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D. H. Lawrence in Victorian Relativism: A "Theory of Human Relativity" in *Aaron's Rod*

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I

In 1905, Albert Einstein published three significant research papers, one of which was "On the Electrodynamics of Moving Bodies," a work that became known for his special theory of relativity. In 1915–16 he published two more papers, "On Accelerated Motion and Gravitation" and "The Foundation of the General Theory of Relativity," to explain his general theory of relativity. Conventional wisdom holds that Einstein's new vision of the space-time continuum in these works superseded the then prevailing Newtonian vision of absolute space and time, promoting a paradigm shift in the field of physical science.[1)] Christopher Herbert challenges this assumption, suggesting that Einstein did not originate the idea of relativity, and that physics was not the only field in which the principle of relativity was explored. In fact, even before Einstein published his first works of relativity, a number of scientists and intellectuals throughout Europe had already proposed an alternate vision of a dynamic and relativistic universe that differed markedly from the Newtonian version. Christopher Herbert focuses on this movement in Britain, calling it "Victorian relativism" (xi). The purpose of this paper is to show that D. H. Lawrence lived and worked

in the midst of "Victorian relativism" and drew upon its ideas before being exposed to and influenced by Einstein's theories. In establishing this case, the paper makes special reference to *Aaron's Rod* (1922), a novel Lawrence completed just before his encounter with Einstein's ideas.

In the middle of June 1921, two weeks after completing *Aaron's Rod*,[2] Lawrence read Einstein's *Relativity: The Special and General Theory*, an English translation published in the previous year. On 4 June, he asked his friend S. S. Koteliansky to send "a simple book on Einstein's Relativity" (4*L* 23). Five days later, he eagerly sent another letter, promising to give his friend a cheque for the book (4*L* 30). Lawrence gratefully confirmed receiving the book on 15 June (4*L* 36). The very next day, he again wrote Koteliansky this time to say that "Einstein isn't so metaphysically marvellous, but I like him for taking out the pin which fixed down our fluttering little physical universe" (4*L* 37). Having taken only a day to read the book, Lawrence's response was positive yet surprisingly quick. On Lawrence's feelings toward Einstein's ideas, Michael Whitworth speaks of the writer's "enthusiastic response" (132). Bruce Clarke is more guarded but remarks that Lawrence's knowledge of Einstein's theory "had a subtle but significant effect on his writings after 1921" (213). In fact, after Lawrence read Einstein, he showed some interest in his theory, as indicated in later works such as *Kangaroo* (1923) and "Relativity," a poem included in *Pansies* (1929).

However, Lawrence's response to Einstein's theory of relativity was more ambivalent than it might seem at first glance. Indeed, Nancy Katherine Hayles and Mark Kinkead-Weekes suggest that Lawrence had already acquired his belief in relativity before assessing Einstein's theory.[3] Lawrence's view that "Einstein isn't so metaphysically marvellous" (*4L* 37) further implies that he had previously been exploring the idea of relativity at

least on a "metaphysical" level. As for what constitutes a "metaphysic," Lawrence understood it as something that "governs men at the time, and is by all men more or less comprehended, and lived" (*FU* 65). I submit that the "metaphysic" that "govern[ed]" Lawrence and his contemporaries was the "metaphysic" of relativity.

In my paper "Modernism's Fourth Dimension in *Aaron's Rod*: Einstein, Picasso, and Lawrence," I demonstrate that Lawrence had actually entertained a "metaphysic" of relativity before reading Einstein's theory through examining Lawrence's representation of the relative, four-dimensional universe in *Aaron's Rod*. In this novel, as was discussed in the paper, Lawrence portrays Aaron, a main character, as moving quickly and constantly. An observation of this depiction reveals some characteristics that are commonly observed in other contemporary works presenting a vision of the fourth dimension, the emerging idea of the spatiotemporal universe. First, Aaron's quick motion indicates his ever-changing state in the spatiotemporal space. The memorable scene where Aaron "veer[s] round, like some sort of weather-cock" (*AR* 25) resembles the figure in Marcel Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2* (1912), an artwork regarded as an attempt to visually represent the fourth dimension. Second, Aaron's constant movement provides him with multiple perspectives, from which he relativizes the traditional vision of an absolute, three-dimensional universe. This perspective also appears in the paintings of Paul Cézanne and Pablo Picasso, artists who materialize four-dimensional space on two-dimensional canvas. Finally, after moving and changing viewpoints constantly, Aaron, like H. G. Wells's "Invisible Man," experiences a "transmutation" and perceives the "invisible and undefined" reality of his self, the world surrounding him, and the relation between himself and the world (*AR* 163–64). H. G. Wells was inspired by the new four-dimensional vision produced

by the X-ray to write *The Invisible Man*, and therefore Lawrence's reference to this particular novel points to his keen interest in relativistic, four-dimensional space-time.

