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***ALL OF US:*
D. H. LAWRENCE'S FIRST WORLD
WAR POEMS FOR THE PEOPLE**

KATE McLOUGHLIN

In December 1916, D. H. Lawrence sent his agent, J. B. Pinker, what he described as “a tiny book of poems of the present day” – “Give it the people as the ‘war *literature*’ they are looking for”, Lawrence advised Pinker, “they will find themselves in it” (3*L* 51, original emphasis). What Lawrence thought of as the war literature the people were looking for were 31 poems that had undergone an extraordinary transition from songs sung by land workers in Upper Egypt to German Lieder to, now, Lawrentian verses on the tensions and desires inherent in personal relationships during wartime. Richly complicated in their textual history, deceptively simple in their content and form, the 31 poems were published for the first time under Lawrence’s original title *All Of Us* in Christopher Pollnitz’s 2013 Cambridge University Press edition of Lawrence’s collected poems (*Poems I* 139–50).¹ Their appearance, and the ongoing First World War centenary anniversaries, provides an opportunity to reflect both on how war poetry has been conceptualised and canonised and on Lawrence’s own agonised relationship with the First World War.

In 1900–1, the German Egyptologist Heinrich Schäfer was carrying out excavations for the Berlin Museum at the sun temple of the fifth-century pharaoh Ne-user-Rē (also known as Nyuserre Ini) at Abusir, a necropolis outside Cairo.² Equipped with only a rudimentary knowledge of Arabic, Schäfer began noting down phonetically the songs that were being sung by the fellaheen assisting on the excavations.³ In 1903, Schäfer’s translations of 134 fellaheen songs, set alongside the transliterated Arabic, were published by the Leipzig publisher Johann Conrad Hinrichs as *Die*

Lieder Eines Ägyptischen Bauern. A copy was given to Lawrence by his German uncle-by-marriage Fritz Krenkow, a "businessman and part-time Arabist" (*Poems II* 697). Lawrence began translating the songs from German into English in December 1910, the month of his mother's death and a few weeks after his engagement to Louie Burrows.⁴

Six years later, he turned to them again, revising and adding to the 1910 translations. The project or, more precisely, the *notion* of translation seems to have troubled Lawrence. He called himself a "bad translator" of the poems, dismissed his translations of them as "shocking" and told Frederick Atkinson, the reader for the publishers Heinemann, that, rather than "translating" the verses, he was simply "writing [them] up" (*IL* 196, 210, 230).⁵ Certainly, enormous liberties are taken on occasion with the German. But "translation" does do justice to the fact that Lawrence's 31 poems are the outcome not only of a carrying across from language to language but of a wholesale transfer of situations from the everyday lives of the fellaheen to circumstances particular to the First World War. Hence 'Munitions Factory' transposes those assisting with the backbreaking work on the archaeological excavations into the equally exhausted workers manufacturing munitions and 'Prisoners at Work in the Rain' mutates the fellaheen's labours into the miserable existence of Prisoners of War. More radically, demonstrating that Lawrence's work of translation crossed cultures and religions, 'Straying Thoughts' converts a fleeting lapse of attention on the part of a boy in a mosque into a similar, though more eroticised, moment of distraction on the part of a girl praying for her beloved in a "cathedral church" (*Poems I* 141); 'The Grey Nurse' substitutes a grey-uniformed military nurse for the Prophet Mohammed entering a garden; 'Benediction' turns a hymn to the Prophet into a father's Christian blessing on his son; and 'Supplication' renders a petition to the Prophet as the battle-field prayer of 'A young lieutenant, who joined the Roman Catholic Church whilst at Oxford' (*Poems I* 142).⁶ Lawrence sent the 31

poems to Pinker with the comment that they were “bitterly ironical” and “a bit wicked” (3L 221).

Some irony, and perhaps the sense of wickedness, derived from the poems’ originating cultures: their Egyptian and German antecedents made these pieces, at that particular historical moment, controversial at least. British rule in Egypt, established in 1882, had been undermined by surges in nationalist feeling in the early twentieth century. In 1914, Britain deposed the incumbent Khedive, an Ottoman sympathiser, and substituted the anglophile Prince Hussein Kamel Pasha. The new Khedive was quoted in *The Times* as saying:

I believe there is a great future for my country ... Remember we have three great assets – the Nile, the Egyptian sun, and, above all, the Fellaheen who till the fruitful soil of Egypt. I know them well, and love them. You will not find a race of men more accessible to progress.⁷

Such was not the universal view of the fellaheen as reported in the British press, whose more standard portrayal was of a “primitive Oriental population” slow to understand the British-imposed land rental system.⁸ *The Times*, for example, reported in August 1911 that the typical fellah did not comprehend why the boll-worm, which was destroying the cotton harvests heavily invested in by the British, should be eradicated, “his argument being that it is Allah who has sent it, therefore why should it be killed, because surely Allah would not send it to their hurt”.⁹ In the years just preceding the First World War and during the early years of the conflict, Egypt appears in *The Times* largely in association with investment opportunities, troublesome nationalism, a backward rural population whom the Consul-General, Lord Kitchener, struggled to help, and the strategically important Suez Canal.¹⁰ Less prominent was the fact that 95,829 fellaheen were enlisted during the war in the Egyptian Labour Corps, Camel Transport Corps and Donkey Transport Corps, supporting the British Egyptian Expeditionary

Force in the Sinai and Palestine Campaign with manual work no less arduous than on the archaeological digs.¹¹

