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**Women's Condition in D. H. Lawrence's Shorter Fiction: A Study of Representative
Narrative Processes in Selected Texts**

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Summary

The condition of women in D. H. Lawrence's fiction has often been examined from a psycho-biographical viewpoint. Concentrating on the content of his writings some scholars have argued that Lawrence 'turned against women' after the war and that this change is reflected in his post-war fiction.

This thesis shifts the focus to the form that shapes the contents of Lawrence's fictions: drawing from the works of narratologists, it closely examines a formally and thematically representative sample of Lawrence's post-war short fictions with a view to demonstrating that the allegation is inaccurate and textually unfounded. What these readings ultimately evince is that the failure to apprehend Lawrence's complex mode of representation in combination with subjectivized narrators has often led to a misapprehension of the political import of Lawrence's narratives.

The texts examined have been thematically grouped around four common indictments against Lawrence: his advocacy of woman's submission to man, his exultation over the infliction of physical violence on women, his delectation in breaking female bonds, and his silencing of rebellious women characters. After a brief examination of the extant criticism on Lawrence's short story production on the one hand, and on Lawrence's relationship to feminism on the other, and an exposition of the theoretical premises informing this thesis, four chapters follow. Chapter one examines 'Hadrian' and 'Tickets, Please' in the light of institutionalized and subliminal modes of patriarchal domination of women; it particularly aims to illuminate Lawrence's technique of narrative organization. Chapter two focuses on the theme of rape in 'Samson and Delilah', 'The Princess', and 'None of That'; here the main emphasis is on the handling of point of view and narrative voice. Chapter three explores 'Mother and Daughter', 'The Lovely Lady' (Part I) and *The Fox* (Part II) in relation to the question of women's division by/in a male hegemonic order; Part I focuses on intertextuality, whereas Part II concentrates on narrative ambiguity, structural fragmentation and open-endedness. Chapter four analyses 'The Woman Who Rode Away' and *St Mawr* in the light of the possible alternatives to patriarchal capitalism which they represent respectively; the techniques examined here are more broad-ranging, ultimately seeking to articulate the essential and paradigmatic quality of these texts: their intrinsic "volubility". The concluding chapter summarizes findings and situates Lawrence's narrative techniques within a post-Jamesian context.

INTRODUCTION

Kate Millett's feminist polemic, *Sexual Politics*, published in 1970, finished off what Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* started in 1949: the identification of D. H. Lawrence as one of the arch-enemies of twentieth-century woman.¹

Elaine Feinstein's *Lawrence's Women: The Intimate Life of D. H. Lawrence*, when set alongside other recent publications whose focus is also on Lawrence's relationship to feminism, actually proves that Kate Millett did not 'finish off' any polemic as Maddox suggests in the introductory statement (quoted above) to her review of Feinstein's book.² In fact, Millett only re-opened a discussion which dates back, not to Simone de Beauvoir, but to John Middleton Murry's *Son of Woman* — published only one year after Lawrence's death.³ Moreover, Maddox's claim that Lawrence is 'one of the arch-enemies of twentieth-century woman' does not take into consideration contemporary dissenting feminist voices such as those, to cite only a few, of Carol Siegel, Sandra M. Gilbert, Mara Kalnins, and Lydia Blanchard.⁴

1. Brenda Maddox, 'Reluctant to Kiss: Elaine Feinstein's *Lawrence's Women*', *The Times Literary Supplement*, 15 January (1993), p. 5.

2. Elaine Feinstein's *Lawrence's Women: The Intimate Life of D. H. Lawrence* (London: Harper Collins, 1993); other recently published works on this subject are: Margaret Storch's *Sons and Adversaries: Women in William Blake and D. H. Lawrence* (Knoxville, Tenn.: University of Tennessee Press, 1991), also reviewed by Brenda Maddox in her 'Damages of the Breast: Infantilism in Blake and Lawrence', *The Times Literary Supplement*, 7 June (1991), p. 10; David Holbrook's *Where D. H. Lawrence Was Wrong About Women* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press; London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1992); Carol Siegel's *Lawrence Among the Women: Wavering Boundaries in Women's Literary Traditions* (Charlottesville, VA, and London: University Press of Virginia, 1991).

3. John Middleton Murry, *Son of Woman: D. H. Lawrence* (London and Toronto: Jonathan Cape, 1931); Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. by H. M. Parshley (London and Toronto: Jonathan Cape, 1953).

4. Carol Siegel's *Lawrence Among the Women: Wavering Boundaries in Women's Literary Traditions*; Sandra M. Gilbert's 'Feminism and D. H. Lawrence: Some Notes Toward a Vindication of His Rites', *Anals: An International Journal*, 9 (1991), 92-100; Mara Kalnins, 'Lawrence's Men and Women: Complements and Opposites', in *Problems for Feminist Criticism*, edited by Sally Minogue (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), pp. 145-78; Lydia Blanchard, 'Love and Power: A Reconsideration of Sexual Politics in D. H. Lawrence', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 21 (1975-76), 431-43.

This thesis also considers D. H. Lawrence's relationship to feminism, albeit from a perspective different from those from which it has normally been viewed. First of all, this survey aims to break through the biographical and psychological critical impasse that surrounds D. H. Lawrence's sexual politics by shifting the focus to the *interplay* between narrative techniques and sexual/textual ideology in some of his narratives. Accordingly, this thesis will offer interpretive readings of selected texts with a view to illuminating the intricate texture of Lawrence's fictions and the difficulties this poses when trying to elucidate their ideological import.

The particular texts to be closely examined are in fact short narratives. This specific selection has been determined, first of all, by the obvious reason that the short story genre is a convenient arena for close textual analysis. In the second place, it has been influenced by the scant attention which Lawrence's shorter fictions have received by the critics — a fate that parallels Lawrence's poetic production and the short story genre in general.

In effect, only three extensive studies of Lawrence's shorter fiction have been published hitherto: Kingsley Widmer's *The Art of Perversity: D. H. Lawrence's Shorter Fictions* (1962), Keith Cushman's *D. H. Lawrence at Work: The Emergence of "The Prussian Officer" Stories* (1978), and Janice H. Harris's *The Short Fiction of D. H. Lawrence* (1984).

The first of these books, as its title indicates, explores Lawrence's 'shorter fictions' from a thematic viewpoint. Inasmuch as it aims to deal with the whole production of Lawrence within the genre, it can only offer a superficial overview of the stories. Nonetheless, it is useful for any newcomer to this body of Lawrence's works.

By contrast, Janice H. Harris organizes her study chronologically so as to shed light upon 'Lawrence's progress within the genre'.⁵ One of the positive aspects of this book is the way it foregrounds the dialogic quality of Lawrence's fictions, that is, the way in which his stories converse with each other. To this one ought to add the many shrewd

5. Janice H. Harris, *The Short Fiction of D. H. Lawrence* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1984), p. xi.

insights into particular stories that the book contains. Finally, there is the intelligent circumspection with which Harris deals with the issue of Lawrence's relationship to feminism. Yet there are some serious shortcomings in her approach. Harris shows an inclination to intentional justifications which seriously damage some of her arguments. Further, she deals with different versions of specific stories while — somehow inconsistently — skating over the writing process involved in many others. Then, she at times bends the evidence which she provides so that it fits her ends, now resorting to biography for a specific tale, then to narrative explanations, without alerting the reader why she chooses to do so. Most important of all, Harris runs into serious difficulties when trying to interpret some specific stories according to the mode which they are supposed to exemplify. So much is this the case that in the end the emphasis shifts from "chronological development" to "variety", thus threatening 'to call into question the usefulness of her thesis', as one reviewer has remarked.⁶

Keith Cushman's book is, compared to the works already mentioned, less comprehensive and for this reason all the more focused. Cushman does not aim to give an exhaustive account of Lawrence's 60-odd shorter fictions as much as he wants to concentrate on the early short stories which were compiled under the title of *The Prussian Officer* (1914). Actually, his particular preoccupation is not with the stories *per se* but with the analysis of the technical modifications involved at their different story-writing stages and the way these changes significantly affect meaning production in each of them. The result is a very discerning study, not just for the specific readings it offers, but because it uncovers a very crucial facet of Lawrence until then only cursorily observed: Lawrence's preoccupation with technique and his awareness of how meaning depends on it.

This survey partly aims to complement Cushman's in displacing the focus to the shorter fictions which Lawrence wrote *after 1914*. The choice of post-war shorter narratives has also been made with a view to testing a customary claim: that Lawrence 'turned against women' after the war and that this attitudinal change can in turn be traced

6. Gordon D. Hirsh, 'Review of Janice Hubbard Harris, *The Short Fiction of D. H. Lawrence*', *The D. H. Lawrence Review*, 17 (1984), 265-66 (p. 265).

in the fiction of this specific period.⁷ It will query this allegation by examining in detail a representative sample of stories selected on the basis of two interrelated criteria: first, all of them appear to corroborate this claim at an immediate level of narration; second, they have provoked controversial responses from those interested in women's issues. In so concentrating on these texts, this survey ultimately aims to demonstrate that the surface of Lawrence's fictions is in fact deceptively smooth: when one actually pierces through it, what emerges is a very intricate narrative pattern which intensely problematizes any facile ideological conclusion.

The stories have been thematically grouped in four different chapters. Four themes have been favoured in the light of what appear to be the most common feminist indictments against Lawrence, that is to say: his advocacy of woman's submission to man, his exultation over the infliction of physical violence on women, his delectation in breaking female bonds, and finally, his silencing of rebellious women characters, whether through death or exclusion from society. Thus, the first chapter will deal with 'Hadrian' ['You Touched Me'] and 'Tickets, Please' in the light of institutionalized and subliminal modes of patriarchal domination of women. The theme of rape will constitute the main preoccupation of the second chapter and will be pursued through 'Samson and Delilah', 'The Princess', and 'None of That'. In the third chapter, 'Mother and Daughter', 'The Lovely Lady', and *The Fox* will be examined in relation to the question of women's division by/in a male hegemonic order. The fourth chapter will be devoted to 'The Woman Who Rode Away' and *St Mawr*, both of which will be carefully explored for what they have to say about the possibility of women finding alternative modes of existence outside patriarchy. In a

7. I borrow the phrase from the title of Cornelia Nixon's work: *Lawrence's Leadership Politics and the Turn Against Women* (Berkeley, CA, and London: University of California Press, 1986). The same change in Lawrence's attitude towards women has been pointed out by Carol Dix, Hilary Simpson, Laurence Lerner and Barbara Hardy, to cite a few: Carol Dix, *D. H. Lawrence and Women* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1980); Hilary Simpson, *D. H. Lawrence and Feminism* (De Kalb, NIll: Northern Illinois University Press, 1982); Laurence Lerner, 'Lawrence and the Feminists', in *D. H. Lawrence: Centenary Essays*, edited by Mara Kalnins (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1986), pp. 69-87; Barbara Hardy, 'Women in D. H. Lawrence's Works', in *D. H. Lawrence*, edited by Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House Publ., 1986), pp. 133-46. An opposite view can be found in Evelyn Hinz's 'Le Féminisme, les femmes et la sexualité', *L'Arc*, 96 (1985), 48-57.

concluding chapter an attempt will be made to put Lawrence's mode of writing into a modernist perspective.

D. H. Lawrence's relationship to feminism: a critical survey

In 1970 Kate Millett published a book which would immediately become a best-seller: *Sexual Politics*. Much has been said about the weaknesses of this book already, especially with reference to the way it approaches literature through the works of four particular authors: D. H. Lawrence, Henry Miller, Norman Mailer, and Jean Genet. What has not been sufficiently emphasized in the course of such critiques is that at the time when the work was published, it was very much needed. Indeed, as Cora Kaplan has observed, it was needed in order to call readers' attention to literature as a major 'source of patriarchal ideology'.⁸ Neither has this work been praised enough for the way it succeeded in liberating literary criticism from the academic sphere. Because Kate Millett adopted a language free of literary jargon, she managed to reach a very wide lay readership. This would partly explain why, in spite of all the voices that have since then endeavoured to qualify the charges which Millett launched against Lawrence, the predominant idea is to this day that he is a male-supremacist.

Subsequent to the publication of *Sexual Politics*, Kate Millett's indictment of Lawrence found an echo in the works of a host of feminist critics. More interesting perhaps is the fact that such charges were further endorsed by feminists with different, and at times opposed, theoretical views and political interests. An illustrative example can be found in the studies of Florence Howe and Carolyn G. Heilbrun.⁹ The former concentrates on the content of literary works in an attempt to unveil falsifying representations of women; in contrast, Heilbrun focuses on modes of writing which, independently of their authors'

8. Cora Kaplan, 'Radical Feminism and Literature: Rethinking Millett's *Sexual Politics*', in *Feminist Literary Criticism*, edited by Mary Eagleton (London and New York: Longman, 1991), pp. 157-70 (p. 158). This essay was first published in *Red Letters*, 9 (1979).

9. Florence Howe, 'Feminism and Literature', in *Images of Women in Fiction: Feminists Perspectives*, edited by Susan Koppelman Cornillon (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1972), pp. 253-77 (first published in *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal* (Winter, 1972), 369-89); Carolyn G. Heilbrun, *Towards a Recognition of Androgyny: Aspects of Male and Female in Literature* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973). An earlier passing reference to Lawrence's sexism can also be found in yet another book whose impact almost equalled Kate Millett's: Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch* (London: Paladin Grafton Books, 1971; first publ. 1970), p. 181, p. 182.

sexual identity, subversively 'deconstruct the death-dealing binary oppositions of masculinity and femininity'.¹⁰ Yet approaching literature from such different angles, both critics converge with regard to Lawrence's sexual politics. On the one hand, they commend him for his opposition to a Christian tradition which they themselves regard as intrinsically pernicious to women. At the same time, they fault him for not having reached far enough in the battle against patriarchy. In her last analysis, Howe discredits Lawrence for depicting a world where 'women exist by prescription in relation to men — or we are doomed, damned, and dismissed'.¹¹ Howe decries 'his male view' not only on the basis that it is 'partisan' but because it constitutes a 'partial view [which] leaves much of our lives untouched'.¹² Similarly, Heilbrun concludes that, notwithstanding *The Rainbow*, Lawrence is a 'male chauvinist', 'a phallic worshipper' and 'one of the chief practitioners of the virility school of writing'.¹³

These allegations against Lawrence's sexual politics did not go unanswered at the time they were made. In an article published in 1974, Janice H. Harris convincingly objected to the way in which Millett and some of her followers had misleadingly quoted Lawrence out of context; as she shrewdly remarked at the time,

one can make Lawrence say just about anything. Taking from him brief quotations, brief examples, is almost always misleading. To avoid quoting him out of context, one must almost supply the entire story, the entire novel, read several times over.¹⁴

Harris's remonstrance found support in the works of Blanchard and Rossman, both of whom set out to undermine Millett's strictures by re-examining in its appropriate artistic context any apparent sign of sexism on Lawrence's part.¹⁵

10. Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory* (London and New York: Routledge, 1985), p. 13.

11. Florence Howe, 'Feminism and Literature', p. 266.

12. Howe, p. 266. For a contemporary of Howe, Elaine Reuben, Lawrence's is not just a 'male partisan view' but one that does not take into account many other men who fall out of the white paradigm which this 'view' epitomizes; 'Feminist Criticism in the Classroom, or, "What Do You Mean *We*, White Man?"', *Women's Studies*, 1-2 (1972-74), 315-25.

13. Heilbrun, *Towards a Recognition of Androgyny*, pp. 101-102.

14. Janice H. Harris, 'D. H. Lawrence and Kate Millett', *The Massachusetts Review*, 3 (Summer, 1974), 522-29 (p. 524).

15. Charles Rossman, "'You Are the Call and I Am the Answer": D. H. Lawrence and Women', *The D. H. Lawrence Review*, 8 (1975), 255-328; Lydia Blanchard, 'Love and Power: A Reconsideration of Sexual Politics in D. H. Lawrence'.

However, it was only in the eighties that two extensive works appeared aiming to question Lawrence's alleged anti-feminism: Carol Dix's and Hilary Simpson's.¹⁶ Both critics show a keen interest to problematize earlier explanations of Lawrence's sexual politics by re-locating his oeuvre in the period of social turbulence in which it is anchored. Accordingly, they begin by deconstructing the monolithic appreciations of the so-called Women's Liberation Movement against which Lawrence's sexual ideology had been examined previously. Piercing through the cultural history of Lawrence's time, these scholars lay open an incipient feminist movement riven with contradictions. They then go on to suggest that Lawrence's anti-suffragettism is not to be interpreted as a sexist sign; rather, it is a stance which a host of other feminists took in view of the suffragettes' espousal of utterly inadequate male values.

Granted the similarities between these two accounts, they crucially differ with regard to the ways in which they treat the question of Lawrence's allegedly changing ideological views after the Great War. Unlike Dix, Simpson rightly establishes a clear distinction between the man and his work. Thus, while agreeing that 'Lawrence develops in the 1920s an explicit anti-feminism', she does not perceive Lawrence's post-war fictional works as 'given ... to actual explicit invective against women'.¹⁷ Instead, she accurately apprehends the essentially exploratory nature of Lawrence's fictions: fictions in which, 'in contrast to the dogmatism of the essays', 'ideas [are] tested and found wanting'.¹⁸

Hilary Simpson's contribution to Lawrencian scholarship has frequently been acknowledged. What needs to be insisted on is that the value of her book reaches beyond the historical insights it offers. In a recent study aiming to dismantle 'feminist misreading[s]' of Lawrence's fiction, Peter Balbert rightly remarks that 'her work is demonstrably strongest when it summarizes the relation of Lawrence to women's issues in England from 1914 to 1930'.¹⁹ Nevertheless, he faults her for 'frequently [misreading] key

16. Carol Dix, *D. H. Lawrence and Women*; Hilary Simpson, *D. H. Lawrence and Feminism*; see also Laurence Lerner's 'Lawrence and the Feminists', and Barbara Hardy's 'Women in D. H. Lawrence's Works'.

17. Hilary Simpson, p. 65; Carol Dix, p. 111.

18. Simpson, p. 109, p. 112.

19. Peter Balbert, *D. H. Lawrence and the Phallic Imagination: Essays on Sexual Identity and Feminist Misreadings* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1989), p. 10.

moments in [Lawrence's] novels by submitting them too willingly to the scrutiny of Millett's directives rather than to the more nurturant impulses of Lawrence's framing vision'.²⁰ Ultimately, Balbert concludes, 'Simpson often supplies consensus feminist doctrine rather than probing literary analysis of the works'.²¹ That Balbert should object so is to some extent understandable, especially when one bears in mind the claim which he makes at the beginning of his own study: 'By now critical studies of Lawrence that present a unified approach to his fiction and ideology are not uncommon. *My own perspective in this volume is different*'.²² Undoubtedly, his own study is crucially different. But it also owes more to Simpson's than he himself acknowledges. First of all, Simpson's *does* occasionally coincide with some of Millett's interpretations because, as a matter of fact, Millett's are not *always* misinterpretations. In the second place, and even if she does not directly address specific inaccurate feminist readings of Lawrence, Simpson obliquely queries these as she draws readers' attention to crucial narrative questions regarding Lawrence's fictions. Interestingly, many of these questions constitute the bed-rock of Balbert's own readings. One thinks, for example, of the way in which Simpson insists on the exploratory nature of Lawrence's fictions, on the ambiguous characterization of his heroes and heroines, and on the resistance to closure of many of his works. Above all, one cannot possibly ignore the importance she assigns to Lawrencian narrators and the way in which, in novels like *The Lost Girl*, she deals with their outspokenness as a characteristic that importantly underlines their abdication of any claim to discursive objectivity.²³ The essential matter is that, given the *socio-historical* scope of her work, these crucial narrative insights are not thoroughly pursued. It is rather unfortunate that, apart from Balbert, very scant attempts have been made to follow up what Simpson so accurately discerned: that any ideological discussion of Lawrence's fictions inevitably entails a careful examination of narrative techniques.

20. Peter Balbert, p. 11.

21. Balbert, p. 11.

22. Balbert, p. 1; my emphasis.

23. Hilary Simpson, p. 76.

Hilary Simpson's book was mainly motivated by a deep awareness of the fruitless critical impasse into which Lawrenceian scholarship had fallen. As she herself expressed in the introductory pages of her work, '[critics] interpret his ideas (especially about sexual relationships) in exclusively psychological and biographical terms'.²⁴ Her contribution, however, did not succeed in breaking through such a critical deadlock. In fact, the major works which were published in subsequent years on the subject of Lawrence's sexual ideology prove that the psycho-biographical model had become stronger than ever.

Three books published in the 1980s are particularly relevant to this study: Judith Ruderman's *D. H. Lawrence and the Devouring Mother: The Search for a Patriarchal Ideal of Leadership* (1984), Sheila MacLeod's *Lawrence's Men and Women* (1985), and Cornelia Nixon's *Lawrence's Leadership Politics and the Turn Against Women* (1986).²⁵ All three works resort to psychoanalysis in order to explain what is presented as an unquestionable fact from the outset: namely, that Lawrence's post-war fiction evinces a personal hostility to women. Judith Ruderman differs from MacLeod and Nixon in that her concern is not Lawrence's Oedipus complex. Instead, she is interested in explaining Lawrence's animosity against women as symptomatic of deeply ingrained pre-Oedipal fears. This in turn links with another important difference: while MacLeod and Nixon agree that Lawrence's hostility to women manifests itself in his post-war fiction, Ruderman contends that it is already present in his earlier works — that is to say, in *The White Peacock*, *The Trespasser*, and *Sons and Lovers*.

Much as the present survey questions Ruderman's critical procedures, and even when it will, in due course, propose readings which crucially differ from hers, it nevertheless commends her work for effecting a very much needed departure from prevailing organicist reconstructions of Lawrence's oeuvre. Indeed, Ruderman queries the generalized assumption that Lawrence *turned* against women; instead, she proposes that his hostility can already be apprehended in his earliest works. Similarly, albeit in the opposite

24. Simpson, p. 14.

25. Judith Ruderman, *D. H. Lawrence and the Devouring Mother: The Search for a Patriarchal Ideal of Leadership* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1984); Sheila MacLeod, *Lawrence's Men and Women*; Cornelia Nixon, *D. H. Lawrence's Leadership Politics and the Turn Against Women*.

direction, this thesis questions the claim that Lawrence's understanding of the woman's condition in his early works transforms itself into a hatred of women in his post-war fictions. In other words, it interrogates the organicist assumptions which pervade, not just MacLeod's and Nixon's, but an almost endless list of works led by Middleton Murry's *Son of Woman*. In effect, as one critic has recently remarked, as long as these organicist argumentations prevail there will be 'little room for recognition of ... Lawrence's radical inconsistency about all that moved him most'.²⁶

Peter Balbert, to whom I have referred above, closes the decade of the eighties with a book which aims to 'supply a missing voice in response to feminist charges' against Lawrence.²⁷ The corpus on which he works includes Lawrence's four best-known novels and the most polemic of his stories: 'The Woman Who Rode Away'.²⁸ These he sets out to examine by paying especial attention to narrative technique and what he calls Lawrence's 'informing doctrine'.²⁹ As can be appreciated, the present survey draws on Balbert's both in terms of its concern — imprecise feminist explications of Lawrence's fictions — and its focus on narrative techniques. Yet it parts company with Balbert's, not only because it centres on Lawrence's shorter fiction, but because it consigns to the margins what Balbert takes to be Lawrence's 'doctrine'.

Looking into Balbert's study it is easy to perceive the danger inhering in it: namely, the risk of reading the so-called doctrine *into* the fiction. Added to this there is the problem of deciding *where* to find "Lawrence's doctrine", a problem to which Balbert is seemingly oblivious as he indiscriminately turns to Lawrence's letters, essays, travel books, and other *non-fictional* works in his search for interpretational evidence. The fact is that this kind of approach is likely to result in serious misreadings: first of all, because it feeds upon intentional arguments; in the second place, it does not take into account *genre* differences; most importantly, it draws doctrinal evidence from texts which, relying as they heavily do on imagery, symbol and metaphor, must in turn be subjected to interpretive

26. Carol Siegel, *Lawrence Among the Women*, p. 11.

27. Peter Balbert, p. 12.

28. The novels he examines are: *Sons and Lovers*; *The Rainbow*; *Women and Love*; *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.

29. Peter Balbert, *D. H. Lawrence and the Phallic Imagination*, p. 1.

scrutiny.³⁰ Failing to bear these considerations in mind, some of Balbert's readings inevitably become circular, hence ineffectual.

In spite of the shortcomings I have indicated, Balbert's is, together with Hilary Simpson's, one of the most powerful challenges to past feminist considerations of Lawrence's fiction. Furthermore, it represents a welcome shift in the face of the content-oriented criticism which, especially since Kate Millett, has come to dominate most studies dealing with Lawrence's sexual ideology.

In the present decade, it would appear that Peter Balbert's voice has not been lost in the desert. In effect, at the outset of the 1990s, voices like Janet Barron and Mara Kalnins have joined him: the former to insist once more on the complexity of Lawrence's narratives and the way in which this complexity necessarily encroaches on any ideological argumentation about them; the latter to emphasize the need to look into problematic passages in their specific textual contexts.³¹ Added to these, there is Carol Siegel's survey which, aiming to examine Lawrence's fictions in relation to women's literary traditions, has broken very fresh ground in relation to past feminist appreciations of his work.³²

The fact that the publications mentioned have importantly shaken the author-centred trend which has dominated Lawrencian studies ought not to be interpreted as a definitive change in criticism's course. In effect, refreshing as these insights are, they nevertheless coexist with the recent psycho-biographical contributions of Margaret Storch, Elaine Feinstein, and David Holbrook.³³ For all three, the stakes are clear: Lawrence is, as Millett alleged in 1970, a misogynist.

So far I have referred to the major works which, since Kate Millett, have focused on the subject of Lawrence's sexual politics. It is rather paradoxical that, although Millett has constantly come under attack on diverse fronts for her critical procedures and

30. I am thinking in particular of works such as *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, *Psychoanalysis of the Unconscious*, *Studies in Classic American Literature*, to which he frequently refers.

31. Janet Barron, 'Equality Puzzle: Lawrence and Feminism', in *Rethinking Lawrence*, edited by Keith Brown (Bristol, PA, and Buckingham: Open University Press, 1990), pp. 12-22; Mara Kalnins, 'Lawrence's Men and Women: Complements and Opposites'.

32. Carol Siegel, *Lawrence Among the Women*. See also Sandra M. Gilbert's 'Feminism and D. H. Lawrence: Some Notes Toward a Vindication of His Rites'. Taking these two insights together, one might want to speculate about an imminent wave of post-structuralist feminist readings of Lawrence's works.

33. See note 2 for references.

concomitant distortions, the image which she so neatly drew of Lawrence prevails even amongst those who have not read a work by him.³⁴ In view of her recent appearance in a British television programme devoted to D. H. Lawrence's putative homosexuality, one is driven to speculate that, failing serious efforts to problematize it, such will remain the popular image of D. H. Lawrence.

Theoretical questions and methodological implications

The following survey will set out to amend two 'common critical errors and misconceptions' affecting the works of those who have been particularly concerned with Lawrence and his relationship to feminism: first, there would be what Mara Kalnins has defined as the 'apparent ignorance' on the part of some critics

of the first and most elementary rule of literary criticism succinctly put by Hardy to one of his detractors: "that a writer's works should be judged as a whole, and not from picked passages that contradict them as a whole."³⁵

Second, there would be their failure to realize that between the writer and his/her fictional characters and narrators there is never a one-to-one correspondence.

The present thesis endorses Mara Kalnins' pronouncement, and all conclusions drawn in the course of it will refer to the ideology of the 'artificial author' — not 'the one of flesh and blood' — engendered by the stories examined; they are not intended as definitive statements of "the meaning" of Lawrence's entire oeuvre.³⁶

This leads to the second critical error. Much has been protested about the critical tendency to identify Lawrence with particular characters. On this score, it is worth recalling Susan French's justified impatient reply to Brenda Maddox's review of Elaine Feinstein's *Lawrence's Women*:

Lawrence is *not* a Mexican general, nor a Chilchui Indian. Lawrence is a novelist, he is not writing autobiography or tracts.³⁷

34. Laurence Lerner recounts a personal anecdote illuminating the point I have just made: 'When I was buying some books for this lecture last month, the girl serving me in Britain's most famous bookshop said, "Ah, Lawrence. He didn't think much of women, did he?" She turned out not to have read much Lawrence, and though I invited her to the lecture, I don't expect her to travel 100 miles to put her hearsay views to the test'; 'Lawrence and the Feminists', p. 69.

35. Mara Kalnins, 'Lawrence's Men and Women: Complements and Opposites', p. 146.

36. William H. Gass, 'The Death of the Author', *Salganundi*, 65 (1984), 3-26 (p. 19).

37. Susan French, 'Lawrence's Women', *The Times Literary Supplement*, 5 February (1993), p. 15.

In this letter to the editor of the *TLS* Susan French reminds Maddox of post-structuralist feminist considerations of the concept of "authorship". In so doing, she touches upon a crucial problem which reaches beyond Lawrencian criticism: namely, the abyss that separates a hegemonic author-centred model of *criticism* and a no less hegemonic body of literary author-decentred *theories*. David Lodge has recently commented on the chasm between, on the one hand, a plethora of theories which seek to liberate literary texts from the authoritarian control of their producers, and on the other, the paradoxical proclivity of literary commentators to explicate and assess literary works 'as more or less powerful expressions of [the author's] unique sensibility or world-view'.³⁸ More particularly, the liberating erasure of the author so enthusiastically proclaimed by Barthes and Foucault does not seem to accord with the non-academic '[belief] in the existence and importance of authors'.³⁹ Lodge is on the verge of entering a circular pattern of argumentation as he tries to salvage the notion of "authorial responsibility" while simultaneously maintaining that between 'the novelist's personal identity and his *oeuvre*' there is no 'perfect fit'.⁴⁰ Yet, in the midst of his entangled argument, one sees him raising a fundamental question, that is the question of academic jargon:

A vast amount of [academic literary criticism and theory] is ... the demonstration of a professional mastery by translating known facts into more arcane metalanguages.⁴¹

The problem to which Lodge alludes has always been *the* problem of narratologists, that is, those who, like the author of this thesis, are particularly concerned with 'the structure of narrative and the functioning of its major constituents'.⁴² It is notably in this field that lay readers have often felt most at a loss. This in turn would partly explain

38. David Lodge, *After Bakhtin: Essays on Fiction and Criticism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 12.

39. David Lodge, p. 7. See also Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author': first published in 1968, translated and edited in *Image-Music-Text* by Stephen Heath in 1977, and reprinted from the latter in *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*, edited by David Lodge (London and New York: Longman, 1988), pp. 167-71; Michel Foucault, 'What is an Author', first published in 1969, and reprinted from Joseph V. Harari's 1979 translation in Lodge's, pp. 197-210.

40. Lodge, p. 16.

41. Lodge, p. 8. A similar complaint with regard to the language that characterizes current literary theories is voiced in a humorous fashion — though not without serious intent — by David Lehman in *Signs of the Times: Deconstruction and the Fall of Paul de Man* (New York: Poseidon Press, 1991)

42. Jonathan Culler, 'Problems in the Theory of Fiction', *Diacritics*, 14 (1984), 1-11 (p. 3).

why, up to the present, text-oriented models of criticism have not gained as many adepts as author-centred critical paradigms. Because narratological analyses tend systematically to use technical terminology, their specific literary readings in turn appear to be abstract and cumbersome. Ultimately, they would seemingly 'lose touch with certain broader areas of concern'.⁴³ Yet, as the following survey will demonstrate, such must not necessarily be the case. The fact remains that, as long as voices arise vindicating the urgency to set a clear demarcation between the author's life and his/her fiction without exemplifying how this can be done in practice, these voices will ring hollow, as they have up to recent times.⁴⁴

In order to prevent any such easy identification between the ideological underpinnings of the narratives which will be examined shortly, and D. H. Lawrence's personal/political views, this thesis does not refer to D. H. Lawrence in the course of such readings. Instead, the terms 'narrators', 'characters', 'narrative' and 'narration' will be used. The term 'narrative' will comprise 'theme, story line, and all matters of chronology', whereas 'narration' will encompass the ways in which the stories are '[complicated and modulated], especially in the areas of time and point of view'.⁴⁵

Some readers will be concerned with the possible ideological implications of the analytical procedure described here. This concern is not altogether unjustified in view of current theoretical trends which leave little opportunity to find specific individuals responsible for politically unacceptable writings. This thesis, as the very title suggests, shares that concern. But at the same time it is conscious of the complexities involved not merely in the process of writing fiction, but also in the process of reading it. Most important of all, this survey reflects an awareness of the pragmatic dangers inherent in

43. Lydia Blanchard, 'Women and Fiction: The Limits of Criticism', *Studies in the Novel*, 9 (1977), 339-54 (p. 339); Lydia Blanchard's objection to text-oriented analyses is quite pertinent when these become purely descriptive, or indeed, taxonomic.

44. *The D. H. Lawrence Review* has brought to my attention that attempts are being made along these lines in some English Departments. A further effort remains to be made so that what is done inside the academy comes out. *The D. H. Lawrence Review* has contributed along these lines with three issues — 8 (1975), 19 (1987), 20 (1988) — which include a section dedicated to the teaching of Lawrence. Amongst the articles included there I should especially refer the reader to Elizabeth M. Wallace's 'Teaching Lawrence: Raise Your Hand — How Many of You Buy a Record Album and Then Play It Only Once?', 19 (1987), 318-24; Sandra Eagleton's 'One Feminist Approach to Teaching D. H. Lawrence', 19 (1987), 325-30; and Paul A. Wood's 'Up at the Front: A Teacher's Learning Experience with Lawrence's Sexual Politics', 20 (1988), 71-77.