My earlier paper on the subject ends with a suggestion that Lawrence adapts the concept of relativity not only to his representation of the universe but also to his portrayal of human relationships in *Aaron's Rod*. Right after Lawrence positively responds to Einstein's theory of relativity in *Fantasia of the Unconscious*,[4] he suddenly shifts his focus from the universe to human relationships:

> We have no one law that governs us. For me there is only one law: I am I. And that isn't a law, it's just a remark. One is one, but one is not all alone. There are other stars buzzing in the centre of their own isolation. . . . I am I, but also you are you, and we are in sad need of *a theory of human relativity*. We need it much more than the universe does. (*FU* 72; emphasis added)

The key to understanding how *Aaron's Rod* embodies "a theory of human relativity" is Aaron's internal motion, which is described as constantly changing in a similar way as his physical movement.

Lawrence's representation of the relative universe bears a coincident resemblance to those in the paintings of Picasso and other modernist artists like Marcel Duchamp. On the other hand, his description of "human relativity" seems to be directly influenced by preceding thinkers such as Charles Darwin, T. H. Huxley, Herbert Spencer, William James and Ernst Haeckel. From 1906 to 1908, when Lawrence studied at University College Nottingham, he avidly read their works, which, as critics have often noted,[5] greatly influenced his own ideas. Importantly, Christopher Herbert treats the

first four, Darwin, Huxley, Spencer and James, as Victorian relativists, suggesting that the idea of relativity is fundamental to their philosophies.[6] With regard to Lawrence's representation of "human relativity" in *Aaron's Rod*, Herbert Spencer's idea of "the rhythm of motion" and William James's philosophy of pragmatism are particularly important because they exhibit the same traits as in Aaron's physical movements. In Spencer's view of the universe, "the rhythm of motion" refers to the rhythm of quick and relative motion, something also characteristic of Aaron's physical motion. Essential to James's pragmatism is the significance of multiple perspectives, which also feature in Aaron's way of viewing the world. This paper will closely examine the way in which Lawrence is influenced by the relativistic ideas of Spencer and James to enforce his "theory of human relativity" in *Aaron's Rod*. The controversial issue of how to read the ending of this novel will then be considered in the light of the concept of "human relativity" as discussed herein.

II

Wyndham Lewis, one of Lawrence's contemporaries, noted that "Relativity fashion did not commence with Einstein's General Theory—a few of [its] implications can be pointed out" (7). Lewis does not specify the "implications" of relativity in his work, but the idea of relativity evolving before the publication of Einstein's theory is significant. According to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, "relativity" means "The quantitative dependence of observations on the relative motion of the observer and the observed object" (*OED* 2). When the adjective "relative" modifies "motion" in particular, it means "Arising from, depending on, or determined by, relation to something else or to each other; comparative" (*OED* A. 4. a). These definitions point to the three essential tenets of relativity. Firstly, "relativity"

is primarily based on the idea of a mutual relationship between the observer and the observed object. Secondly, "relativity" is the state of being judged only when the observer looks at the object. Thirdly, both the observer and the object are moving relative to each other. It can be said that Einstein integrated these three tenets of relativity into his theory, giving, in Michael Whitworth's words, "the sanction of empirical science" to the "philosophical concept" (131).