If Germany was, more straightforwardly, the enemy, Lawrence's own relations with Germany were far from straightforward.¹² His wife Frieda, though a naturalised British citizen, was originally German and they had spent time together in Germany before the war.¹³ Lawrence published a number of reviews of books related to German literature and culture in *The English Review*: in one of them, a piece on H. G. Fiedler's *The Oxford Book of German Verse* (1911), he expressed genuine and long-standing enthusiasm for German culture, describing the encounter with "all the poems in German which we have cherished since School days" as "extraordinarily delightful" (*IR* 193). The outbreak of hostilities with Germany put the Lawrences in an invidious position. In the early days of the war, they were questioned by three sets of detectives after being overheard speaking German at a dinner-party given by David Garnett.¹⁴ In Cornwall, where they and their friends were heard singing German songs, their cottage was searched and their papers confiscated. Finally, having been served with a military exclusion order under the Defence of the Realm Act, they were obliged to leave Cornwall;¹⁵ it was effectively the end of their life in England. Such matters might have turned Lawrence into a German sympathiser. But his feelings were not so clear-cut. On a visit to Frieda's family in the early months of their relationship, he had been arrested as a spy and felt the full force of "the vast, stupid mechanism of German officialdom" (*TI* 14). In 1911, reviewing Jethro Bithell's *Contemporary German Poetry* (1909), he suggested that "in point of brutality" the Germans "are miles ahead of us; or at the back of us, as the case may be" (*IR* 188); the point is repeated in *Kangaroo* (1923) in Richard Somers's description of the Germans as "mechanical bullies" (*K* 213). In 'The English and the Germans' (1912), the first in a series of essays on German re-fortification, Lawrence described watching soldiers on manoeuvres in Bavaria: "in the German soldier the worst national characteristics seem most pronounced—lack of intuition, clumsy sentimentality, affectation; a

certain clumsiness of soul, a certain arrogance of stupidity, a certain stupid cleverness" (TI 10).

By May 1915, he was writing to Lady Ottoline Morrell, "I ... hate the Germans so much, I could kill every one of them ... I would like to kill a million Germans – two million" (2L 340). When Lawrence sent his *All of Us* translations to Louie Burrows, and later to Pinker, Cynthia Asquith and Frederick Atkinson, he was evasive on the point of their Egyptian-German origins.¹⁶ As Pollnitz observes, his reasons for doing so were "complex" (*Poems II* 697).¹⁷ But at least as strong as a wish to avoid controversy was a deeply-held suspicion of any brand of nationalistic sentiments.¹⁸

Such sentiments, mobilised in the first global industrialised armed conflict, presented to Lawrence a spectacle of horror. The war, he told friends, was "just hell" for him, inducing in him "a sort of coma" (2L 211); it was a "colossal idiocy" (2L 212); "stupid, monstrous and contemptible" (3L 32). His greatest abhorrence was reserved for the sight of massed men becoming indistinguishable from machines. "It is a war of artillery, a war of machines, and men no more than the subjective material of the machine", he wrote in 'With the Guns', published in *The Manchester Guardian* on 18 August 1914: "My God, why am I a man at all, when this is all, this machinery piercing and tearing?" (TI 84). What could constitute an appropriate literary response to the appalling mechanised assault? In a letter of 1 October 1914 to Harriet Monroe, commenting on the \$100 prize offered in the September 1914 issue of *Poetry* for the best war or peace poem "based on the present European situation", Lawrence suggested something "in the vein of: / 'The owl and the pussy cat went to sea / In a beautiful peagreen boat'" (2L 219).¹⁹ Nonsense should be met by nonsense was the implication. Nonsense is not the mode of *All of Us*, but those poems nonetheless share what is manifest in Lawrence's half-serious suggestion to Monroe: an utter determination not to meet the war on its own terms.

All of Us is an ingenious affront to the war, to its scale, to its mechanisation, to its nationalisms, to the fighting itself. The

opening poem of the sequence, 'Farewell and Adieu', is a rendition of Schäfer's Song 46, one of three under the title 'Schwerer Abschied' ['Difficult Parting']:

When in the morning I rose to depart, my love came to say
farewell.
She wept bitterly, hiding her face in her kerchief. I said, 'Why
then!'
She said to me, 'Stay three hours, to comfort me.' – Such is a
girl!
Do not ask me, Almighty God, to part from her again.
(*Poems I* 139)

A mixture of trisyllabic and disyllabic feet and caesurae in both the second and third lines imbue the poem with a stateliness which is reinforced by the spare and rather formal diction, the biblical-sounding formulations ("in the morning I rose to depart"), the paratactical constructions, the lack of identifying details, the dearth of imagery and the absence of summative commentary. (The ABAB rhyme scheme lightly holds the lines together.) The effect typifies *All of Us*: deliberate, dignified, laconic. Tone itself is part of Lawrence's reconceptualisation of war poetry: as this opening poem indicates, the sequence is in complete contrast to his earlier foray into the genre. 'Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani?', published in *The Egoist* on 1 May 1915, is an eroticised imagining of a bayoneting: "Like a bride he took my bayonet, wanting it, / Like a virgin the blade of my bayonet, wanting it";²⁰ as frenzied and expressionist as anything Lawrence deprecated in the war itself. The poems in *All of Us* are not like this, but remain tonally and technically, as well as thematically, above the fray.