45. Marc Blanchard, 'His Master's Voice', *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, 25 (1992), 61-77 (p. 61). To avoid repetition, 'narrative discourse' will alternatively be used as synonymous with 'narration'.

those critical practices which unproblematically reduce the ideological import of a text to the particular ideology of a character or narrator who in turn, and no less unproblematically, is identified with its creator's.⁴⁶ The choice of not referring to D. H. Lawrence is a gesture whereby the study emphasizes the problems inherent in the interpretation of literary texts in general, and of Lawrence in particular. It is also a gesture pointing to the fact that *all* characters and whatever values these may be seen to endorse are in the last instance the outcome of one writing "hand". As Evelyn Hinz rightly comments in relation to feminist charges against Lawrence's antagonism to Gudrun in *Women in Love*,

[Gudrun] est ... souvent tenue pour un personnage sympathique avec qui Lawrence ne sympathise pas. De même, considérant favorablement la révolte des personnages féminins contre la théorie de la «domination masculine» prônée par leurs partenaires mâles, les féministes en usent occasionnellement contre Lawrence lui-même, comme si pour commencer, ce n'était pas lui qui leur avait fourni leurs arguments!⁴⁷

Not only have critics of Lawrence been too hasty in finding him character/porte-paroles; they have also identified him with his narrators. This commonplace practice in Lawrencian scholarship contrasts with Prince's views as he expressed them some ten years ago:

Le narrateur est une créature fictive, comme son narrataire ... Tout étudiant quelque peu averti du genre narratif distingue le narrateur d'un roman de son auteur et de l'*alter ego* romanesque de ce dernier.⁴⁸

The practice of referring to the hypothetical reader of a (literary) text as "she/he", or "s/he", or by alternating "she" and "he" somehow whimsically is nowadays commonly accepted on the grounds that such an *invisible* reader might be male or female. The point is, the "persons" of third-person narrators are as invisible as readers. Yet they are repeatedly referred to as either "she" or "he" depending on the actual sexual identity of the author of any given text.

46. Salman Rushdie is a case in point.

47. Evelyn Hinz, 'Le féminisme, les femmes et la sexualité', p. 52.

48. Gerald Prince, 'Introduction à l'étude du narrataire', *Poétique*, 4 (1973), 178-96 (p. 178).

This practice has been strongly supported by Susan S. Lanser, who appeals to reading 'conventions' in order to assign to narrators the same sexual identity as their authors.⁴⁹ Thus, with regard to Kate O. Chopin's 'The Story of an Hour', she observes:

By virtue of the conventions linking the author's social identity with that of the heterodiegetic (third-person) narrative, the narrator is female. Most importantly, by the conventions of authorial equivalence this narrator may also be assumed to share the personality and values — the imaginative and ideological consciousness — of the authorial voice.⁵⁰

The problem with Lanser's theory is that it risks re-naturalizing modes of thinking, either as feminine or masculine; as Jonathan Culler comments,

Trying to infer the sex of individual narrators from the character of their reflections and judgements, though, risks conferring authority on the most tendentious stereotypes, which would come to serve as standards: this observation sounds feminine, this one masculine.⁵¹

Even more hazardous is Lanser's paradoxical re-naturalization of literature, for in so dealing with narrators as if they were real people she turns narratives into organic realities.

In contrast with Lanser, this thesis works on the assumption that narrators are fictional constructs just as much as narratees or characters. It also assumes that when these narrators are undramatized (the so-called third-person narrators) they are unsexed unless specific markers overtly identify them as either male or female. Consequently, in the textual analyses here included a narrator will be referred to as IT. I am aware that this might create reading problems, but as long as narrators continue to be referred to by resorting to *sexed* personal pronouns, they will tend to be identified with authors, something which has proved particularly prejudicial in the case of Lawrence.

The problem of Lawrencean narrators relates to a much larger issue: namely, the narrative representation of consciousness. This question has been the subject of much discussion amongst narratologists. Above all, it has been the central concern of Ann Banfield, to whose work this thesis is greatly indebted.

Over the course of several years, Banfield has been particularly concerned with the different modes in which subjectivity is represented in narrative. In 1982, her findings

49. Susan S. Lanser, *The Narrative Act: Point of View in Prose Fiction* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 250.

50. Lanser, p. 250.

51. Jonathan Culler, 'Problems in the Theory of Fiction', p. 5.

were compiled in a work which, ever since its publication, has been the object of much debate: *Unspeakable Sentences: Narration and Representation in the Language of Fiction*.⁵² Here Banfield isolates two types of sentence which, in her view, are unique to narrative: on the one hand, the sentence of represented speech and thought; on the other, the sentence of pure narration.⁵³ The predominant term in her study is that of 'self', that is the centre of consciousness to which any linguistic sign of subjectivity ought to be assigned.⁵⁴ According to Banfield, sentences of represented speech and thought are narratorless. By this she means that all subjective elements in such sentences must be assigned to the character whose consciousness is being represented and not to some effaced narrator. The counterpart of the sentences of represented speech and thought would be the sentences of narration *per se*, that is, those which, from a linguistic point of view, are purely objective, hence 'immune to judgements of truth or falsity'.⁵⁵ These, she argues, are also narratorless.

Having so distinguished these two types of sentence Banfield concludes in a manner that crucially sheds light on the specific reading procedure which will inform this thesis:

the process of reading a narrative text involves determining the status of each sentence — is its force objective and fiction-creating or must it be interpreted with the caution due any subjective statement? The linguistic status of [sentences] can make a difference in our assessment of [characters]. If [these sentences] are pure narration, then the text has provided a fact about [a character]; if they instead represent the fallible opinion of [a character], the text has given only a picture of this latter evaluating consciousness.⁵⁶

In spite of the great debt this study owes to Banfield's, it maintains two reservations about it. First of all, in her efforts to banish the narrator from third-person narratives she falls short of considering the possibility of third-person narrators being subjectivities in their own right. Actually, Banfield's failure to recognize the possible

52. Ann Banfield, *Unspeakable Sentences: Narration and Representation in the Language of Fiction* (Boston, MA, London, Melbourne, and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982). This book is the culmination of a work whose different stages can be traced in several articles published before the book itself was issued. For complete references of such articles refer to the general bibliography.

53. What she calls "represented speech and thought" corresponds in many cases to what others have referred to as *Erlebte rede*, *style indirecte libre*, free indirect style or FID, and narrated consciousness.

54. Banfield provides an invaluable and very exhaustive linguistic apparatus enabling the reader to identify subjective centres and to trace changes in perspective.

55. Banfield, p. 258.

56. Banfield, pp. 262-63.

existence of narrators as 'selves' is due to an underlying fear of bringing back the author into the text. Yet to postulate that a narrator is a 'self' is simply a matter of acknowledging one more *subjectivity* contributing to the construction of the fictional world which the reader is presented with, a subjectivity with no more nor less authority than the other subjectivities emerging from that world.

More crucial to any consideration of Lawrence's narratives is Banfield's unconvincing exclusion of the possibility of multiple-voiced narration, that is, the case of sentences where more than one consciousness is simultaneously involved. Ultimately, this particular failure derives from her not dealing with the problems that arise when such sentences are interwoven into more extensive units. As McHale puts it, 'no theory of text can be completely adequate that fails to take into account the "vertical" dimension of context'.⁵⁷ Actually, Banfield's failure parallels that of many Lawrencian readers who, so McHale would say, being so '[preoccupied] with haggling about their author's exact political coloration (how pink?)', have often hailed one sentence or another as evidence of Lawrence's sexism without taking heed of its surrounding context.⁵⁸

This thesis argues that the "ideology" of any text — its *viewpoint* — must not be reduced to any individual point of view. Rather, it must be assessed in terms of *all* those which the text represents — the narrator's and characters'. This entails deciding whose viewpoint is being conveyed at any particular moment in the course of any given narrative. It will also involve discriminating between different modes of narration: namely, direct speech, interior monologue, stream of consciousness, represented speech and thought, indirect speech. Having done so, one will need to consider how these different modes of narration may affect the reader's sympathies or antagonisms vis-à-vis such and such a narrator or character. Finally, questions like how often the narration lets the reader see into the different consciousnesses involved in a single narrative, or at what particular moments it provides us with such insights, will also have to be borne in mind. As the following analyses will show, it is when all these matters are carefully considered that ideological

57. Brian McHale, 'Unspeakable Sentences, Unnatural Acts: Linguistics and Poetics Revisited', *Poetics Today*, 4 (1983), 17-45 (p. 34).

58. Brian McHale, p. 31.

issues in relation to Lawrence cease to be as simple as some Lawrencian critics would believe.

CHAPTER 1
FROM INSTITUTIONALIZED SUBORDINATION
TO GENDER INDOCTRINATION
'HADRIAN' AND 'TICKETS, PLEASE'

This chapter is concerned with two stories compiled in Lawrence's *England, My England and Other Stories* (October, 1922).¹ Although this collection was published three years after the end of the Great War, the stories it contains were composed and revised before 1920: two of them were written in 1913, four during the war years, eight after the signature of the 1918 Armistice — 'Tickets, Please' amongst these — and only one subsequent to the Treaty of Versailles, 'Hadrian' ['You Touched Me'].² All the tales contained in this volume, however, were revised again, after publication in different journals, for their inclusion in the collection. In some of these, the changes made were minimal; yet others like 'Tickets, Please' were substantially altered: thus, in 1921, D. H. Lawrence went back to the latter and, amongst other modifications, he re-wrote its ending almost completely.

The information provided above highlights the difficulties and concomitant risks which, as I observed in the introduction, should be borne in mind when seeking to substantiate D. H. Lawrence's allegedly changing sexual/textual ideology. Carol Dix, for

1. For a detailed account of the publishing particulars of this collection refer to Bruce Steele's Introduction to D. H. Lawrence's *England, My England and Other Stories* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. xix-li. What follows is a summative relation of those publishing details more specifically pertinent for present purposes.

2. Subsequent references to 'Tickets, Please' and 'Hadrian' ['You Touched Me'] will be from *England, My England and Other Stories* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); page references will be given in parenthesis after each quotation.

instance, is one amongst many other Lawrencian scholars who, sidestepping these compositional and publishing problems, misleadingly concludes that

by the time of writing *Aaron's Rod* and *Kangaroo*, Lawrence has emerged as the defender of malehood against women. Here he cites his *new theory* that women must submit to the new man if they are to find salvation.³

Were one to take Dix's statement at face value, one would expect it to be equally applicable to most of the stories contained in *England, My England*, 'Tickets, Please' and 'Hadrian' amongst others: for these were written while Lawrence was working on *Aaron's Rod*.⁴ Actually, as will be seen in the present chapter, these two stories shed important light upon the two levels at which patriarchal domination works: on the one hand, 'Hadrian' represents the subordination of two women at an institutional level; on the other, 'Tickets, Please' illustrates the way in which patriarchy continues to control women (at more subliminal levels) even when some of its objective foundations might have been weakened.

Family and marriage are, historically speaking, the patriarchal institutions *par excellence*. In turn, both institutions find a crucial place in Lawrence's *oeuvre*. Next to 'Hadrian', one thinks of other households such as those represented in earlier stories like 'Daughters of the Vicar', 'The Christening', and 'England, My England'. Like Mr Rockley in 'Hadrian', the father figures in each of these (Mr Lindley, Mr Rowbotham, and Godfrey Marshall) conform, to different degrees, to the traditional *pater familias* model: they are, to use Gertrude Morel's designation of Mr Morel in *Sons and Lovers*, the 'breadwinners' upon which the family ineluctably depends for subsistence. In exchange for maintenance, all family members are tacitly expected to be subordinate to the authority of the patriarch.

Nevertheless, Mr Rockley's exertion of patriarchal authority reaches limits which are not matched by any of his fictional counterparts. True, Mr Rowbotham's children in 'The Christening' are 'only half-individuals' because, according to the narrator, his 'will

3. Carol Dix, *D. H. Lawrence and Women* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1980), p. 116; my emphasis.

4. Lawrence wrote *Kangaroo* in four months (he began it in June 1921 and finished it in September of the same year), whereas it took him almost four years to complete *Aaron's Rod* (from around November 1917 until June 1921). For a detailed account of the composition and publication of the latter refer to Mara Kalnins' Introduction to D. H. Lawrence's *Aaron's Rod* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. xvii-xliv.

[has] always been upon them and contained them'.⁵ Mr Rowbotham himself — in the course of a speech strongly reminiscent of Tom's speech at Anna's wedding in *The Rainbow* — confesses to his having been "like a stone upon them".⁶ But even though one hears about this patriarch's alleged 'will', it is never dramatized. Furthermore, his behaviour vis-à-vis his youngest daughter's 'bastard' indicates that the authority he exercises over his household is more psychological than pragmatic. In this sense, he resembles Godfrey Marshall in 'England, My England', for he too exerts a powerful psychological influence upon his daughter Winifred. Otherwise, Godfrey Marshall does not interfere in his daughter's life, even though he is not particularly fond of her husband Egbert. By contrast, Mr Lindley in 'Daughters of the Vicar' does meddle in his daughter's life (Louisa's) by actually opposing her marriage to Alfred. In spite of it all, neither does Mr Lindley's authority equal Mr Rockley's, and this for a very obvious reason: the moment Louisa is, through her attachment to Alfred, liberated from the economic bond which had kept her under her father's yoke, Mr Lindley's patriarchal authority, unlike Mr Rockley's, loses its economically coercive force and becomes ineffectual.

Notwithstanding the difference between Mr Rockley and Mr Lindley, Matilda's story, when counterposed to Louisa's, importantly illuminates a historical double-standard: man's exclusive prerogative to choose.

For a long time, particularly at the beginning of the Women's Liberation Movement, it was a common belief amongst many women that by attacking the economic foundations of patriarchy and its fundamental institutions — the family and marriage — they would be able to liberate themselves from male domination. Hence the emphasis these feminist precursors placed on obtaining economic independence via a free access to the labour market, and their fight for a radical change of a legal system which contributed to women's subjugation, especially within the marriage sphere. This is where 'Tickets, Please' could be seen to enter: as this chapter will shortly illustrate, the thrust of this story is the way it underscores the ingenuousness of such a belief.

5. 'The Christening', in *The Complete Short Stories of D. H. Lawrence*, 3 vols, vol. 1 (London: Heinemann, 1955), pp. 274-82 (p. 282).

6. 'The Christening', p. 281.

In contrast with the sisters in 'Hadrian', the women in 'Tickets, Please' have left the domestic sphere and entered into the labour market. Hence they no longer depend on men for subsistence. But as the tale illustrates, it does not automatically follow that these women are emancipated in any real sense of the word. In their case, the obstacle is no longer a literal patriarch, but an unconscious internalization of patriarchal values. As Lerner would put it, what prevents them from being genuinely liberated is the 'great [man]' who sits so comfortably 'in their heads'.⁷

This is most obvious at the level of sexual behaviour. On the surface, and in contrast with Matilda, these girls are ostensibly free from sexual inhibitions. Nevertheless, it soon becomes evident that they still adhere to a conception of sexual relationship as binding and, ultimately, leading into marriage. It is here that the tram-girls of 'Tickets, Please' could be seen to join a host of other Lawrencian women for whom marriage, in spite of all, remains the goal of their lives. One thinks of Fanny in 'The Last Straw' ['Fanny and Annie']: an economically self-sufficient woman who returns to her home town with the sole purpose of marrying her 'first-love' and only after '[having] had other affairs' which in the end 'had come to nothing'.⁸

However, no two situations are alike in Lawrence's fictions, which is what endows them with the exploratory quality that distinguishes them. Thus, even though the tram-girls come close to Fanny, they differ from her in that their collusion with patriarchal culture is deeper. Unlike Fanny, they will be seen to yield the right to choose to a male representative, thus reasserting a quintessentially patriarchal privilege.

This links with a related question: one of the major problems of Lawrence's fictions in general, and of 'Hadrian' and 'Tickets, Please' in particular, is that they are rather disquieting when considered in the light of their surface plots.⁹ Faced with the rather unpleasant experiences which their women protagonists are seen to endure at this level, the

7. Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 228.

8. 'The Last Straw' ['Fanny and Annie'], in *England, My England*, pp. 153-66 (p. 154).

9. Albert J. Devlin, for example, describes 'Hadrian' as 'cryptic and on the surface impalatable', "'The Strange and Fiery" Course of *The Fox*: D. H. Lawrence's Aesthetic of Composition and Revision', in *The Spirit of D. H. Lawrence: Centenary Studies*, edited by Gamini Salgado and G. K. Das (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1988), pp. 75-91 (p. 81).

reader is likely to feel some ideological discomfort. Yet one needs to pierce through their surface plots so as to probe whether the disquietude one might feel about them is extraneous to the texts in question or whether it is in fact something which is actually built into them.

Therefore, in what follows, 'Hadrian' and 'Tickets, Please' will both be examined in the light of what this thesis deems to be two essential difficulties inherent in them in particular, and in many Lawrencian fictions in general: first, what Vickery would call 'the interpenetration of mythic pattern and contemporary verisimilitude'; second, the oddity and apparent shadiness of their endings.¹⁰ The ultimate aim will be to bring forth the narrative complexities of these stories and the way their textual specificity importantly affects meaning production throughout the works. In the last instance, these surveys will corroborate what one early reviewer already intuited about the stories contained in *England, My England*:

By far the greater number of these stories have a subtlety, an evasive quality underlying yet penetrating the texture of the exterior plot. Even when they seem simple, they are in truth intensely complex ... They are not tales for those who wish merely to be amused, to read and enjoy without using their own brains, these tales of Mr. Lawrence's. He is one of those writers who demand more than a little co-operation from their readers.¹¹

10. John B. Vickery, *Myths and Texts: Strategies of Incorporation and Displacement* (Baton Rouge, Louis., and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), p. 38.

11. Unsigned review in *New York Times Book Review*, 19 November 1922, 13-14; reprinted in *D. H. Lawrence: The Critical Heritage*, edited by R. P. Draper (London and New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), pp. 188-90 (pp. 189-90).

'HADRIAN' ('YOU TOUCHED ME'): A LITERAL REPRESENTATION OF WOMAN IN PATRIARCHY

My hand is alive, it flickers with a life of its own. It meets all the strange universe, in touch, and learns a vast number of things ... [My hand] has its own rudiments of thought, and is just as much *me* as is my brain, my mind, or my soul.¹²

It has often been remarked that Lawrence's shorter fiction is prominently palimpsestic, and 'Hadrian', as some critics have indicated, is no exception.¹³ Herein lies one of the most important difficulties of this seemingly straightforward tale: the way its meaning hinges on a multi-layered design which simultaneously encompasses a biblical narrative, a mythic story, a fairy-tale, and a socio-realistic text. In view of this multi-layered design one needs to probe how these different subtexts function, how they interact, and finally, how this palimpsestic structure affects the tale's resolution.

1. The vertical axis

As soon as 'Hadrian' begins to unfold one comes across the following narratorial comment:

[Matilda] was the Mary to Emmie's Martha: that is, Matilda loved painting and music, and read a good many novels, whilst Emmie looked after the housekeeping ... [Emmie] looked up to Matilda, whose mind was naturally refined and sensible (p. 93).

This narratorial statement introduces what I have earlier called the biblical subtext of 'Hadrian'. It should be noted at once that this biblical allusion confers upon this particular story a typically Lawrencian stamp.¹⁴ As Virginia Hyde reminds us, it is characteristic of Lawrence's fictions to feed upon biblical sources; but as she says, his uses of these 'are often as ironic and revisionist as Blake's'.¹⁵ One could add that such allusions fulfill varying functions in each of the fictions in which they are made. In the case of 'Hadrian', the parallelism that the narrator establishes between the biblical and the fictional sisters

12. D. H. Lawrence, 'Why the Novel Matters', in *Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 193-98 (p. 193).

13. Janice H. Harris's *The Short Fiction of D. H. Lawrence* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1984), pp. 150-53; Keith Cushman, 'The Achievement of England, My England and Other Stories', in *D. H. Lawrence: The Man Who Lived*, edited by Robert B. Partlow, Jr., and Harry T. Moore (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1980), pp. 27-38 (pp. 32-33).

14. Luke x, 38-42.

15. Virginia Hyde, *The Risen Adam: D. H. Lawrence's Revisionist Typology* (University Park, Penn.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), p. xvi.

creates a certain horizon of expectations. First, the reader is made to anticipate a Jesus-surrogate. Then, inasmuch as Jesus is a divisive presence in the biblical narrative (his presence sets Martha against Mary), one is given to expect that, in the event of a Jesus-surrogate being brought into the arena, the girls' presumed 'happiness' and the alleged 'quietness' of their 'household' (p. 93) will similarly be affected. Finally, given that the biblical story is about Mary's 'choice' ("Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her") the reader is already prepared to be, sooner or later, presented with Matilda's own choice. The biblical subtext, therefore, is not a passing reference: it is a narrative which importantly prefigures the plot of 'Hadrian' and some of the conflicts to follow.

Having so alerted the reader to the likely appearance of a Jesus-surrogate, the narrator provides some background information about the Rockleys' past and what is as yet an absent figure: Hadrian, the adopted boy of the Rockleys', a 'prodigy' (p. 93). The description of Hadrian as a prodigious boy immediately sparks off the association of this character with the similarly 'talented' Jesus who, as a boy, amazed all the rabbis in the temple of Jerusalem with his marvellous 'understanding'.¹⁶ Therefore one surmises that Hadrian is the Jesus impersonator one has been made to expect to step in at any time and wreak havoc on this peaceful household.

Just as this particular description of the adopted boy advances the biblical narrative one step further, it also paves the way to what I have called the mythical subtext of 'Hadrian'. In effect, as soon as he is defined as a 'prodigy', the reader bears witness to a marvellous animal-like aura beginning to envelop him: not only is he a marvel, but a boy with a 'watchful' 'instinct', a 'subtle, jeering look on his face' (p. 93; my emphasis): 'the girls called him sly' (p. 94).¹⁷

16. Luke ii, 46-47.

17. Keith Cushman interprets 'Hadrian' as 'an odd, fascinating preview of *The Fox*'. Undoubtedly, the very features which are used to describe the fox ('a demon', 'sly', '[watchful]' and 'cunning') are also associated with Hadrian. The overall situation in either story and the characterization of their male protagonists are also strikingly similar. But as I have already observed, no two Lawrencean stories, whatever their similarities, are replicas of each other. Given that *The Fox* will be examined in Chapter 3, I shall bypass differential details here. Suffice it to point out that, compared to the symbolic thrust of *The Fox*, the dominant in 'Hadrian' is, as Hobsbaum accurately observes, its intense realism; Keith Cushman, 'The Achievement of *England, My*

The archetypal nature of Hadrian increases the moment he ceases to be the narrator's discursive object in order to become an actual presence in this fictional realm: 'His face was brown, he had a small moustache, *he was vigorous enough in his smallness*' (p. 95; my emphasis). Such is the first physical description the reader gets of Hadrian as he enters the Rockleys', a description which significantly emanates from Matilda. The key word here is 'vigorous' with its potentially sexual overtones. From now on, Hadrian's sexual nature will be constantly underlined. Later, for example, one hears Matilda say to Hadrian that he is "quite a man," (p. 95). Then, in the course of a conversation between Matilda and Emmie, his "manliness" becomes the central object of discussion:

'Isn't he altered?' said Matilda, *sotto voce*.
 'Isn't he!' said Cousin Emmie. 'What a little man!'
 They both made a grimace, and laughed nervously.
 'Get the frying pan,' said Emmie to Matilda.
 'But he's as cocky as ever,' said Matilda [...]
 'Mannie!' said Emmie sarcastically. Hadrian's new-fledged cock-
 sure manliness evidently found no favour in her eyes (p. 96).

Hadrian's youth and sexuality contrasts sharply with the father's senility on the one hand, and the sense of sterility and waste that exudes from the world inhabited by these women on the other. This, together with his strangeness, contributes to our seeing Hadrian as yet another Lawrencian embodiment of the (Frazerian) mythical stranger with fertilising powers alongside the memorable Ciccio in *The Lost Girl*, Joe Boswell in *The Virgin and the Gipsy*, Henry in *The Fox*, or the man who died in 'The Escaped Cock'.¹⁸

Because of this mythical parallelism, Janice H. Harris has interpreted 'Hadrian' as 'a metaphor for the necessary fertilization of the genteel classes by the lower'.¹⁹ However, this interpretation overlooks the fact that mythical strangers were not merely 'embodiments of the corn spirit': they were also practitioners of magic and witchcraft, as well as sacrificial victims themselves.²⁰ As far as the latter characteristics go, Hadrian is indeed archetypal: on the one hand, his presence exerts a magical influence on Matilda; on the

England and Other Stories', p. 27; Philip Hobsbaum, *A Reader's Guide to D. H. Lawrence* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1981), p. 36.

18. Sir James Frazer, *The New Golden Bough*, abridged edition introduced and commented by Theodor H. Gaster (New York: New American Library, 1964), p. 500; p. 509.

19. Janice H. Harris, *The Short Fiction of D. H. Lawrence*, p. 152.

20. Frazer, p. 500, p. 509, p. 205.

other, he is the sacrificial victim, as will become evident in the course of the ensuing pages. The question of Hadrian's fertilizing powers, however, begs for more elaboration.

Read in the context in which Harris's statement appears it soon becomes clear that, when she talks about Hadrian's fertilizing powers, she is defining 'fertilization' not in the metaphoric sense of the word but in literal/sexual terms. Hence her conclusion:

Lawrence gives his father figure an absolute, magic prestige that may sound good on some level — and may work within the conventions of fable — but raises the spectre of bullying within a realistic context. The same is true for Hadrian. On some level, his inexorable demand works; but on another, more quotidian level, he has not awakened Matilda, he has forced her.²¹

This study proposes instead that the narration establishes a clear demarcation between Hadrian's metaphoric fertility and his literal, that is, sexual virility. The distinction is achieved by the text's thoroughly undermining Hadrian's literal sexuality at the level of discourse, while simultaneously sustaining his archetypal role at the level of dramatized events.

At the level of discourse, all voices, including the narrator's, converge in presenting his 'manliness' as an object of scorn. First of all, there is the sisters' scoffing at his apparent sexual arrogance in the course of the dialogue cited. Then, there is Mr Rockley himself, who on first seeing Hadrian mockingly exclaims "'You wouldn't make a life-guardsmen'" (p. 96), a statement which derides his unfitness to fulfill the literal, sexual function of the fertility god. Finally, there is the narratorial aside: 'Hadrian's *new-fledged*, cock-sure manliness evidently found no favour in her eyes' (p. 96; my emphasis), whereby the narrator would be seemingly pointing to the ineffectual sexuality of Hadrian.

By contrast, Hadrian acts out his archetypal role at a dramatic level of narration. To begin with, his presence exercises a *magically* magnetic influence upon Matilda. The first night Hadrian sleeps at the Rockleys' Matilda enters into a state of trance and is drawn to Hadrian's room. In what follows, the reader apprehends Hadrian acting out his fertilizing role, not in the literal sense of his archetypal coeval in 'The Escaped Cock', but

21. Janice H. Harris, p. 152.

in the sense that he *involuntary* causes Matilda's awakening into full being, whereupon myth and fairy-tale are seen to blend.

It has often been observed that the climactic episode echoes the Sleeping Beauty tale. Yet the significance of the fairy-tale motif cannot be fully comprehended unless one looks into a very particular scene preceding the episode in which the motif is inserted: namely, the scene where the reader watches Matilda as she gets changed in the privacy of her room:

Matilda went upstairs to change. She had thought it all out how she would receive Hadrian, and impress him. And he had caught her with her head tied up in a duster, and her thin arms in a basin of lather. But she did not care. She now dressed herself most scrupulously, carefully folded her long string of exquisite crystal beads over her soft green dress. Now she looked elegant, like a heroine in a magazine illustration, and almost as unreal (p. 97).

Here is a crucial insight into Matilda's mind. One notices the contradictoriness inherent in the first two sentences when counterposed with the assertion 'But she did not care'. Clearly, the narration represents Matilda's suppression of her anger at having given Hadrian the wrong *image*. That she actually 'cares' is something which the narration elicits by compelling us to follow her movements. As she begins to dress up the narrative tempo slows down: the length of the sentence, achieved by means of coordination, contributes to this effect; then, there is the accumulation of adverbs and the profuseness of adjectives. Therefore the morpho-syntactic organization of the sentence heightens our sense that Matilda's metamorphosis is taking place over a considerably long span of time, concomitantly undermining her *conscious* conviction that she does not care about the way she looks for Hadrian. The sentence that concludes this ritualistic scene is also paramount: as it begins to unfold, the narration represents Matilda's personal satisfaction with the job she has done on herself; but then, the ironic voice of the narrator emerges with full force in the last simile. What this narrator ironizes is her having made herself a *picture*, a *fiction*, an '*unreal*' being. The adjectives and nouns denoting colour — 'blonde', 'pallor', 'rouge', 'crystal', 'green' — contribute to enhance the idea that she has turned herself into a painting. Yet the target of the narrator's irony is not just Matilda. True, in so likening her to 'a heroine in a magazine illustration', the narrator mocks Matilda for having so

disguised her real being; but more importantly, IT directs itself against a kind of literature that fabricates stereotyped women.²²

One notices that in the course of this scene no single mention of a *mirror* has been made. This is remarkable, especially when one apprehends the scene for what it is: a *realistically* minute description of Matilda's dressing performance. The omission of any *explicit* mention of this cherished object of realism endows the entire passage with parodic force.

This omission is felt even more strongly in the narrator's impersonation of the missing object. The crux of the matter is that the recipient of ITS image is not Matilda but the reader. My contention in this regard is that the missing mirror is actually brought back into the narrative in the course of the climactic episode: not as a physical object projecting Matilda's heroine-like dressed image, but in the form of another human being who will reflect Matilda's naked self.

Contrary to what has often been argued, the climactic episode is no simple reversal of the Sleeping Beauty tale. To be sure, Matilda is first seen to take up the role of the prince in the fairy-tale as she literally wakes up Hadrian. But he literally awakens Matilda from her trance-like state too:

'Can't you sleep to-night?' she said.

There was a quick stirring in the bed. 'Yes, I can,' a voice answered. It was Hadrian's voice. She started away. Instantly, she was awakened from her late-at-night trance. She remembered that her father was downstairs, that Hadrian had his room. She stood in the darkness as if *stung* (p. 99; my emphasis).

22. In his review of Trigant Burrow's *The Social Basis of Consciousness* (New York: Bookman, 1927), Lawrence expresses his profound dissatisfaction with the way in which people in general tend to make a picture of themselves and live according to it: 'If we could once get into our heads', he argues, '— or if we once dare admit to one another — that we are not the picture, and the picture is not what we are, then we might lay a new hold on life. For the picture is really the death, and certainly the neurosis, of us all', 'Review of *The Social Basis of Consciousness* by Trigant Burrow', in *Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D. H. Lawrence*, edited with an introduction by Edward D. McDonald (London: Heinemann, 1936), pp. 377-82 (p. 380). This 'neurosis' is powerfully dramatized in 'The Lovely Lady' (see Chapter 3); it also constitutes the particular concern of *St Mawr* (Chapter 4), although here it is dramatized not as the mental sickness of one single individual (as is the case of Mrs Attenborough in the former story) but as the collective phenomenon to which Lawrence refers in the review.

The narrator's speculative statement would suggest that Matilda, having been awakened, is at once sent back to sleep. Indeed, one recalls here that the princess of the fairy-tale falls asleep after having been *stung*.

The incorporation of the fairy-tale motif, then, cannot be reduced to a straightforward reversal of roles. Taking into account the preceding dressing-up scene and the narrator's suggested failure of Hadrian to fulfil the role of prince, the narration ostensibly dislodges the stereotypically generic force of the fairy-tale while simultaneously preserving its psychological thrust. The latter, however, is not unveiled until Matilda returns to her room:

When she was back in her own room, in the light, and her door was closed, she stood holding up her hand that had touched him, as if it hurt. She was almost too shocked, she could not endure.

'Well,' said her calm and weary mind, 'it was only a mistake, why take any notice of it.'

But she could not reason her feelings so easily. She suffered, feeling herself in a false position. Her right hand, which she had laid so gently on his face, on his fresh skin, ached now, as if it were really injured. She could not forgive Hadrian for the mistake: it made her dislike him deeply (p. 100).

One is reminded here of Fergusson in 'The Horse Dealer's Daughter': on touching Mabel's shoulder in an involuntary movement, Fergusson similarly feels as if 'a flame [were burning] the hand that [had grasped] her soft shoulder'.²³ In Matilda's case, as in Fergusson's, the narration represents the experience of somebody at once alienated from and horrified at the fatal spontaneity of her body. Matilda's thoughts are then reported, whereby the reader perceives her striving, as she did earlier, to convince herself of the triviality of the episode. Yet in so juxtaposing her thoughts with the objective description of her as she holds up her hand, the narration positively asserts for the reader that which she consciously denies: namely, the magnitude of the event. It accentuates Matilda's self-deceit, or her conscious retreat into the safe haven of her unfragmented self-conception.²⁴

23. 'The Horse Dealer's Daughter', in *England, My England*, pp. 137-52 (p. 149).

24. Matilda's reaction strongly echoes Lois's in 'Goose Fair'. In this story, though, the process is presented in a more explicit way: looking out of the window one night, Lois apprehends 'her own faint image' being reflected by the 'nothingness' of the outside world. She retrieves into her bedroom at once and looks at herself in the mirror for a long time, as if in an attempt to freeze, indeed recompose the disintegrating self-image which she has just seen reflected in the night. *The Complete Short Stories of D. H. Lawrence*, 3 vols, vol. 1 (London: Heinemann, 1955), pp. 234-43 (p. 237).

