico.” All of which should be added to *Mornings in Mexico*.

It is a great mistake to brush off D.H. Lawrence’s experiences in America as unimportant to him, and utterly false to say that he hated America. It is of course true that he dreaded and avoided highly industrialised areas in America, just as he did in England, Australia and Europe. But he did like the vast desert and mountain area of the South-West, and loved the little ranch in the New Mexican Rockies where he re-built the adobe shack with his own

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hands, and where he now lies buried. If he loved it so much, why did he not 
stay there? The answer is very simple. A visa to the United States is good for 
six months only, unless the person crossing the frontier of freedom comes as an 
immigrant on the quota, which last requires a medical examination. In the 
spring of 1925 D.H. Lawrence was refused admission on the Mexican- United 
States frontier for reasons of health, and was allowed in for six months only on 
the intervention of the United States Embassy in Mexico City. He did not try to 
visit Mexico.

The travel account has eight chapters. The first four of these sketches – 
"Corasman and the Parrots," "Walk to Huayapa," "The Mozo" and "Market 
Day" (the other four are "Indians and Entertainment," "Dance of the Sprouting 
Corn," "The Hopi Snake Dance" and "A Little Moonshine with Lemon") -- 
deal with D.H. Lawrence's life in Oaxaca (pronounced Wa-ha-ka) Mexico, but 
were in fact written after the three studies of Indian life in New Mexico. The 
earliest in date of these, "Indians and Entertainment" and 'Dance of the 
Sprouting Corn,' must have been written in the spring of 1924, just after D.H. 
Lawrence returned to New Mexico after a flying visit to England. The 
sprouting corn dance is performed by the Pueblo Indians at Easter, and the two 
 essays are obviously related.

The Hopi Snake Dance was seen by D.H. Lawrence in late August 1924 
when he was motored into the Navajo Indian reservations in Arizona. There 
exist two separate accounts by D.H. Lawrence of this experience. The first was 
written immediately on his return for a little periodical called The Laughing
Horse (reprinted in Letters) and begins, 'One wonders what one came for... the Hopi country is hideous,' and so forth, a complete debunking of the whole thing, Indians, landscape, dance and the three thousand onlookers. The second and much more favourable account was probably written to placate the offended vanity of his American friends who wanted their Indians to be admired.

In October 1924 the D.H. Lawrences went to Mexico City, and by November journeyed south to Oaxaca where he finished writing his Mexican novel *The Plumed Serpent*. Through an English priest in the town they were at once installed in the rather crumbly adobe house built round two sides of a garden patio with its deep, shady veranda looking on to the coffee-trees with reddening berries. There the D.H. Lawrences remained until he fell ill with malaria in February 1925, and had to be moved away.

Richard Aldington comments,

'These four sketches of life in that remote part of Mexico show us D.H. Lawrence at his sparkling best as a writer of travel impressions. No English writer of his time was so aware so unerringly right in picking out just those aspects of a foreign scene which bring it vividly before the reader to whom it is all strange and unknown. He had a unique gift of choosing quite spontaneously just those combinations of words which make his reader see, hear, smell, feel the wonder and interest of life as D.H. Lawrence felt them. He indeed had
kept the sense of wonder which we are supposed to have lost, and kept it not for exploded myths and old wives' tales, but for the living ordinary world about him. True, when he was ill, or in one of dark moods, or in one of his annoying fits of perverse contradiction, he could and did project himself on the outer world, and found it sinister or ugly or repulsive or just ordinary. But when he was in happy mood, which he so often was, nobody saw the beauty and strangeness of the living world more vividly than he."\textsuperscript{21}

There are many instances of critical commentary on places, persons, books, writing and his personal life in D.H. Lawrence's travel writings. His comments are the expression of his personality. Since the criticism is based on his own personal views, it is creative in nature.
References:


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