Indeed, in 'Farewell and Adieu' (as in its Arabic and German predecessors) there is nothing even to indicate that the departing lover is setting off to fight. It is only in the context of the rest of the sequence that this opening valediction waves the reader, as well as the warrior, off to war. Lawrence had been struck by a spectacle he

witnessed at Barrow-in-Furness station on 4 August 1914, the day the war was declared. He told Cynthia Asquith: “I can remember soldiers kissing on Barrow station, and a woman shouting defiantly to her sweetheart ‘When you get at ‘em, Clem, let ‘em have it’, as the train drew off – and in all the tram-cars ‘War’” (2*L* 268). Fascinated and appalled, he described the sight again in ‘With the Guns’, revealing the reality of what “letting ‘em have it” would mean for the human frame in the context of industrialised warfare: “This was how the gunner ‘would let ‘em have it.’ A shell would fall into this mass of vulnerable bodies, there would be a torn hole in the mass. This would be his ‘letting ‘em have it’” (2*I* 82). The shelled and obliterated body envisaged here is also absent from ‘Farewell and Adieu’, but this is a different kind of absence – a refocusing of attention on the sorrowful feelings of the parting lovers. Lawrence tinkers with the German to expose not only the girl’s devastation at her lover’s departure but also his anguish at her grief: Schäfer’s bilateral “die Trennung der Liebesleute is schwer, / o Herr Gott!” [“The separation of lovers is hard, o Lord God”] becomes the unilateral “Do not ask me, Almighty God, to part from her again”. (The sentiment is reminiscent of a much earlier farewell on the brink of war, John Donne’s ‘A Valediction: of Weeping’.)

The adjustments of focus, again, form part of Lawrence’s poetics of war. Beginning with this farewell, he immediately deprioritises combat itself as the definitive experience of armed conflict. Instead, the reader’s attention is at once drawn to the acute emotional pain of separation, of witnessing a loved one’s grief. Consonant with this, in the majority of the poems in *All of Us* the effect of war is seen on those who are *not* fighting it: wives and lovers, parents and children, younger siblings. Redistributing the war experience in this way, Lawrence manages to circumvent what has come critically to be known as “combat gnosticism”. This term, coined by James Campbell in a 1999 article, refers to the conceptualisation of armed conflict which privileges fighting itself as “a kind of gnosis, a secret knowledge which only an initiated elite knows”.²¹ Declared unfit for military service, self-consciously

not a combatant – “I am not in the war zone. I think I am much too valuable a creature to offer myself to a German bullet gratis and for fun”, he wrote to Harriet Monroe (2L 219) – Lawrence found a means, through the songs of the fellaheen, to articulate a revised combat gnosticism, a belief in indirect and vicarious, but still painful, means of knowing about the war.²²

The fellaheen's songs also circumvented the war's sheer size. From the beginning, as Carl Krockel has pointed out, the conflict “overwhelmed” Lawrence with its “scale and intensity”.²³ Throughout his writings, he returns in fear and despair to the numerousness of those fighting, the “vast mob-spirit” and the “ghastly masses” (K 213), the “obscenity of obscenities” that was “the will of the flock” (RDP 43). By contrast, and strikingly, the adjectives he uses to describe *All of Us* are diminutive: they are “a tiny book of poems” (3L 49, 51), “little poems” (3L 74, 221), a “little manuscript of tiny poems” (3L 218, 338).²⁴ His 1919 title for a 29-poem version of the series was, tersely, ‘Bits’ (*Poems II* 699). Strung together like so many minute beads, the sequence is slight. It is not just that Lawrence downsizes the war to the moment of the fiancée's pining or the mother's anxiety. Brevity itself becomes a stylistic strength.²⁵ ‘The Wind, The Rascal’, for example, comprises a mere three lines, plus the title and what Pollnitz aptly terms a “stage direction” (*Poems II* 916):

‘The Wind, The Rascal’

(*A girl, sitting alone at night, starts at the sound of the wind.*)

The wind, the rascal, knocked at my door, and I said:

“My love is come.”

But Oh, wind, what a knave thou art

Thus to make sport of a sorrowful heart! (*Poems I* 143)

Again, it is only its inclusion in the sequence that makes this a war poem (this context is absent in the Arabic and German versions): in

a remarkable feat of condensation a global conflict is reduced to the sound of the wind heard by a solitary girl. The poem is more complex than 'Farewell and Adieu' in so far as it features an extended metaphor: the wind "knocks" on the door like a rascally child, tricking the girl into believing that her lover is there, and so raises her hopes only to deflate them – a mischievous toying with emotions. But, as in the opening poem, a formal, biblical-sounding effect is achieved by simple lexis, parataxis, apostrophe and an absence of contextual detail (again, with the lightest of touches, end-rhymes constitute the sole cohesive formal feature). Spare, delicate and economical in its deployment of poetic resources, 'The Wind, The Rascal' is the complete opposite of the massed forces and bloodthirsty mobs that so horrified Lawrence.