The passage then closes with the representation of Matilda's thoughts. As we look into her mind we realize, first of all, that try as she may she cannot convince herself about the insignificance of the event. Above all, we realize that in her blaming and disliking Hadrian for what is a mere misunderstanding *resulting from her own forgetfulness* what she actually reveals is her aversion for the real culprit: her own 'hand' — or that which can act independently of consciousness, her own unconscious being.

Matilda's experience is in fact emblematic of a recurrent experience in Lawrence's fiction: the discovery of fragmentariness of being through touch.²⁵ I have already referred to 'The Horse Dealer's Daughter', a story which also feeds upon the Sleeping Beauty motif in a way no less complex than 'Hadrian'. One could also cite 'The Blind Man', where the man of the title — Maurice — urges Bertie Reid to touch his face; more importantly, he beseeches Bertie to touch his blind eyes and scar, unequivocal symbols of impairment.²⁶ Interestingly, after touching these, Bertie is overcome by an 'unreasonable fear' of being destroyed by this man. He then hastens out of the house, feeling 'like a mollusc whose shell [had been] broken'.²⁷

Just as Bertie tries to escape his own 'broken' self by running away from Maurice, so does Matilda strive to suppress the whole event from her consciousness to no avail:

In the morning she could feel the consciousness in his eyes, when she came downstairs. She tried to bear herself as if nothing at all had happened, and she succeeded. She had the calm *self-control*, self-indifference, of one who has suffered and borne her suffering. She looked at him ... she met the spark of consciousness in his eyes, and quenched it. ... But she could not *control him* as she thought she could (p. 100; my emphasis).

This passage represents Matilda's capitulation of her power over Hadrian. Her surrender, however, is not literal. Instead, she yields to a 'him' which, as the narration makes it plain,

25. James C. Cowan approaches Lawrence's conception of 'touch' in more general terms in his 'Lawrence and Touch', *The D. H. Lawrence Review*, 18 (1985-86), 121-37; according to this scholar, 'touch' in Lawrence's oeuvre appears to have 'the power to activate unconscious instinctual motives, not mentally derived ideas, into consciousness, thus making self-confrontation and relationship with a significant other possible', 135.

26. 'The Blind Man', in *England, My England*, pp. 46-63 (p. 62).

27. 'The Blind Man', p. 63.

is in fact her unconscious 'self'. That is to say, she comes to terms with the self reflected by Hadrian, the inescapable "'other" to her conscious self'.²⁸

So far I have concentrated on the palimpsestic design characteristic of 'Hadrian', in turn representative of most Lawrencean fictions. With regard to 'Hadrian' one notes that its different layers are framed by an all-encompassing socio-realistic text.

Indeed, as the story unfolds, it would appear to be firmly rooted in history (the post-war period.) But soon afterwards the reader is transposed into a biblical world. Then, the narration deepens further into myth. As we reach the climactic episode, we enter into the fantastic world of the fairy-tale which further plunges us into the depths of the human unconscious. The crux is that, while the narration has been vertically falling into the depth of the unconscious, it has been progressing simultaneously along the horizontal path of realism. After Matilda's capitulation a reversal takes place whereby the socio-realistic text becomes the dominant.

2. The horizontal plane

Right from the outset the historical coordinates of 'Hadrian' are set — the post-war years. Against this background, the Pottery House emerges as a kind of unbreachable feudal fortress, the last bastion of a bygone social order apparently immune to the changes undergone by the outside world. Such is the fortress inhabited by the Rockleys', a household into which the reader enters under the guidance of such an intrusive, intensively manipulative, and strongly opinionated narrator that it would not come as a surprise if, like the narrator in *Mr Noon*, or in *Aaron's Rod*, IT suddenly removed its third-person mask in order to become an *I* in its own right.

It is not long before the two Rockley sisters come under the sharp knife of this ironic narrator: no sooner does one hear their voices than the latter intervenes so as to undermine utterly the girls' speech:

'We like it much better—oh, much better—quieter,' said Matilda Rockley.

'Oh, yes,' assented Emmie Rockley, her sister.

'I'm sure you do,' agreed the visitor.

28. Ed Jewinski, 'The Phallus in D. H. Lawrence and Jacques Lacan', *The D. H. Lawrence Review*, 21 (1989), 9-12 (p. 9).

But whether the two Rockley girls *really* liked it better, or whether they only *imagined* they did, *is a question*. *Certainly* their lives were much more grey and dreary now that the grey clay had ceased to spatter its mud and silt its dust over the premises. They did not quite realise how they missed the shrieking, shouting lasses, whom they had known all their lives and disliked so much (p. 92; my emphasis).

This authoritarian and seemingly all-knowing narrator does not differ much from those narratorial voices which characterize pre-Jamesian kinds of writing. What is more, one gradually gets the impression that the narration will carry on in this monologic fashion.

This tendency, however, is briefly interrupted in the following extract:

The ugly industrial town was full of men, young men who were ready to marry. But they were all colliers or pottery-hands, *mere workmen*. The Rockley girls would have about ten thousand pounds each when their father died: ten thousand pounds' worth of profitable house-property. It was not to be *sneezed at: they felt so themselves*, and refrained from *sneezing away* such a fortune on any *mere member of the proletariat*' (pp. 92-93; my emphasis).

This is a typical example of Lawrencian technique: in this excerpt the narration shifts first from narratorial voice, then to dual-voice, and finally to free indirect style. In turn, it is a shifting narration which importantly affects the reader's sympathies. With regard to this particular passage, the narrator's contempt for the presumed class-snobbery of the Rockley girls can be perceived in the way their speech is caricatured. As the narration gives way to the girls' represented snobbery, the reader is manipulated into sympathizing with the narrator's ironic attitude towards them.

The fact is that before any conflict arises between the girls and Hadrian not only does the narration manipulate the reader into allying with the narrator against the girls; after building in such an alliance, it further drives us to sympathize with Hadrian. When one reads later that 'the girls called [Hadrian] sly', for example, the narrator quickly undercuts their statement by saying that their judgement of Hadrian 'was unjust' (p. 94). Then, following Hadrian's appearance into the fictional arena, a conversation between Hadrian and Mr Rockley takes place in the course of which Hadrian emerges as the advocate of social equality: "'there's too much difference between the men and the employers over here — too much of that for me'" (p. 97). Hadrian's statement is overheard by Matilda, whereby the narration proceeds to represent her own antagonism to Hadrian's socialist views:

'So that's your big idea, is it, my little man', she said to herself. She had always said of Hadrian that he had no proper *respect* for anybody or anything, that he was sly and *common*. She went down to the kitchen for a *sotto voce* confab with Emmie (p. 97).

The announced 'confab' ensues in the form of a dialogue in which the reader overhears their own anti-'democratic' ideas.

In view of the exposition above one begins to discern the source of some of the difficulties which the tale poses when it comes to making ideological decisions about it. It is evident that, as the story begins, and until the climactic episode, the narration presents itself as a blunt attack on class-snobbery. Furthermore, it unequivocally positions the reader against the sisters as the advocates of a reactionary class-ideology. Concomitantly, it creates a strong alliance between narrator, Hadrian, and reader. But in Lawrence's fictions, as this thesis will evince, sympathies are never static. Actually, the changing views of the reader vis-à-vis the characters of any particular story run parallel with a continuously shifting narrative mode.

Coinciding with Matilda's epiphanic experience, the narrator becomes less sententious and more speculative; its irony gives way to an unsmiling gravity; above all, IT gradually relinquishes the narrating as IT leaves more and more room to unmediated representation and direct presentation through dialogue. Moreover, the narrator's gradual effacement is paralleled by a thematic shift whereby gender takes precedence over class, or to be more precise, the class issue is subsumed within the overarching frame of patriarchy.

The morning after the 'touch' episode, the narration offers the following insight into Hadrian's mind:

He looked at [Matilda] curiously. ... she had a high-bred sensitiveness. This queer, brave, high-bred quality she shared with her father. The charity boy could see it in her tapering fingers, which were white and ringed. The same glamour that he knew in the elderly man he now saw in the woman. And *he wanted to possess himself of it, he wanted to make himself a master of it* (p. 100; my emphasis).

Notice that this insight severely undermines Hadrian, for what one is made to apprehend behind his wish to possess the qualities which characterize Matilda and her father is in fact a desideratum which thoroughly casts doubt upon the equalitarian ideas he has defended earlier: namely, the yearning to belong to the ruling class. Thus, when the reader

eavesdrops on the subsequent conversation between Hadrian and Mr Rockley, the narration has already encoded the interpretation of his wanting to marry Matilda: she constitutes his passport into the establishment.

Mr Rockley's reaction to Hadrian's proposal is also significant:

'You!' said the sick man, mocking, with some contempt. Hadrian turned and met his eyes. The two men had an inexplicable understanding.

'If you wasn't against it,' said Hadrian.

'Nay,' said the father, turning aside, 'I don't think I'm against it. I've never thought of it. But — But Emmie's the youngest.'

He had flushed, and looked suddenly more alive. Secretly he loved the boy.

'You might ask her,' said Hadrian.

The elder man considered.

'Hadn't you better ask her yourself?' he said.

'She'd take more notice of you,' said Hadrian.

They were both silent. Then Emmie came in (pp. 101-102).

As can be seen from this dialogue, the old man does not quite conform to the patriarch stereotype. For one thing, the thought of dying without having been able to *exchange* his daughters in marriage does not seem to have troubled him in the past. Moreover, he does not appear to abide by the arranged-marriage convention of giving away the eldest daughter first. Finally, he even goes so far as to suggest that he has no right to decide for Matilda. Bearing in mind Mr Rockley's self-represented image, one is driven to share Matilda's 'dumbfoundedness' when two days later Mr Rockley *orders* her to marry Hadrian. To make matters more confusing, the narration disseminates narratorial comments which exacerbate the reader's bewilderment and strengthen his/her rapprochement to Matilda: on the one hand, the narrator asserts that Mr Rockley feels contemptuous at Hadrian's wish to marry Matilda; on the other, IT says that the old man 'loves' Hadrian. Added to this there is the forever unexplained 'inexplicable understanding' between the two men to which this narrator refers. And last, the narration utterly seals the old man's mind, thwarting any possible understanding of the reason why he 'looked suddenly more alive', or why he 'was excited' (p. 102) for two days, or indeed, what the contents of his thoughts are prior to his final decision.

Henceforth the only information one gets about the old man is mediated by a very elusive narrator and is limited exclusively to facial expressions. The word that recurs in

association with Mr Rockley is 'malevolence', and the victims of this cryptic malevolence are apparently his own daughters as much as his adopted son: 'At length [Matilda's] father turned to her, looking really malevolent' (p. 102); 'But he looked at [Emmie] with a malevolent little smile' (p. 103); 'Mr Rockley told this to the young man, with malevolent satisfaction' (p. 104). As regards what lies behind the man's malevolence, the narrator speculates: 'He *seemed* to have a *strange* desire, quite *unreasonable*, for revenge upon the women who had surrounded him for so long' (p. 104; my emphasis). One ought to be cautious here, lest one be misled into taking the narrator's supposition for a summative statement about the sexual politics of the story. Indeed, caution is required not merely because this is the subjective guess of the narrator, but also and more importantly because it is one that utterly clashes with what the narration has insisted from the outset: that the Rockleys are a 'happy' and 'quiet household' (p. 93).

After Hadrian's irruption into this family, the strong bond that unites the members of this household is further underlined. One recalls, for instance, the quiet conversation between the dying man and Matilda before Hadrian's marriage proposal, in which Mr Rockley's concern for his daughters is so exclusive that the only things he will leave to Hadrian are a 'watch' and a 'chain' (p. 99). Another example would be Emmie's outburst when she learns that Hadrian will get anything at all:

'What right has *he*' — *he* — meaning Hadrian — 'to my father's watch and chain — what has it to do with him? Let him have the money, and get off,' said Emmie. She loved her father (p. 99).

It is noteworthy that the last sentence counters what on the face of it could have been otherwise perceived as Emmie's materialistic greed. Above all, the Rockleys emerge from the outset as united by a shared feeling of resentment for Hadrian, in turn caused by his departure at the age of fifteen: 'Matilda and Emmie wept often to think how he left them: even on their father's face a queer look came' (p. 94). This look on Mr Rockley's face will in fact return when Hadrian reappears: 'Seeing Hadrian, a queer, unwilling smile went over his face' (p. 96).

From the exposition above it becomes clear that in Lawrence's fictions one ought to be circumspect about the weight one wants to assign to narratorial conjectures, especially

when his narrators are as highly subjectivized as the one in 'Hadrian'. In this story, the narrator's idea that the old man's decision is a mere act of revenge runs counter to the impression one receives from the context. Moreover, the narration disseminates indications which make the opposite case plausible: namely, that the old man's decision is more a matter of class vindictiveness directed at Hadrian. Thus, for example, when we read that the old man 'was an intelligent man who had had some education, but preferred to remain as if he were one with the rest of the working people' (p. 93), the insertion of the phrase 'as if' already alerts the reader to Mr Rockley's democratic *pose*. Hence when Hadrian launches his critique against the English class system, one has already been predisposed to interpret the look which Mr Rockley's is reported to give Hadrian as a sign of derision: 'The sick man looked at him narrowly, with *oddly smiling eyes*' (p. 97).

Thus we see that, notwithstanding their apparent smoothness, Lawrencian fictions are in fact very intricate. Above all, the reader is continually sent back and forth through the texts in search of possible clues that may shed light upon their frequently indeterminate nature. It is in this sense that Mr Rockley's sudden and irrational change of mind with regard to Matilda is exemplary: in view of the several indications I have given above, it would appear that Mr Rockley's decision is in fact a manoeuvre whereby he uses a patriarchal instrument — the institution of marriage — not for its more conventional purpose, that is to say, to keep woman in her place, but in order to impede a male representative of the working class entering into the establishment. The plausibility of this hypothesis finds ample support in the course of the remaining narrative.

First of all, the narration offers the reader the opportunity to look into Hadrian's scheming mind:

[Hadrian] turned his back on [Emmie], to think. It had not occurred to him that they would think he was after the money. He *did* want the money — badly. He badly wanted to be an employer himself, not one of the employed. But he knew, in his subtle, calculating way, that it was not for the money he wanted Matilda. He wanted both the money and Matilda. But he told himself the two desires were separate, not one. He could not do with Matilda, *without* the money. But he did not want her *for* the money.

When he got this clear in his mind, he sought for an opportunity to tell it her, lurking and watching (p. 104).

The sentence that finishes this passage resonates with irony, especially in view of the mental entanglement that precedes it. Yet the extract illuminates decisive questions. Once more, it reveals Hadrian's self-contradictoriness as it represents his urgency to climb up the social ladder, indeed to become a master himself. This leads him to conceive his marriage to Matilda as his passport into the ruling class. The extract is also crucially revealing in the way it foregrounds Hadrian's struggle to convince himself that Matilda and the money are two different *things*: even though he strives to separate them, in the eyes of the reader they emerge as indivisible. It could be argued that what he is trying to differentiate is between material expediency on the one hand, and physical desire on the other. In either case, he can only conceive Matilda as an object of consumption. But most important of all is the fact that in so presenting the reader with such an insight the narration metaphorically undresses Hadrian and explicitly bars any sympathetic assessment of his claim on Matilda. This insight, however, needs to be complemented with the following:

Hadrian pondered within himself. If he did not marry Matilda he would go to Canada with twenty thousand pounds. This was itself a very satisfactory prospect. If Matilda consented he would have nothing — she would have her own money (pp. 105-106).

This perspective is paramount not so much for what it exposes about Hadrian himself but because it illuminates Mr Rockley's irrational turn of mind. Here the narration educes the actual parameters of the marriage contract in the fictional realm. This is no trifle: given the historical setting of the narrative, one might have been driven to conclude that, even in the event of marrying Hadrian, the wife's/Matilda's capital would have automatically fallen into her husband's/Hadrian's hands. But as the narration makes it clear through Hadrian, these are not the *fictional* terms of the marriage deal. Then, in so making these explicit, the passage importantly sheds light upon Mr Rockley's stratagem: by resorting to his economically based patriarchal authority, that is, by blackmailing Matilda, he actually prevents Hadrian from having access to capital. In other words, he nails him down to where he "belongs".

There is yet another extract representing Hadrian's thoughts which, for all its brevity, further illuminates Mr Rockley's machinations and the conversation that closes the narrative:

The same glamour that he knew in the elderly man he now saw in the woman. And he wanted to possess himself of it, he wanted to make himself master of it (p. 100).

Compare this insight with the final dialogue:

'Hadrian, — you've got her?' he said, a little hoarsely.
 'Yes,' said Hadrian, who was pale round the gills.
 'Ay, my lad, I'm glad you're mine,' replied the dying man (p. 107).

Setting these extracts against each other it becomes evident that the end of the story is a case of dramatic irony: for after all his calculations, Hadrian's plans backlash. As Mr Rockley's words make it plain, in so marrying Matilda Hadrian has actually thrown himself into the very "belly" of *patriarchal capitalism*.

Several conclusions can be drawn from the exposition I have just elaborated. First, the socio-realism of the story is not as *accidental* as some scholars have argued: rather, it is the dominant narrative mode. Second, the realism of 'Hadrian' deals with two crucial issues, class and gender, as they relate to patriarchy. Third, 'Hadrian' does not subsume the gender question within class struggle; instead, it relocates the problem of class *within* patriarchy and dramatizes how an acceptance of the latter has 'diminishing [and] destructive effects ... on both male and female characters'.²⁹ Fourth, the story illuminates some of the processes 'by which the work of reproducing gender ideology is done': on the one hand, the process of recuperation *by* and *into* the dominant ideology (Mr Rockley) through the character of Hadrian; on the other, the process of 'collusion' through Matilda.³⁰ The latter needs further elaboration and will constitute the conclusion of my argument.

29. Gayle Greene, 'Feminist and Marxist Criticism: An Argument for Alliances', *Women's Studies*, 9 (1982), 29-45 (pp. 30-31).

30. For an explanation of these two processes, see Michèle Barrett's *Women's Oppression Today: Problems in Marxist Feminist Analysis* (London: Verso, 1980), pp. 108-11. Even though Barrett defines the process of recuperation as the 'ideological effort that goes into negating and defusing challenges to the historically dominant meaning of gender in particular periods' (p. 111), I use it more broadly to encompass any challenge to the dominant ideology, that is, patriarchal capitalism in the case of the fictional world of 'Hadrian'. As for the process of collusion, I use it in the sense of 'women's willing consent and their internalization of oppression' (p. 110).

3. Matilda's choice

So far I have suspended the question of Matilda's agreement to marry Hadrian for the obvious reason that it is what appears to be most troublesome. Brian Finney, for example, interprets Matilda's compliance as a disclosure of the story's underlying intention: the representation of her marriage to Hadrian as 'a victory for both of them'.³¹ Janice H. Harris goes so far as to suggest that in this resolution Lawrence endorses 'the notion encoded through centuries of law and custom that there is a real gain for man and woman alike in the woman's giving up self-responsibility':

The gain derives of course from the fact that each is following his and her "natural" bent, his to lead, hers to follow.³²

Harris's apparent discomfort about the 'air of harshness, compulsion, and cruelty' in 'Hadrian' finds its own *raison d'être* in the way the narration, especially after the climactic episode, surrounds Matilda with a mute aura.³³ So much is this the case that she would appear to have been literally sent to sleep by Hadrian's touch. The point is that, as with Mr Rockley, the interpretive difficulties concerning Matilda's "irrational" decision arise from the fact that her mind remains sealed for most of the narrative. (One recalls that Matilda is supposed to take after her father, something which her hermetical personality appears to corroborate.) Granted that the narration forecloses any possibility of knowing the motivation of her decision, one can try to infer it from other sources.

The first observation that needs to be made in this respect is that the narrative makes explicit that Matilda, like Mabel in 'The Horse Dealer's Daughter' (indeed, like many other Lawrencian female characters) '[holds] the keys of her own situation':³⁴

'Oh, well,' [Emmie] said. 'Matilda — don't you bother. Let him have everything, we can look after ourselves.'
'I know he'll take everything,' said Matilda abstractly (p. 105).

Emmie's speech is important for manifold reasons. First, it is paradigmatic of a recurrent motif in Lawrence's fictions: namely, sisterly support. One thinks, for example, of

31. Brian Finney, 'Introduction' to *D. H. Lawrence: Selected Short Stories*, edited by the same author (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), pp. 11-31 (p. 20).

32. Janice H. Harris, *The Short Fiction*, p. 153.

33. Harris, p. 152.

34. 'The Horse Dealer's Daughter', in *England, My England*, p. 143.

memorable examples such as Frances and Anne in 'Second Best' (1912), Hester and Henrietta in 'In Love' (1926), or indeed, Mary and Louisa in 'Daughters of the Vicar' (1915) and Ursula and Gudrun in *Women in Love* (1920).³⁵ Then, it functions as a reminder that Mr Rockley's modification of his will affects both sisters, and not just Matilda. In other words, Matilda's choice decides two destinies: her own and her sister's. Thirdly, and given that Emmie's remark seeks to release Matilda from the obligation of having to marry on her account, it functions as a signpost alerting the reader that whatever the outcome, Matilda's decision is *her own* decision and not an inescapable imposition from outside.³⁶ As for Matilda's rejoinder, its down-to-earth force stands in sharp contrast with the indifferent attitude she would appear to assume in the course of Emmie's heated argument with Hadrian. Against all appearances, this is not the reply of somebody who is benumbed, least of all indifferent; rather, Matilda's 'abstraction' is that of a no less scheming mind than Mr Rockley's or Hadrian's. One is reminded here of the way in which, early in the narrative, Emmie '[looks] up to Matilda, whose mind was naturally refined and sensible' (p. 93).

Thus one notes that even though the narration keeps Matilda's mind out of reach, it nevertheless opens up other indirect paths leading into it. The dialogue I have just examined would be one of them. Another path is Hadrian's calculating mind which, as I have pointed out already, alerts the reader to the idiosyncratic marital rules applicable in this fictional realm: if he marries her he will have nothing. It is conceivable that just as Hadrian knows them, so does Matilda. And it is no less conceivable that, especially in view of her 'sensible' mind, she too knows what Hadrian knows: that if she marries him, he loses, if she does not marry him she *and* Emmie lose.

This illustrates the way in which the narration actually enables the reader to conjecture that Matilda, in spite of all her secretive nature, is aware of the catch-22 situation in which she is enmeshed: 'She felt as if he had trapped her' (p. 106). Therefore,

35. All examples I cite have been recurrently overlooked by those who have claimed that Lawrence had a vested interest in dividing women. Chapter 3 will deal with this problem more extensively.

36. Such would be Harris's interpretation of the ending, which in turn explains her overtly expressed discomfort about it; *The Short Fiction*, p. 152.

if her not marrying Hadrian would constitute a subversive challenge to patriarchy, on practical grounds she would be allowing Hadrian to become yet another patriarchal master while at the same time demoting herself and her sister to the class of the dispossessed, or better, casting herself and Emmie out of the establishment. On the other hand, were she to accept Hadrian, she would be merely betraying the moral code of 'decency' (p. 106) to which she and her sister have been seen to adhere; but she and her sister would retain their position in the dominant culture. More significantly, in marrying him both sisters would hold economic power over Hadrian, thus subversively turning patriarchy on its head by means of its quintessential instrument of power — marriage.

One may argue that Lawrence has put his woman protagonist in a situation where she can only act on the margins of ideology or be integrated — thus recuperated like Hadrian — within the very ideology that oppresses her. But as I have indicated above, Matilda's choice is not such a simple case of collusion. Actually one could advance instead that Lawrence's story explores a historically familiar situation in the course of which some of the mechanisms whereby patriarchy manages to keep women in their places are unveiled.

There is yet another side to the story. First of all, the ending of 'Hadrian' forcefully emerges as an act of sisterly solidarity. In the second place, it stands out as an overt rejection of the happy-love-marriage resolution that characterizes both fairy-tales and romantic fictions. Needless to say, such happy endings constitute, more often than not, a subterfuge whereby the underlying economics of marriage are camouflaged. And last but not least, in so making Matilda discard the code of 'decency' in favour of the economics of power, the ending obliquely gives entry to the previously taboo unconscious, thus breaking through the reifying representational practice of mid-nineteenth-century fiction.

'TICKETS, PLEASE': BEYOND THE LITERAL

The real trouble about women is that they must always go on trying to adapt themselves to men's theories of women, as they always have done. When a woman is thoroughly herself, she is being what her type of man wants her to be. When a woman is hysterical it's because she doesn't quite know what to be, which pattern to follow, which man's picture of woman to live up to.³⁷

To enter into the world of 'Tickets, Please' is almost like jumping over the fence of the Pottery House into a nascent new world: the world of newly independent women. In contrast with Matilda and Emmie, the women one encounters in 'Tickets, Please' have vaulted over the domestic borders and taken their lives in their own hands. As they do so, they *seemingly* leave behind the code of decency to which Matilda and Emmie have been seen to adhere. Nevertheless, it soon becomes obvious that against appearances these women have still a long way to go before they extricate themselves from patriarchal bonds.

This links at once with what this chapter assumes to be the principal thrust of 'Tickets, Please': the debunking of those modes of sexual behaviour which patriarchal conventions of love underwrite. In effect, as the ensuing pages will show, 'Tickets, Please' is a parody which powerfully exposes the artificiality of such modes of behaviour and reveals its economic foundations. But it is also a parody that bluntly dramatizes the way in which patriarchal ideology survives structural change through subliminal indoctrination.

An examination of the parodic content of the story, however, cannot be pursued without paying heed to its compositional base. This survey will be particularly concerned with the relationship between the narrator and its corresponding narratee for two obvious reasons: first, it is from this relationship that the parodic thrust of the story emerges; secondly, the significance of the issues which its intensely problematic resolution raises hinges on the nature of this relationship.

37. D. H. Lawrence, 'Give Her a Pattern', *Daily Express*, 19 June 1929; *Assorted Articles*, 1930; reprinted in *Phoenix: Uncollected, Unpublished and Other Prose Works by D. H. Lawrence*, collected and edited with an introduction and notes by Warren Roberts and Harry T. Moore (London: Heinemann, 1968), pp. 535-38 (p. 535).

1. "O my friends, there is no friend"³⁸

The apostrophe quoted here suitably describes a fundamental trait of 'Tickets, Please': the narrator's shifting attitude vis-à-vis its corresponding narratee. It is also an apostrophe which equally applies to other Lawrencian narratives, more particularly to *Aaron's Rod* and *Mr Noon*. One recalls that in these novels the narrator addresses a "reader" on several occasions, and that such scattered interpellations tend, more often than not, to discourage the actual reader's identification with these encoded interlocutors. For example, the narrator of *Aaron's Rod* suddenly interrupts ITS account as if foreseeing that ITS narratee(s) may cast doubt on the credibility of ITS narrating:

Don't grumble at me then, gentle reader, and swear at me that this damned fellow [Aaron] wasn't half clever enough to think all these smart things ... You are quite right, he wasn't, yet it all resolved itself in him as I say, and it is for you to prove that it didn't.³⁹

The difference between these novels and 'Tickets, Please' is that whereas in the former the narrator's irony towards the narratee(s) is overt, in 'Tickets, Please' it is much more surreptitious. Above all, the narrator of the story is deceptive because, although distancing ITSELF from the encoded audience, IT only does so after having won its sympathy.

From the moment the story begins to unfold one immediately recognizes a style which is strikingly reminiscent of mid-nineteenth-century literature. Amongst the features which contribute to give it this peculiar stamp there is precisely the fact that, right from the start, the narration weaves in a sympathetic alliance between the narrator and the narratee(s). That is to say, it encodes a "we" whose immediate effect is to evoke a shared experience between the teller and the audience. This *entente cordiale* is further reinforced by the insertion of proverbs signalling a common cultural heritage between both parties. But there are other features contributing to that effect: first, the symbolic naming of the protagonists; then, the use of logical connectors such as 'therefore', 'so' and other similar syntactic devices calling forth an agreed language of reason; and last, the creation of the

38. Aristotle's apostrophe, cited in David Lehman, *Signs of the Times: Deconstruction and the Fall of Paul de Man* (New York: Poseidon, 1991), p. 247; the apostrophe constitutes the subject of three lectures by Derrida around the subject of "The Politics of Friendship", delivered in the first week of October 1988 at Cornell University.

39. D. H. Lawrence, *Aaron's Rod*, edited by Mara Kalnins (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 164.

illusion of familiarity with regard to the spatio-temporal setting in which the events take place. Yet as one advances through the narrative it turns out that this narration actually uses stylistic procedures which are typical of mid-nineteenth-century literary artifacts in order to debunk the very ideology which — generally speaking — informs these works.⁴⁰

In effect, the narrating instance of 'Tickets, Please', like the one we have just seen in 'Hadrian', is intensely subjectivized from the outset. IT differs from the latter in that ITS tone is not as contentious or authoritarian as the tone one hears at the beginning of 'Hadrian'. On the contrary, the narrator's mode in 'Tickets, Please' is at once striking for its amiability. As IT assumes such an amicable stance, the narrator is at once perceived as striving to win the sympathy of the encoded audience.

The first step towards this search for alliance is the attempt IT makes to win ITS interlocutors's trust by endowing ITS narrative with an aura of objective familiarity:

There the green and creamy-coloured tram-car seems to pause and purr with curious satisfaction. But in a few minutes — *the clock on the turret of the Co-operative Wholesale Society's Shops gives the time* — away it starts once more on the adventure (p. 34; my emphasis).

Following this, the narrator directly drags in the audience, hence bringing into effect a sense of shared experience in a familiar geographical setting:

We are in the sordid streets of the great town, once more we sidle to a standstill at our terminus, abashed by the great crimson and cream-coloured city cars, but still perky, jaunty, somewhat dare-devil, green as a jaunty sprig of parsley out of a black colliery garden (p. 34).

In a third movement, the narrating instance simultaneously encodes a shared historical reality and system of beliefs:

Since we are in war-time, the drivers are men unfit for active service: cripples and hunchbacks. *So they have the spirit of the devil in them* (p. 34; my emphasis).

40. Lionel Trilling perceives two contrasting styles in the story: one which he defines as 'Victorian' for its 'whimsicality, coziness and jollity'; and the style of the second movement, which is 'quick', 'violent', and 'aparc'; although this essay coincides with his on this score, it parts ways with Trilling's, especially because, as he concludes on the story, he is seen to reinscribe the essentialist conception of woman which the text actually debunks: 'the behaviour of the girls,' he argues, 'which is so extravagantly unwomanly, reveals them, especially Annie, in the full of their female nature — and reveals them not only to us but to themselves'; 'Tickets Please: D. H. Lawrence 1885-1930', in *Prefaces to the Experience of Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981; first publ. in 1979), pp. 123-27 (p. 124, p. 127). A similar move can be detected in two other approaches to the story: *Understanding Fiction*, edited by Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, 2nd edition (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1959), p. 122; Seymour Lainoff, 'The Wartime Setting of Lawrence's "Tickets, Please"', *Studies in Short Fiction*, 7 (1970), 649-51.

The subtle facetiousness of this narratorial observation is remarkable: here the narrator is actually inscribing a shared *Weltanschauung* by appealing to a popular *superstition* in the manner of a logical implicature, that is, by resorting to the language of *scientific rationalism*. This farcical blend of incompatible discourses already signals — although almost imperceptibly at this point — the deceitful nature of the friendship which this narrator is ostensibly establishing here. Before this surreptitiousness comes fully to the forefront, the narrator further reinforces the sense of fellowship by merging ITS own voice with the audience's:

'Hurray! — we have leapt in a clean jump over the canal bridges — now for the four-lane corner. With a shriek and a trail of sparks we are clear again. To be sure, a tram often leaps the rails — but what matter!' (p. 34).

The characteristic double-voicedness of 'Tickets, Please' can be best appreciated here, for one hears in it the voice of the narrator and ITS audience as they commonly enjoy the adventure of travelling in these cars.

Yet just as the narrator is perceived to merge with the audience, IT suddenly detaches ITSELF from the latter by getting off the tram and leaving the audience behind. This is in fact the figural effect that the immediate switch from representational narration to direct report creates: 'the passengers stolidly reply: "Get on — get on. We're not coming out. We're stopping where we are. Push on, George"' (p. 35). In so circumscribing now the passengers' words in quotation marks the narration marks off a distance between narrator/narratee whereby the former ceases to be a passenger on a par with the audience. From then on, the narrator's tone vis-à-vis the inhabitants of this world becomes increasingly ironic. For example, after reporting the passengers' reluctance to get off the tram at the cry of 'fire' the narrator mockingly adds the postpositive clause 'So till flames actually appear' (p. 35). To this one should add the jocular distortion of the proverbial 'Ships that pass in the night', which in the voice of this narrator becomes 'Trams that pass in the night' (p. 35). In so twisting the traditional locution the narrator evokes ITS own estrangement from and playful disrespect for the collective memory; or more precisely, for the discourse of popular sentimental romance and its underlying ideology.

This detachment becomes even more conspicuous when the narrator appeals to the 'authorities' of this fictional world:

This, the most dangerous tram service in England, as the authorities themselves declare with pride, is entirely conducted by girls and driven by rash young men, a little crippled, or by delicate young men, who creep forward in terror (p. 35).