From 1906 to 1908, Lawrence became familiar with these three tenets of relativity through reading works by Charles Darwin, T. H. Huxley, Herbert Spencer, William James and Ernst Haeckel. In 1906, Lawrence read Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859), a work in which Christopher Herbert discerns "the coeval bond between evolutionism and relativity" (51). In fact, Darwin's theory of evolution is primarily based on the idea of a mutual relationship, one of the three tenets of relativity.[7)] "Mutual relations" is also an expression often used by Darwin himself. In his "Introduction" to *The Origin*, Darwin declares that "the *mutual relations of all the beings* which live around us" are "of the highest importance, for they determine the present welfare, and . . . the future success and modification of every inhabitant of this world" (6; emphasis added). Interestingly, Lawrence came to use a very similar expression in his later writings. In "Morality and the Novel" (1925), Lawrence states:

> . . . we find that our life consists in this achieving of *a pure relationship* between ourselves and the living universe about us. This is how I "save my soul," by accomplishing *a pure relationship* between me and another person, me and other people, me and a nation, me and a race of men, me and the animals, me and the trees or flowers, me and the earth, me and the skies and sun and stars, me and the moon. (*STH* 172; emphasis added)

Here Lawrence insists on "a pure relationship" to everything, in which he includes not only humans, animals, and plants, but also nations, races and the universe. It is clear that Darwin's idea that the "mutual relations of all the beings" are "of the highest importance" greatly appealed to Lawrence.

When Lawrence read T. H. Huxley's *Man's Place in Nature* (1895) in 1907, he was exposed to a similar proposition that a variety of relationships should construct the natural world.[8)] In his Preface to *Man's Place in Nature*, Huxley states that in 1857, two years before the publication of Darwin's *The Origin*, he had launched into "the whole question of the structural *relations* of Man to the next lower existing forms, with much care" (xxi; emphasis added). When Darwin's *The Origin* was published, says Huxley, Darwin's view was "not only in full harmony with the conclusions at which [Huxley] had arrived, respecting the structural *relations* of apes and men, but was strongly supported by them" (xxi-xxii; emphasis added). A vision of an interconnected natural world thus presented by Huxley as well as by Darwin surely impacted Lawrence.

The same year, Lawrence also read Herbert Spencer's *First Principles* (1862), a book Christopher Herbert considers "one of the most remarkable early manifestos of all-encompassing philosophical relativism" (25). Spencer's relativism explored here is again based on "mutual relations." "We think in *relations*," Spencer comments, "This is truly the form of all thought" (162; emphasis added). Spencer terms this fundamental principle "the relativity of our thought" (163). In Spencer's worldview, space, time, matter, motion and force turn out to be "a relative reality" (165). Spencer further asserts that space is "a relative reality" (165), for "[a]ny limited portion of space can be conceived only by representing its limits as co-existing in certain relative positions" (164). Concerning time, Spencer briefly writes: "a parallel argument leads to parallel conclusions" (165).

While space and time are considered "abstracts of the forms of these various realities," matter and motion are "concretes built up from the contents of various mental relations" (169). In comparison to space, time, matter and motion, Spencer regards force "as the ultimate of ultimates" because "the primordial experiences of Force . . . supply at once the materials" (169).

The greatest impact Spencer made on Lawrence was through the idea of the "rhythm of motion."[9] In a chapter entitled "The Rhythm of Motion" in *First Principles*, Spencer explains that the universe evolves according to the "rhythm of motion," made possible by the "universally co-existent forces of attraction and repulsion" (225). This "rhythm of motion" equals "relative motion," another important aspect of relativity. "Relative motion" for Spencer refers to the motion that "the components of a mass have with respect to one another" (281). An "equilibrium" is achieved only when "the relative motions of the constituent parts are continually so counter-balanced by opposed motions" (489). It is well known that this idea of "equilibrium" is one of Lawrence's main concerns in *Women in Love*, where he compares star-equilibrium to the ideal relationship between man and woman. What is more, *Women in Love* also presents the process in which two single beings, Ursula Brangwen and Rupert Birkin, move in relation to each other in a fashion akin to "relative motion." *Aaron's Rod*, as we shall see later in this paper, centres around the process characterized by "relative motion" between characters.