The 31 poems of the sequence also undermine any sense of the exceptionality of the war's experiences. As noted, Lawrence's translation of the fellaheen's songs was not solely linguistic. Entire situations are carried across to the wartime context. 'Zeppelin Nights', for example, is a rendition of Schäfer's Song 23, 'Genug des Spiels' ['Enough Playing'], a song which might typically be sung by a mother calling her children in for dinner.²⁶ The singer promises the children punishment if they do not come in from their games at once: "so werf ich euch mit einem Erdkloß! / Mäusegift / gibt's beim Krämer!" ["I will throw a lump of earth at you! / The grocer / sells rat poison!"]. Lawrence transposes the kindly-meant threats of a mother into another kind of warning:

Tonight they're coming!
It's a full moon!
When you hear them humming
Very soon,
You'll stop that blooming
Tune— (*Poems I* 146–7)

"They" and "them" are not identified in the body of the poem: the undisclosed threat draws on the terrors of the dark, the menace of

what might come out in the moonlight and the ominous connotations of "humming". Only the title reveals that reference is being made to the Zeppelin raids over England, which began in January 1915. On 31 May of that year, the first Zeppelin attack was made on London. A raid on 8 September, witnessed by Lawrence and Frieda who were living in Hampstead at the time, killed 22 and injured over 80 Londoners (*Poems II* 930). Without underestimating the deadly danger of the raids, 'Zeppelin Nights' indicates a continuity of experience between those concerned about their children, whether in the East End of London in wartime (the rhyme scheme suggests that "blooming" is pronounced as the cockney "blummin'") or the rural Middle East. With the moon now interchangeable with "the shaking, white / Searchlight rays" (*Poems I* 146), a community, and a commonness, of suffering is proposed.

Now, it is a tempting critical move to suggest that, in addition to an opportunity to neutralise the exceptionality of the First World War, the fellaheen songs also offered Lawrence a source connoting timeless, elemental feelings, rootedness in the land, an existence powerful in its simplicity and closeness to nature – all qualities he is known for prizing. David Cram and Christopher Pollnitz argue in this vein that Lawrence's use of the fellaheen songs "was of a piece with a lifelong predilection ... for the directness of folk art before the self-conscious sophistication of high art"; indeed, they suggest that, in the manner of James Joyce and T. S. Eliot, *All of Us* deploys the "mythical method" of "juxtaposing the primitive with the sophisticatedly modern".²⁷ Schäfer himself paved the way for such an interpretation, describing his collection as "touching all the essential aspects of peasant life": "We find children at play and with their mother; youths at the work of excavation; girls drawing water; men at the plough, at the shaduf (scooping bucket) and the sa'ye (scooping wheel) ... the sailor and the vegetable-seller; the watchman guarding the antiquities; and much more".²⁸ The songs of the youths who built the sun-temple 4,500 years previously

would not have sounded very different, Schäfer adds, overlaying the traditional with a sense of the eternal.²⁹

In 1995, Dwight Fletcher Reynolds suggested that, in contemporary political discourse, the term *fellah* “is coded to refer to ‘real Egyptians’”, the people who “own and farm the land, the backbone of Egypt”.³⁰ Schäfer and, to an extent, Lawrence – who described the songs as “ingenuous and touching” in a letter to Louie Burrows (*IL* 196) – participate in such coding, taking the *fellah* to represent a certain simple authenticity of being. But the matter is highly nuanced. Across a number of works, Lawrence conveyed a certain image of Egypt. This image had nothing to do with the land-rents and cotton-harvests associated with the country in the British press, but instead derived from the cultural artefacts he had encountered. So, the Egyptian sculptures in the British Museum embodied for him “the tremendous unknown forces of life, coming unseen and unperceived as out of the desert to the Egyptians” (*2L* 218). In *Women in Love* – a novel not published until 1920, but which was being written and re-written as Lawrence revised *All of Us* in 1916 and so forms a highly important intertext for the poems –³¹ these “forces” are described as having “immemorial potency, like the great carven statues of real Egypt” (*WL* 318).³² This sense of the monumental – immovable if not immobile – is discernible in *All of Us*, whose verses undoubtedly concern themselves with the elemental: the sun, the stars, the wind and, above all, the desert. But the Egypt adumbrated in *Women in Love* as a “concentration in darkness” (*WL* 318) – mysterious, atavistic, instinctive – is not the cultural prototype of the 31 poems. Indeed, since the original fellaheen songs are not specific to Egypt but were also sung in what was, in both Schäfer’s and Lawrence’s time, Palestine,³³ it is more accurate to associate them with a (working) way of life than with a particular nation state.

Understanding the original poems in this way allows the voices in Lawrence’s translations to be heard chiming with those of another community crucial to his aesthetic, albeit one geographically distant from the Middle East: the miners of his

native Nottinghamshire and other English counties. There are striking resemblances between the fellaheen and the miners. Both are engaged in excavating the earth (the fellaheen on the archaeological digs). Natural pigmentation and the effects of coal-dust produce in both of them dark complexions. The Midlands mining songs and poems collected by William Maurice in 1944 reveal a continuum of preoccupations with the songs of the fellaheen, most notably worry on the part of wives and mothers about their menfolk working in dangerous conditions ('A Woman Lies Awake') and references to the physical arduousness of the work and consciousness of being exploited by rich proprietors ('We Dig and Delve').³⁴ Lawrence dramatised these concerns in several of his works, most notably 'Odour of Chrysanthemums' (1911), in which a suffocated miner is laid out by his wife and mother, and *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928), in which Mrs Bolton tells of being widowed when her husband was killed in an accident in the mine (LCL 162–4). There is a clear line linking the fellaheen toiling on the archaeological digs to the miners working the pits to the soldiers in the trenches of the Western Front.³⁵ Lawrence sensed in the "blackened" miners "a resonance of physical men, a glamorous thickness of labour and maleness" (WL 222, 115), an evocation (in *Women in Love*) that resonates with Hugh Stevens's observation that he also "exult[ed]" in the erotic potential of a "brown, foreign masculinity".³⁶ In Lawrence's first published short story, 'A Prelude' (1907), a young farm-worker, Fred, dresses up as a Bedouin: "His eyes glittered like a true Arab's, and it was to be noticed that the muscles of his sunbrowned arm were tense with the grip of the broad hand" (LAH 9). This single sentence conjoins the eroticism of dark skin and physical strength with Semitic ethnicity. Similarly, the eponymous Prussian Officer of the short story of 1914 is besotted with a "swarthy" youth with "strong, heavy limbs" and "a soft, black, young moustache" who seems to receive "life direct through his senses" and acts "straight from instinct" (PO 2–3).