One notices the whimsical dialogicality of this extract: as if anticipating disagreement amongst the audience, the narrator endows ITS utterance with 'authorial' weight. The implication is that the encoded audience is one which consents to official discourse. Yet there is more: in so transforming ITS own statement into a mere *echo*, the narrator is felt to disengage ITSELF from it. The narrator gives the listener(s) a friendly pat on the shoulder in the manner of a "You and I know that if it is the authorities that say so it must necessarily be true" while simultaneously withdrawing from the audience and the authorities around which the former gathers by adding something like "the discourse of the authorities on which *you* put your trust is not my own discourse".

The foregoing exposition evinces that the literary convention of the "dear reader" typical of mid-nineteenth-century novel writing is here brought into prominence only to be relentlessly assaulted. It is in fact the same attack which Earl G. Ingersoll perceives in *Mr Noon*, the difference between the novel and the story being that in the latter the enmity between the teller and the audience is disguised as friendship.⁴¹ This in turn creates interpretive difficulties: failing to apprehend the janus-faced nature of the narrator, one risks losing sight of the parodic thrust of the story and, concurrently, one may be misled into endowing with authorial weight what is in fact being subjected to doubt: the system of beliefs informing the style which the narration mimics.

2. The language of common sense

It should be stressed at once that in so foregrounding the narrator's detachment from ITS corresponding narratee and the authorities around which the latter gathers, the narration encourages the reader's dissociation from the latter. As one critic would express it, the

41. Earl G. Ingersoll, 'D. H. Lawrence's *Mr Noon* as a Postmodern Text', *The Modern Language Review*, 85 (1990), 304-9.

narration 'embarrasses readers out' of any association with the *point of view* of the entire fictional community which the narrator is seen to imitate.⁴²

Once this distance is established, the narration proceeds to unveil the actual contents of such a community's viewpoint in relation to the girls who work in the line:

The girls are fearless young hussies. In their ugly blue uniforms, skirts up their knees, shapeless old peaked caps on their heads, they have all the *sang froid* of an old non-commissioned officer. With a tram packed with howling colliers, roaring hymns downstairs and a sort of antiphony of obscenities upstairs, the lasses are perfectly at their ease (p. 35; bold-faced characters mine).

The derogatory manner in which the girls are described is evident. What needs to be insisted upon is that the description obtains in the same passage which purports to *mime* the authorities' perception of this particular service and its employees. Hence the double-voicedness of the passage discloses an authorial moral discourse which perceives the women who work in this line as immoral ('hussies'; 'at their ease' in the midst of an 'antiphony of obscenities'), uglified by their 'uniforms', and unwomanly (their composure is like that of 'an old non-commissioned officer'). Then, as Ted's play on words further evinces ("Oh, mind my corn, Miss Stone. It's my belief you've got a heart of stone", p. 35) it is a discourse which appears to be endorsed by the entire male community.

For a while the narration carries on conveying the authorities' viewpoint through the medium of the narrator. From this particular stance, one would have thought that the girls who work on the tram represent a real defiance to the so-parodied authorial double standard. Yet, as soon as the narration focuses on Annie, a very different picture emerges.

Actually, Annie is very much an epitome of most Lawrencian women: she is not so much a new woman as much as a new woman *in the making*.⁴³ What this means is that

42. Robyn R. Warhol, 'Toward a Theory of the Engaging Narrator: Earnest Interventions in Gaskell, Stowe, and Eliot', *PMLA*, 101 (1986), 811-18 (p. 814).

43. Apart from the women characters who appear in subsequent chapters, one could cite as examples of new women in the making Clara in *Sons and Lovers*: being as she is deeply involved with the Suffragettes, she is nevertheless under the dominion of convention and public opinion. Another such example would be Ursula in *The Rainbow*, who 'expecting a little chivalrous courtesy' from Mr Harby (the schoolmaster) feels absolutely confused at the realization that 'the fact that she was a girl, a woman, was ignored or used as a matter of contempt against her'; ultimately, she is even led to question her own identity: 'She did not know what she was, nor what she must be. She wanted to remain her own responsive, personal self'; D. H. Lawrence, *The Rainbow*, edited by Mark Kinkead-Weekes (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 351.

even though outwardly capable of '[holding] her own against ten thousand' (p. 35), deep inside she is under the surveillance of the community whose authorial voice the narrator has been mimicking earlier:

She was very glad to have a 'boy'. To be at the Statutes without a fellow was no fun. Instantly, like the gallant he was, he took her on the Dragons ... to be seated in a shaking dragon ... whilst John Thomas leaned over her, a cigarette in his mouth, was after all the right style (p. 37).

The passage purports to convey Annie's thoughts, although contained within the narrator's voice. This containment is in turn fundamental insofar as it allows the narrator's viewpoint to fuse with hers. The merging of voices endows this insight with a heavily ironic thrust: on the one hand, it represents Annie's adherence to the world of *sentimental romance* and the gendered system upon which this rests. But when heard against the background of John Thomas's 'flirtatious' reputation (p. 36), it also represents the narrator's counterview: a gallant, indeed, but in the *amatory*, non-sentimental sense of the word. The voice of the narrator intermingles with Annie's to the effect of underscoring her naivete and concurrently unveiling what she herself cannot perceive: that in so succumbing to the world of romance she is in fact complying with a world which actually conceals a conceptualization of woman as nothing more than a marketable sexual object.

Nevertheless, the narration does not mock Annie arbitrarily for her apparent "inexperience". Rather, it powerfully dramatizes her case not as that of a woman defying convention (as the official 'authorities' of this fictional realm would want us to believe) but as that of a woman absolutely caught in the double bind created by the system with which she herself is seen to collude. The narration unveils this double bind in which she appears to be enmeshed by exposing her mind to the reader once more. What this new insight allows us to apprehend is that, however Annie chooses to behave towards John Thomas, she inevitably breaks the "law": if she satisfies these pre-established rules she breaks a moral code (the same that defines self-assertive, independent women as 'hussies' and 'impudent'); if she chooses to be moral, she runs against the tacit contract that, within the fictional realm, appears to underlie the courtship game:

she could hardly *for shame* repulse him when he put his arm round her and drew her a little nearer to him, in a very warm and cuddly manner.

Besides, he was fairly *discreet*, he kept his movement as hidden as possible. She looked down, and *saw that his red, clean hand was out of sight of the crowd* (p. 36; my emphasis).

[...]

After the dragons they went on the horses. *John paid each time, so she could but be complaisant* (p. 37; my emphasis).

Through the exposure of Annie's mind the narration lays bare the economics of the relationship between the sexes that, as the logical connector 'so' indicates, are in fact normative in her world. Furthermore, it reveals the way in which Annie, in so sticking to what is preordained, confers an exchange value upon her own sexuality. To put it otherwise, the narration makes the reader apprehend Annie at the moment where she turns herself into one more fairground amusement for John Thomas.

Apart from disclosing the double bind where Annie and her friends find themselves, the narration also and more significantly denaturalizes their comportment, which amounts to debunking the sex-gender system that feeds it. This is powerfully carried out in the course of the carousel scene. Given that the process has already been shrewdly examined elsewhere by Kiernan Ryan, and to avoid cumbersome repetition, what follows will only stress what is most pertinent to the ongoing discussion.⁴⁴

The denaturalization of the sex-gendered system that subliminally dictates Annie's conduct is achieved by the reiterative intercalation of logical connectors ('of course', 'after all', 'so', 'therefore') which serve to underline the pre-determined character of what is being described. One example will suffice to illustrate this point: when we read that '[John Thomas] of course sat astride on the outer horse ... and she sat sideways, towards him, on the inner horse' (p. 37-38), the phrase "of course" functions as a clear signpost of conventional posturing. In so making the narrator mimic the discourse of conventional behaviour, the narration not only underlines the role-playing character of their respective bearings; more importantly, it lays bare the submissive role of women (she sits 'on the inner horse', that is, in confinement), and the sexual restraint (she sits 'sideways') which these conventional postures underwrite.⁴⁵

44. Kiernan Ryan, 'The Revenge of the Women: Lawrence's *Tickets, Please*', *Literature and History*, 7 (1981), 210-22.

45. Kiernan Ryan, p. 214.

Therefore, the cruciality of 'Tickets, Please' lies in the way it unrelentlessly muckrakes the patriarchal convention and its conceptualization of the sexes as they are unconsciously assimilated by individuals.⁴⁶ In the last instance, it is the women of the fictional realm we are presented with who emerge as the ultimate victims of gender socialization. This in turn leads to a consideration of the story's resolution.

3. The problematics of the story's resolution

'Tickets, Please' begins by focusing on the community to which Annie and John Thomas belong; then, the focus shifts towards the process whereby the latter come together and how they come apart. In both movements the narrator's presence is strongly felt. But as is often the case in Lawrencian fictions, 'Tickets, Please' becomes increasingly dramatic as it advances towards its climax and dénouement. This progression in turn is paralleled by a change of the role assigned to the narrator, now limited to registering external events (actions, speech interventions). Hence the ambiguity of the story's resolution partly arises from the narration liberating its characters from narratorial constraints. Yet other factors contribute to it.

After the Statutes fair John Thomas and Annie go out together for a while. Their relationship comes to an end when Annie decides that she wants him to be more than 'a *mere* nocturnal presence':

Here she made a mistake. John Thomas intended to remain a nocturnal presence, he had no idea of becoming an all-round individual to her. When she started to take an intelligent interest in him and his life and his character, he sheered off. He hated intelligent interest. And he knew that the only way to stop it was to avoid it. The possessive female was aroused in Annie. So he left her (p. 39).

This is the kind of passage which many a reader will be tempted to take 'as undoctored Lawrence', for as Wayne C. Booth would say, the contents of the extract undoubtedly bear a striking resemblance to what Lawrence expresses in other non-fictional writings.⁴⁷ Yet to quote Booth once more, the passage must be considered within the whole context that

46. See Ryan's for more textual examples illustrating this point.

47. Wayne C. Booth, *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction* (Berkeley, CA, and London: University of California Press, 1988), p. 448.

frames it and 'must not be accomodated to a simple, consistent, propositional portrait of "what Lawrence believed"'.⁴⁸

As one begins to read this passage one gets the impression that the narrating instance is taking sides with John Thomas against Annie. The narrator would seemingly convey the idea that indeed she has made a 'mistake' and therefore John Thomas is not to be blamed for her subsequent misery. On close reading, however, the narrator is not so much taking sides — nor is the reader compelled to do so — as much as IT is acting as the linguistic medium through which John Thomas's viewpoint on Annie's growing personal interest in him emerges. That the latter is in fact the case becomes evident as the narration progressively releases John Thomas's own thoughts outside narratorial boundaries ('He hated ... So he left her'). Thus, when we read about the 'possessive female', the narration has already made clear that this is actually the male character's generalization about the female sex and definition of Annie as the epitome of it. Whether such is the view which the story taken as a whole endorses is something that requires further consideration.

Annie's "possessiveness", or her desire to get married as the narration translates it in retrospect, must be comprehended within the immediate surrounding context. What this context has been hammering home all along is that Annie's behaviour is absolutely governed by patriarchal conventionality. Thus, when one reads that she wants John Thomas to be more than 'a *mere* nocturnal presence', one has been well prepared to apprehend this new bent not as one which is *natural* to her sex (as John Thomas would imply) but as *nurtured* in women. In other words, one takes her desire to marry him as the last link of a long chain of patriarchal expectations.

The irony that 'Tickets, Please' confronts us with is that it is precisely Annie's frustration at not being able to fulfil patriarchal expectations — marriage — which ultimately leads her to defy patriarchy by organizing a collective, female revenge. But the biggest of ironies is that these women's solidarity is in fact fostered by mutual rivalry. In other words, this is not a "divide and conquer" narrative but quite the opposite.

48. Wayne C. Booth, p. 448.

In relation to the women's revenge it is important to realize how the socialized modes of behaviour which the narration has parodied earlier are now objectified at the level of direct dramatization. Yet as the narrative becomes more and more dramatic, what initially started as parody gradually turns into dramatic irony.

According to Judith Breen, in so harassing John Thomas into choosing one of the girls '[Annie] assumes for herself the patriarchal right to force the seducer to marry'.⁴⁹ This would then explain why in the text we read "'You've got to *choose!*" she cried, ... as if it hurt her that she could not exact more' (p. 44). Annie's frustration, so Breen suggests, is therefore an indicator of her 'realization that while she can force him to the ground, only he can "exact more" and his choice of Annie vindictively reminds her of the realities of sexual politics':⁵⁰

Male genital power, says Lawrence, is the final power ... no matter how strengthened by the freedoms brought by World War I, women can never be the equals of men. The source of their power remains in the underlining of the word *please*. Annie's essential failure in her own eyes — the most cruel element in her humiliation — as well as in those of John Thomas, is her failure to be a man.⁵¹

While accurately isolating one patriarchal situation, Breen fails to see yet another: that of the male wielding the patriarchal right to choose the woman he wants to marry. Their 'acting' the role of the patriarch wishing to restore respectability to the "dishonoured daughter" cannot but misfire, for their role does not suffice to erase their condition as women. It is precisely this condition that makes the second patriarchal situation not only possible but inevitable. As Ryan very rightly argues, the girls force him to reassert

the conventional assumption of the male prerogative and thereby [reinstates] that whole debasing structure of sexual relationship which the women have just so violently overthrown. The 'normal' female situation of being chosen as object, the situation they have ritually mocked and symbolically dissolved, coalesces and hardens round them again.⁵²

49. Judith Puchner Breen, 'D. H. Lawrence, World War I and the Battle of the Sexes: A reading of "The Blind Man" and "Tickets, Please"', *Women's Studies*, 3 (1986-87), 63-74 (p. 71).

50. Breen, p. 71.

51. Breen, p. 72. Sandra M. Gilbert argues along similar lines: in a passing reference to this text, she maintains that this fight actually 'suggests the horror and disorder associated with female ascendancy'; 'Costumes of the Mind: Transvestism as Metaphor in Modern Literature', *Critical Inquiry*, 7 (1980-81), 391-417 (p. 400n).

52. Ryan, pp. 218-19

In other words, the girls re-enact the dream of the female community in "Cinderella", that is, the dream 'of being chosen from amongst others by the handsome male'.⁵³ Not only do they actually give John a prerogative which he already possesses (the male prerogative of choosing), they reify themselves into objects for male consumption in the act of forcing him to choose.

The problem is that once they set the machinery of role-playing in motion it gets out of personal control. Hence Annie's frustration emerges as that of somebody trying to fight against an intangible — because impersonal — 'social structure of institutionalized repression'.⁵⁴ This leads straight into a consideration of the most cryptic narrative statements encountered in 'Tickets, Please':

each one of [the girls] waited for him to look at her, hoped he would look at her. All except Annie, and something was broken in her' (p. 45).

In view of the preceding observations, however, the apparent indeterminacy of this narratorial remark suddenly becomes "over-determined": for the very indefiniteness of this term ('something') could be seen as paralleling the volatility of what is ostensibly its referent:

the whole inherited structure of feeling and expectation, centring precisely on 'possession and marriage' in terms of which the revenge itself was defined and executed.⁵⁵

But it could also point at Annie's undergoing a similar experience to Matilda's, or indeed, to Paul's in *Sons and Lovers* when all of a sudden he realizes that he has been on the verge of killing Baxter: namely, what is 'broken' is actually Annie's socialized self, and her silence would seemingly convey her own dumbfoundedness as she suddenly confronts the actual generator of violence, that is to say, the *unsocialized* part of her own being — her own unconscious.

The plurality of this narrative does not stop here. One needs to bear in mind the present tense that characterizes the opening of 'Tickets, Please'. As the narrative advances, and the story of Annie and John Thomas begins, the narration ceases to be simultaneous

53. Hilary Simpson, *D. H. Lawrence and Feminism* (De Kalb, NIll: Northern Illinois University Press, 1982), p. 69.

54. Ryan, p. 217.

55. Ryan, p. 219.

and becomes retrospective. Having taken us into the past, the narrative does not take us back to the present from which the narration starts, hence leaving an open gap. It is precisely in this fissure that another interpretive aporia emerges. Conceptually speaking, the present is still 'present' when the retrospective narration comes to an end. Hence the narration allows us to interpret the girls' action as having changed nothing: the tram is still there, continuously setting off on the adventure; *and* the colliers, travelling every day in these cars and saying their usual obscenities; *and* the tram-girls, always pouncing on the passengers. Yet at the same time, in so *formally* leaving off in the past, the narration leaves a gap to be filled in as well. One could express these equally plausible interpretations by resorting to an image which the narration encodes in the opening page: that '[green] sprig of parsley' blossoming in 'the black colliery garden' (p. 34). In view of this image one could venture to conclude that, in so opening this breach, the question of whether Annie is at the end of the story a blossoming sprig of parsley or a sprig doomed to eternal 'greenness' is ultimately left unanswered.⁵⁶

In the light of the current exposition one could conclude as follows. First, very much in line with the rest of Lawrence's *oeuvre*, both 'Hadrian' and 'Tickets, Please' are essentially exploratory as opposed to explanatory or doctrinal. This is different from saying that the stories remain entirely impartial in relation to the political issues they explore. Thus, while 'Hadrian' allows the reader to apprehend the perniciousness inherent in an all-embracing patriarchal system affecting both men and women, 'Tickets, Please' unashamedly exposes the unnaturalness and personally damaging effects of a sex-gender system. More importantly perhaps in the light of feminist criticism is the fact that in both stories women are represented as being capable of solidarity in the face of what they think is an injustice committed against them by the opposite sex.

Another important characteristic which these stories share is that, while exploring issues concerning the subordination of women at both overt and covert levels, they obliquely react against a very specific kind of fiction. We have already seen how, while

56. This image has been brought to my attention by Ryan's; he himself unproblematically adheres to an optimistic interpretation of the ending (p. 221). The problem I see in his account is that he does not take on board the interpretive difficulties which the category of *tense* arises.

being intensely realistic, they nevertheless counteract mid-nineteenth-century fictional praxis. On the one hand, 'Hadrian' breaks the mirror through which it often creates stereotypes. Similarly, 'Tickets, Please' resorts to parody in order to deflate the ideology that underpins this praxis. In the last instance, both stories reveal, as much as do those that will be examined next, the wide variety of resources which patriarchy possesses in order to guarantee its own hegemony.

CHAPTER 2
THE HAUNTING GHOST OF RAPE
'SAMSON AND DELILAH', 'THE PRINCESS', 'NONE OF THAT'

Today it is widely accepted that rape, more than 'a pervasive metaphor, perhaps *the* master metaphor, for defining the violation of woman by patriarchy', is a concrete social phenomenon both widely and quite successfully exploited by patriarchy in order "to keep women in their place".¹ Hence many feminist scholars are particularly interested in examining how this social reality is actually represented in literary works, especially by male writers.

In recent years, these studies have been importantly influenced by the research carried out on this subject in the fields of sociology and psychology. One of the questions examined in the terrain of psychology has been the frequency with which women fantasize about rape. Even though no definite single explanation of such a common phenomenon has been proposed as yet, it is consensually agreed that the fact that women often fantasize about rape does not mean that they want to be raped in real life. This has necessarily brought in its trail the unavoidable rejection of an old, deep-seated fallacy in literary studies: if such is the case with regard to women's rape fantasies, one cannot assert either that behind men's literary representations, that is, *fantasies*, there is mere wish-fulfillment. Other important efforts have been made towards a better understanding of the aetiology of rape. No one explanation can be singled out with regard to this criminal offence, but one

1. William B. Warner, 'Reading Rape: Marxist-Feminist Figurations of the Literal', *Diacritics*, 13:4 (1983), 12-32 (p. 13); such is the metaphoric meaning which, according to Warner, Susan Brownmiller helped endow rape with in her *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1975).

thing at least is clear: rape acts are closely connected to social constructs of "masculinity" and the internalization of these by men. Then, in the process of studying this phenomenon, two longstanding myths have been cogently impugned: the racist myth of the dark rapist and the white woman, and the sexist myth of the woman's complicity in rape cases.

These considerations need to be borne in mind when approaching the subject of woman's victimization by men in Lawrence's fictions, which is the principal concern of the present chapter. Needless to say, the subject of male violence against women runs through many other Lawrencian fictions. Amongst his novels it is already present in *Sons and Lovers* at both overt and covert levels: one recalls, for example, those occasions on which Mrs Morel is physically confronted by her husband; it also permeates Paul's sexual relationships, particularly with Miriam. Neither can one forget the sexual relationship between Gerald and Gudrun in *Women in Love*, especially in the final chapter before Gerald's death; nor the violence inherent in the first sexual encounters between Alvina and Ciccio in *The Lost Girl*, and in the sexual relationship between Kate and Cipriano in *The Plumed Serpent*. The subject also runs through many of Lawrence's shorter works: 'A Sick Collier' (1913), 'The White Stocking' (1913), 'The Primrose Path' (1913), 'The Blue Moccasins' (1928), 'The Escaped Cock' ['The Man Who Died'] (1928); all these, to cite only a few, are tales in which women are either said or shown to be the target of male bullying, physical violence, and even rape. To this list one ought to add the stories which this chapter will examine shortly: 'Samson and Delilah', 'The Princess' and 'None of That'; all three works are appropriate fictional terrains for an exploration of different, although characteristic, Lawrencian narrative techniques of representation in relation to the theme of women and sexual violence.²

Violence in connection with female sexuality lies at the very core of 'Samson and Delilah', a story whose end already intimates the tragic outcome of Dollie's experience in

2. 'Samson and Delilah', in D. H. Lawrence, *England, My England and Other Stories*, edited by Bruce Steele (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 108-22; 'The Princess', in D. H. Lawrence, *St. Mawr and Other Stories*, edited by Brian Finney (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 159-96; 'None of That', in *The Complete Short Stories of D. H. Lawrence*, 3 vols, vol. 3 (London: Heinemann, 1955), pp. 701-21; all quotations will be from these editions and page numbers will be given after each quotation in the main text.

'The Princess', her rape. In relation to the latter, 'None of That' can be seen as its complement, for here rape ceases to be a subjectivized female experience in order to become the object of male discourse.

Sharing as they do similar concerns, these stories belong to three different collections and chronological periods. 'Samson and Delilah' (composed in 1916; first published in 1917) was included in the same collection as the stories already examined, that is, in *England, My England*. Seven years after the composition of 'Samson and Delilah', and inspired by Catherine Carswell, Lawrence wrote 'The Princess', first published serially in the *Calendar of Modern Letters* (1925) and included in *St. Mawr together with The Princess* in the same year.³ 'None of That', whose composition date is uncertain, was compiled in *The Woman Who Rode Away* issued in 1928.⁴

Following the critical procedure adopted in Chapter 1, each of these stories will be examined separately in the light of the subject of women and violence. It will focus upon those structural features which are at once most salient in each of the stories examined and illustrative of Lawrencian narrative techniques.

3. According to Brian Finney, Catherine Carswell told Lawrence the plot of a novel she had in mind in the winter of 1923-24; it appears that Lawrence and Carswell wrote together the outline of this novel, whose second part bears some resemblances to 'The Princess'; see his Introduction to D. H. Lawrence's *St. Mawr and Other Stories*, edited by the same author (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. xvii-xliii (pp. xxix-xxxiv).

4. Apparently, Lawrence said that this story was based on fact; see Janice H. Harris, *The Short Fiction*, p. 295n. Harris suggests that it could have been composed around 1921 when Lawrence was in Venice, then re-written when he was in Mexico in the late 1920s; see also Keith Sagar, *D. H. Lawrence: A Calendar of His Works, With A Checklist of the Manuscripts of D. H. Lawrence by Lindeth Vasey* (Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, 1979), pp. 13-14.

'SAMSON AND DELILAH', OR WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU KNOCK THE ANGEL DOWN?

Each of us has two selves. First is his body which is vulnerable and never quite within control. The body with its irrational sympathies and desires and passions, its peculiar direct communication, defying the mind. And second is the conscious ego, the self I know I am.

The self that lives in my body ... has such strange attractions, and revulsions, and it lets me in for so much irrational suffering, real torment, and occasional frightening delight.⁵

When dealing with 'Hadrian' in the previous chapter, I suggested that Matilda's choice represents a break through the ethics of 'decency' to which she conforms at the beginning of the story. I then remarked that her choice does not come forth as an act of free will proper but as determined by pragmatic circumstances. In the last instance it is, amongst other things, an indirect capitulation to her unconscious self, the repository of bodily impulses which, time and again, appear to transgress conscious control. In this sense, 'Samson and Delilah' is reminiscent of 'Hadrian', for here is a woman similarly caught between "puritanical" conventionality and sexual desire.

Nevertheless, 'Samson and Delilah' is not just a psychological narrative. Like 'Hadrian', it is also a twofold domestico-political story: on the one hand, there is the *institutional* narrative of a wife's resistance to her husband's matrimonial rights; on the other, there is the *suprainstitutional* story about female opposition to male claims within a hegemonically patriarchal order. These narrative strands complicate further when one considers the biblical title that frames them.

As the earlier 'Delilah and Mr Bircumshaw' (written in 1912; published in 1940), 'Samson and Delilah' borrows from the Samson narrative in the Bible. In contrast with Mr Bircumshaw's mock incarnation of the defeated biblical Samson, however, Willie Nankervis in 'Samson and Delilah' remains the powerful Samson, even after being temporarily defeated; Willie supersedes Delilah's biblical triumph. On the surface, this reads as an artful re-writing of the Old Testament text. But this narrative is not so much a

5. D. H. Lawrence, 'On Being a Man', *Vanity Fair* (June 1924); later in *Assorted Articles* (1930); reprinted in *Phoenix II: Uncollected, Unpublished and Other Prose Works by D. H. Lawrence*, collected and edited with an introduction and notes by Warren Roberts and Harry T. Moore (London: Heinemann, 1968), pp. 616-22 (p. 616)

tricky re-writing of the biblical tale as it is a mixture of the familiar story of Samson's defeat by Delilah and the less well-known story of Samson's victory over the Philistines in Gaza, the one which 'prefigures Christ's triumph over the doors of death'.⁶

That Willie is a personification of Christ resurrected from the dead — and not merely a Samson type — is something which his own story illustrates: for some fifteen years he has not got in touch with his deserted wife, as if he had been blotted out of existence; then, one day he turns up at his wife's inn unexpectedly; as he walks towards the inn he is seen to be following the Pole star; and finally, his youth is counterposed to the derelict landscape he traverses (p. 108). In brief, Willie Nankervis stands out as archetypal, thus seemingly endowing the story with universal import.

In view of the apparent archetypal character of 'Samson and Delilah', the ending is rather disturbing, inasmuch as one is literally presented with Mrs Nankervis's acquiescence to a bullying husband. Unsurprisingly, the story has provoked the reaction of some critics. Gilbert and Gubar, for example, demur to Lawrence's presumed celebration of 'male sexual authority' and 'female defeat' as the story comes to an end.⁷ True, the woman appears to submit to her husband, but only when the end is considered from the husband's viewpoint. What both critics fall short of apprehending is the tension which arises in this particular ending from the incorporation of not just one, but two viewpoints: the husband's *and* the wife's. Once one realizes this characteristic double-sidedness, the archetypal import of the story can be seen to accommodate, not merely the power struggle between husband and wife, but the battle between the two essential selves of the woman. Furthermore, in so incorporating both viewpoints the narration not only maintains a clear demarcation between the psychological and the social realms; more significantly, it illuminates the danger that arises when woman's sexual liberation is not appropriately matched by man's relinquishment of an anachronic conceptualization of woman.

6. Virginia Hyde, *The Risen Adam: D. H. Lawrence's Revisionist Typology* (University Park, Penn.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), p. 67.

7. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century*, 2 vols, vol. 1 "The War of the Words" (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1988), p. 38.

Therefore, in order to comprehend the woman's story and its political implications, one must attend to the different viewpoints from which the story emerges and the way the reader is situated in relation to these.

1. A sensual encounter

From the outset, the narration fluctuates between the narrator's focalization on the male protagonist and the latter's perception of the surrounding landscape. The sense of immediacy which this opening creates is characteristic of other Lawrencian stories. Apart from those examined in Chapter 1, one is also reminded of 'Fanny and Annie' (1919), in which from the very first line the reader is positioned within Fanny's angle of vision as she looks through the window of the carriage in which she is travelling and catches sight of Harry amongst the crowd waiting on the platform. It is also reminiscent of the opening of 'Odour of Chrysanthemums' (1911; re-written in 1914) where the reader is at once situated within Elizabeth Bates's mind as she watches the miners pass by. At last, it resembles the beginning of 'The Primrose Path' (1913), where the reader follows the movements of a man as he comes out of Victoria station searching for a cab; almost immediately, the narration plunges into his own mind, from which the reader apprehends the surrounding setting. Apart from the sense of propinquity which all these beginnings create, they all incorporate a narrator whose tone is remarkably grave, non-judgemental, and rather conjectural. This helps create the impression in all these stories that their narrators are themselves inhabitants of the fictional realms they present. In the case that occupies us now, it also heightens the feeling that the traveller in question is as much a stranger to the narrator who presents him as he is to the reader:

A man got down from the motor-omnibus that runs from Penzance to St. Just-in-Penwith ...

The man went his way unhesitating, but looked from side to side with cautious curiosity ...

He tramped steadily on, always watchful with curiosity. He was a tall, well-built man, *apparently* in the prime of life ... he leaned forwards a little as he went ... *like a man who must stoop to lower his height* ...

Now and again short ... figures of Cornish miners passed him, and he invariably gave them goodnight, *as if* to insist that he was on his own ground. He spoke with the west-Cornish intonation ... he *seemed* a little excited and pleased with himself, watchful, thrilled, veering along in a sense of mastery and of power in conflict (p. 108; my emphasis).

In view of the title which frames the narrative, the narrator's suppositious statements about this man entice the reader into connecting him with the biblical Samson. At the same time, as was the case in 'Hadrian', they help create a specific horizon of expectations vis-à-vis future events. But more importantly, the narrator's similes contribute to endow this character with an intimidating demeanour, at once imminently bellicose and domineering.

Soon afterwards the narration dives into the stranger's mind as he arrives at the "Tinnars Rest". So much is this so that when he enters the inn one feels oneself to be in step with him, inasmuch as the narration utterly merges one's own identity with the stranger's. This is important in view of the man's apprehension of the inn's landlady: 'The lamp was burning, a buxom woman rose from the white-scrubbed deal table' (p. 109). Such is the first view of the female protagonist, one which at once foregrounds the man's sensual apprehension of the woman's sexuality. Yet the narration does not linger on her and swiftly shifts to represent the woman's visualization of the stranger himself:

She had noticed the man: a big fine fellow, well dressed, a stranger. But he spoke with that Cornish-Yankee accent she accepted as the natural twang among the miners.

The stranger put his foot on the fender and looked into the fire. He was handsome, well-coloured, with well-drawn Cornish eyebrows and the usual dark, bright, mindless Cornish eyes. He seemed abstracted in thought. Then he watched the card-party (p. 109).

This extract unmediatedly articulates Mrs Nankervis's perception of Willie and, therefore, ought to be taken not primarily for what it reveals about the man, but for what it unveils about the perceiver. Like the stranger's earlier visualization of her, Mrs Nankervis's exposes at once a similar physical attraction towards him. True, her attraction also owes to her vague intuition of a familiar air about him. In spite of this intuitive feeling, however, the woman (or the reader for that matter) does not know the real identity of the man at this stage.

Interestingly, the narration swiftly slips again into the man's field of vision:

The woman was buxom and healthy, with dark hair and small, quick brown eyes. She was bursting with life and vigour, the energy she threw into the game of cards excited all the men, they shouted, and laughed, and the woman held her breast, shrieking with laughter (p. 109).

Considering the man's description of her in the light of the narrator's earlier portrayal of him (a man 'in the prime of life') it is evident that the narration is preparing the ground for an imminent sexual encounter between both characters. More crucially, as the narrative advances, the narration increasingly entreats the reader to regard any eventual sexual meeting between the two as the *natural* conclusion:

'Now come on, Mr Trevorrow, play fair. Play fair, I say, or I s'll put the cards down.'

'Play fair! Why who's played unfair!' ejaculated Mr Trevorrow. 'Do you mean t'accuse me, as I haven't played fair, Mrs Nankervis?'

'I do. I say it and I mean it. Haven't you got the Queen of Spades? — Now come on, no dodging round me. I know you've got that queen, as well as I know my name's Alice.' (pp. 109-10).

Brief as it is, this dialogue presents a woman who breaks all patriarchal stereotypes of passive femininity: she clearly is a potential fighter ready to confront any man who may attempt to take advantage of her. Like the stranger himself, she '[insists on being on her own ground]' (p. 108). This unorthodox image needs to be borne in mind: together with the previous instance of represented perception, it encourages the reader to envision a smooth physical reunion of the pair. In retrospect, however, the narration will prove to be immensely deceptive at this point.

Shortly afterwards, the woman disappears into the kitchen and the narration does not allow the reader to follow her there. Instead, one is compelled to remain with the stranger. This spatial constraint is crucial too, in the sense that it now bars any occasion to fathom the rationale of the woman's subsequent attitudinal turn against the man. The crux of the matter is that in so keeping her mind out of reach the narration becomes notably equivocal.

2. Variable realities⁸

I have indicated elsewhere that Lawrencian fictions characteristically force the reader continuously to reconsider any previous assumption in the course of the reading process, be it with regard to the characters or the possible import of the story. In this respect, 'Samson and Delilah' is a good illustrative example.

8. Jean Ricardou, 'Réalités variables, variantes réelles', in his *Problèmes du nouveau roman* (Paris: Seuil, 1967), pp. 23-43.