Another work read by Lawrence in 1907 was *Pragmatism* (1907) by William James, who Christopher Herbert calls "another philosopher of relativity and a vociferous opponent of 'absolutism'" (47). What James considers relational and therefore relative in this work is "truth." In his Preface to *The Meaning of Truth* (1909), James summarizes the basic characteristic of his philosophy in *Pragmatism*: "The pivotal part of my

book named *Pragmatism* is its account of the *relation* called 'truth' which may obtain between an idea (opinion, belief, statement, or what not) and its object" (135; emphasis added). James also states: "Truth here is a *relation*, not of our ideas to non-human realities, but of conceptual parts of our experience to sensational parts" (159; emphasis added). In addition to the importance of the mutual relation, James's pragmatic approach is based on the idea of the observer's point of view, another characteristic of relativity. James states in *Pragmatism*: "The world is indubitably one if you look at it in one way, but as indubitably is it many, if you look at it in another. It is both one and many—let us adopt a sort of pluralistic monism" (11).[10)]

James's "pluralistic monism," in which the observer's point of view is a crucial factor, differs from Ernst Haeckel's materialistic monism in *The Riddle of the Universe* (1899), an English translation of which Lawrence read in 1908. Haeckel postulates that the universe consists of only one substance that includes two inseparable attributes, such as "God and nature," "body and spirit," or "matter and energy." Furthermore, these two attributes are "in eternal motion," which "runs on through infinite time as an unbroken development, with a periodic change from life to death, from evolution to devolution" (13). Significantly, this view shows the two characteristics of relativity: the mutual relation between two inseparable attributes and their relative motion. Even though James criticized Haeckel's materialistic monism,[11)] it is possible to see their worldviews as supporting the same movement of relativism.

Thus, the period from 1906 to 1908 was a formative period when Lawrence read various works by the five Victorian thinkers mentioned above, absorbing their ideas of relativity before encountering Einstein's theory. From his forays into Victorian relativism, Lawrence continued to include relativistic thinking as a fundamental element of his philosophy,

something revealed in his later works such as *Aaron's Rod*, the subject of the next section.

III

In *Aaron's Rod*, as was discussed in "Modernism's Fourth Dimension," Lawrence shows how Aaron's physical motion helps him establish a relative and living relationship to the four-dimensional universe. At the same time, Aaron's internal motion exemplifies his own "theory of human relativity" which Lawrence thinks is needed beyond the theory of universal relativity.

A close examination of Aaron's relationships with other characters in the novel reveals that his relationships are subject to change according to a certain principle. This principle bears great resemblance to what Herbert Spencer calls the "rhythm of motion." As was discussed above, in *First Principles* Spencer explains how "universally co-existent forces of attraction and repulsion" produce "the rhythm of motion" and change the state of the universe (225). According to Spencer, this "rhythm" is "very generally not simple but compound," for "besides the primary rhythms there are secondary rhythms, produced by the periodic coincidence and antagonism of the primary ones" (253). As Spencer elucidates here, the "rhythm of motion" discerned in *Aaron's Rod* is "not simple but compound." Lawrence describes Aaron as if he has the "primary rhythms" affected by those of other characters and that the "compound" rhythms produced in this way cause Aaron's relationships with others to change constantly.

In *Aaron's Rod*, this principle of the "rhythm of motion" is observed in Aaron's relationships with women, in particular Josephine Ford and the Marchesa del Torre. When persistently asked by Josephine to kiss her, he refuses to acquiesce (*AR* 71). Spencer's principle of the "rhythm of motion" is applicable to this scene; the force of "repulsion" is at work in Aaron's self

while the force of "attraction" is working in Josephine's self. In this scene, as Aaron's "repulsion" is greater than Josephine's "attraction" they do not establish "equilibrium." Spencer says that "wherever there is a conflict of forces," the "rhythm of motion" does not result in "equilibrium" (254).

Later in the story, Aaron and Josephine come to have a sexual relationship, but this does not mean that they attain "equilibrium" at this time either. How they come to have a sexual relationship is not described in the text; the details are only alluded to by Aaron when he becomes ill and is carried to Lilly's apartment: "I gave in, I gave in to her, else I should ha' been all right" (*AR* 89). He further says: "It's my own fault, for giving in to her. If I'd kept myself back, my liver wouldn't have broken inside me, and I shouldn't have been sick" (*AR* 90). The affair with Josephine seriously damages Aaron; he is hurt not only mentally but also physically, needing Lilly's dedicated care for several weeks before recovering from this mental and physical depression. If Aaron's account of their affair is seen in the light of Spencer's principle of "the rhythm of motion," it turns out that the force of "attraction" in Josephine's self has predominated over the force of "repulsion" in Aaron's self, compelling him to sleep with her. His mental and physical illness can be taken as the sign of the disorder in his own natural "rhythm of motion."