Again, there is a critical temptation to infer that Lawrence turned to the fellaheen and their songs – as he elsewhere turned to the miners – to evoke similar properties of sensuousness, strength and instinctiveness that bypass the intellect. The problem with this interpretation is that it undermines the complexity of the fellaheen folksongs, reducing the fellah to a signifier for the simplistic. Timothy Mitchell has traced a similar practice back through the inception of “peasant studies” in the interwar years to Henry Ayrout’s *The Egyptian Peasant* (first published as *Moeurs et coutumes des fellahs* in 1938, translated into Arabic in 1943 and English in 1945) and beyond that to Gustave Le Bon’s *Lois psychologiques de l’évolution des peuples* [*The Psychology of Peoples*] (1894) and *Psychologie des foules* [*The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*] (1895), both translated into Arabic and read widely in Cairo.³⁷ In these works, Mitchell explains, Le Bon posited the notion of a people’s psyche or soul, a “collective mind” which accumulates gradually as the product of the elite and which consists of ideas, feelings and belief.³⁸ Similarly, the crowd consists of cells “so merged together” that they constitute a “provisional being” with an “unconscious collective mind”.³⁹ A “backward nation” resembles the crowd: in both are “parallel states of mental inferiority ... caused by the absence of individuality”.⁴⁰ Such notions, formulated by Ayrout specifically in relation to the fellaheen (“The fellah should always be spoken of in the plural because he lives always as a member of a group, if not of a crowd”),⁴¹ formed the basis of the aforementioned “peasant studies”, in which the fellah is associated with lack of change, with the “ancient and exotic” and with a “timeless ... mentality”.⁴² Ascribing Lawrence’s selection of the fellaheen songs for translation to his penchant for the elemental, the felt life, the existence connected to the earth is dangerous in that it rests on the assumption that these qualities connote backwardness or naivety. Simple but far from simplistic, the 31 poems of *All of Us* are a radical attempt to break down national barriers and re-group ordinary people in a common interest.

As Paul Delany comments, Lawrence's immediate fear on the outbreak of war was of "being drawn into the vortex of nationalistic passions".⁴³ In a letter of 19 April 1915, to Lady Ottoline Morrell, he wrote, "Sometimes I think I can't stand this England any more: it is too wicked and perverse" (2L 319). His vision of the war's destructive effect on the nation informs 'England, My England', a short story he wrote in 1915. "Old" England emerges in this story as a place of "hamlets and yeomen", discernable in Winifred who is "ruddy, strong, with a certain crude, passionate quiescence and a hawthorn robustness" and in the sense of the "hot blood-desire of by-gone yeomen", who "had lusted and bred for so many generations" in the cottage (EME 6, 8). Egbert, Winifred's husband, is something different to this – "a born rose", an "epicurean hermit", "a flower in the garden" (EME 7, 10, 12) – and the outbreak of war horrifies him:

He had no conception of Imperial England, and Rule Britannia was just a joke to him. He was a pure-blooded Englishman, perfect in his race, and when he was truly himself he could no more have been aggressive on the score of his Englishness than a rose can be aggressive on the score of its rosiness. (EME 27)

The Englishness of Winifred and her family, the Marshalls, is, Lawrence implies, a dark, destructive force which finds its apotheosis in "mass feeling" and "Mechanism, the pure mechanical action of obedience at the guns" (EME 27, 31). It is this force, deployed by English and Germans alike, which kills Egbert, the "English archer" (EME 6) – a figure who is notably unmechanised.

All of Us is the antidote to the Marshalls / the martial, the class denounced in *Kangaroo* as "British commercial bullies" (K 214). The sequence partakes in Lawrence's vision of "the Whole" – crucially distinct from the mass – which preoccupied him for the duration of the war. In a letter of 28 January 1915, to E. M. Forster, he stated, "it is time to gather again a conception of the Whole ... a conception of the beginning and end, of heaven and hell" (2L 265–

6).⁴⁴ The vision had a venue, an island – Lawrence called it Ranim –⁴⁵ where people would come, each “knowing that his life [was] but a tiny section of a Whole”, to form “a real community ... out of many fulfilled individualities seeking greater fulfilment” (2L 266). He reiterated the point to the barrister Gordon Campbell:

You see it really means something ... this feeling that one is not only a little individual living a little individual life, but that one is in oneself the whole of mankind, and one's fate is the fate of the whole of mankind, and one's charge is the charge of the whole of mankind. Not *me* – the little, vain, personal D. H. Lawrence – but that unnameable *me* which is not vain nor personal, but strong, and glad, and ultimately sure, but so blind, so groping, so tongue-tied, so staggering. (2L 302)