In effect, one notes that following Mrs Nankervis's reappearance on the stage the narration draws away from the representational mode that characterizes the first part of this narrative and confines the reader to the narrator's monologic discourse. As the narration absolutely falls upon the narrator, the latter becomes increasingly manipulative.

On the surface, the narrator merely reports the characters' vocal tones when they address each other or their external movements. This reporting, however, is not as innocent as it first appears:

The landlady darted looks at him from her small eyes, minute by minute the electric storm swelled in her bosom, *as still he did not go*. She was quivering with suppressed, violent passion, something frightening and abnormal. She could not sit still for a moment. Her heavy form seemed to flash with sudden, involuntary movements as the minutes passed by, *and still he sat there*, and the tension on her heart grew unbearable. She watched the hands of the clock move on.

The landlady sat behind the bar fidgeting spasmodically with the newspaper. She looked again at the clock. *At last it was five minutes to ten* (p. 112; my emphasis).

The excerpt concurrently modulates the narratorial voice and the woman's. The articulation of the woman's thoughts foregrounds her mounting disquietude at the stranger's presence. Yet in providing such a limited insight, the passage impedes any possible rationalization of the woman's anxiety. The result is that she emerges as a purely hysterical woman. But just as her behaviour remains thoroughly inscrutable at the level of self-representation, it is accounted for by the narrator's discourse.

Adopting the posture of a recording camera, the narrator seemingly relates the woman's external bearing. The truth is that, looking closely into the discourse of this objective recorder, it soon becomes clear that the recording is not so innocent after all. Firstly, there is the connection which this narrating instance overtly establishes between the woman's 'passion' and her own physique (her '[swelling] bosom'). Secondly, there is the sexually overloaded lexicon that pervades the narrator's portrayal: the 'quivering', the 'suppressed, violent passion', the 'involuntary movements', her '[spasms]'. Finally, one cannot overlook the imagery which this supposedly objective narrator employs, that is, not just physical, but natural: she is overcome by an 'electric storm'. Everything in the narrator's discourse encourages the reader's interpreting the woman's conscious struggle to

suppress her anger as ultimately disguising the woman's repression of sexual desire. Furthermore, one is enticed into perceiving her as an *unnatural* woman ('frightening and abnormal') because, we are given to understand, she unconsciously denies her *natural* (sexual) self. Therefore, the narration at this point naturalizes in advance any potential release of the woman's sexuality, or to be more precise, it naturalizes her acceptance of this stranger as her sexual mate. But as it turns out, this mate is the husband who deserted her fifteen years ago.

At the point at which the identity of the stranger is unveiled the passage I have just examined comes forth in a different light: this is not so much a hysterical woman, but a woman who is distressed by the unexpected presence of the *husband* who abandoned her. This unexpected revelation does not however erase the narrative which the narrator has already woven in, that is, the story of Mrs Nankervis struggling against her own nature. Rather, the latter conflates the former so that, hereafter, two different stories co-exist: on the one hand, the story of the woman, and on the other, the story of the wife. Furthermore, both stories are interlaced on two different levels: while the story of the deserted *wife* resisting her bullying husband is brought forth at the level of dramatic events, the parallel story of the *woman* emerges at the level of narratorial discourse and represented consciousness.

After this rather equivocating passage, the narration becomes predominantly dramatic. This shift endows 'Samson and Delilah' with paradigmatic force. In effect, it is a shift which also occurs in the stories already examined. But it is also recognizable in some of the stories which subsequent chapters will explore. In 'Samson and Delilah', the effect of this shift is twofold: first, it offers the reader the opportunity to get a clearer picture of what has been until now a rather shadowy figure — the stranger. And, more important, it sheds new light, not just on the woman protagonist, but also on the community to which she herself belongs and on the way she relates to it.

At the level of direct representation the narration verifies the exactitude of Mrs Nankervis's earlier utterance: indeed, she does not allow any man, least of all her husband, to 'dodge around her' (p. 110). Not even when physical confrontation is involved does this

woman cringe. Instead, she *actively* partakes in the fight that ensues, even undertaking the leading role:

And suddenly she flung her arms round him, hung on to him with all her powerful weight, calling to the soldiers:
'Get the rope boys, and fasten him up. Alfred—John, quick now—' (p. 117).

In spite of all, Mrs Nankervis is not such a nonconformist. Per contra, she fully adheres to patriarchal conventionality, as some of her verbal utterances certify:

'Are we going to stand it, boys?—Are we going to be done like this, Sergeant Thomas, by a scoundrel and a bully as has led a life beyond *mention*, in those American mining-camps, and then wants to come back and make havoc of a poor woman's life and savings, after having left her with a baby in arms to struggle as best she might?—It's a crying shame if nobody will stand up for me—a crying shame—!' (p. 116).

In this apostrophe Mrs Nankervis reveals her endorsement of a patriarchal conception of marriage, that is, as an economically based contractual engagement between two parties. Actually, her speech does not just convey her outrage at her husband's desertion, but his failure to abide by the two fundamental terms of the marriage bargain: economic maintenance and personal protection. Perhaps more significant is her invocation of morality in the phrase 'a life beyond *mention*'. This will not be the only time Mrs Nankervis censures her husband on moral grounds. Later, for example, she appeals again to public opinion: "'You don't think I've not heard of you, neither, in Butte City and elsewhere"' (p. 120). No less pertinent is her reaction and rejoinder when Willie retorts that he has heard about her too:

She drew herself up.
'And what lies have you heard about *me*?' she demanded superbly.
'I dunno as I've heard any lies at all — 'sept as you was getting on very well, like' (p. 120).

This dialogue evokes the moral pressure that the social community of this fictional world exerts upon its inhabitants. The dialogue, in fact, harks back to the world of 'Tickets, Please', specifically to the 'scandal' there is about John Thomas 'in half a dozen villages' ('Tickets, Please', p. 36). In Mrs Nankervis's world, as in John Thomas's, the private lives of individuals are under constant moral surveillance. The key point is that Mrs Nankervis herself shows no resistance to this moral society. She may call herself Alice instead of Mrs

Nankervis at the beginning of the story (p. 120), thus appearing to renege her married status. But as her speech elucidates, for over fifteen years she has been the faithful Mrs Nankervis — and not Alice. She has lived according to moral customary expectations *on principle*.

It is noteworthy that while the reader is distracted by the surface of the story, that is, the wife's fight against her bullying husband, the narrator subliminally construes the story of the woman shedding her social/moral carapace and concurrently recovering her natural self. This metamorphic process begins precisely at the moment in which the battle starts: after the man has stated that he is stopping at the inn for the night, the narrator reports that she 'Involuntarily ... shut the door, and advanced *like a great, dangerous bird*' (p. 113; my emphasis). This is only the first of a tripartite chain of similes which the narrator gradually weaves in. A second matching simile summons shortly afterwards another wild animal, this time an earthly one: 'Her small, tawny-brown eyes concentrated in a point of vivid, sightless fury, *like a tiger*' (p. 114; my emphasis). Finally, coinciding with the moment in which the woman embraces the man during the struggle, the narrator compares her to a '*a cuttle-fish wreathed heavily upon him*' (p. 117; my emphasis). At the moment of touch the woman is seen to incarnate three elemental substances: water (fish), earth (tiger), air (bird). Significantly, the element which is so conspicuously absent at this point — fire — will be no less manifestly present in the last scene.

Before turning to this dénouement one more observation needs to be made. Subsequent to the completion of such a natural tableau, the narration focuses on the woman as she herself focalizes her defeated husband:

The woman looked at the prostrate figure, the strong, straight limbs, the strong back bound in subjection, the wide-eyed face that reminded her of a calf tied in a sack in a cart, only its head stretched dumbly backwards (p. 118).

This is a peculiar perception, especially taking into consideration that it is usually women who, in sexist discourses, are perceived by men as cattle/meat. One recalls, for example, John Thomas's conception of women as livestock grazing in 'pastures' in 'Tickets Please' (p. 39); or Cuesta's thinking of Ethel in terms of 'meat' in 'None of That' (p. 715). But

more significant than this rather unusual reversal of stereotyped gender conceptualizations is Mrs Nankervis's emotionless attraction towards her husband, that is to say, as a purely physical object. Coinciding with the narrator's subliminal construction of the natural woman, the narration draws the reader's attention to the woman's fascination at the man's 'strong, straight limbs', as if intimating that her essential nature has literally, and not just metaphorically, displaced her customary self.

3. Variable perspectives

Before reaching the end of the tale the narrator's account of the sexual attraction between the man and the woman runs parallel to the dramatization of the marital battle between husband and wife. In the last part of the narrative, however, the marital relationship comes to the forefront. This in turn is the result of the narrator's almost total withdrawal from the stage. In the absence of witnesses, the woman recognizes the man as her husband and tackles the question of his desertion. Yet limited as the narrator's comments are, they are nonetheless paramount. In effect, whenever this narrator intervenes it is mainly to bring into prominence the woman's fear of her husband.

The subject of fear first emerges at the level of represented consciousness:

Her anger stirred again in her, violently. But she subdued it, because of the danger there was in him, and more, perhaps, because of the beauty of his head and his level-drawn brows, which she could not bear to forfeit (p. 121).

This is a critical moment of introspection in which the narration underlines Mrs Nankervis's confusion: on the one hand, she perceives the man as a threatening figure; on the other, she feels sexually attracted to him. In fact, one perceives here a phenomenon which, as Mary Anne Ferguson observes, is rather common amongst women. Fergusson's explication appropriately applies to Mrs Nankervis's present experience:

A woman is confused about how to respond to wolf calls and whistles: should she smile and accept them as efforts to humanize existence, or should she haughtily ignore them because they reduce her from person to thing, a sexual object? Often fear rules her response more than reason: behind the most casual approach of a male may lurk every woman's nightmare, the rapist-murderer.⁹

9. Anne Ferguson, *Images of Women in Literature* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1986), p. 257.

From the beginning 'Samson and Delilah' has been the story of a woman hearing those 'wolf calls and whistles' which Fergusson mentions. Faced with the question of whether to answer positively to these calls or, on the contrary, ignore them, Mrs Nankervis finally chooses the former. But as the sentence above cited evinces, her acquiescence is smudged with fear: a fear to which the narration, through the narrator's medium, continuously draws attention once it is brought into play. Thus, whenever the man makes the slightest movement, the narrator focuses on the woman's fearful reaction and manipulates the reader into perceiving her response as that of a "hunted" victim: 'So near was his head, and the close black hair, she could scarcely refrain from starting away, *as if it would bite her*' (p. 121; my emphasis); 'Then he rose. She started *involuntarily*' (p. 122; my emphasis); 'And he pulled off his overcoat, throwing it on the table. She sat *as if slightly cowed*, whilst he did so' (p. 122; my emphasis). The crux of the matter is that the narrator's insistence on her fear heightens the distress one feels when confronted with the closing passage:

'As grand a pluck as a man could wish to find in a woman, true as I'm here,' he said, reaching forward his hand and tentatively touching her between her full, warm breasts, quietly.

She started, and seemed to shudder. But his hand insinuated itself between her breasts, as she continued to gaze in the fire.

'And don't you think I've come back here a-begging,' he said. 'I've more than *one* thousand pounds to my name, I have. And a bit of a fight for a how-de-do pleases me, that it do. But that doesn't mean as you're going to deny as you're my Missis ...' (p. 122).

The scene is remarkably disturbing.¹⁰ But it is so not because we, as readers, see more than the text shows. Rather, the distress that this scene causes is an *effect* of the narration itself which powerfully foregrounds the woman's speechlessness and numbness. Hence to think that this narrative is celebrating male sexual power is to sidestep the way in which the narration has been working up to this point.

As I observed at the beginning, the scene incorporates two viewpoints which in turn are clearly demarcated within the narrative. From the woman's viewpoint the scene represents her final capitulation to her sexual nature, that is to say, to Willie inasmuch as

10. I am aware that some scholars do not experience any discomfort when faced with this scene. See for example Harry T. Moore's, for whom this is 'a story of reunion rather than separation': *The Life and Work of D. H. Lawrence* (London: Unwin Books, 1953; first publ. in 1951), p. 159.

he figuratively represents the voice of her previously repressed natural self.¹¹ This in turn is something which the narration intimates by insistently focusing on the woman as she stares at the fire, as if the narration were pointing to the final accomplishment of the tableau which the narrator left unfinished earlier. Then, from the point of view of the husband, this is his victory over his 'Missis'. Nevertheless, his loud triumphant speech is undermined as it is made to resound against the silence of his 'Missis', one which bespeaks *desire* as much as *anger*, and not simple acquiescence: 'She only sat *glowering* into the fire' (p. 122; my emphasis).¹²

'Samson and Delilah' is not an encomium of male supremacy. Rather, it is a story in which sexuality is recuperated as an essential part of Mrs Nankervis. Concurrently, it is a story which takes cognizance of the problems inherent in Mrs Nankervis's acceptance of her sexual nature. As one reaches the end of this recuperative process, the narration introduces a note of fear. That such a fear should be incorporated into the narrative at the very moment when the woman protagonist appears to have come to terms with her purely sexual desires is significant. True, the narration does not *explicitly* rationalize it. But in so making this fear spark off against a background of physical violence and almost verbal abuse, one is tacitly enticed into interpreting it along Fergusson's lines. Furthermore, one is led into seeing it as pointing to the violence that may result when female liberality collides against an essentially unchanged male conceptualization of the sexes, that is, the violence which lies at the core of 'The Princess' and 'None of That'.¹³

11. F. R. Leavis appears to intuit something along these lines when, in the manner of a conclusion to a brief study of 'Samson and Delilah', he observes that 'the restored marital relation [is] part sensual attraction, part conflict and part something else'; unfortunately, he does not elaborate on this idea any further. See his *D. H. Lawrence: Novelist* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976; first publ. in 1955), p. 300. A similar intuition permeates Harris's account, for whom 'it would seem that the point of the tale is not to show Willie's power over his wife but to demonstrate the power of desire'; *The Short Fiction of D. H. Lawrence*, p. 135.

12. Approaching this story from a different angle, Virginia Hyde arrives at a similar conclusion: according to her, while the ending '[celebrates] the sensual consciousness', it nevertheless leaves 'the power struggle unresolved'; *The Risen Adam*, p. 68.

13. In a way, Lawrence's 'The Princess' and 'None of That' could be seen to come close to some contemporary women writers' fictions which also end with the 'rape, assault, or murder' of the heroine; according to Elaine Showalter, the questions that permeate these are: '[what are] the limits of the liberated will and the metaphysics of violence[?]. What are the irrational forces of evil and violence that collide with control of one's life? Are they outside the self, in fantasy, guilt, and hate?'; Elaine Showalter, 'Rethinking the Seventies: Women Writers and Violence', in *Women and Violence in Literature: An Essay Collection*, edited by Katherine Anne Ackley (New York and London: Garland Publ., 1990), pp. 237-54 (pp. 239-40).

'THE PRINCESS': THE POLITICS OF RAPE

And to this day, most of the Mexican Indian women seem to bring forth stone knives. Look at them, these sons of incomprehensible mothers, with their black eyes like flints, and their stiff little bodies as taut and as keen as knives of obsidian. Take care they don't rip you up.¹⁴

Thematically, 'The Princess' resembles 'Samson and Delilah' in that it also presents the reader with a woman recoiling from her sexual self in vain. In 'The Princess', however, what is a ghostly shadow hovering over Mrs Nankervis becomes an objective reality for Dollie, a reality incarnated in the person of Romero. Structurally, 'The Princess' differs from the former: in contrast with 'Samson and Delilah', the story that occupies us now progressively works from an external presentation of its woman protagonist and her background towards introspective narration. This movement is in turn accompanied by a gradual effacement of the narrator, as well as an important change of tone. While the first part of the story is predominantly ironic, the tone becomes suitably grave as one moves towards the climactic episode — Dollie's rape.¹⁵

1. The lady on the naturalistic canvass

The narratorial voice that guides the reader into the world of 'The Princess' is as whimsical as the one which introduces 'Tickets, Please'. It is also reminiscent of the voice which leads us into the world of the American 'idealists' of 'Things' (1928), a Lawrencian tale which of late has in its turn attracted the attention of several critics for its intrinsic dialogism.¹⁶ It too reminds one of the voice which reverberates throughout the first part of *St Mawr*, the novella which the last chapter of this thesis will examine. All these narrators share a facetious ability to ventriloquize the characteristic phraseology and inflection of those who inhabit the fictional worlds which they respectively introduce. It is precisely the

14. D. H. Lawrence, *Mornings in Mexico* (1927), reprinted in *Mornings in Mexico and Etruscan Places* (London: Heinemann, 1956), pp. 1-82 (p. 24).

15. For edition used refer to note 2 above.

16. See for example David Lodge, *After Bakhtin: Essays on Fiction and Criticism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), especially pp. 69-73.

imitative quality of such narratorial voices which endows these stories with their distinctive sardonic flavour.

In contrast with 'Things', such a peculiar narratorial penchant is not uniformly maintained throughout 'The Princess' — nor is it in *St Mawr*, as will be seen. Instead, it is principally restricted to the first pages where the woman protagonist's socio-cultural background and personal history are established.

In these opening pages everybody falls under the sharp-cutting knife of the dominant narratorial voice: Dollie's Bostonian aunts and uncles and their hypocritically ethical concerns, her father's madness and anachronistic philosophy, the Mediterranean male community and its "macho" arrogance, and finally the Princess. The case of Dollie is nonetheless exceptional, for although she is the target of the narrator's irony from the outset, ITS mockery does not aim at her personally. More accurately it is directed to "the Princess", that is to say, the artificial product of her father's education.

The paternal education to which Dollie is subjected from an early age is summarily translated by the narrator as a twofold indoctrination: first, there is the 'impossibility of intimacy with any other than her father', and second, a 'naïve, slightly benevolent politeness' (p. 161).¹⁷ As a consequence of this education, Dollie would seemingly be incapable of relating to others and developing into sexual maturity. Ultimately, it is an education which results, according to this narrator, in the germination of a 'dignified, scentless flower', or perhaps better, in "the portrait of a lady":

She looked as if she had stepped out of a picture ... the strange picture her father had framed her in' (p. 162).

...
[Her] apple-blossom face ... was modelled with an arched nose like a proud old Florentine portrait ... She was the Princess, and sardonically she looked on a princeless world (p. 165).

Significantly, Dollie is not solely presented at the outset as a still, lifeless portrait: she is also depicted as the impersonation of two representatives of the French literary school of naturalism — Zola and Maupassant:

17. A similar critique is launched by the narrator of 'Daughters of the Vicar' against the Lindleys' 'cruel' education of their daughters.

Her father let her see the world, from the outside. And he let her read. When she was in her teens she read Zola and Maupassant and with the eyes of Zola and Maupassant she looked on Paris. A little later she read Tolstoi and Dostoevsky. The latter confused her. The others, she seemed to understand with a very shrewd, canny understanding, just as she understood the Decameron stories as she read them in their old Italian, or the Nibelung poems. Strange and *uncanny*, she seemed to understand things in the cold light perfectly, with all the flush of fire absent. She was something like a changeling, not quite human (p. 162).

In retrospect, this excerpt is paramount for its implicit self-referentiality. In effect, this narratorial passage submits that Dollie, "like Zola", has a sharpened visual faculty to apprehend reality 'in the cold light' and without 'the flush of fire', that is, in an exclusively objective, scientific light. Shortly afterwards the narrator adds that as far as human beings are concerned, and particularly with regard to the 'Roman cabman', Dollie knows 'all about [them], in Zola' (p. 163), the *textual implication* being that "Zola's" characters are mere outward appearances, just as much as Dollie is a lifeless portrait. Thus, Dollie is at once described as a "Zolaesque" artifice and artificer. The interesting thing is that, as the narrative advances, Dollie gradually breaks through narratorial bonds and becomes, not the discursive object she is when the story begins to unfold, but the subject of her own experience. It is as if the narration progressively pushed her out of the frame in which the narrator had placed her at the outset. This is crucial, for in so moving from external narration towards introspective representation 'The Princess' would be implicitly (re)presenting itself as acting in defiance against a literary practice which, *within textual boundaries*, it manifestly defines as stereotypically falsifying.¹⁸

This calls immediately for a brief comment on what appears to be the paradoxical quality of 'The Princess'. It is clear that the story has a lot in common with those literary works generally labelled "naturalistic". Thus, for example, the emphasis it places on Dollie's education as a critical determinant of her tragedy; or indeed, the question of Dollie's madness at the end of 'The Princess', the naturalistic *tare héréditaire*. To these one should add the plot line itself, one that traces, as many other naturalistic works, the protagonist's downfall. Everything seemingly converges to indicate that, notwithstanding

18. Lawrence humourously parodies the transposition of literature into life in 'Jimmy and the Desperate Woman' (1924); here the protagonist (Jimmy), a professional literary critic, looks into the world trying to find some sort of Tess or Grenfel; *The Complete Short Stories of D. H. Lawrence* (London: Heinemann, 1966), 3 vols., vol. 3, pp. 605-29 (p. 605).

its textually encoded remonstrance against naturalist writers in the figure of Dollie, 'The Princess' itself emerges as a naturalistic work *en toutes lettres*. Yet the pages that ensue will demonstrate that the relationship between 'The Princess' and scientific realism as the latter is conceived within conventional fictional parameters (a realism that might create one-dimensional characters like the Roman cabman as seen through Dollie's objective eye) is more complex.

2. Walking away with the frame

It is somewhat significant that, in view of subsequent events, Dollie should begin to emerge as the subject of her own discourse following her disagreeable experience with 'the real Mediterranean, who prided himself on his *beauté mâle*' and 'who would turn a terrible face on her, bully her in a brutal, coarse fashion, hideous':

Encounters like these made her tremble, and made her know she must have support from the outside. The power of her spirit did not extend to these low people: and *they had all the physical power*. ...

[She] could never understand the volcanic phallic rage with which coarse people could turn on her, in a paroxysm of hatred. *They never turned on her father like that*. And quite early she decided it was the New England mother in her whom they hated. Never for one minute could she see with the old Roman eyes, see herself as sterility, the barren flower, taken on airs and an intolerable impertinence. This was what the Roman cabman saw in her. And *he longed to crush the barren blossom*. Its sexless beauty and its authority put him *in a passion of brutal revolt* (p. 163; my emphasis).¹⁹

The excerpt articulates three centres of consciousness. It begins with the verbalization of Dollie's fear of male violence and an awareness of her physical vulnerability. Most importantly, it articulates her dim realization of a difference between herself and her father. It is noteworthy that just as the reader catches her hastening to interpret this difference in terms of biological inheritance (her mother's genes) the narrator takes over and instantly undercuts her naively scientific interpretation: the difference is not biological according to this narrator, but gender-based. The narrator's interruption of Dollie's train of thoughts

19. Compare the way Dollie is treated by these Mediterranean cabmen with the treatment which her "feminine" counterpart, Katherine Farquhar in 'The Border Line', receives in Paris; in this story, Katherine emerges as the spokeswoman of sexist discourse, fully endorsing the treatment which Dollie is said to receive by the French and Italian men: 'Katherine understood so well that Frenchmen were rude to the dry, hard-seeming, competent Englishwoman or American. She sympathized with the Frenchman's point of view; too much obvious capacity to help herself is a disagreeable trait in a woman'; *The Complete Short Stories of D. H. Lawrence* (London: Heinemann, 1966), 3 vols, vol. 3, pp. 587-604 (p. 587).

would be seemingly motivated by an interest in dislodging the blame which she puts upon herself (and on her mother in the first place) by transferring it to the Roman cabman and his *male* 'brutality'. As if to authorize the narrator's rationalization of the problem, the narration proceeds to articulate the actual sexually aggressive thoughts of the Roman cabman, thoughts from which Dollie remains utterly alienated — unlike the reader who is permitted to see into them.

No less significant is the fact that, shortly after the excerpt quoted above and prior to Dollie's consideration of marriage as her only alternative in life, the narrative focuses on the aggravation of her father's madness before his death: not 'just a bit mad' now (p. 159), but dangerously so:

He was very much estranged, sometimes had fits of violence which almost killed the little Princess. *Physical violence was horrible to her, it seemed to shatter her heart.* ... [The] fact of madness was never openly admitted (p. 165; my emphasis).

This is a disconcertingly equivocal passage: first of all, the juxtaposition of the phrases 'almost killed her' and 'seemed to shatter her heart' makes it rather uncertain whether she is the actual, that is, *literal* victim of her father's physical violence; then, there is the question of his madness never being 'openly admitted', which one would retroactively associate with the way in which Dollie's rape is similarly 'hushed up' (p. 196). The point is not whether Dollie is actually the victim of parental sexual abuse, but that in simply allowing this question to be raised at all, the narration predisposes the reader to apprehend Dollie's subsequent reticence in relation to men not as a hysterical attitude or a matter of sexual prudery but as an amply justified attitude in view of the male violence which seems to pervade this fictive world, at both personal and public levels. That is to say, one is prepared from the outset to comprehend the necessity of her becoming a full being by accepting her sexuality as an essential part of her self without, for that matter, being blinded to the difficulties this may entail.

Following her father's death, the number of insights the narration offers into Dollie's consciousness begin to proliferate. As is usually the case with Lawrencian heroes and heroines alike, these reveal a subjectivity fraught with conflict:

Quoi faire? What was she to do? She seemed faced with absolute nothingness. ...

Quoi faire? What was she to do? She felt that, since she could not evaporate into nothingness like alcohol from an unstoppered bottle, she must *do* something. Never before in her life had she felt the incumbency. Never, never had she felt she must do anything. That was left to the vulgar.

Now her father was dead, she found herself on the *fringe* of the vulgar crowd, sharing their necessity to *do* something ... she found herself looking at men with a shrewder eye: an eye to marriage. Not that she felt any sudden interest or attraction towards them. No! She was still neither interested nor attracted towards men vitally (p. 165-66).

What this moment of introspection exposes is a mind torn between a compulsive desire to remain aloof from personal contact with men on the one hand, and on the other, the contemplation of marriage as the only sphere of activity available to her. Interestingly, just as Dollie begins to emerge as a woman of the "old school", the narrator abruptly discontinues her self-representation as it did earlier, to the effect of collapsing the conventional mould in which she seems to be placing herself:

But marriage, that peculiar abstraction, had imposed a sort of spell on her. She thought that marriage, in the blank abstract, was the thing she ought to do. That marriage implied a man, she also knew. She knew all the facts. But the man seemed a property of her own mind rather than a thing in himself, another being (p. 166; bold-faced characters mine).

In spite of Victorian appearances, she is certainly not conventional: for insofar as she conceives of marriage as pure abstraction to the exclusion of emotional considerations, she unconventionally undermines a typically patriarchal discursive practice which defines Woman as essentially emotional. To this one should add the narrator's stress on her nonconformist personality. Therefore, one apprehends Dollie not solely as she undermines the patriarchal discursive practice referred to, but as she *subverts* it too. She may belong to a Dickensian world as the sentence 'She knew all the facts' suggests, but this world Dollie literally turns on its head as she appropriates the role of Thomas Gradgrind.

When Dollie reaches Mexico, the narrator continues to foreground what would appear to be her fundamental problem: an almost pathologically infantile fixation ('She was always grown-up: she never really grew up', p. 160) which incapacitates her from relating to others at a personal level. What needs to be stressed here is that when she arrives in Mexico, this alienation ceases to be merely the object of the narrator's discourse and emerges instead as the subjective experience of Dollie: 'she felt something of a fish out of

water, or a bird in the wrong forest' (p. 167). Having so *felt* the problem, it will take Romero to trigger self-analysis, or more precisely, to launch Dollie into a quest for self-knowledge.

3. Visual prognosis

The first presentation of Domingo Romero — 'the only man that intrigued [Dollie] at all' (p. 167) amongst all the men she meets at the Rancho in New Mexico — is in the hands of the narrator, who now adopts the grave tone of the natural historian in order to convey the facts of Romero's personal background and family genealogy: he is 'the last of [a] Spanish family that had owned miles of land around San Cristobal' and eventually lost everything (p. 167). He is, in other words, one who has come down in the world, like Colin Urquhart; or one who has gone to seed, like Dollie herself who is 'a flower that has blossomed in a shadowy place' (p. 165). Then his physical description follows, in the course of which the narrator can be seen to metamorphose into an objective camera first focusing on his face, then his back, then his face again:

[Domingo] was now about thirty years old, a tall, silent fellow with a heavy closed mouth and black eyes that looked across at one almost sullenly. From behind, he was handsome, with a strong, natural body and the back of his neck very dark and well-shapen, strong with life. But his dark face was long and heavy, almost sinister, with that peculiar heavy meaninglessness in it, characteristic of the Mexicans of his own locality (pp. 167-68).

This is Romero, a visible object, and one ought to stress at once that he will significantly remain so for most part of the narrative.

In full accord with the role of natural historian the narrator proceeds to describe Romero as part of a larger community: 'the Mexicans of his own locality' (p. 168).

Compared to these, Romero is at once representative and exceptional:

Domingo Romero was *almost* a typical Mexican to look at ... His eyes were black and Indian looking. Only, at the centre of their hopelessness a spark of pride, of self-confidence, of dauntlessness. Just a spark in the midst of the blackness of static despair (p. 168).

Seen from the narrator's viewpoint, Romero emerges as a mirror image of Dollie. Apart from his family background, Romero's 'spark of pride, of self-confidence, of dauntlessness' is paralleled by Dollie's 'odd' self-assurance (p. 162; p. 163) and

'undaunted' nature (p. 164). Then, like the rest of the Mexicans he is 'hopelessly static', by which we are given to understand that he is 'waiting either to die, or to be aroused into passion and hope' (p. 168). Consequently, one is given to surmise that Romero is the impossible "Prince", waiting like Dollie, the "fairy-Princess", to be awakened into passion. Finally, as Dollie is incapable of 'intimacy with any other than her father' (p. 161), so is Romero 'aloof', 'not forthcoming' (p. 168). In so establishing the similarity between both characters, the narration can be seen to anticipate dissension: symbolically, and inasmuch as they are both "waiting", one intuits that neither of them is going to be "awakened"; realistically, and in the eventuality of their coming together, one foresees the destructive conflict of two equally intractable wills.

Next to the narrator's perception of Romero one must also take Dollie's into account. As soon as he comes within her field of vision, Dollie becomes attracted towards what she interprets as a 'subtle insidious male *kindliness* [which] she had never known before' (p. 169); a 'power to *help* her in silence' (p. 170); an ability to 'send her *from his heart* a dark beam of succour and sustaining [which] she had never known ... before' (p. 170); a smile with 'something warm, such a dark flame of kindness' (p. 170). One notes how the narration draws graphic attention (by means of italics) to the words 'kindliness', 'help', and 'from his heart': it is evident that Dollie's attraction towards Romero sets her apart from the heroines of the stories examined earlier. As opposed to these, Dollie's attraction does not translate as a physical yearning. Rather, it lays bare an intense longing for parental affection.

One would want to argue instead that the narration at this stage is registering Dollie's sexual awakening, that is, her shedding her father fixation. But the truth is that the more she focuses on Romero, the more one apprehends him as having the opposite effect on her: 'she was elated in her true *Princess self*', says the narrator (p. 170; my emphasis). Instead of sexually awakening her, his presence fuels her infantile nature. Furthermore, her own appearance becomes childlike during the conversation leading to the planning of the horse-riding journey into the mountains: 'She looked ... wistful like a child'; '[she looked] up at him with a sudden naïve impulse' (p. 171). Just as she becomes childlike, he in turn

becomes paternalistic, at once 'indulgent' towards her and feeling 'responsible' for her (p. 171; p. 172). In view of these apparent changes on both sides and the object which sparks them off (the journey on horseback) one is at once reminded of Dollie's childhood, when 'she would ride with [her father] on horseback over the mountain trails' (p. 164). Everything would converge at this point to make us comprehend her sudden desire to go to the mountains with Romero not as her incipient sexual awakening but as a regressive impulse on her part.

Nonetheless, Romero has another effect on her:

And yet his presence only put to flight in her the *idée fixe* of "marriage". For some reason, in her strange little brain, the idea of *marrying* him could not enter. Not for any definite reason. He was in himself a gentleman, and she had plenty of money for two. There was no actual obstacle. Nor was she conventional.

No, now she came down to it, it was as if their two 'daemons' could marry, were perhaps married. Only their two *selves*, Miss Urquhart and Señor Domingo Romero, were for some reason incompatible. There was a peculiar subtle intimacy of inter-recognition between them. But she did not see in the least how it could lead to marriage. Almost she could more easily marry one of the nice boys from Harvard or Yale (pp. 170-71).

Here is one of the most crucial passages in 'The Princess'. It opens with the voice of the narrator scorning Dollie's incapacity to think of marriage other than as an abstraction. Then Dollie's thought is verbalized, whereby one is made to apprehend her as she rejects the *personal* as sufficient requirement to sanction marriage — thus coming close again to the Victorian patriarch — while simultaneously recoiling from the patriarchal economic conception of marriage. Ultimately, however, what she perceives as the obstacle to her marrying Romero lies in their 'two *selves*, Miss Urquhart and Señor Domingo Romero'. Since socio-economic status appears not to be the issue, the obstacle from Dollie's viewpoint is cultural. She seems to intuit now the unbridgeability of the cultural gap that separates her from Romero: 'she could more easily marry one of the nice boys from Harvard or Yale' (p. 171).

What the exposition elaborated so far demonstrates is that, from the outset, the reader is prevented from taking this narrative as a romantic idealization of a foreign, that is, Mexican culture. Instead, one is made to perceive two tightly interwoven narrative strands: on the one hand, there is the story of two incompatible cultural representatives —

an *American* woman and a *Mexican* man (Miss Urquhart and Señor Romero); on the other, albeit related to the latter as will be seen shortly, a gender/sexual story, the coming together of a Mexican *man* and an American *woman* (Domingo and Dollie). The fact is that as the narrative advances, the latter strand progressively takes precedence over the former.