A similar dynamism related to "attraction and repulsion" appears when Aaron has an affair with the Marchesa del Torre. When Aaron visits Florence, he is inspired by Michelangelo's *David* along with a group of men gathering in the Piazza della Signoria, feeling "a new self, a new life-urge rising inside himself" (*AR* 212). This "new self" is characterized by his male sexuality. As Aaron's flute helps the Marchesa regain her singing voice she has lost since the war, his male sexuality simultaneously awakens her female sexuality. As such, their affair represents the state in which the forces of

Aaron and the Marchesa are in "equilibrium." Yet, such a state of "equilibrium" is only temporary. Immediately after his liaison with the Marchesa, Aaron again starts to feel "repulsion." Even in bed, he wants "to get out of her arms and her clinging and her tangle of hair and her curiosity and her strange and hateful power" (*AR* 262). Consequently, he runs out of her room. The force which moves him is that of inner "repulsion." Thus, due to the "rhythm of motion" produced by "the coexistent forces of attraction and repulsion" in his self, Aaron quickly changes his emotions toward women, just as he quickly changes his positions in space.

Lawrence also applies Spencer's principle of "the rhythm of motion" in describing the relationship between Aaron and Lilly, the most important relationship in the work. Critics have often regarded these two characters as representing two aspects of Lawrence himself.[12] What should be noted here is the dynamics observed in the relationship between Aaron and Lilly that can be expressed as "the rhythm of motion." The narrator of *Aaron's Rod* states that there are ambivalent feelings between these two characters: "The two men had *an almost uncanny understanding* of one another—like brothers. . . . Like brothers, there was *a profound hostility* between them. But hostility is not antipathy" (*AR* 106; emphasis added). Here, "an almost uncanny understanding" can be equated to what Spencer calls "coincidence," while "a profound hostility" is "antagonism" in Spencer's word.

In the novel, the relationship between Aaron and Lilly starts with "an almost uncanny understanding," or "coincidence." In Jim Bricknell's apartment in London, Lilly says, "I don't like them [London—England—America]. But I can't get much fire in my hatred. They pall on me rather" (*AR* 61). Listening to Lilly, Aaron only utters "Ay," but the narrator highlights how these two men come to a mutual understanding at this moment: "Lilly and he [Aaron] glanced at one another with a look of

recognition" (*AR* 61). However, this "understanding" between Aaron and Lilly immediately shifts into "hostility," or "antagonism." When Aaron is under Lilly's care at his apartment in Covent Garden, he accuses Lilly of his "unconscious assumption of priority" (*AR* 106). When Aaron visits Lilly next time not to find him at home, he assures himself that "Lilly had made a certain call on his, Aaron's soul, a call which he, Aaron, did not at all intend to obey" (*AR* 121). Oddly enough, in spite of such "repulsion" toward Lilly, Aaron goes to Italy as if following Lilly, and while hearing Sir William Franks criticize Lilly, he feels it necessary to support his friend: "for the first time in his life he felt that there existed a necessity for taking sides" (*AR* 143).

Lawrence also describes how Lilly's "co-existent forces of attraction and repulsion" foment his ambivalence toward Aaron. Lilly devotes himself to caring for Aaron in the state of physical and mental depression; what is active in Lilly's self is the force of "attraction" toward Aaron. Yet, even while he is taking care of Aaron, "repulsion" wells up within him. Lilly thinks to himself: "I like him, and he ought to like me. And he'll be another Jim: he *will* like me, if he can knock the wind out of me" (*AR* 97). What Lilly recalls here is his earlier experience with Jim Bricknell. Lilly's relationship with Jim also follows "the rhythm of motion." At first, in Jim's apartment in Adelphi, Lilly despises Jim (*AR* 61–62). Yet, when Jim comes to see him in Hampshire, Lilly's "certain belief in himself as a saviour" (*AR* 73) motivates him to try to remould Jim's personality. Lilly advises Jim to abandon his desire "to be loved" because it is "disgusting" (*AR* 82). He also tells him: "You should stand by yourself and learn to be by yourself" (*AR* 81). Lilly's attempt to save Jim ends up invoking the latter's impetuous violence. Jim suddenly punches Lilly in the stomach so hard Lilly is rendered breathless and speechless. At this moment, Lilly identifies Jim as

"Judas" in his mind (*AR* 83). These various relationships depicted in *Aaron's Rod* thus show some traits of Spencer's idea of "the rhythm of motion" to enact "a theory of human relativity."

