**Université Paris Nanterre**

**32nd International D.H. Lawrence Conference**

**Etudes lawrenciennes, CREA EA 370**

**29-31 March 2018**

**RESISTING TRAGEDY**

The theme of this conference has been prompted by the first line of *Lady Chatterley's Lover:* "Ours is essentially a tragic age, so we refuse to take it tragically."

The statement invites reflection on the literary means and devices that were adopted by Lawrence in order to resist tragedy, both here and elsewhere in his writings. The strategies of resistance include various arts of distanciation through which the tragic can be warded off. They can be linguistic, poetic, rhetorical, or can involve the interplay between a variety of perspectives, tonal shifts, humour, satire, romance, poetic licence, the refusal of seriousness etc.

The focus of the 2018 Conference should not be exclusively or too explicitly on WW1 and its consequences. If the opening to *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* offers an explicit reference to the war and, in the second sentence, an explanation of its origin and a hypothesis regarding the responses that it arouses, “the cataclysm has happened, we are among the ruins, we start to build up new little habitats, to have new little hopes”, the focus of the conference is to be less on the specific nature of the “cataclysms” than on the nature and the substance of these “little habitats” and “little hopes” that are devised, conjured up, as if the immensity of “cataclysm”, apocalypse, were unable to put an end to an irrepressible individual and collective inventiveness. The resistance to tragedy thus appears to be the condition or cost exacted of a society or of a social agent who is to survive or outlive the “cataclysm”, a “cataclysm” which is both historical, epochal, but also, perhaps, existential or anthropological. Lawrence asserts "Tragedy looks to me like man/ in love with his own defeat" (*Pansies*). We may then suggest further lines of reflection on the following themes: resistance or non-resistance to tragedy whether personal, social or political, heroism or escapism, the denunciation of Hamletizing, the temptation of oblivion, the refusal of sacrifice or self-annihilation, resilience and creative destruction. This list is of course not exhaustive.

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