4. Fearful insights

That the gender issue in 'The Princess' is given precedence over the cultural question is obvious at both structural and thematic levels. Formally, the narration keeps Romero's mind completely out of reach, hence precluding any outlet for the argument of the colonized people to come forth. To the contrary, it increasingly opens up Dollie's as we follow her into the mountains. Once her mind is displayed, gender becomes the focal issue: for these insights immediately foreground what I have called the "haunting ghost of rape".

Notably, soon after Dollie sets off with Romero into the mountains, one comes across the following instance of introspective narration:

And she thought of her adventure. She was going on alone with Romero. But then she was sure of herself, and Romero was not the kind of man to do anything to her, against her will. This was her first thought (p. 178).

Dollie's fear of being assaulted by Romero is laid bare in this passage. True, she quickly dismisses the possibility of his acting 'against her will', but the fact remains that, even if only fleetingly, the possibility of being attacked has crossed Dollie's mind. More specifically, and as the appositional phrase makes clear, she dreads the loss of control over her own will, which one is likely to associate with the loss that underlies any act of rape.

Shortly afterwards, Dollie's ingrained fear of being sexually assaulted is made conspicuous once again. While waiting for Romero to come back from accompanying Miss Cummins to the canyon, two Indians arrive at the place where she is camping. It is notable that, when asked by these newly arrived Indians (about whom the reader knows nothing) if she is 'alone', she does not give a straight answer as might have been expected; instead, she says "'Romero will be here in a minute'" while simultaneously '[glancing] back along the trail' (p. 179). Yet there is nothing apparently suggesting that these Indians will actually attack her. But again, what the narration is representing here is not a naturally

irrational woman, but one who is absolutely overcome by a fear which *experience* has inculcated in her. Indeed, one cannot fail to connect her reflexive search for Romero's protection with the way she felt in the past when faced with the brutality of the Roman cabman: 'Encounters like these made her tremble, and made her know she must have support from the outside' (p. 163).

'The Princess' does not stop at representing a woman's experientially imbued fear of rape: it also brings into prominence the way this dread can severely curb her spontaneity when relating to men:

When they were alone, Romero turned and looked at her curiously, in a way she could not understand, with such a hard glint in his eyes. And for the first time, *she wondered if she was rash* (p. 180; my emphasis).²⁰

Dollie's thinking as represented by this excerpt follows her encounter with the Indians. In the face of it, one is led to infer that at this moment Romero is associated with the Indians in Dollie's mind. Moreover, this mental connection supervenes after her catching a glimpse of violence in Romero's eyes, one which at once provokes a sense of guilt in Dollie. Therefore, the passage does not in the least convey the idea that women 'are always precipitating scenes of violence', nor that violence occurs 'at women's instigation'.²¹ Instead, it vividly dramatizes a very common reality amongst women in male-dominated contexts: the reality of women 'frequently [blaming] themselves for men's victimization of them'.²² In the last analysis, one distinguishes a woman who, despite all her self-assertiveness, freedom of movement and economic independence, is still under the unconscious influence of deeply seated conventional discourses of *femininity*.

One observes that as Dollie's anxiety increases the landscape gradually loses the fairy appeal it has had for her at the beginning of her journey. Actually, after apprehending the 'glint' in Romero's eyes, the landscape itself becomes frightening:

20. As Lynne Segal remarks, 'the fear of rape is ... a crucial factor in restricting women's freedom, often keeping them, at least in public, sexually passive, hypocritical and submissive to men'; *Is the Future Female? Troubled Thoughts on Contemporary Feminism* (London: Virago, 1988), p. 103.

21. Germaine Greer, *The Female Eunuch* (London: Paladin Grafton Books, 1971; first publ. 1970), p. 316, p. 260.

22. Katherine Anne Ackley, 'Introduction', in *Women and Violence in Literature: An Essay Collection*, edited by the same author (New York and London: Garland Publ., 1990), pp. xi-xviii (p. xii).

It frightened the Princess, it was *so* inhuman. She had not thought it could be so inhuman, so, as it were, anti-life ... And she wanted to go back. At this moment she wanted to turn back. She had looked down into the intestinal knot of these mountains. She was frightened. She wanted to go back back (p. 181).

Some scholars have rightly pointed out the symbolic import of the landscape — it reflects her repressed unconscious self, the vessel of her own sexuality; but there is also a process of transferral involved in the metamorphosis of the scenery.²³ Dollie would appear to be projecting onto the natural world her own fear of the physical violence she has seen in Romero's eyes. This finds further corroboration in the way the landscape becomes increasingly darker, a darkness which at once calls forth Dollie's earlier perception of Romero riding in front of her:

They rode single file, Romero first, on a black horse. Himself in black, he made a flickering black spot in the delicate pallor of the great landscape (p. 174).

Furthermore, immediately after Dollie has been pondering over the 'strange and ominous' halo which seems to envelop him, the narration articulates Dollie's fear of the landscape once again: 'The Princess was afraid. ... [the western horizon] was ethereal and terrifying ... She could not bear it' (p. 182).

What the foregoing description evinces is that Dollie's fear and her projection of it onto the landscape is not reducible to its symbolic dimension, that is, to the exclusion of the literal. In fact, the narration precludes any such displacement by keeping the literal always in sight. With regard to Dollie's literal fear of Romero as potential aggressor, not only does it keep it constantly in sight: it also and foremost emphasizes its rational basis by exceptionally opening up Romero's mind just before the climactic episode:

The Princess set off in blind, reckless pursuit, tottering and yet nimble. And Romero, looking constantly back to see how she was faring, saw her fluttering down *like some queer little bird*, her orange breeches twinkling *like the legs of some duck*, and her head, tied in the blue and buff kerchief, bound round and round *like the head of some blue-topped bird* (p. 183; my emphasis).

It is rather symptomatic that in this exceptional opportunity to see into Romero's mind the narration should disclose a man staring at a woman with the rather conventional male eyes

23. Robert H. MacDonald, 'Images of Negative Vision: The Symbolic World of D. H. Lawrence's "The Princess"', *Studies in Short Fiction*, 16 (1979), 289-93.

of a hunter: that is to say, eyes which conceive of woman as game bird. In so conspicuously exposing Romero's sexist (and inherently violent) thoughts about Dollie the narration prevents any possible mystification of him, while simultaneously conferring a strong realism upon Dollie's fear.

5. Voices from the nether world

Approaching the climactic episode, Dollie's sexual conflict is brought to the forefront. Here, the distance that separates 'Samson and Delilah' and 'The Princess' becomes outstanding. To be sure, both stories intimate the heroines's recoil from their own sexual selves; but while in the former the woman's experience is rendered from the narrator's external vantage point, the latter positions Dollie at the very centre of her own experience.

Two particular passages from 'The Princess' illustrate this point:

The strange squalor of *the primitive forest* pervaded, the squalor of *animals* and their droppings, the squalor of *the wild*. The Princess knew the peculiar repulsiveness of it (p. 184; bold-faced characters mine).

...

Sparks? — or eyes looking at her across the water? She gazed hypnotised. And with her sharp eyes she made out in the dusk the pale form of a *bob-cat* ... And it was watching her with cold, *electric* eyes of *strange* intentness, a sort of *cold, icy wonder and fearlessness*. ... It was watching her with *cold, animal* curiosity, something *demonish and conscienceless* ... in a *flash* the creature was gone ... *strange* and soft in motion ... Rather fascinating. Yet that *cold, intent, demonish* watching! She *shivered* with cold and fear. She knew well enough the *dread and repulsiveness* of the *wild* (pp. 185-86; italics and bold-faced characters mine).²⁴

These passages translate two orders of consciousness: first, Dollie's visual perception *and* response to the surrounding objective world; then, the pervading rhetoric transforms this objective order into the symbol of her own unconscious. Given the natural imagery and references to electric energy, added to the physical effect which the scenery has on Dollie, the reader is invited to apprehend Dollie at the precise moment when she confronts her sexual self, that is, a self from which she feels completely estranged and to which she consequently responds with fear and repulsion. But however strongly she represses it, it gradually takes over:

24. I have italicized those parts pointing to the unconscious, and typed in bold-face those which reflect upon Dollie's response to it.

She crouched in her dark cloak by the water, rinsing the saucepan, *feeling* the cold heavy above her, the shadow like a vast weight upon her, bowing her down. The sun was leaving the mountain tops, departing, leaving her under profound shadow. *Soon it would crush her down completely* (p. 185; my emphasis).

Here is a representative Lawrencian passage. Its typicality stems from its blending two different discourses: while the passage represents Dollie as the actual sensor of physical stimuli (she 'feels' the 'cold' and the 'shadow' '[weighing] upon her' as she '[crouches] by the water'), it also registers the glance of the narrator who sees the sun 'departing' and 'leaving her under profound shadow'. In so letting the narrator in, the narration becomes ambiguous: the passage appears to hint at the irreversible victory of her sexual self (the 'sun' giving in to the 'shadow'); but it also evokes the image of 'the flower that has blossomed in a shadowy place' (p. 165) to which Dollie had been likened earlier. It is as if the narrator were predicting the emergence of the flower and its simultaneous disintegration. Furthermore, the rhetorical violence implicit in the passage invites one to interpret it — although retrospectively — as a metaphorical prognosis of the sexually violent encounter between Dollie and Romero, the 'shadow' standing for the latter.

The excerpt cited above complicates further when considered in the light of Dollie's subsequent dream:

She dreamed it was snowing, and the snow was falling on her through the roof, softly, softly, helplessly, and she was going to be buried alive. She was growing colder and colder, the snow was weighing down on her. The snow was going to absorb her (p. 187).

The incorporation of dreams is not unusual in Lawrencian fictions. One thinks, for example, of Paul Morel's and Aaron's, or indeed, March's dream in *The Fox*. Compared to these, Dollie's dream comes closer to March's in that it too is transcribed at the point of its occurrence in Dollie's mind and not in retrospect (in the case of Paul and Aaron the narration registers their dreams as the characters recollect them). What is most interesting about Dollie's represented dream is that although the *idea* in it is basically the same as in the extract quoted earlier, there is a crucial difference: while from the viewpoint of the narrator in the former passage Dollie's *impending* experience is thoroughly violent, Dollie's represented experience within the dream is ambivalent, as the repetition of 'softly' indicates.

This ambivalence re-emerges at a conscious level. Following this dream, the reader comes across a compelling representation of the heroine as she strives to understand what is happening within herself. The dramatic immediacy of Dollie's represented thoughts sweeps the reader along into the core of her experience:

'What did she want? Oh, what did she want?' — She sat in bed and rocked herself wofully [sic]. She could hear the steady breathing of the sleeping man. She was shivering with cold, her heart seemed as if it could not beat. She wanted warmth, protection, she wanted to be taken away from herself. And at the same time, perhaps more deeply than anything she wanted to keep herself intact, intact, untouched, that no-one should have any power over her, or rights to her. It was a wild necessity in her: that *no-one, particularly no man, should have any rights or power over her, that no-one and nothing should possess her.*

Yet that other thing! And she was so cold, so shivering, and her heart could not beat. Oh, would not someone help her heart to beat (p. 188; my emphasis).

As one begins to read this passage Dollie's imminent urge would ostensibly be a circumstantial wish to relinquish adult responsibility — almost a desire to return to the maternal womb. But the more one follows her thoughts, the more this urge becomes thoroughly sexual, an urge which she then appears to be reluctant to admit to herself. Her reluctance is not a mere matter of prudery, as her euphemistic exclamation would suggest. Rather, what prevents her from accepting her pressing sexual needs is, as was the case of Mrs Nankervis, the fear that in giving in to her sexual yearning she risks having her control over her own body taken away, of thus being turned into a mere object for male consumption ('no-one, particularly no man ... should possess her'). Nevertheless, and despite Dollie's *conscious* effort to repress sexual desire, her drives finally find a way out through language.

The episode that ensues is disturbing because it reads more as rape than as sexual intercourse. This is mostly due to the circumlocutory dialogue leading to it:

'Romero,' she said strangely. 'It is so cold!'
Where did her voice come from, and whose voice was it, in the dark?

[...]

'I am so cold.'

[...]

'You want me to make you warm.'

'Yes' (p. 188).

As readers we know that Dollie is both overcome by physical cold and sexual desire. But that she is overcome by sexual desire is something which Romero does not know. This is not as trivial a remark as it may first appear: rather, it is an observation which purports to emphasize the need in Lawrencian fictions to maintain each perspective separate for fear of important misreadings. As regards Romero's utterance, it is important to heed that his mind remains completely sealed and that, therefore, it is impossible either for the reader or Dollie to reckon whether his question is to be taken at face value or metaphorically.²⁵ Then, Dollie's answer is, as far as Romero is concerned, a 'Yes, [I want you to make me warm]'. The next outcome is that, in view of subsequent events, Romero emerges here as imposing his meaning on what is still equivocal for Dollie. In effect, it is rather significant that her voice arises while she is still trying to sort out her feelings.

To recognize this is fundamental in view of the scene that ensues. Confronted with it some scholars have hastened to interpret Dollie's reaction to Romero's sexual advance as that of a 'sexually frigid' woman, or as an unproblematic instance of 'hysterical purity'.²⁶ This is not altogether accurate. Certainly she is suffering from hysteria, as her numbness and speechlessness clearly evince: 'She stiffened herself. Yet she was dumb' (p. 188); and she is actually withdrawing from touch: 'She wanted to scream to him not to touch her' (p. 188). But one cannot overlook that her reaction immediately follows Romero's '[lifting] her in his arms', a physical gesture which at once sparks off power associations. That is to say, her response is in full accord with her previously expressed desire to be in the power of 'no-one, particularly no man'.

But the rape quality of the scene also derives from the way in which the narration evokes Dollie's absolute detachment from the sexual act itself:

She had never, never wanted to be given over to this. But she had *willed* that it should happen to her. And according to her will, *she lay and let it happen*. But she never wanted it. She never wanted to be thus assailed and handled, mauled. She wanted to keep herself to herself.

25. In Janice H. Harris's view, for example, Dollie 'invites Romero into her bed to make love to her'; *The Short Fiction of D. H. Lawrence* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1984), p. 196.

26. Graham Hough, *The Dark Sun: A Study of D. H. Lawrence* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., 1956), p. 179; Janice H. Harris, *The Short Fiction*, p. 195.

However, she had willed it to happen, and it had happened. She panted with relief when it was over.²⁷

Yet even now she had to lie within the hard, powerful clasp of this other creature, this man. She dreaded to struggle to go away. She dreaded almost too much the icy cold of that other bunk (p. 188; my emphasis).

In so articulating Dollie's mental process, the narration vividly foregrounds her passive involvement in the sexual act. But perhaps more important is the fact that, in so utterly encapsulating the reader in her own mind as she tries to articulate her ongoing experience, Dollie can only be perceived as a rape victim: not only are we made to feel that she is not participating in the sexual act in which she is involved, but that it is a psychologically painful experience *for her*. Hence, what pervades this scene is no sexist discourse perpetuating the myth of women incurring rape upon themselves. Instead, it is a scene that powerfully captures the disintegrated personality that results from the collision of (unconscious) desire and (conscious) volition. Furthermore, in so silencing Romero's voice while at the same time verbalizing Dollie's thoughts, the passage heightens the impression that Romero is too self-absorbed to realize that his partner is not "there". (This is a recurrent complaint amongst Lawrencian female protagonists vis-à-vis their sexual partners.) In so positioning the reader at the very core of Dollie's psychologically painful experience, the narration bars any possible sympathy for Romero.

6. Dramatic experience and tragic resolution

Following this first sexual encounter the narration shifts to the dramatic mode, whereupon one gets a first hand image of Romero. This image does not differ much from that of Hadrian. More particularly, he resembles Hadrian in the way he claims to have 'some right' on Dollie merely because she 'called' him 'in the night' (p. 192). Romero's reaction also parallels Lewis's response to Mrs Witt's proposal of marriage in *Sr Mawr*: "You Americans," [Romero] said; "you always want to do a man down" (p. 165). His riposte is doubly significant: on the one hand, it echoes with cultural resentment; but it too smacks of a stereotypical discourse of masculinity. That is to say, his speech also expresses Romero's masculine humiliation at the discovery that he has not given the woman any sexual

27. Dollie's reaction at this point is highly reminiscent of the islander's in 'The Man Who Loved Islands' after he becomes the lover of Flora in the second island; *The Complete Short Stories of D. H. Lawrence* (London: Heinemann, 1966), 3 vols, vol. 3, pp. 722-46 (pp. 736-37).

pleasure: he feels denigrated ('done down'), belittled in his manhood. Crowning this, his speech resounds with a stereotypically sexist and paternalistic discourse which conceptualizes woman both as aesthetic object and defenceless child:

'You are such a *pretty* white woman, why do you want to act mean to me?'

[...]

'You sure are a *pretty little* white woman, *small* and *pretty*,' he said. 'You sure won't act mean to me — you don't want, I know you don't' (p. 192; my emphasis).

Not only is his speech stereotypically sexist, it more importantly resonates with what anybody would at once recognize as the discourse of the *potential* rapist: one which tries to justify in advance any eventual violent action by displacing the blame to Dollie herself.²⁸ To put it otherwise, he echoes a male-centred discourse which exonerates man's violence against women by arguing that they only resort to brutal force because women 'have failed to inspire the best in them'.²⁹

Nevertheless, Dollie's subsequent rape does not come out as the *unproblematic* act of a man wanting to assert male power over his female victim. Rather, it arises as an act in which gender and culture/race intermingle (although they are not amalgamated, as we shall see). One needs to recall that the cultural/racial issue is overtly broached on several occasions in the course of this narrative: for example, when the narrator refers to the destructive effect of 'the coming of the white man' upon Romero's family (p. 167); and when Romero tells Dollie about how some twenty years ago the Mexicans tried 'to drive

28. It is noteworthy that, when approaching the story, some scholars have made this discourse their own. For example, Bibhu Padhi argues that 'the princess [forces] her initiator-guide more and more into a cold, nervous intimacy which has its basis in exigencies of circumstance rather than spontaneous contact'; not only does this critic re-echo the sexist discourse of 'she got what she asked for', he even goes as far as to make *her* the criminal of the story: 'Finally,' he says, 'she "kills" her mythic guide-lover, almost in the manner of a witch who ... involuntarily entices her human partner into a murderous trap'; Bibhu Padhi, *D. H. Lawrence: Modes of Fictional Style* (New York: The Whitston Publishing Company Troy, 1989), p. 54. Harry T. Moore also seems to fall into the same discursive trap when arguing that although 'Lawrence does not idealize Romero ... he does recognize that Romero, who behaved with propriety until summoned and indeed until coldly rebuffed, has some rights'; *The Life and Work of D. H. Lawrence*, p. 181.

29. As Alanna Kathleen Brown observes in relation to the role which Sir Willoughby wants Clara to assume in George Meredith's *The Egoist*, 'while men may denigrate women in conversation with each other, they pretend to recognize a unique spiritual power in women that obscures the reality of female powerlessness, and at the same time absolves men of responsibility in the abuse of power. If men are cruel, dishonest, or exploitative, it is because women have failed to inspire the best in them'; 'The Self and the Other: George Meredith's *The Egoist*', in *Women and Violence in Literature: An Essay Collection*, pp. 105-38 (p. 131).

out the whites' from the mountains (p. 181). But the issue fully emerges in Dollie's own remark when Romero is about to leave her to herself: "You think you can *conquer* me this way. But you can't. You can never *conquer* me." (p. 192; my emphasis). The way in which Romero goes 'speechless' at the mention of the word 'conquer' is noticeable. One cannot overlook either that the rape takes place after this dialogue and not after the earlier one, where his "masculinity" was at stake. Consequently, one infers that Dollie's speech has the effect of reminding Romero of his association with a colonized people. Thus, when shortly afterwards, as if aware of her having chosen the wrong word ('she regretted having said it', p. 192), Dollie rephrases her speech ("I won't have anybody's will put over me", p. 192), one discerns the sexual/political import of her statement, but also Romero's potential racial/political interpretation of it.

It could be argued at this point that 'The Princess' then is another literary work reinscribing the myth of the Black rapist. Alternatively, and perhaps more correctly, one could propose that in so setting a colonizing and a colonized culture (American/Mexican) against each other the narrative actually enlarges the meaning of rape by presenting it as the weapon which the culturally powerless men (the colonized people) themselves perceive as the last resort available to them. Eldridge Cleaver's confession in *Soul on Ice* appropriately illustrates the point:

I became a rapist. ... [I] sought out white prey. I did this consciously, deliberately, willfully, methodically ... Rape was an insurrectionary act.³⁰

From the fact that 'The Princess' so complicates the issue of rape it does not follow that it concomitantly disseminates the criminal responsibility of Romero, or that it condones his act. On the contrary, it stresses its damaging effects for both victim and victimizer while simultaneously foreclosing any commiserative exculpation of Romero. As for the latter, it achieves this through formal means: namely, by completely immersing the reader in Dollie's mind once again and concurrently sealing off Romero's so as to obstruct the examination of his feelings.

30. Eldridge Cleaver, *Soul on Ice* (New York: Dell Publ., 1972), p. 26.

Even when Dollie's rape has been looming on the horizon all the time, when it finally occurs it takes the reader by surprise, therefore heightening even more the poignancy of the event. This surprise effect in turn stems from the absence of any narrative shift marker: now Romero is cooking, and the next thing we know is that he is raping Dollie. Not only is there no apparent transition from one situation to the next, the reader's attention is completely focused on Dollie's thinking process while Romero does the cooking:

Then, sombre, he bent to the cooking again.

He could not conquer her, however much he violated her. Because her spirit was hard and flawless as a diamond. But he could shatter her. This she knew. Much more, and she would be shattered (p. 192).

Immediately we read that 'he tried to expend his desire for her' (p. 193). Hence the reader is metaphorically trapped in the rape as much as Dollie is literally raped. Moreover, the sentence that introduces the rape is so euphemistic that it is only when one follows Dollie's thoughts as she is being raped that one *gradually* realizes what is actually happening:

And she was *racked with agony*, and felt *each time* she would die. Because, in some peculiar way, *he had got hold of her*, some unrealised *part of her* she never wished to realise. *Racked with a burning, tearing anguish*, she felt that the *thread* of her being would *break*, and she would die. The *burning heat* that *racked her inwardly* (p. 193; my emphasis).

The description of the rape is neither glamourized nor explicit, yet it is undeniably poignant. Such a poignancy does not solely stem from the reader's mental association with the extra-fictional crime itself: more exactly, it derives from the fact that while Dollie's thinking communicates the *psychological* import of the rape, the rhetoric of the passage (see italics) helps foreground the *physical* pain which the act involves. With regard to the former, Dollie's represented thoughts would seem to confirm what the narrative has suggested all along: that Dollie's primordial problem is an unhealthy/unnatural withdrawal from sex ('he had got hold of her, some unrealised part of her she never wished to realize'). But also at this level, the rape signifies for Dollie the breaking of 'the thread of her being'. Clearly this phrase points to Dollie's *metaphorical* virginity. More precisely, it would seem that what most worries Dollie while she is being raped is the sheer disruption of her autonomous self.

This may sound paradoxical, indeed, but the fact is that the paradox inheres in the extract quoted as well as in the whole narrative. In effect, one needs to recall that the narrator's discourse, together with Dollie's self-representation, has persistently worked at the idea of Dollie's infantile fixation. The reader is led to surmise that in order to become a wholesome being she needs to realize that part of her self that is dormant: her sexual being. The question is how her autonomous self can be disrupted when it has not even germinated. Of course, Dollie herself is not aware of the loss that results from her denying her sexuality. Hence from her point of view there is no paradox. But for the reader, this paradox is precisely what lies at the core of Dollie's tragedy: that her wholesome being is destroyed at the very moment of its inception.

After the rape episode the narrative would seemingly threaten to turn into a real spaghetti western. This is only a matter of appearances, for the crux is that, as one comes towards the resolution of the tale, the narration encodes different potential endings, all of which are finally discarded in favour of Dollie's madness. More importantly, it is Dollie herself who mentally writes such potential endings: first, she considers putting an end to her ordeal by agreeing to marry Romero, an ending which she at once rejects (p. 194); then, she feels tempted to "confess" her love for him, but just as the thought crosses her mind she too dismisses it (pp. 193-94). The killing of Romero brings her literary mind to a temporary halt precisely at the moment when, as her untiring attempts to create her own fate demonstrate, Dollie is on the verge of turning herself into a sentimental heroine. In so suddenly interrupting Dollie's drafting of her own life ending with the killing of Romero, not only does the narration preclude sentimentalism, it irrevocably forecloses the eventuality of the rapist and the raped victim coming together in the everlasting embrace of a Lolah Burford story.³¹

31. In her study of novels of romance and their popularity among women, Helen Hazen compares Lolah Burford's *Vice Avenged: A Moral Tale* (New York: Macmillan, 1971) with the more orthodox romances by Georgette Heyer; she then argues that even though the former includes rape in her fiction, the plot line is basically the same as any of Heyer's romances; Helen Hazen's *Endless Rapture: Rape, Romance and the Female Imagination* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1983); a summary of the plot of Burford's *Avenged Vice* can be found on p. 7.

And yet the irony that pervades the very last page of the story has troubled some scholars: 'she too was now a little mad' (p. 196). The sentence rings with some irony, no doubt. Nonetheless, it is essential to realize that two voices are involved in it: on the one hand, the narrator would appear to be relating Dollie's madness to her father's, as the anaphoric adverb 'too' indicates; this adverb, however, concurrently points to the plural voice of the men who have found her in the mountains and taken her back to the ranch. One recalls that Dollie's explanation of Romero's behaviour is that "'he had gone out of his mind'" (p. 195). Thus, what would seem to be the narrator's irony is in fact the Forest Service men's mocking tone, the same one hears when at Dollie's explanation they reply "'Good Lord! You mean to say he'd gone out of his mind. —Whew! That's pretty awful. That explains it then. Hm!'" (p. 195). A similar statement occurs later: 'She was slightly crazy'; the difference between one and the other is that at this juncture Dollie's madness has already been dramatized. In view of her madness, the narrator's qualification of it ('little', 'slightly') is not so much a matter of irony as it is the narrator's indication that somehow "there is method in her madness".

At first sight, 'The Princess' would appear to be a conventional naturalistic story. Dollie's marrying an 'elderly man' — a father-figure — would appear to confirm that her fate has been pre-determined by the education she has received in her childhood: one which, according to the narrator, teaches her 'the impossibility of intimacy with any other than her father' (p. 161). Moreover, her madness would also seem to be genetically determined. As a matter of fact, it is precisely her madness that gives rise to the final aporia of 'The Princess': if fate writes her madness, her madness re-writes her fate, that is to say, there is no pre-determined destiny here. In effect, the foregoing analysis has already shown the way in which prior to Romero's death Dollie tries to write the end of her own story and how the narrative suddenly interrupts her writing. After the death of Romero, one apprehends her as she resumes this creative activity and re-writes the definite text of her own experience. In this final sketch she emerges as 'the Princess, and a virgin intact' (p. 196); or better, while 'The Princess' writes her, she in turn writes *the Princess*, thus

erasing her violated self through an imaginary act, which is precisely that which Ethel in 'None of That' will be incapable of doing.

'NONE OF THAT': THE FICTION OF RAPE

Two blankly opposing morals, the artist's and the tale's. Never trust the artist. Trust the tale.³²

The extent to which rape can be transcended *imaginatively* is the question that lies at the core of 'None of That'. The story has rightly been considered 'a sister tale to "The Princess"'.³³ Granted both tales come close to each other as far as their central event (rape) and physical locale go, there is an important difference between the two: while 'The Princess' presents a woman as the subject of her own experience, 'None of That' deals with a woman's experience as the object of a man's discourse. Hence 'None of That' is not the story of *Ethel Cane* proper, but the story of *Colmenares* about Ethel Cane.³⁴ This distinction must be underlined to avoid confounding the ideological underpinnings of *Colmenares's* discourse with the story's ideological significance.³⁵

In effect, 'None of That' is first and foremost an embedded narrative: not only is Ethel Cane's story *encompassed* by *Colmenares's* narrative, the latter in its turn is framed by an "I"-narrator. Therefore, before one even attempts to understand Ethel's experience, two essential issues need to be examined: first, the significance of the "I"-narrator; second, the self-reflective import of *Colmenares's* narrative about Ethel.³⁶

32. D. H. Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature* (Harmondsworth: Penguin in association with Heinemann, 1986; first publ. in 1923), p. 8.

33. Janice H. Harris, *The Short Fiction of D. H. Lawrence*, p. 211.

34. Apart from the story under consideration, Lawrence only exploited this device in one of his three earliest stories, 'A Fragment of Stained Glass' ['Legend'] (written in 1907 as 'Legend'; revised and retitled in 1911); in this story, the structure is even more convoluted: an "I"-narrator hands over the narration to the Vicar of Beauvale (Mr Colbran) who in turn reads an "I"-narration from a 15th-century manuscript. However unsuccessful this early story may be for some scholars, it attests to Lawrence's concern with narrative perspective and subjectivity in fiction from the beginning of his career as writer.

35. Harry T. Moore, for example, describes Ethel as representative of other Lawrence heroines who, like her, are 'sexless'; *The Life and Work of D. H. Lawrence* (London: Unwin Books, 1963; first publ. in 1951), p. 200. More recently, Sheila MacLeod has sustained that Lawrence justifies Cuesta's rape: 'Ethel has been asking for it'; *Lawrence's Men and Women* (London: Paladin Grafton Books, 1987; first publ. in 1985), p. 138.

36. Even though Lawrence showed preference for third-person narratives, some of his early fictions were written in the first-person. Amongst his novels, only one is told by a character: *The White Peacock* (1911). Then, amongst his shorter fictions, most of those told by "I"-narrators belong to the pre-war years: 'A Lesson

1. The framing narrator

From the opening pages Colmenares proves a very poor story-teller in the hands of a derisively unco-operative addressee — the "I"-narrator — who ceaselessly forces him to digress from the story he wants to recount. Thus, very early in the course of their dialogue, Colmenares refers for the first time to an American woman who 'left [Cuesta] a lot of money' (p. 701). This allusion passes as trivial, not just because it is the first mention of the woman, but also because the reader's attention is diverted by the "I"-narrator to other matters. Yet at the second reference to the same woman, and particularly in view of Colmenares's additional piece of information — she is a woman who apparently left Cuesta 'half a million dollars' (p. 705) — one suspects that she will play a leading role in 'None of That'. As if trying once more to catch his fictional interlocutor's attention, Colmenares asks: "Did you never hear of it?" (p. 705). Given his persistent inquiring there is no longer any doubt that the story which Colmenares wants to tell is that of the American woman and Cuesta. But the "I"-narrator has not heard of the story, nor is IT interested in hearing about it: "No. Then why shouldn't [Cuesta] give you money? I suppose you often gave him some, in the past?" (p. 705). Shortly afterwards Colmenares alludes to this American woman for the third time: "Did you never hear of the American woman who left [Cuesta] half a million dollars, and committed suicide?" (p. 705). This question further augments the reader's interest about *why* she committed suicide; the "I"-narrator, however, disappoints the reader's textually piqued curiosity once more by being concerned not with the "nosy" *why* but with the "factual" *when*.

Certainly, the "I"-narrator's unexpected question tags contribute to weakening Colmenares's authority as well as his felt excitement about Ethel's story. Above all, they clash with the reader's textually manipulated interests. What the "I"-narrator asks Colmenares differs from what the reader is tacitly prompted to ask. The fact is that, as the narrative comes to a close, this conflict of interests places the reader *retroactively* in a very uncomfortable, indeed unpleasant position: first of all, through this combination of teasing

on a Tortoise' (1909), 'Lessford's Rabbits' (1909), 'Once' (1912), 'The Fly in the Ointment' (1911), 'Adolf' (1919), 'Rex' (1919), 'Glad Ghosts' (1926), and 'Rawdon's Roof' (1928).

question on the one hand, and unexpected answer on the other, the reader is endowed with the same "morbidness" as that which characterizes Colmenares throughout his narrating. Concurrently, in so making the reader want Colmenares to tell Ethel's story, it obliquely manipulates him/her into actually willing the substantializing of her rape; it circuitously turns the reader into an accomplice to her own tragedy, hence augmenting the literal meaning of Ethel's *gang*-rape by uprooting the latter from its fictional realm. Such is indeed the case, for what this very peculiar beginning indicates is that the story of Ethel's rape can come into existence if and only if Colmenares is given the appropriate cues, that is, those which the reader is induced to provide.

The last question which the framing narrator poses almost succeeds in bringing the narrative to a cul-de-sac. Hence Colmenares's urge to ask his addressee once more if IT has ever heard of Ethel. Obviously, in so putting this question forward now, Colmenares does not seek any confirmation or denial from his interlocutor; instead, he looks for the reply which will allow him to recount the story. At last he gets one which, albeit not altogether appropriate ("I don't think I did", p. 705), nonetheless enables him to release the story from the dead end it has come to.

Thus we see that the framing narrator of 'None of That' plays a key role: not only IT illuminates the necessary collaboration of the narratee for the narrating act to be successful, IT retrospectively, albeit obliquely, implicates the actual reader in Ethel's tragedy too.