The "theory of human relativity" in *Aaron's Rod* can also be understood through William James's philosophy of pragmatism in which the observer's perspective is essential to a relativist worldview. Important here again is the relationship between Lilly and Aaron: the former, the theorist; the latter, the practitioner of theory. Throughout the novel, Lilly asserts that human beings exist as irreducibly separate individuals and this fact must be accepted. Based on his belief, Lilly attempts to influence Aaron as well as Jim Bricknell. The clearest expression of Lilly's lone individual is presented in a chapter entitled "High Up over the Cathedral Square," where Argyle, the Marchese del Torre, and Aaron discuss love and women. At first, Lilly only utters occasional short questions. His unusual reticence reminds us of Plato's dialogues, with Lilly playing the role of an inquisitive Socrates.[13] Eventually, however, Lilly unleashes a barrage of words:

> . . . and yet know that one is *alone*? Essentially, at the very core of me, *alone*. Eternally *alone*. And choosing to be *alone*. Not sentimental or lonely. *Alone*, choosing to be *alone*, because by one's own nature one is *alone*. The being with another person is secondary. . . . In so far as he is a single individual soul, he is *alone*—ipso facto. In so far as *I am I*, and only *I am I*, and *I am* only *I*, in so far, I am inevitably and eternally *alone*, and it is my last blessedness to know it, and to accept it, and to live with this as the core of my self-knowledge. (*AR* 246–47; emphasis added)

In this short passage, Lilly repeats the word "alone" nine times, and the

phrase "I am I" three times. Obviously, this idea contradicts Lawrence's own belief in "human relativity" in *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, quoted earlier in this paper.

In Aaron's case, his experience with his wife prompts him to accept Lilly's idea. Aaron leaves his wife and children and embarks on a journey, but he is not aware why he does so; rather, he believes there is "no particular reason" (*AR* 66). In the course of his journey, he gradually finds the reason. When Aaron returns home for the second time, he thinks to himself: "To be alone, to be oneself, not to be driven or violated into something which is not oneself, surely it is better than anything" (*AR* 128). He decides to lead "life single, not life double" (*AR* 128). While staying in Novara, Aaron realizes fully that he has escaped from his wife's "terrible, implacable, cunning" will (*AR* 158). On this occasion, Aaron also understands that his "intrinsic and central aloneness was the very centre of his being" (*AR* 162).

However, Aaron's experiences with Josephine and the Marchesa provide him with new perspectives on this issue, leading him to realize that the idea of being a separate individual is impractical, and that he cannot be alone however desperately he desires to be. At Argyle's loggia, he utters: "I can't stand by myself in the middle of the world and in the middle of people, and know I am quite by myself, and nowhere to go, and nothing to hold on to" (*AR* 246). Aaron's ambivalence reflects Lawrence's stance in *Fantasia of the Unconscious*. Hence, Lawrence describes Aaron as if adopting William James's pragmatic approach to learn the importance of "human relativity."

IV

The controversial ending of *Aaron's Rod* must be read with reference to "a theory of human relativity." The novel ends when Aaron asks Lilly, "And whom shall I submit to?" and Lilly answers, "Your soul will tell you" (*AR*

299). Quite a few critics have appraised this ending as ambiguous and inconclusive.[14] Whether Aaron is to submit to Lilly is the crucial issue over which critics' views have diverged. For instance, John Worthen states clearly: "it ends with the mystical submission of one man to another" (132). If Aaron, as Worthen says, will submit to Lilly, his submission can be taken as a refutation of the "theory of human relativity." Conversely, Virginia Hyde asserts that "Aaron apparently remains uncommitted, still speaking 'rather sarcastically' to Lilly near the book's end" (475). When the ending of this work is considered in relation to Spencer's principle of the "rhythm of motion" and William James's philosophy of pragmatism, it turns out that Hyde's view is more persuasive: Aaron will never submit to Lilly.