All of Us articulates the ideal of the individual in the whole, a polity which, to use a word Lawrence deployed in *Women in Love*, is “super-national” (WL 397).⁴⁶ This ideal found a congenial outlet in the fellaheen songs, which were, Schäfer insisted, “all truly sung by the people” or, as a reviewer of Frances Hart Breasted's translation commented, “such as the people *really* sing”.⁴⁷ The voices of the 31 poems are those of wagon-haulers, children, prostitutes, workers, farm-labourers, parents: in other words, of all of us. They speak from Flanders, from Mesopotamia, from Salonika, from East Africa, from England, from the Near East, from Turkey, from the East End of London. They are cold, overcome by the heat, wet with rain. Their greatest pain is that of separation – the majority long for their lovers and their sexual frustration is palpable – but they also tell of hard work, tiredness, hunger, thirst, bereavement, physical suffering, death. ‘Drill on Salisbury Plain in Summer Time’, for example, is a song beseeching the sun to have mercy on sweating workers:

Go forward, Sun, do not torment us
With this affectation of faltering.

We have leaked like a barrel that is sprung; but as yet
I see little hope of altering
The greed of this infamous fellow for our sweat. (*Poems I* 145)

Cast as an apostrophe to the sun (Donne again comes to mind, with 'The Sunne Rising'), this is an expansion of Schäfer's two-line Song 26: "Wandre weiter, Sonne, laß die Ziererei! / das hier ist eine Fronarbeit, bei der es keine Fürsprache gibt" ["Move on, Sun, enough of the pretence! This here is drudgery, for which there is no intercession"].⁴⁸ Economical as always in the sequence in his use of metaphor, again omitting identifying personal detail, again drawing the lines together with end-rhymes, Lawrence connects the situation of the fellaheen, doing forced (unpaid) labour on the excavations, with that of the soldiers drilling in the summer sun in England (the Egyptian Labour Corps, though not evoked in the poem, is a silent link between the two).⁴⁹ As a result, the martial manoeuvres are revealed equally to be the outcome of exploitation, imposed on helpless and suffering men. There is some irony in the fact that Song 26 belongs to a set labelled "Bei der Ausgrabungsarbeit" ["During the Excavation Work"] by Schäfer. As this suggests, the fellaheen have been recruited (their financial circumstances give them no choice) into the despoiling project of turn-of-the-century German Egyptology: the digging up of the land, the labelling and confiscation of artefacts, the intervention in and shaping of cultural heritage and regional history. Lawrence's recruits on Salisbury Plain, it can be inferred, have been conscripted into similar complicity with powers whose interests do not match their own. 'Drill on Salisbury Plain in Summer Time' is a song of oppression circumventing national boundaries, an example of what Amit Chaudhuri describes as a Lawrentian discourse "that struggles to move towards communality and participation, and away from control and power".⁵⁰

So when Lawrence sent *All of Us* to Pinker as the war literature "the people ... are looking for" (3L 51), he was enunciating a war poetics at once inclusive, democratising, individualising and

internationalising. Slight as they are, the 31 poems combine to challenge what is massed, mechanised and nationalistic about the war, homing in on the succinct but salient emotional moment. Finding continuities between those exploited and oppressed by the first global armed conflict and the quotidian sorrows and sufferings of a colonised people, Lawrence constructs a supra-nationalism grounded in labour and realised in glimpses of particular intimacy, familiar to us all.

I would like to thank Santanu Das, Yousif Qasmiyeh, Susan Reid and Hugh Stevens for reading and commenting on earlier drafts of this piece. Remaining errors are my own. This article was first given as a paper at the English Association's *British Poetry of the First World War* conference, held at Wadham College, Oxford, on 5–7 September 2014. Subsequent to giving the paper, I discovered that Dr. Catherine Brown had lectured on *All Of Us* to the D. H. Lawrence Society on 11 September 2014 (see <<http://catherinebrown.org/anglo-german-relations-and-d-h-lawrences-all-of-us/>> for a transcript). There is inevitably some overlap between this article and Dr. Brown's lecture.

¹ For an exhaustive bibliographical history of *All Of Us*, and the related 'Bits' and 'War Films' sequences, see *Poems II*, 696–700, 914–38, and, further, David Cram and Christopher Pollnitz, 'D. H. Lawrence as Verse Translator', *Cambridge Quarterly* 30.2 (June 2001), 133–50, 133 and Mark Kinkead-Weekes, *D. H. Lawrence: Triumph to Exile 1912–1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996), 345, 432, 826 n.119.

² Heinrich Schäfer, 'Vorwort', *Die Lieder Eines Ägyptischen Bauern*, ed. Heinrich Schäfer (Leipzig: J. S. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1903), vii–xv, viii. For a full account, see the rest of this preface. Translations of Schäfer are my own unless otherwise stated. An English translation of Schäfer by Frances Hart Breasted was published by Hinrichs as *Songs of an Egyptian Peasant* in 1904. There is no evidence, however, that Lawrence saw this translation (Cram and Pollnitz, 'D. H. Lawrence as Verse Translator', 134 n.4). For a contemporary review of Breasted's translation, see J. Walker, 'Some Rhymes of Egyptian Children', *Folklore* 38.4 (31 December 1927), 375–83.