At a most immediate level the "I"-narrator's interventions also serve to ironize Colmenares's reverence for Cuesta, and collaterally Cuesta's admirable worth. For example, when referring to the latter the "I"-narrator makes the following rhetorical question: "And women, of course, fell for him by the thousand?" (p. 704); failing to notice the irony inherent in such a hyperbolic remark, Colmenares replies with serious intent "By the million!" (p. 704), whereby both his nonsensical regard for Cuesta and his stylistic proclivity to exaggerate is brought to the forefront. Or when following Colmenares's observation that Cuesta "made you physically aware of him ... if you were in a room with him" (p. 703) the first narrator responds with what is felt to be an inane

question, hence accentuating the facetiousness of the latter's comment: "Did he do it on purpose?" (p. 703); once again, Colmenares's reply evinces his failure to grasp his interlocutor's mocking tone: "Well! It's hard to say" (p. 703). Last but not least, the first narrator significantly interrupts Colmenares half way through his account to the effect of drawing attention to both ITS own ironic detachment from Colmenares's discourse, and the personal bias inherent in the latter's view of Ethel:

Colmenares looked at me ... to see if I was mocking him. He did not care about me and my interruptions. He was utterly absorbed in his recollections of that woman, who had made him so clever, and who had made him her servant, and from whom he had never had any satisfaction (p. 711).

Hereafter the framing narrator allows Colmenares to continue his narration and does not interrupt him for a long while. As will be established in the last part of the present discussion, the "I"-narrator's interventions both in the middle and at the end of the narrative contribute to expose substantial questions germane to the problematics of rape.

2. The framed narrator

Apart from stressing Colmenares's incapacity to remain impersonally detached from his own report, the narratorial aside cited above also insinuates the sexist bias which saturates it. Still, Colmenares's sexist prejudice is not immediately patent. Conversely, it would first appear that he himself assumes a critical stand towards the male chauvinism which, perceived from his own standpoint, distinguishes the Mexican men with whom Ethel socializes. Moreover, his behaviour towards Ethel ostensibly attests to his being an odd number within this male-centred community, a position which is verified by the fact that everybody 'laughs' and 'jeers' at him because he is constantly at Ethel's service and yet fails to obtain any sexual "dividends" in return for his services (p. 709-10).

Colmenares's exceptionality is nevertheless a matter of appearances, for in actual fact he, like the rest of the male community he so portrays, also entertains outrageously sexist ideas about women. Furthermore, notwithstanding his ('[grudging]') acknowledgement of Cuesta's brutal behaviour towards Ethel (p. 702) he reveals himself as being no different from Cuesta.

Even before Ethel comes to the centre of his narrative, Colmenares tacitly rearticulates the sexist double standard which associates women's sexual assertiveness with evil. For example, those women who are attracted towards Cuesta become contemptible '[besiegers]' in Colmenares's discourse (p. 704). At the same time, he does not particularly object to those men who want to make of Ethel their "'mistress"', nor does he appear to censure their violent conduct towards her:

'In Mexico, women must run in the dust like the Indian women, with meek little heads. American women are not very popular. Their energy, and their power to make other people do things, are not in request ... So Ethel found not a cold shoulder, but a number of square, fat backs turned to her ... General Isidor Garabay danced with her, and expected her immediately to become his mistress. But, as she said, she was having *none of that*. ... They would, perhaps, have carried her off and shared her as mistress, except for the fear of trouble with the American Government' (p. 707).³⁷

Taken in isolation this excerpt would convey Colmenares's ironic stance towards both parties — Ethel and the Mexican men. Yet the context brings to light that he virtually condones the male community's approach to Ethel: for just as the male community perceives in Ethel's *sociability* a sexual sign, so does Colmenares interpret Ethel's *friendliness* towards him as a sign of 'some part of her [wanting him] to make love to her' (p. 709). Then, like the Mexican men who *expect* her to become their mistress, Colmenares similarly *thinks* that she wants to become his mistress (p. 710). Furthermore, the Mexican men's aggressive attitude towards Ethel following their realization that she will have '*none of that*' (p. 707) parallels Colmenares's sexually violent day-dreams:

'I tried to *rebel against her*, and *put her in her place*, as the Mexicans say — which means to them, in bed with no clothes on' (709; my emphasis).

[...]

'When I was away from her, I could think of her white, healthy body with a voluptuous shiver. I could even run to her apartment,

37. Colmenares's portrayal of the Indian women in relation to men echoes a similar description contained in Lawrence's travel book *Mornings in Mexico* (1927); here the debasement of the Indian women is unequivocally condemned: 'The Aztec gods and goddesses are ... an unlovely and unlovable lot ... The goddess of love is a goddess of dirt and prostitution, a dirt-eater ... If the god wants to make love to her, she has to sprawl down in front of him, blatant and accessible'; D. H. Lawrence, *Mornings in Mexico and Etruscan Places* (London: Heinemann, 1956), pp. 1-82 (p. 23). See also Lawrence's essay 'Pornography and Obscenity' (1929), where he heavily criticizes those men who '[having had] intercourse with a woman ... triumphantly feel that they have done her dirt, and now she is lower, cheaper, more contemptible than she was before'; reprinted in *Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D. H. Lawrence*, edited with an introduction by Edward D. McDonald (London: Heinemann, 1936), pp. 170-87 (p. 176).

intending to kiss her, and *make her my mistress* that very night' (p. 710; my emphasis).

What is important to note is that Colmenares's violent fantasies seem triggered by his own realization that Ethel's behaviour towards him does not comply with the phallogentric social order which he himself underwrites: an order in which women are expected to satisfy men and in which intelligence and self-assertiveness are "masculine" properties. His adherence to such a male-centred discourse comes fully to the forefront in the imagery which pervades his description of Cuesta's fight with the bull:

'Cuesta opened his arms to him with a little smile, but endearing, lovingly endearing, as a man might open his arms to a little maiden he really loves, but, really, for her to come to his body, his warm, open body, to come softly' (p. 713).

This is not an even-handed portrayal of Cuesta's carriage, but a refractory light on the sexist glance of the 'painter' — Colmenares's (p. 701) — recalling Cuesta's performance. The stakes are similar when, following this description, Colmenares adopts an omniscient mask and interprets the reaction of the female spectatorship as one of 'fascination' towards Cuesta's 'lovingly endearing' pose (p. 713).

Colmenares's sexism does not need further emphasis. What needs to be stressed instead is that his sexist bias is overtly underscored from within his own discourse inasmuch as it comes forth thoroughly overloaded with linguistic markers of subjectivity. And yet the more one probes his discourse, the more his sexism issues as a masquerade disguising an intense homo-erotic attraction towards Cuesta:

'He had the *body* of an Indian, very *smooth*, with hardly any hair, and *creamy-yellow*. I always thought it had something childish about it, so *soft*. But also, it had the same mystery as his eyes, *as if you could never touch it*, as if, when you touched it, still it was not he' (pp. 703-704; my emphasis).

Certainly one reads here Colmenares's latent yearning to touch Cuesta and his utter incapacity to bring himself to do it. Then, notably, one hears him express later what is felt to be Colmenares's almost sadistic desire to 'stick' Cuesta: "'He fascinated me, but I always hated him. I would have liked to stick him as he stuck the bulls'" (p. 712). (One is reminded here of the opening bull-fight scene in *The Plumed Serpent* and the homo-erotic innuendoes which pervade the scene of the bull charging against the horse, particularly as

this scene is later on recalled by Kate.³⁸) When Colmenares later likens the fourth bull which Cuesta fights to a 'little maiden' (p. 713), his earlier wish to "'stick"' Cuesta becomes even more sexually laden.

It should be noted that Colmenares's mixed feelings of admiration and hatred towards Cuesta parallel his equally paradoxical attitude towards Ethel. This conspicuous similitude becomes meaningful when examined in the light of these two characters' explicit heterosexuality. It as if both characters constituted the mirror in which Colmenares saw highlighted his own sexually deviant nature. That such is indeed the case becomes evident as one examines carefully some of Colmenares's speech utterances.

In the course of Colmenares's narrative the framing narrator interrupts him in order to enquire whether Ethel "'[tried] her hand on Cuesta"', to which Colmenares responds in a confessing manner:

'Yes! That was what she did. And I was jealous. Though I couldn't bring myself to touch her, yet *I was excruciated with jealousy*, because she was interested in someone else. She was interested in someone besides myself, and my vanity suffered tortures of jealousy'(p. 711; my emphasis).

The crux of the matter is that Colmenares's avowal clashes against an earlier observation:

'I wondered always why she did not take a lover. She was a woman between thirty and forty, very healthy and full of this extraordinary energy. ... She attracted men ... Yet she had no lover'(pp. 708-709).

In other words, while Colmenares does not seem to object to her taking a lover, he nonetheless resents her choosing Cuesta. One wonders, then, whether what lies behind his categorical admission to *jealousy* of Cuesta is in fact *envy* of Ethel. This would help explicate his sudden outburst: "'She took herself so seriously, it seemed to me she would deserve what she got"' (p. 720). The statement sounds outrageous, even more so in view of Ethel's fate and Colmenares's knowledge of it at the time of his narrating. But this ought not to be interpreted as the story's tenor. Rather, it is Colmenares's own "moral", that is to say, the utterance of a man who appears to be torn between pressing discourses of masculinity and a personal inability to meet the *required* standards.³⁹

38. D. H. Lawrence, *The Plumed Serpent*, edited by L. D. Clark (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 5-6; p. 20.

39. The way in which male sexual behaviour is dictated by pressuring discourses of masculinity can also be pursued in another controversial story by Lawrence: 'Monkey Nuts' (composed in 1919; no subsequent

From the argument elaborated so far it is clear that, in contrast to the other stories examined in this chapter, the heroine's conflict in 'None of That' is mediated by a man whose very mind is immensely problematic. I have already noted that this conflicting male consciousness is divided between social pressure and natural inclination; he is, as much as Ethel, the victim of patriarchal discourses of "masculinity". This links with the issue of rape: as Lynne Segal appropriately explains,

the prevalence and problem of rape in our society stems in part from the cultural connections which are made between "masculinity" and heterosexual performance. As the gay liberation movement has argued, it ties in with the repression and ridicule of "effeminate" masculinities, and in particular with the policing of "deviant" sexual identities, such as male homosexuality.⁴⁰

It is worth recalling that Colmenares is a figure of fun within the Mexican male community because he is at the service of a woman. Therefore, one is driven to surmise that what leads him to entertain sexual fantasies verging on rape is not a masculine desire to overpower a woman; rather, such imaginings issue from Colmenares's acute sense of ridicule and connate inability to *perform* according to social strictures. This needs to be stressed in order to dispel the misleading idea that in this narrative the reader is presented with a stereotypical female castrating figure. Instead, 'None of That' presents a male figure who is caught in the web of discourses of "masculinity" from which he himself remains alienated.

3. The embedded narrative

The problem with Ethel's story is that, while it is clear that it can only be comprehended indirectly, one is nonetheless likely to skate this over for two particular reasons: first, because for some time the framing narrator completely withdraws; second, Colmenares's narrative incorporates instances of direct and indirect speech which, in the case of *non-embedded* narratives, one would normally take as the most reliable sources of knowledge.

alterations recorded), where the male protagonist (Joe) feels psychologically compelled to respond to Miss Stokes's invitations to go out together even when he is not in the least interested in her; *England, My England and Other Stories*, pp. 64-76.

40. Lynne Segal, *Is the Future Female? Troubled Thoughts on Contemporary Feminism* (London: Virago, 1988), p. 103.

Approaching Ethel through those instances of indirect speech present in Colmenares's narrating she emerges as an unsympathetic spokeswoman of cultural imperialism:

'She said that Mexico was a place without a soul and without a culture, and it had not even brain enough to be mechanically efficient. It was a city and a land of naughty little boys doing obscene little things, and one day it would learn its lesson. I told her that history is the account of a lesson which nobody learns, and she told me the world certainly *had* progressed. Only not in Mexico, she supposed. I asked her why she had come, then, to Mexico. And she said she had thought there was something doing, and she would like to be in it. But she found it was only naughty and mostly cowardly little boys letting off their guns and doing mediocre obscenities, so she would leave them to it' (p. 708).

From this extract one would infer that Ethel has not come to Mexico with the open-mindedness of somebody wanting to understand a different culture but with the mind of the patronizing colonizer wishing to impose his/her standards upon a people s/he considers inferior. Furthermore, she comes forth as a familiar representative of those who, taking their superiority for granted, assume they have a right to interfere in other "inferior peoples"'s politics.⁴¹ Ethel's patronizingly colonial attitude would be further corroborated by the questions she presumably asks Cuesta in the course of their first meeting:

'She asked him in French if he liked his profession, and how long he had been doing it, and if he got a great kick out of it, and *was he a pure-blood Indian?* — all that kind of thing' (p. 715; my emphasis).

Once again, and more specifically with regard to the last question, Ethel seems to echo the characteristic attitude of those who, feeling racially superior, look down on other races as anthropological oddities.⁴² Then, Colmenares's summative statement would indicate that Ethel maintains this superior posture throughout the entire conversation with Cuesta. The point is, Colmenares is as much a Mexican as Cuesta himself. Therefore, one is inclined to perceive the umbrage which pervades Colmenares's summary as resonant with the Mexican community's general feeling vis-à-vis Ethel's Americanism, including Cuesta's. Actually,

41. The imaginative rendering of the relationship between colonizers and colonized peoples in Lawrence's work, particularly in 'The Woman Who Rode Away', has been specifically examined by Mark Kinkead-Wecker in his 'The Gringo Senora Who Rode Away'.

42. 'As the Indians of Taos were to make clear to Mabel Dodge Luhan', Mark Kinkead-Wecker remarks, 'romantic patronage is no more acceptable to the recipient than colonial scorn or scientific anthropological curiosity'; 'The Gringo Senora Who Rode Away', 255.

this feeling of racial enmity comes to the surface later when Colmenares reports Cuesta's perception of Ethel: "she is so rich and so white-skinned and white-souled" (p. 719).

Granted the racial question considered here, the fact remains that, as in 'The Princess', the personal, and more specifically the generic issues which 'None of That' raises, take precedence over the racial question for a very specific reason: Colmenares does never represent the racial question from Ethel's unmediated viewpoint. By contrast, he represents Ethel's personal problem at both indirect and direct levels.

When examining Ethel's problem in the light of those instances of indirect speech which Colmenares incorporates in his own narrative one runs against the impassable obstacle of his own adherence to a phallogocentric discourse which denies woman's sexuality. Confronted with Ethel's conflict, Colmenares can only interpret it in terms of love or will-to-power (p. 717). But paying heed to these instances of indirect speech in juxtaposition with Ethel's reported discourse it appears that the stakes are quite different:

'If I know about myself: if I know my own mind. But I don't. My mind says he's a nada-nada, a dumb-bell, no brain, no imagination, no anything. But my body says he's marvellous ... What am I to *do* with my body, I tell you? What am I to *do* with it? I've got to master it, I've got to be *more* than that man. I've got to get all round him, and past him' (p. 717).

Such is the first direct presentation of Ethel's conflict within Colmenares's narrative, one which immediately places her ahead of all the heroines which this thesis has examined so far. In effect, even when Ethel seems to be at pains to articulate what she wants, in contrast with the two previous heroines she seems to be determined not to "sidetrack her body" (p. 717). Concurrently, she is set upon not losing mental control of her bodily yearnings (p. 717).

As regards her expressed fear of losing control over her body, there are textual reasons to conjecture that what Ethel actually fears is to be incapable of *acting* of her own accord, or more precisely, she dreads becoming *the object* of Cuesta. Indeed, one cannot overlook the verbs of *action* that saturate Ethel's speech: *do, get round, [get] past, take* [Cuesta] (p. 717); nor can one sidestep the reported statement in which one hears Ethel assert that for her it is a question of "either forget him or else *get him to make it an*

imaginative act with [her]" (p. 718; my emphasis). Clearly this stress on activity points to Ethel's refusal to being *excluded* as *active participant* ('with her') from the sexual act.

Problems arise when Colmenares indirectly reports her opinion about the case of the raped nuns:

'she said it was all nonsense that a woman was broken because she had been raped. She could rise above it. The imagination could rise above *anything*, that was not real organic damage. If one lived the life of the imagination, one could rise above any experience that ever happened to one. One could even commit murder, and rise above that' (p. 711).

This is undoubtedly a very distressing observation on her part. However, it is significant that, following this statement, the "I"-narrator (who until then has remained silent) interrupts Colmenares in order to observe that Ethel's belief is in fact the belief of the majority of modern men and women alike (p. 711). But the framing narrator's intervention has a more important effect, which is that of undercutting the illusion of reality created by Colmenares's *uninterrupted* narrative.

Ethel's personal experience (her rape, followed by her suicide) would ostensibly undermine her alleged faith in the power of the imagination; Ethel's destiny would seem to be denying what 'The Princess' appears to assert. The point that needs to be stressed here is that, as the "I"-narrator's intervention reminds us, the story of Ethel is actually the *literary imagining* of a raped woman. Seen in this light, 'None of That' emerges not so much as the narrative of Ethel but as a narrative about narratives on rape: Ethel's destiny may be the ultimate evidence of the limits of the liberated female will, but above all, it is the utmost denial of literature's real capacity to erase the social import of the crime of rape.⁴³

This links with the ending of 'None of That'. I have already remarked that the intervention of the framing narrator has the immediate effect of a reminder: that is to say, it

43. In relation to the limits of the female liberated will, Elaine Showalter's observes: 'The feminist fantasies of the liberated will characteristic of the seventies — the will towards autonomy, the will to change our lives, to release sexual and political force in a confrontation with confining institutions — have come up against an external limit ... To talk of controlling one's destiny in the face of the huge, impersonal, murderous shifts of the machinery of history is plainly hubristic in the eighties, a philosophy that may survive only behind the locked doors of EST seminars', 'Rethinking the Seventies: Women Writers and Violence', in *Women and Violence in Literature: An Essay Collection*, edited by Katherine Anne Ackley (New York and London: Garland Publ., 1990), pp. 237-54 (p. 254).

reminds the reader that 'None of That' is an embedded narrative. Needless to say, the effect of the frame is precisely to render knowledge unstable, to displace the emphasis on knowledge to 'the *process of communicating* knowledge'.⁴⁴ The fact that 'None of That', a story with a rape at its centre, is endowed with this particular structure, plus the fact that such is a very unusual device in Lawrencian fictions, is crucially pertinent: even more so when one bears in mind the epistemological difficulties with which any real court case of rape collides. That 'None of That' directly deals with this epistemological problem becomes transparent when one considers the "I"-narrator's question before the narrative comes to a close:

'But how do you know [Cuesta] handed her over like that'
'One of the men told me himself. He was shot afterwards' (p. 721).

Undoubtedly, this is a very troublesome ending, and it is so because of its intrinsic hyper-realism: for one recognizes here the fictional dramatization of the well-known reality of the courtroom. And it is precisely against this familiar background that the final aporia of 'None of That' arises: on the one hand, one gets the impression that the "I"-narrator's question denies the actual happening of the rape; but also, in the voice of this "I"-narrator, one distinguishes that of an all-too-familiar figure: the voice of the actual judge dealing with a case of rape.

This particularly unpleasant close has further implications. First of all, it silently intimates Colmenares's personal failure to help re-open the police inquiry by presenting his own testimony. This is no trivial matter when one remembers that at the time of his narrating (that is, after Ethel's rape and suicide) he still admires Cuesta. Added to this, the framing narrator's intervention functions as a reminder of Colmenares's unreliability as narrator, and concomitantly, of his own complicity in Ethel's fate.

In the first section of the present discussion I remarked upon the way in which the framing narrator, in so continuously driving Colmenares away from that which he wants to narrate, undermines his narratorial capacities. Then, there is his own problematic personality, which has also been discussed in the preceding section. Yet Colmenares's

44. William Nelles, 'Stories within Stories: Narrative Levels and Embedded Narrative', *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, 25 (1992), 79-96 (p. 86; my emphasis).

untrustworthiness as narrator emerges with full force when he represents himself as the mediator of the relationship between Ethel and Cuesta.

First of all, one cannot overlook the way in which Colmenares fulfils his translator role:

'[Ethel] asked him in French if he liked his profession, and how long he had been doing it, and if he got a great kick out of it, and was he a pure-blood Indian? — all that kind of thing. *I translated to him as short as possible*, Ethel flushing with embarrassment. He replied just as short, to me, in his coarse, flat sort of voice, as if he knew it was mere pretence' (p. 715; my emphasis).

This excerpt elucidates the way in which Colmenares as interpreter takes the liberty of exerting censorship whenever he deems it *appropriate*. His inclination to expurgate others' discourses — reminiscent of the "I"-narrator's translator role in Lawrence's 'The Wintry Peacock' (1921) — is further evinced in the way he reports Cuesta's speech:

'I asked him later, what made him put such a crude question? Did he think of offering to marry her? "*Marry a—?*" he replied, using an obscene expression' (pp. 716-17; my emphasis).

The fact that Colmenares discloses a tendency to distort in one way or another the discourse of both Ethel and Cuesta has two immediate consequences: firstly, it increases the reader's scepticism vis-à-vis the accuracy inherent in other instances of direct and indirect speech present in Colmenares's narrative. Secondly, and more importantly, given Colmenares's apparent reluctance to report Cuesta's "obscenities", one is driven to infer that none of Cuesta's "obscenities" about Ethel ever reach Ethel herself. In other words, Colmenares never tells Ethel about the outrageously sexist views which Cuesta appears to entertain about her: namely, a "skirt" (p. 715), "a—" (p. 717), a "cuttlefish ... cooked in sauce" (p. 719), "an octopus" (p. 719), "a lump of jelly" (p. 719), a "zopilote" (p. 720). True, Colmenares discourages her from having a relationship with Cuesta, and he also stresses that he is a brute. But in so withholding Cuesta's personal view of her, Colmenares is perceived as indirectly contributing to Ethel's misrepresentation of Cuesta and to her own fatal destiny. For the fact is that in so foregrounding these crucial omissions 'None of That' opens the option for the reader to question whether Ethel would

have insisted on testing the power of the mind over her body with Cuesta had she known about what Colmenares keeps silent.

CHAPTER 3
WOMEN DIVIDED

'MOTHER AND DAUGHTER', 'THE LOVELY LADY', *THE FOX*

The previous chapter has explored three Lawrencian texts in the light of one of the main preoccupations amongst feminist literary scholars: the question of violence against women as it is represented by men writers. The following is an investigation of three different Lawrencian texts in relation to an equally important feminist concern: the portrayal of women's estrangement from each other in fiction.

It is generally agreed that the naturalization of the division of women in all media has been a common phenomenon in the past (as well as in the present) and that this phenomenon has in turn tended to thwart any potential unified female action against the hegemonic sexual order. Consequently, feminist critics in the field of literary studies have continually endeavoured to intercept and expose any text which may appear to perpetuate the 'male canard that women are their own worst enemies'.¹

Although to short-circuit such damaging discourses is a necessary task, one should be cautious here for fear of automatically disparaging texts on the sole basis that they represent divided women. To be borne in mind in this respect is that the division of women is empirically a historical reality and not a male myth.² Furthermore, it is a reality that

1. Myrna Lamb, 'Two Plays on Love and Marriage', in *Woman in Sexist Society: Studies in Power and Powerlessness*, edited by Vivian Gornick and Barbara K. Moran (New York and Scarborough, Ontario: The New American Library, 1972), pp. 37-59 (p. 38).

2. As Elizabeth V. Spelman observes, '[we] cannot be said to have taken women seriously until we explore how women have treated each other. But that means, too, how we have mistreated each other. The history of women, including the history of feminism and feminists, is hardly free of some women doing violence to others, of some women miserably failing other women in need'; 'The Virtue of Feeling and the Feeling of

women too have been — and still sometimes are — accomplices in maintaining a sexual status quo which keeps them within socially inferior ranks.³

That these realities have not been taken into account in relation to Lawrence's fictions is apparent when one examines the extant criticism around the relationship between Winifred and Ursula in *The Rainbow* on the one hand, and between Banford and March in *The Fox* on the other. Numerous scholars have hastily concluded that these are Lawrence's expression of a personal animosity against female alliances, an animosity which has collaterally been interpreted as Lawrence's deep-seated fear of female ententes which might jeopardize the phallogentric social order he supposedly endorses.⁴ This argument, however, does not take into account all those memorable sisterly couples to which Chapter 1 alluded when dealing with Matilda's choice. One could add other successful non-sisterly female connections such as that between Fanny and her aunt, or the former and her prospective mother-in-law in 'The Last Straw' [Fanny and Annie]; the relationship between Lou and Mrs Witt in *St Mawr*; between Ursula and her grandmother Lydia, or between the former and her fellow-teacher Maggie in *The Rainbow*.⁵ As for less successful female associations in Lawrencian fictions one should query what exactly lies behind such failures and how the narratives justify them. Failing to do so one risks overlooking that on more than one occasion a Lawrencian woman is not *arbitrarily* opposing another woman. For instance, proceeding in this manner one discerns that Ursula splits up with Hermione not because of an inexplicably sudden aversion towards lesbianism, but owing to Ursula's recognition of Winifred as a fervent adherent to a male-centered system of values which she herself

Virtue', in *Feminist Ethics*, edited by Claudia Card (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1990), pp. 213-32 (p. 213).

3. According to Annette C. Baier the fact that this female complicity has been skirted by feminists is understandable when one considers that 'one of the bad raps about themselves that many women have had to battle is the image that they are catty and callous toward each other, really interested only in men and their money or their prestige or their bodies or in some cases all of those'; 'Whom Can Women Trust?', in *Feminist Ethics*, pp. 233-45 (p. 234).

4. See for example Deborah Core, "'The Closed Door': Love Between Women in the Works of D. H. Lawrence', *The D. H. Lawrence Review*, 11 (1978), 114-31.

5. See Lydia Blanchard's 'Mothers and Daughters in D. H. Lawrence: *The Rainbow* and Selected Shorter Works', *Lawrence and Women*, edited by Anne Smith (London: Vision Press, 1978) pp. 75-100.

rebuffs: a system which feeds upon an absolute idolatry of mechanized life and an intense inclination to dominate others.⁶

The ensuing pages intend to re-examine the subject of divided women in 'Mother and Daughter', 'The Lovely Lady', and *The Fox* respectively. The discussion will comprise two sections: the first will be concerned with 'Mother and Daughter' and 'The Lovely Lady', two stories where this particular subject is further complicated by the fact that one of the contending female characters is a mother. In the absence of such a figure in *The Fox*, and in view of the intense debate which this particular story has stirred over the years, a separate section will be dedicated to a careful re-examination of it.

PART I

MOTHERS AND FEMALE SIBLINGS

'MOTHER AND DAUGHTER' AND 'THE LOVELY LADY'⁷

'Mother and Daughter' and 'The Lovely Lady' represent at a surface level the antagonistic battle between two women, one of them being a mother figure. In either story the mother is characterized as a strong personality who patently casts a shadow over her own offspring. Beyond the level of characterisation, these tales also share a humouristic verve which is itself rooted in their distinctive intertextual dynamism.

Comedy and intertextuality are two features which, although permeating much of Lawrence's oeuvre, have been frequently neglected.⁸ This is a damaging critical lapse

6. Sandra M. Gilbert has recently noted that 'Lawrence's battle against women was often a battle against the same force he excoriated in men: the fixed will, the "nerve-brain" consciousness that would subordinate flesh and blood to an idealized authority'; 'Feminism and D. H. Lawrence: Some Notes Toward a Vindication of His Rites', *Anais: An International Journal*, 9 (1991), 92-100 (p. 98). In this article, Gilbert re-examines Lawrence in the light of French post-structuralist feminism, especially with respect to theorists like Hélène Cixous and Luce Irigaray. She suggests that Lawrence might be considered a 'proto-feminist' inasmuch as he '[rejects] the cultural metaphysics that would suppress darkness, the body, otherness — and women', 98-99.

7. Included in *The Complete Short Stories of D. H. Lawrence* (London: Heinemann, 1955), 3 vols, vol. 3; 'Mother and Daughter', pp. 805-26; 'The Lovely Lady', pp. 761-78; all subsequent references will be to this edition; page numbers will be incorporated in the main text after each quotation.

8. Of late, several critics have begun to pay due attention to the comedy that permeates Lawrence's fiction. An illustrative example is the issue dedicated to it by the French journal *Etudes lawrenciennes*, n° 6 (Université de Paris X, 1991). Here, humour in its various forms — irony, parody, satire — is examined in relation to *The Rainbow*, *The Lost Girl*, *St Mawr*, 'Fanny and Annie', 'Things', 'The Woman Who Rode Away', as well as some of Lawrence's poems and his play *The Fight for Barbara*. As for the intertextual dynamics of Lawrence's fiction, it is a feature to which the editors of the Cambridge edition of *Sons and Lovers*, Helen Baron and Carl

insofar as these features have a crucial bearing on the stories' ideological thrust. Hence the general purpose of the following will be to examine 'Mother and Daughter' and 'The Lovely Lady' as textual paradigms of the way in which these two features affect our understanding of the ideological import of Lawrencian fictions.

Before I begin my discussion of these two stories I would like to point out that one of the reasons why critics have failed to appreciate their comical import is that they have generally approached them through the looking-glass of *Sons and Lovers*. Biased by this work and other extra-fictional Lawrencian statements on the subject of 'motherhood' critics have shown themselves unwilling to see beyond "Lawrence's Oedipus complex" and his presumed "motherphobia".⁹ What is more, this has led some of them to perpetuate the myth that Lawrencian mothers are devouring 'Moms' worthy of contempt. Yet the mothers of these tales pertain to a large gallery of Lawrencian mothers whose very multifariousness precludes any possibility of seeing all of them as conforming to a single, unproblematic pattern. The same applies to Lawrencian representations of the relationship between mothers and their children: as the following discussion will evince shortly, these relationships are, on close inspection, as ambivalent as those which contemporary feminists from different fields have observed in real life.¹⁰

Baron, recently called attention in the course of a seminar imparted at the English Department of the University of Warwick (7 November, 1992); on that occasion they observed that the meaning of very specific passages varies in great measure when considered in the light of its implicit dialogue with other literary texts.

9. See, for example, Sheila MacLeod, *Lawrence's Men and Women* (London: Paladin Graffon Books, 1987), p. 175, and Laurence Lerner, 'Lawrence and the Feminists', in *D. H. Lawrence: Centenary Essays*, edited by Mara Kalnins (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1986), pp. 69-87 (p. 70). Actually, Judith Arcana extends this criticism to *Sons and Lovers*; the present thesis fully coincides with her view that this novel (as much as other fictional representations of mothers in Lawrence's fiction) has been misleadingly examined through 'the Freudian Oedipal hypothesis', a tendency which she finds 'embedded in the sociocultural phenomenon of mother-blaming' and which '[encourages] each of us to condemn mothers for thwarting us, repressing us, raising us for selfish purposes, refusing to let us go, even dominating our emotional lives after their death'; 'I Remember Mama: Mother-Blaming in *Sons and Lovers* Criticism', *The D. H. Lawrence Review*, 21 (1989), 137-51 (pp. 137-38).

10. Particularly relevant to this subject are: Edith G. Neisser's *Mothers and Daughters: A Lifelong Relationship* 2nd edition, revised (New York: Harper and Row Publ., 1973); Nancy Chodorow's 'Being and Doing: A Crosscultural Examination of the Socialization of Males and Females', in *Woman in Sexist Society: Studies in Power and Powerlessness*, pp. 259-91; the issue dedicated to this subject by *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 6 (1979); Andrea Dworkin's *Our Blood: Prophecies and Discourses on Sexual Politics* (London: The Women's Press, 1982; 1st publ. in 1976), especially Chapter 5: "The Sexual Politics of Fear and Courage", pp. 50-65 (pp. 56-58); Marianne Hirsch's *The Mother/Daughter Plot: Narrative, Psychoanalysis, Feminism* (Bloomington, Ill., and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989); Annette C. Baier's 'Whom Can Women Trust?', *Feminist Ethics*, pp. 233-45. Although the list could be extended, these studies are sufficiently illuminative of the ways in which the subject has been dealt with over the years by

'MOTHER AND DAUGHTER': AN UNBREAKABLE BOND

'It's as they say:
 "A son's my son till he takes him a wife,
 But my daughter's my daughter the whole of my life"'.¹¹

'Mother and Daughter', like 'The Lovely Lady', belongs to the posthumously published collection *The Lovely Lady* (1933). The story itself was composed in 1928 and issued the same year by *The New Criterion*. In view of its date of composition it has been suggested that 'Mother and Daughter' is a negative counterpoint to *St Mawr* (1925), where the relationship between mother and daughter is presented in a more positive light. Furthermore, on the basis that the short story was written after the novella, it has also been proposed that the former is Lawrence's definite word on the subject of 'motherhood' and an "affidavit" to the misogyny which overcame Lawrence after the Great War. *Literally*, the short story is the last written word on the subject, no doubt, for after 1928 Lawrence's health left him too weak to write any more fictional works before his death two years later. But to extrapolate this beyond the *letter* is merely a matter of speculation.

Perhaps the greatest of errors inherent in this kind of argument is that it leaves out the satiric tone which pervades most stories written during these last years, one which exudes not 'misogynist paranoia' but the same intense hostility against materialism which runs through other earlier works such as *Women in Love* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.¹² It is no coincidence that by the time Lawrence wrote 'Mother and Daughter' he had also

feminist scholars from different fields. It should be noted that the cautiousness with which these scholars address this issue contrasts with the cursory analyses of the same problem in literary works such as Lawrence's.

11. D. H. Lawrence, *Sons and Lovers*, edited by Helen Baron and Carl Baron (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 286.