It might be difficult to read the ending of *Aaron's Rod* in this way because there seems to be enough evidence to support Worthen's view that Aaron will yield to Lilly. One possible piece of evidence for this is Aaron's strange dream in the last chapter. In this dream, Aaron is split into two different persons: the "invisible Aaron" and the "palpable or visible Aaron" (*AR* 287). The "invisible Aaron" sits in the prow, watching the "palpable or visible Aaron" at the side of the boat. There are three stakes standing in the water. While the "invisible Aaron" can predict that the "palpable or visible Aaron" will hit his elbow against the stakes, the "palpable or visible Aaron" himself neither foresees nor learns from his former experience, keeping his elbow struck against the stakes. After the third stake, the "visible Aaron" abruptly changes his position. Worthen argues that the three stakes in the river represent Aaron's "three encounters with women—Lottie, Josephine Ford, and the Marchesa" (132), and that his shift in position suggests he should change from his heterosexual relationship with women to his homosocial, if not homosexual, relationship with Lilly. In fact, after his affair with the Marchesa, Aaron comes to depend on Lilly more consciously

than ever: "when he needed, he could go to Lilly . . . And like a fate which he resented, yet which steadied him, Lilly" (*AR* 264). Even in this passage, however, both forces of "attraction and repulsion" are at work in Aaron's emotions toward Lilly: he "resented" his "fate."

The scene in which Aaron's flute, a symbol of his male sexuality, has been destroyed by an anarchist's bomb might also suggest Aaron's submission to Lilly as well as his change in sexuality, and yet a close reading of this scene reveals a contrary view. On this occasion, Aaron resolves to "give in to Lilly" (*AR* 289–90). Nevertheless, Aaron's feeling and attitude toward Lilly again veer toward repulsion. Right after his decision to "give in" to Lilly, he goes to see him, but the moment he sees Lilly, a "deep disappointment was settling over his spirit" (*AR* 291). Furthermore, while listening to Lilly's elaborate discourse on love-urge and power-urge, Aaron feels as if "an objection" is springing "from the bottom of his soul" (*AR* 297). During Lilly's talk, Aaron only offers terse responses. For instance, when Lilly asks him if he can understand "will-to-power," Aaron replies: "I don't know" (*AR* 297). Lilly asserts that he longs for "a deep unfathomable free submission" from a woman, but Aaron twice tries to dissuade him: "You'll never get it" (*AR* 298, 299). Aaron shows here, as Baker says, "stubborn reactions to Lilly's words" (174), and therefore it can be argued that Aaron will never submit to Lilly, or to anybody, even after the novel ends. In view of Spencer's principle of the "rhythm of motion," Aaron will eternally continue to oscillate between "attraction and repulsion" toward Lilly. At the same time, James's pragmatic approach that Aaron has taken up to this point will lead him to relativize Lilly's philosophy.

In conclusion, *Aaron's Rod* embodies Lawrence's relativistic view of human relationships as well as the circumambient universe. It is important to note again that Lawrence had written this novel just before he read Einstein's

theory of relativity. This means that he had been exploring his own idea of relativity, one which he developed through his intellectual interactions with his predecessors and contemporaries in Victorian relativism.

Notes

1) In *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), Thomas Kuhn states: "Einstein's theory can be accepted only with the recognition that Newton's was wrong" (98).
2) Two letters dated 1 June 1921 confirm that Lawrence had finished *Aaron's Rod* by the end of May (*3L* 730, 731).
3) In "The Ambivalent Approach: D. H. Lawrence and the New Physics," Nancy Katherine Hayles remarks that Lawrence "hoped that it [the Einsteinian revolution in science] would lead to a scientific model more compatible with his *beliefs*" (106; emphasis added). Mark Kinkead-Weekes also points out Lawrence's "*belief* that life was always a matter of relationships—between opposite impulses within the self, and between selves, none paramount, all 'purely relative to one another,' in an essentially creative pluralism" (*TE* 659; emphasis added).
4) In *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, Lawrence approves Einstein's vision of the universe thus: "We are all very pleased with Mr Einstein for knocking that external axis out of the universe. The universe isn't a spinning wheel. It is a cloud of bees flying and veering round. Thank goodness for that, for we were getting drunk on the spinning wheel. So that now the universe has escaped from the pin which was pushed through it, like an impaled fly vainly buzzing: now that the multiple universe flies its own complicated course quite free, and hasn't got any hub, we can hope also to escape" (*FU* 72).
5) Daniel J. Schneider suggestes that from their works "Lawrence accepted many of materialism's important psychological implications along with its general perspective" (9–10). Recently, Jeff Wallace has elaborated how these five thinkers led Lawrence to disclaim a religious vision of the world, providing him with a new, materialistic vision of it (58–97). Notably, materialism and relativism share some of the same features. By definition, materialism is the idea that matter is the only substance and all the phenomena of the world are explained by the relationship