³ The translation of the Arabic fellah (plural fellaheen) as "peasant" is widespread. Schäfer's German translation – Bauer [farmer, peasant] – avoids the more pejorative connotations of the English word. Frances Hart Breasted, in her 1904 translation of Schäfer, uses "peasant" but notes that fellah literally means "plowman": 'Translator's Preface', *The Songs of an Egyptian Peasant*, ed. Heinrich Schäfer, trans. Frances Hart Breasted (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1904), xv–xvi, xvi. Dwight Fletcher Reynolds glosses fellaheen as "people who own and farm the land, the backbone of Egypt", but notes that the term is also used "derogatorily to indicate lack of education, provincialism, naiveté, even stubbornness": *Heroic Poets, Poetic Heroes: The Ethnography of Performance in an Arabic Oral Tradition* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1995), 65. Ted Swedenborg translates "*fallah*" as "peasant" and stresses the fellaheen's "closeness to the soil": 'The Palestinian Peasant as National Signifier', *Anthropological Quarterly* 63.1 (January 1990), 18–30, 18. This quality is also emphasised by James Clifford, for whom the fellah is "the epitome of what it means to be *samid*, to stay put, anchored to the earth with stubborn determination": 'On Ethnographic Allegory', *Writing Cultures*, eds James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley: U of California P, 1986), 98–121, 112. The fellah's attachment to the land, as farmer or farm-worker, is key and distinguishes the fellaheen from the itinerant bedouin. To avoid the negative or distorting connotations of any translation, fellah, rather than "peasant", is used throughout this essay.

⁴ Cram and Pollnitz, 'D. H. Lawrence as Verse Translator', 133. On Lawrence and the German language, see also Armin Arnold, 'The German Letters of D. H. Lawrence', *Comparative Literature Studies* 3.3 (1966), 285–98, and Jan Wilm, "'A Beastly Language': Uses of German in the Letters of D. H. Lawrence", *Journal of D. H. Lawrence Studies* 3.2 (2013), 85–107. Wilm describes Lawrence's German as "full of beautiful, productive mistakes" (ibid., 96).

⁵ In his "only extended public comment on the translation process" (per G. M. Hyde, *D. H. Lawrence and the Art of Translation* [London: Macmillan, 1981], 3), in a review of R. B. Cunningham Grahame's *Pedro de Valdivia: Conqueror of Chile* (1926) published in *Calendar* in January 1927, Lawrence criticised "the peculiar laziness or insensitiveness to language which is so great a vice in a translator" (IR 303).

⁶ Not all the poems' Middle Eastern origins are obscured. 'Star Sentinel', a version of Schäfer's Song 68, 'Das Prachzelt' ['The

Magnificent Tent’], features a young woman musing on her betrothed “who is in Mesopotamia” (*Poems I* 139) and ‘Too Late’, a rendition of Schäfer’s Song 11, ‘Der Nachzügler’ [‘The Straggler’], which is voiced by a pilgrim en route to Mecca, articulates the plight of a soldier “in Mesopotamia” separated from his comrades (*Poems I* 148). On the British fighting in Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq), see *Poems II*, 935.

⁷ ‘New Sultan’s Views’, *The Times*, 21 December 1914, 10.

⁸ ‘Egypt at the Cross-Roads’, *The Times*, 22 January 1914, 7.

⁹ ‘Egyptian Cotton Crop’, *The Times*, 18 August 1911, 15.

¹⁰ See, for example, ‘The Ferment of the East’, *The Times*, 11 May 1910, 11; ‘The Egyptian Nationalists’, *The Times*, 20 September 1910, 9; ‘Egyptian Investment and Agency (Limited)’, *The Times*, 27 April 1911, 22; ‘Egyptian Cotton Crop’, *The Times*, 18 August 1911, 15; ‘Engineering at Assuan’, *The Times*, 24 December 1912, 5; ‘Irrigation in Egypt’, *The Times*, 5 March 1913, 23; ‘Egypt and the Sudan’, *The Times*, 26 March 1913, 17; ‘Treasure Trove’, *The Times*, 29 May 1914, 6; ‘Scarcity of Gold Coinage in Egypt’, *The Times*, 15 September 1914, 14. ‘Suez Canal in War Time’, *The Times*, 7 March 1916, 5.

¹¹ Hansard HC Deb, 31 March 1919, vol. 114, c853.

¹² For fuller information about Lawrence and German literature and culture, see Jennifer Michaels-Tonks, *D. H. Lawrence: The Polarity of North and South – Germany and Italy in His Prose Works* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1976), Carl Krockel, *D. H. Lawrence and Germany: The Politics of Influence* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), and Cram and Pollnitz, ‘D. H. Lawrence as Verse Translator’, 135.

¹³ See Paul Delany, *D. H. Lawrence’s Nightmare: The Writer and His Circle in the Years of the Great War* (Hassocks: The Harvester Press, 1979), 6–7. (See also Lawrence’s fictionalised account of his time with Frieda in Germany before the war in Part 2 of *Mr Noon*.)

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁵ John Worthen, *D. H. Lawrence: The Life of an Outsider* (London: Penguin, 2006), 188–92.

¹⁶ In December 1916, Lawrence asked Cynthia Asquith, daughter-in-law of the just-replaced Prime Minister, for permission to dedicate *All of Us* to her (3L 49). She found them “sardonic” (Kinkead-Weekes, *D. H. Lawrence: Triumph to Exile*, 432) but was relieved that they “were mainly (thank Heaven)! not erotic”: Cynthia Asquith, *Diaries, 1915–1918* (London: Hutchinson, 1968), 419, quoted in *Poems II* 700.

¹⁷ See also Cram and Pollnitz, 'D. H. Lawrence as Verse Translator', 148, on the difficulties that resulted from Lawrence dedicating *The Rainbow* (1915) to his German sister-in-law.