between matter and force and its movements and modulations.

6) Christopher Herbert states that Darwin's *The Origin of Species* shows "the intimate historical bond linking the principles of evolution and relativity" (58). He also mentions T. H. Huxley frequently in his book.

7) The significance of mutual relationships in Darwin's theory of evolution has been noted by some critics. Gilian Beer states: "What Darwin emphasises is relationship—the ordinary chain of generation—the sense of progeny and diversification, of a world in which profusely various forms co-exist, unseen and yet dependent on each other and related to each other by blood and need" (40). Roger Ebbatson pays attention to Darwin's influence on Lawrence, arguing that "the stress in evolution upon the organic connexion and interrelatedness of the whole of Nature is characteristically rewritten by Lawrence" (34).

8) Ebbatson states: "In Huxley, perhaps more than in Darwin, Lawrence discovered an exciting new vision of the interconnexion and animation of all Nature" (33).

9) See Schneider (12–17) and Hiroshi Muto (264–67).

10) This idea might remind us of Einstein's proposition in the special theory of relativity, published in 1905, two years before William James's *Pragmatism*. Einstein's special theory of relativity presupposes that a view of everything varies according to one's point of view. Although this proposition was popularized as Einstein's, it did not originate in Einstein's special theory of relativity. Alan J. Friedman and Carol C. Donley remark: "To claim that everything depends on one's point of view . . . is so simple and unoriginal an idea that Einstein certainly did not have to go to all the bother of formulating the relativity theory in order to discover it" (17). In fact, even before the publication of Einstein's special theory of relativity, the idea of the observer's point of view had played a vital part in various fields, in particular in art. For instance, Paul Cézanne looked at objects from various points of view, incorporating multiple perspectives into one picture. Cézanne's style heavily influenced the Cubists, notably Pablo Picasso (Hoshi 108–9). Lawrence, who looked at Cézanne's and Picasso's paintings while reading works by authors such as James was certainly aware of the importance of the observer's perspective in the new, relativistic view of the world.

11) Discussing "the conflict between science and religion," William James criticizes

Haeckel as follows: “Either it is that Rocky Mountain tough of a Haeckel with his materialistic monism, his ether-god and his jest at your God as a ‘gaseous vetebrate,’ or is it Spencer treating the world’s history as a redistribution of matter and motion solely, and bowing religion politely out at the front door:—she may indeed continue to exist, but she must never show her face inside the temple” (12).

12) In F. R. Leavis’s view, for instance, Lilly is “the obvious enough direct presence of Lawrence himself” (39) while Aaron is “an *alter ego*” of Lilly and Lawrence (43). G. M. Hyde also states: “the two men are one split hero, and their contrasting feelings about marriage, and about the state of the world, reflect Lawrence’s uneasy ambivalence” (92). Granofsky specifies the “unequal” roles played by these two characters: the role of Lilly is “a writer” who explains Aaron’s feelings, while Aaron is the “fictional character” who can “enter his creator’s drafting room and ask for an explanation for the goings-on in his comic-strip life” (104).

13) In this regard, Paul Gleason says: “Lilly uses the Socratic method of dialectic in a conversation with Del Torre” (323).

14) Paul G. Baker sees the ending of the novel as “a puzzle which Lawrence deliberately leaves unsolved” (180), while Steven Vine uses the expression of “the mystical inconclusiveness” (xxxiv). Paul Gleason says: “At the novel’s conclusion . . . we remain uncertain” (324).

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