¹⁸ Jan Wilm makes the same point with regard to Lawrence writing letters in German: "The overcoming of his own limitations with this 'beastly' language could be seen as a very subtle, but no less powerful, hint at a larger project of overcoming the confines which Lawrence felt his own language and nation imposed on him": Wilm, "A Beastly Language", 87.

¹⁹ The reference from *Poetry V* is quoted in 2L 219 n.3.

²⁰ D. H. Lawrence, 'Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani?', *The Egoist* 5.2 (1 May 1915), 75–6. On this poem, see Ernest W. Tedlock, Jr., 'A Forgotten War Poem by D. H. Lawrence', *Modern Language Notes* 67.4 (1952), 410–13.

²¹ James Campbell, 'Combat Gnosticism: The Ideology of First World War Criticism', *New Literary History* 30 (1999), 203–15, 204.

²² Worthen, *D. H. Lawrence: The Life of an Outsider*, 201. On Lawrence's lack of military service, see Keith Cushman, 'Bay: The Noncombatant as War Poet', *The Spirit of D. H. Lawrence: Centenary Studies*, eds G. Salgãdo and G. K. Das (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), 181–98.

²³ Carl Krockel, *War Trauma and English Modernism: T. S. Eliot and D. H. Lawrence* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 33.

²⁴ Schäfer, too, described the poems as "Die kleine Sammlung" ["the little collection"] and "nur klein" ["only small"], in 'Vorwort', vii, x, xii, xii.

²⁵ It is notable that, in *Women in Love*, a novel Lawrence was working on contemporaneously with revising *All Of Us*, Gudrun Brangwen has a similar aesthetic: "Isn't it queer that she always likes little things? – she must always work small things" (WL 39).

²⁶ On the different versions of 'Zeppelin Nights' see *Poems II* 930–1.

²⁷ Cram and Pollnitz, 'D. H. Lawrence as Verse Translator', 136, 145.

²⁸ Schäfer, 'Vorwort', x.

²⁹ Ibid., xii.

³⁰ Reynolds, *Heroic Poets, Poetic Heroes*, 65.

³¹ There is insufficient space to discuss the inter-relations between the novel and the poems, but it is worth noting that *Women in Love* contains a number of references to Egypt; for instance, it dramatises discussions in

which nationalism is deprecated, depicts, in Gerald Crich, a mine-owner who wants to replace the human workers with a “perfect, inhuman machine” (WL 228), and even reprises a German folksong (‘Mach mir auf’) very similar to Schäfer’s *Lieder*, in which the singer pleads with his lover to let him in from the rain (WL 419).

³² Quoted in Hugh Stevens, ‘Sex and the Nation: “The Prussian Officer” and *Women in Love*’, in *The Cambridge Companion to D. H. Lawrence*, ed. Anne Fernihough (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006), 49–66, 61.

³³ I am grateful to the Palestinian poet Yousif M. Qasmiyeh for this point.

³⁴ William Jackson, ed., *A Pitman’s Anthology, Compiled by William Maurice, 1872–1951* (London: James & James, 2004), 74, 289–90. I am grateful to David Amos for drawing my attention to this anthology.

³⁵ In *Women in Love*, the miners are described as being in a “state of war” with the mine-owners (WL 225).

³⁶ Stevens, ‘Sex and the Nation’, 53–4.

³⁷ Timothy Mitchell, ‘The Invention and Reinvention of the Egyptian Peasant’, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 22 (1990), 129–50, 129–30, 134.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 134.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Gustave Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (New York: Macmillan, 1896), 36; quoted in Mitchell, ‘The Invention and Reinvention of the Egyptian Peasant’, 135.

⁴¹ Henry Ayrout, *The Egyptian Peasant*, trans. John Alden Williams (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2005), 87; quoted in Mitchell, ‘The Invention and Reinvention of the Egyptian Peasant’, 135.

⁴² Mitchell, ‘The Invention and Reinvention of the Egyptian Peasant’, 132, 133, 137.

⁴³ Delany, *D. H. Lawrence’s Nightmare*, 18.

⁴⁴ Lawrence’s conception has affinities with the cosmological beliefs described in el-Sayed el-Aswad, ‘The Cosmological Belief System of Egyptian Peasants’, *Anthropos* Bd. 89, H. 4./6/ (1994), 359–77.

⁴⁵ The name is mentioned in a letter of 3 January 1915 to Lawrence’s friend, the Russian translator S. S. Kotliansky (2L 252). Delany explains that it was “a Hebrew word that Lawrence interpreted as ‘let us rejoice’ and picked up from Kotliansky’s chanting of psalms on their walking tour”: Delany, *D. H. Lawrence’s Nightmare*, 19.

⁴⁶ Clifford and Constance Chatterley are also described as being "above narrow patriotism" (FSLC 225).

⁴⁷ Schäfer, 'Vorwort', 10; A. F. C., review of *The Songs of an Egyptian Peasant*, ed. Heinrich Schäfer, trans. Frances Hart Breasted, *The Journal of American Folklore* 19.73 (1906), 175–6:175.

⁴⁸ Schäfer, *Die Lieder Eines Ägyptischen Bauern*, 28.

⁴⁹ *Eine Fronarbeit* is the equivalent of a *corvée*, a day's work of unpaid labour.

⁵⁰ Amit Chaudhuri, *D. H. Lawrence and 'Difference': Postcoloniality and the Poetry of the Present* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003), 8.