12. Sheila MacLeod, *Lawrence's Men and Women*, p. 175; Lydia Blanchard similarly argues that 'Lawrence's most bitter attitudes about strong women emerge in his attitude towards Mrs Bodoin', although in her case she does not consider the story as a definite statement on Lawrence's part; 'Mothers and Daughters in D. H. Lawrence's *The Rainbow* and Selected Shorter Works', p. 95. Finally, Brian Finney sees the story as a 'satiric fable about the counter-revolution likely to overtake a society which has overridden what Lawrence believed were inescapable differences between the sexes'; I take this comment not as Finney's recuperation of Lawrence in the light of current feminist debates, but as his consideration of the story as a document attesting to Lawrence's retrogressive position in relation to the New Woman question; Introduction to D. H. Lawrence's *Selected Short Stories*, pp. 11-31 (p. 27).

written 'Things' and 'The Rocking-Horse Winner', both of which, although in altogether different tones, are blunt critiques of capitalism. This is not to say that all there is in the tale under consideration is a critique of capitalism. Rather, it is a way of indicating that in 'Mother and Daughter' sexual politics and materialism are inextricable for reasons to be discussed.

1. The destruction of the monologic context¹³

Skimming the surface of 'Mother and Daughter' one discovers a real farrago of sexist *lieux communs*: "women are witches", "mothers are devourers", "modern women are manly", "it is not in the nature of woman to be the head at work", "working women become nagging and fearsome old maids".¹⁴ Two questions arise: *where* in the text these hackneyed ideas originate and *how* the narration positions the reader with regard to them.

It is essential to realize that the presentation of characters in 'Mother and Daughter' falls into the hands of a narrator whose identity is ethereal from the outset: indeed, IT continually adopts the diction and expressive mannerisms of every single character that comes into the arena. But more importantly, IT appropriates the story-telling style, that is, the *expression* of another's viewpoint:

Virginia Bodoïn had a good job: she was head of a department in a certain government office, held a responsible position, and earned, to imitate Balzac and be precise about it, seven hundred and fifty pounds a year. That is already something. Rachel Bodoïn, her mother, had an income of about six hundred a year, on which she had lived in the capitals of Europe since the effacement of a never very important husband (p. 805).

Remarkable as the opening is, those who have dedicated some thought to the narrative have invariably ignored it.¹⁵ Yet the textual invocation of "Balzac's style" endows the narration

13. According to Mikhail Bakhtin, 'the weakening or destruction of a monologic context occurs only when there is a coming together of two utterances equally and directly oriented toward a referential object'; *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, edited and translated by Caryl Emerson with an introduction by Wayne C. Booth (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), p. 188.

14. In *Les Discours du cliché* (Paris: CDV-SEDES, 1982), Ruth Amossy and Elisheva Rosen examine the difference between cliché and *lieu commun*: in contrast with the first term which refers to a morpho-syntactic unity, *lieu commun* is defined semantically as a trite idea or argument. For a definition and illuminating study of the cliché in literature, refer to Michael Riffaterre's 'Le Cliché dans la prose littéraire', *Essais de stylistique structurale* (Paris: Flammarion, 1971), pp. 161-81.

15. To my knowledge, only Brian Finney has marked upon the 'narrative self-consciousness' of 'Mother and Daughter'. Although he acknowledges the way in which the name of Balzac is evoked twice, he falls short of elaborating upon the full relevance of this overt citation; Introduction to D. H. Lawrence's *Selected Short Stories*, pp. 11-31 (p. 29). It should be clear that, in line with the premises of this survey, all references to Balzac in the following discussion should be understood as the textually constructed "Balzac".

with a double-directed discursive stamp from the outset.¹⁶ Naturally it is too early to judge the scope, depth, or nature of the narrator's incorporation of "Balzac's style" into ITS own discourse. But the mere act of openly summoning it forth serves to '[cast] a slight shadow of objectification over' it, that is, to make the narration reverberate with two distinctly demarcated discourses: "Balzac's" and the narrator's, the latter being in one way or another orientated towards the former.¹⁷

The narrator, then, ostensibly invokes what IT characterizes as "Balzac's" mathematical exactitude or statistical precision ('to be precise about it'). The important point is that after invoking this *analytical* style, the narrator's becomes in turn equally *rationalistic* as IT goes on to explain Henry's separation from Virginia:

For four years [Virginia] had been as good as married to Henry Lubbock, a rather spoilt young man who was musical. Then Henry let her down: for two reasons. He couldn't stand her mother. Her mother couldn't stand him. And anybody whom Mrs Bodoïn could not stand she managed to sit on, disastrously. So Henry had writhed horribly, feeling his mother-in-law sitting on him tight, and Virginia, after all, in a helpless sort of family loyalty, sitting alongside her mother. Virginia didn't really want to sit on Henry. But when her mother egged her on, she couldn't help it. For ultimately, her mother had power over her; a strange *female* power, nothing to do with parental authority. ... But her mother had another, much subtler form of domination, female and thrilling, so that when Rachel said: Let's squash him! Virginia had to rush wickedly and gleefully to the sport. And Henry knew quite well when he was being squashed. So that was one of his reasons for going back on Vinny. — He called her Vinny, to the superlative disgust of Mrs Bodoïn, who always corrected him: My daughter Virginia — (p. 805; bold-faced characters mine).

The exigency of quoting in full is axiomatic: for here is a distinctively Lawrencian abstruse passage which, if broken down into smaller units, will inevitably yield equivocal interpretations. I have emphasized in this excerpt markers of a characteristically *syillogistic* style which summons up "Balzac's". That is to say, what we have here is a double-voiced extract in which the narrator speaks in "Balzac's" idiosyncratically rationalistic expository language. Interestingly, one remarks upon the way in which this language is *apparently*

16. According to Bakhtin, the reader's perception of the full implications of any overt reference to somebody else's discourse is always proportional to the reader's foreknowledge of the "somebody" mentioned. This is a risk which any narrative like 'Mother and Daughter' takes: even when the discourse of an *other* is explicitly invoked, and even if the invoked discourse is palpably given a proper name, still the reader may bypass the full implications underlying this double-voiced discourse; Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 185.

17. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 189.

paradoxically traversed by the hyperbolically quantifying adjective 'superlative' on the one hand, and the emotionally overloaded adverbs such as 'disastrously' and 'horribly'. The paradox is only apparent when one considers that "'horriblyment'" and 'other highly emotive words' are a discursive characteristic of Balzacian narrators'.¹⁸ Looking further into this narrative one notices how often these emotionally overloaded expressions occur. For example, on account of Virginia's problem with her shoes we read that 'the said shoes would hurt her excruciatingly', and that this in turn was 'a fatality' (p. 808). Of course, the narration is representing Virginia's own speech mannerisms; but the fact remains that her speech is already saturated with what one has been taught to recognize as a typically "Balzacian" quirk; "Balzac's" and Virginia's expressive lexis merge. More important, as both resound within the narrator's discourse, they are made to echo with 'an intonation of ridicule or, mockery'.¹⁹

The passage above quoted, however, also resounds with Henry's voice, although in such a manner that even when one manages to catch a glimpse of it in its own individuality — particularly as we reach the end — it appears to fuse with "Balzac's" own utterance ('So that was one of the reasons for going back to Vinny') which is in turn encompassed within the narrator's own discourse. The merging of both voices, "Balzac's" and Henry's, is felt even more strongly when the name of the former is invoked again: 'The second reason was, again to be Balzacian, that Virginia hadn't a sou of her own (p. 805)'. This is no longer a matter of stylistics but semantics. The summoning of "Balzac" at this point does no longer refer to the style *per se* but to the semantic viewpoint that underlies it: an exacerbated practical mind akin to Henry's materialistic attraction towards Virginia:

Virginia, at the age of twenty-four, was already earning four hundred and fifty. But she was earning them. Whereas Henry managed to earn about twelve pounds per annum, by his precious music. *He had realized* that he would find it hard to earn more. So that marrying, except with a wife who could keep him, was rather out of the question. *Vinny* would inherit her

18. In A. W. Raitt's 'Introduction' to Honoré de Balzac, *Short Stories*, selected and edited by the same author (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 212.

19. "The taking over ... of a portion of our partner's utterance brings with it — due to the change in speaking individuals — a transposition in tone: the words of the "other" always sound strange in our mouth, even slightly sarcastic, caricatured, grotesque"; Leo Spitzer, *Italienische Umgangssprache* (Leipzig, 1922), pp. 175-76; cited in Mikhail Bakhtin's *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 194; I use, however, the translation given by the editor, Caryl Emerson in note 4, p. 266.

mother's money. But then Mrs Bodoin had the health and muscular equipment of the Sphinx. *She would live forever*, seeking whom she might devour, and devouring him (p. 806; my emphasis).

The narration has gradually shifted from what it has already characterized as a typically "Balzacian style" — 'precise' about mathematical figures — to the representation of Henry's calculating mind about Virginia. Of further significance, in so giving way to Henry's self-represented egotism the narration debunks his characterization of Rachel; more precisely, in so unequivocally rooting this negativized portrayal of Rachel in Henry's self-exposed mercenariness, his description is deprived of any serious import.

I have found it vital to examine this particular opening in detail in order to demonstrate that the *scope* of the double-voicedness effected through the invocation of "Balzac" is not restricted to the immediately surrounding context in which it is made; instead, it is sustained when "Balzac" is no longer referred to by name. "Balzac's" pragmatic, even specifically mercantile vocabulary permeates the represented utterances of the male inhabitants of this fictional realm. Admittedly, Rachel has a materialistic and intensely scheming mind too, but as will be seen later, hers differs from the *egocentrically mercenary mind* of her male counterparts.

As the narration makes "Balzac's" viewpoint merge with Henry's — and with Arnault's later — one is invited to consider Henry himself as "Balzac's" *porte-parole*. This is particularly crucial in view of the sexually stereotyping direction which the narration appears to take in the following passage:

Women, very often, hypnotize one another, and then, hypnotized, they proceed gently to wring the neck of the man they think they are loving with all their hearts. Then they call it utter perversity on his part, that he doesn't like having his neck wrung. They think he is repudiating a heart-felt love. For they are hypnotized. Women hypnotize one another, without knowing it.

[Henry] *saw himself* being simply reduced to nothingness by two women, an old witch with muscles like the Sphinx, and a young, spell-bound witch, lavish, elvish and weak, who utterly spoilt him but who ate his marrow.

... He was fond of *Vinny*, and he could hardly do without her, and he was sorry for her. But at length *he couldn't see her* apart from her mother. She was a young, weak, spendthrift witch, accomplice of her tough-clawed witch of a mother (p. 806; my emphasis).

Some have taken this to be "the" narrative viewpoint, indeed Lawrence's misogynist conception of women.²⁰ Yet this is altogether misleading. The problem that the passage poses is its sudden slippage into the present tense, a shift which ostensibly causes its contents to reach beyond fictional boundaries and acquire universal validity. The point is that what reads as a *maxim* on women is actually encompassed within a narrative sequence wholly dominated by Henry's subjectivity.²¹ Without doubt, the excerpt where the controversial utterance appears opens with the narrator explaining the second reason for Henry's terminating his relationship with Virginia (p. 805). But then a subtle shift occurs as the nickname 'Vinny' slips in: 'Vinny would inherit her mother's money' (p. 806). As we already know, such is the nickname used by Henry 'to the superlative disgust of Mrs Bodoin' (p. 805), a nickname which is several times reiterated before the narration falls into the present tense: right until the moment in which the tense shift occurs the narration relentlessly insists on the impression that we are in Henry's mind. Furthermore, considering that immediately after this tense-break the narration lapses back again to the past tense in order to convey Henry's represented feelings, it is plausible that — notwithstanding literary conventions — the present tense remains within the representational mode, its effect being one of absolute mental immediacy. This is further corroborated when, in the closing passage cited above, the narration incorporates clear markers of subjectivity indicating that the perception of these women having a bewitching effect upon each other is Henry's: a descriptive source, which has already been deprived of objective authority.

Soon afterwards, Henry physically disappears from the scene. Yet his evaluative voice still resounds in the narratorial impersonator's discourse: 'The two witches howled when he was lost to them' (p. 807). Admitting that the narrator is the actual utterer of this statement, the inclusion of the word 'witches' makes it resonate with Henry's judgemental

20. Sheila MacLeod, *Lawrence's Men and Women*, p. 175.

21. It is perhaps worth recalling here that Balzac, like Poe himself and many other writers in the nineteenth-century, showed especial interest in Mesmer's theories of magnetism and mental power. This interest evinces itself, to cite an example, in Balzac's *Le Réquisitionnaire*, whose dénouement is a perfect illustration of the power of the mind to communicate with another being regardless of distance; *Balzac's Short Stories*, pp. 45-61 (p. 61).

phraseology. The point that needs stressing here is that, in so making the narrator echo Henry's discourse, the narration warns the reader 'against confusing sincerity with truth'.²² This means that the fact that the narrator fuses ITS voice with Henry does not entail that the latter's personal view of Virginia and Rachel ought to be given *authorial* weight. Actually, the opposite holds true: because one clearly perceives Henry's voice in the narrator's, the farcicality of this factional view of the women is automatically enhanced.

A similar dialogic phenomenon occurs in the course of a passage which has been hailed by some as attesting to Lawrence's '[serving] up all the standard stereotypes' about women in relation to work:²³

[Virginia] had to earn her money, and earn it hard. *She had to slog and concentrate*. While she could work by quick intuition and without much responsibility, work thrilled her. But as soon as she had to get down to it, *as they say, grip and slog and concentrate*, in a really responsible position, it wore her out terribly. ... She hadn't the same sort of fighting power as a man. Where a man can summon his old Adam in him to fight through his work, a woman has to draw on her nerves, and on her nerves alone. For the old Eve in her will have nothing to do with such work. So that mental responsibility, *mental concentration, mental slogging* wear out a woman terribly, especially if she is head of a department, and not working for somebody (p. 814; my emphasis).

Surely this is *standard* misogyny; the narration, however, foregrounds the *clichéd* quality of the entire passage by making the narrator appeal to the language of common sense (see my emphasis). Inasmuch as the narration makes the narrator echo the vulgarized language of the people ('as they say'), the reader is impelled to see this normative discourse for what it is: a *clichéd* discourse. Actually, the extract calls forth Paul and Miriam's dialogue on the same subject in *Sons and Lovers*. On that occasion, Paul provokes the anger of Miriam with his essentialist views on women in relation to work; but it is also worth recalling the way that dialogue ends:

'But a man can give *all* himself to a work?' [Miriam] asked.
 'Yes, practically.'
 'And a woman, only the unimportant part of herself?'
 'That's it.'
 'Then,' she said, 'if it's true—it's a great shame.'

22. David Lodge, *After Bakhtin: Essays on Fiction and Criticism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 66.

23. Janice H. Harris, *The Short Fiction of D. H. Lawrence* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1984), p. 215; she goes as far as to say that in this story Lawrence '[trots] out a lamentable list of clichés about women's native incapacity to work', p. 267n.

'It is.—But I don't know everything,' he answered.²⁴

Just as Paul's final remark serves as an indicator to the reader that what he says is his subjective viewpoint on the subject and not an objective, essentialist definition of the sexes, so does the extract quoted above denaturalize the universal statement about women at work by overtly objectifying it as the expression of common parlance. Furthermore, it calls forth the language of Virginia's workmates whose perception of her as possessing a 'curious facility' has already been *represented* in preceding pages; and again, their voice resonates in the final lines of the excerpt insofar as they themselves find her attractive because she is like an 'instrument' which will only be 'set into motion' at their own prompting.

The foregoing pages have been concerned with rehearsing the dialogic nature of 'Mother and Daughter', itself in turn generator of the humour that permeates it. It is perhaps the greatest of ironies that just as the narrator of this story emerges as a skillful ventriloquist, so is Rachel characterized as possessing a 'marvellous faculty of humorous imitation' (p. 812). Such a characterization of Rachel is challenging, to say the least. One could postulate a surreptitious camaraderie between Rachel and the narrator. Indeed, one would even be tempted to recognize an identity nexus between the narrator and Rachel.

2. An arena of conflictive discourses

With *Sons and Lovers* in mind, one would perhaps want to take Rachel as a negativized caricature of Mrs Morel. But even though both fictions dramatize the offspring's struggle to break free from the maternal bond in order to reach an independent identity, the parallels end here. 'Mother and Daughter' is not "Oedipus re-visited", nor is it Lawrence's joyful dramatization of the *divide et impera* maxim.

In her interaction with her daughter, Rachel does not emerge as the grimalkin which the men of this story depict; quite the opposite, she comes forth as a protective mother whose sheltering attitude towards Virginia one is entreated to regard as justifiable, and not in the least excessive. In turn, the narration achieves this by opening up the minds of Virginia's various "suitors" (Henry, Adrian, Arnault) to the effect of foregrounding their mercenary interest in Virginia. Thus, when Rachel's contempt towards Henry and

24. D. H. Lawrence, *Sons and Lovers*, p. 460; bold-faced characters mine.

Arnault is represented, one has been amply predisposed to sympathize with her. For example, her definition of Henry as 'a sponging individual' (p. 807), inasmuch as it is subsequently juxtaposed to the representation of Henry's egotistical mind such as we have seen it in the previous section, presents itself as a very accurate portrayal, and therefore, her contemptuous attitude towards him as a very reasonable one. The same applies to Arnault: that Rachel's opposition to this figure and, concomitantly, to her daughter's desire to marry him is not to be apprehended as grossly exaggerated, nor as a question of maternal *over*protection, is again something which the narration makes clear by emphatically displaying Arnault's Machiavellian manoeuvrings:

He was about sixty. His family was established, in the East, his grandsons were growing up. It was necessary for him to live in London for some years. This girl would be useful. She had no money, save what she would inherit from her mother. But he would risk that: she would be an investment in his business. And then the apartment. He liked the apartment extremely. ... Virginia said to him: Mother gave me the apartment. — So he looked on that as safe (p. 821).

[...]

'I can settle five thousand pounds on Mademoiselle Virginia, Madame,' came his voice. 'Am I correct to assume that she will bring this apartment and its appointments into the marriage settlement?' (p. 823).

[...]

And because he saw that the things in the drawing-room were handsome and valuable, and now they were his, his blood flushed and he caressed the thin girl at his side with passion, because she represented these valuable surroundings, and brought them to his possession (p. 825).

These unmediated insights into Arnault's covetousness surely do not '[persuade the reader] that he might be a suitable mate for Virginia'; nor is the reader expected after these insights to acknowledge Arnault as 'the tale's voice'; nor does this exposure of Arnault's self-seeking mind anticipate a happily balanced business partnership between Arnault and Virginia.²⁵ Rather, these insights hinder any favourable perception of him and, concurrently, they entreat the reader to apprehend Virginia's choice, no matter how much 'anger and rebellion' one might wish to see behind it, as nonsensical *when taken in its literality*.²⁶ But chiefly, by displaying Arnault's serpentine thoughts above-board, the

25. Hilary Simpson, *D. H. Lawrence and Feminism* (De Kalb, Ill: Northern Illinois University Press: 1982), p. 128; Sheila MacLeod, *Lawrence's Men and Women*, p. 175; Janice H. Harris, *The Short Fiction of D. H. Lawrence*, p. 214.

26. Carol Siegel, *Lawrence Among the Women: Wavering Boundaries in Women's Literary Traditions* (Charlottesville, VA, and London: University Press of Virginia, 1991), p. 84.

narration turns Rachel into the reader's mouthpiece when on the closing page she cuttingly gives utterance to her derogatory thoughts: "I think the Armenian grandpapa knows very well what he's about" (p. 826), or when expressing her contempt towards Virginia's decision.

Nevertheless, Rachel wins the reader's approval long before one reaches this farcical dénouement. One recalls, for example, the way in which we are made to perceive Rachel's magnanimity towards Virginia, especially in her readiness to share whatever she owes with her daughter (p. 806; p. 814), or in the benevolent respect which she shows towards Virginia when decorating the apartment — that is, her own apartment:

'Of course, Virginia, I consider this is *your* apartment,' said Mrs Bodoin. 'I am nothing but your *dame de compagnie*, and shall carry out your wishes entirely, if you will only express them.'

Of course Virginia expressed a few, but not many. She introduced some wild pictures ... Mrs Bodoin thought the pictures positive about the wrong things, but as far as possible, she let them stay: looking on them as the necessary element of modern ugliness (p. 811).

Notwithstanding the hilarity which Mrs Bodoin's pompousness might provoke, one recognizes in her a mother who, far from being the despotic figure that arises in the men's portrayal of her, is actually very liberal as far as her daughter is concerned. Finally, one cannot forget Rachel's self-control not to intrude upon Virginia's private life, an attitude which is in turn reminiscent of Mrs Morel's in relation to Paul:

[Virginia] would come home at teatime speechless and done for. Her mother, tortured by the sight of her, longed to say: 'Has anything gone wrong, Virginia? Have you had anything particularly trying at the office today?' But she learned to hold her tongue, and say nothing (p. 814).

Compare Mrs Bodoin's self-restraint with Mrs Morel's when Paul returns to Miriam:

It was a great bitterness to her that he had gone to Miriam. She recognized, however, the uselessness of any further interference. He went to Willey Farm as a man now, not as a youth. She had no right over him.²⁷

Or when Paul tells her of his decision to stop seeing Miriam for good: 'She was surprised. But she would not ask him anything'.²⁸ At this point, this study would contend that with regard to both Mrs Morel and Mrs Bodoin scholars have tended to monologize Lawrence's polyphonic works by listening solely to the offspring's voice (Paul, Virginia) or their

27. *Sons and Lovers*, p. 324.

28. *Sons and Lovers*, p. 335.

suitors's (Miriam, Henry, Arnault), therefore muffling the mothers' such as these are heard in critical moments of introspection: silent voices which on many occasions either contradict or reinterpret in an altogether different fashion what their own offspring think or say about them.

Nonetheless, Lawrencian fictions hardly ever present any character with whom the reader may identify entirely. In this story, as in all Lawrencian fictions, there are no distinct heroes nor villains. Thus, although Rachel is clearly no villain, she is neither portrayed as a faultless heroine. More precisely, she is an ambivalent figure from whom one is forced to remain detached.

Rachel's self-contradictoriness derives from a clash between two opposing ideologies within her. On the surface of it she appears to be an admirable modern woman. Yet at deeper levels she is very much the patriarchal daughter from whom we are invited to recoil:

Mrs Bodoin was one of those women of sixty or so, with a terrible inward energy and a violent sort of vitality. But she managed to hide it. She sat with perfect repose, and folded hands. One thought: What a calm woman! Just as one may look at the snowy summit of a quiescent volcano, in the evening light, and think: What peace!

It was a strange *muscular* energy which possessed Mrs Bodoin, as it possesses, curiously enough, many women over fifty, and is usually distasteful in its manifestations. Perhaps it accounts for the lassitude of the young.

But Mrs Bodoin recognized the bad taste in her energetic coevals, so she cultivated repose. Her very way of pronouncing the word, in two syllables: re-pòse, making the second syllable run on into the twilight, showed how much suppressed energy she had (p. 808; my emphasis).

The fact that Rachel herself appears to endorse the narrator's discourse on older women (see italics) would indicate, not so much that the narrator's statement contains any grain of truth, but that its contents are in fact popular adage — Rachel herself being one of its voices. Indeed, the above narratorial statement is in fact echoing, tongue-in-cheek, what one might call a mid-Victorian discourse. In other words, here we are confronted with a woman cultivating the very self-restraint which in mid-Victorian discourse was considered a must in order to guarantee social stability. It is important to recall that linked with such a belief there was also the conviction that the children of those mothers who had failed to hold their emotions in constant check would inevitably be impaired, whether physically or

psychologically.²⁹ It seems that something akin to this belief is actually being parodied through the figure of Rachel, especially when the narrator conjectures that the failure of some women to harness their vitality is the reason for 'the lassitude of the young'.³⁰

Rachel's cultivation of self-restraint is directly linked with yet another personality trait, one which in turn is the target of the narrator's mockery:

She studied her face, her whole figure, and decided that it was *positive*. There was no denying it. ... Her figure, though not stout, was full, strong, and *cambré*. Her face had an aristocratic arched nose, aristocratic, who-the-devil-are you grey eyes, and cheeks rather long but also rather full. Nothing appealing or youthfully skittish here.

Like an independent woman, she used her wits, and decided most emphatically to be either youthful or skittish or appealing. ... She was positive. She liked to be positive. She was used to her positivity. So she would just *be* positive (pp. 808-809).

Here is a typically Lawrencian example of two different discourses — Rachel's and the narrator's — tightly interwoven. It would appear that the butt of the irony is now being directly shed upon Rachel's modernity as a woman, which in turn is linked to her intelligence. Yet, as we read on, something else appears to be at stake:

She turned to the positive period; to the eighteenth century, to Voltaire, to Ninon de l'Enclos and the Pompadour, to Madame la Duchesse and Monsieur le Marquis. She decided that she was not much in the line of la Pompadour or la Duchesse, but almost exactly in the line of Monsieur le Marquis. And she was right ... she was perfectly eighteenth-century, the early half. That she was Monsieur le Marquis rather than Madame la Marquise made her really modern (p. 809).

What constitutes the object of scorn, after all, is not Rachel's intelligence, but her unconditional devotion to the intellect to the detriment of her passions. Perhaps more important is the textually implicit critique of a conceptualization of Modern Woman as one who identifies with men. For it cannot go unnoticed how Rachel is said to identify herself with Monsieur de Pompadour and not with the other avant-garde women referred to besides him: were it not for this identification, one would have felt reluctant to accept the

29. See Sally Shuttleworth, 'Demonic Mothers: Ideologies of Bourgeois Motherhood in the mid-Victorian Era', in *Rewriting the Victorians: Theory, History and the Politics of Gender*, edited by Linda M. Shires (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 31-51.

30. It would not be farfetched to suggest that the narrator's association of Mrs Bodoin to a 'quiescent volcano' carries in it some Shawian echoes: 'Vitality in a woman is a blind fury of creation'; in George Bernard Shaw, *Man and Superman: A Comedy and a Philosophy* (London: Constable and Co., 1920; first publ. in 1903), pp. 1-175 (p. 21); see also p. 15. Needless to recall here that Lawrence himself did not entertain much sympathy for this particular writer.

narration's implicit critique of Rationalism. To be more exact, it would have placed the reader in an impossible position: to reject Rationalism *and* the historical forerunners of French Revolutionary feminism.³¹ Therefore, what is paramount about this passage is that the mockery derives not from Rachel's modernity but from her alliance with the opposite sex and her parallel withdrawal from the progressive elements of her own.

The more one pierces through Rachel's external appearance, the more we see her turning into a very unappealing spokeswoman of patriarchal ideology. So much is this the case that her intensely calculating mind begins to blur the frontier that separated her from the male protagonists at first. This is particularly evident in her scheming, not just Virginia's marriage to Adrian but, most important of all, her 'falling in love' with him:

No, the plan was not going to work: the plan of having Virginia fall in love and marry. Of course the men *were* such lumps, such *oeufs farcies*. There was one, at least, that Mrs Bodoin had real hopes of. He was a healthy and normal and very good-looking boy of good family, with no money, alas, but clerking to the House of Lords and very hopeful, and not very clever, but simply in love with Virginia's cleverness. He was just the one Mrs Bodoin would have married for herself. True, he was only twenty-six, to Virginia's thirty-one. But he had rowed in the Oxford eight, and adored horses, talked horses adorably, and was simply infatuated by Virginia's cleverness. To him Virginia had the finest mind on earth. She was as wonderful as Plato, but infinitely more attractive, because she was a woman, and winsome with it. Imagine a winsome Plato with untidy curls and the tiniest little brown-eyed squint and just a hint of woman's pathetic need for a protector, and you may imagine Adrian's feeling for Virginia. He adored her on his knees, but he felt he could protect her.

'Of course he's just a very nice *boy!*' said Mrs Bodoin. 'He's a boy, and that's all you can say. And he will always be a boy. But that's the very nicest kind of man, the only kind you can live with: the eternal boy. Virginia, aren't you attracted to him?' (p. 813).

The passage is most revealing both with regard to Rachel and the double-voicedness that characterizes 'Mother and Daughter'. Apart from displaying Rachel's intriguing mind, it

31. Linda M. Shires's 'Of Maenads, Mothers, and Feminized Males: Victorian Readings of the French Revolution' reminds us that 'before the 1789 Revolution, women held great power in the shaping of both public speech and action through their presence as leaders of intellectual salons ... the urban salon functioned as an alternative locus of cultural production which was accepted by but which also threatened the absolutist court. Such *salonnières* as Mme du Déffand, Mlle de Léspinasse, and Mme Géoffrin, for example, were known for shaping the careers of talented male authors and academicians. Yet in the political as well as in the literary arena it was increasingly rumored that all favors men received actually were approved by women in power. Even more worrying to members of these arenas, such women seemed to operate in an organized system quite apart from the King. ... Yet the salon was not separate from but virtually tied to the system of monarchy, aristocracy, and privilege'; in *Rewriting the Victorians*, pp. 147-65 (pp. 149-50). It is perhaps worth noting that Balzac's *La Comédie humaine* itself is populated by *salonnières*, that is, the role which Rachel and Virginia would appear to perform.

too discloses her deep anchorage in patriarchy in that she, like a typical mid-Victorian mother, finds it her duty to marry her daughter. At yet another level, it foregrounds Rachel's profound elitism. Thus, while her disinterestedness in money sets her apart from the male characters and wins the reader's sympathy, her profound snobbery casts a negative shadow upon her and brings her very close to the men — in particular Henry, an already contemptible figure who similarly adheres to bourgeois principles. But there is more to this passage, something which subtle as it is may go unnoticed to the detriment of its humorous intent. I am alluding to the way in which, while mocking Rachel's intensely calculating mind and her snobbery, it covertly parodies what is an idiosyncratic descriptive technique of Balzacian narrators:

Imaginez un front chauve, bombé, proéminent, retombant en saillie sur un petit nez écrasé, retroussé du bout comme celui de Rabelais ou de Socrate; une bouche rieuse et ridée, un menton court, fièrement relevé, garni d'une barbe grise taillé en pointe, des yeux verts de mer ternis en apparence par l'âge, mais qui par le contraste du blanc nacré dans lequel flottait la prunelle devaient parfois jeter des regards magnétiques au fort de la colère ou de l'enthousiasme. Le visage était d'ailleurs singulièrement flétri par les fatigues de l'âge, et plus encore par ces pensées qui creusent également l'âme et le corps. ... Mettez cette tête sur un corps fluet et débile ... et vous aurez une image imparfaite de ce personnage auquel le jour faible de l'escalier prêtait encore une couleur fantastique.³²

The parallels between the Balzacian narrator's portrayal of the 'vieillard' and that of Adrian is self-evident when the two extracts are set against each other. Although to pursue all the possible implications of such a striking resemblance would lead us astray from present purposes, it is important to realize that in view of Adrian's portrayal, there is no longer any question that this apparently insignificant story is a blunt parody of the materialistically reactionary ideology presumed to inform "Balzac's style".

Bearing in mind the argument elaborated to this juncture, Rachel emerges in the passage above cited as yet another mouthpiece of materialistic conservatism. One notices, for example, the irony in 'he had rowed in the Oxford eight, and adored horses, talked horses adorably', a sentence which conveys Rachel's own snobbish speech mannerisms without allowing her to voice its contents. Added to it there is the humorous tone arising from the juxtaposition of the verb 'adored' with the adverb 'adorably'; not to mention the

32. 'Le Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu', in *Balzac's Short Stories*, pp. 62-90 (pp. 63-64).

sharp contrast between the semantic force that inheres in these words ([religious worship]) and the absolute banality of the topic ("horses"); or the crowning of the passage with the verb 'adore', now applied to Virginia instead of the horses. In one stroke, then, the double-voicedness of the narrative invites the reader to take Rachel's snobbery *and* Adrian's perception of Virginia as worthy of ridicule. Finally, the implicit irony in Rachel's ostensibly subversive reversal of patriarchal paradigms when defining her very ideal of Man as 'the eternal boy' cannot be overlooked: given the context in which this phrase occurs, rather than making her subversive, it has the effect of turning her into a kind of "female paternalist".³³

Therefore it is clear that at one level Rachel comes forth as a mother who adheres to the system which the men themselves stand for. Yet she simultaneously deviates from it, not just in her very mode of life but also, and more importantly, in her persistent refusal to hand over her daughter as a mere marketable commodity.

Rachel's defiance of patriarchy on this score does not so much come out as politically motivated as much as derivative from her patriarchal condition as mother:

During the second ghastly year, Mrs Bodoïn realized that the game was up. She was a beaten woman, a woman without object or meaning any more. ... For her daughter was her other self, her *alter ego* ... Virginia was the continuation of Rachel's own self. Virginia was Rachel's *alter ego*, her other self (p. 816).

The excerpt I have just transcribed is in its textual form actually traversed by jocular narratorial comments (indicated by ellipsis). The point in not including these responds to the necessity to re-focus what the narrator's humour obfuscates (without, for that matter, drowning it out of sight.) Indeed, while the narrator mocks Rachel's hyper-rationalism, the narration concurrently represents Rachel's existential anguish. What this insight into her anguish lays bare is the incongruous contradiction within the phallogocentric system to which she herself adheres: while conferring upon mothers the responsibility to place their daughters in the marriage market, it simultaneously makes the very definition of

33. I borrow this label from Christine L. Krueger, which she uses to designate the collusion with the established patriarchal structures that characterizes the woman protagonist in Elizabeth Gaskell's *My Lady Ludlow* (1958); "The 'Female Paternalist' as Historian: Elizabeth Gaskell's *My Lady Ludlow*", in *Rethinking the Victorians*, pp. 166-83.

womanhood rest upon the concept of maternal nurturance. Deprive the mother of her nurturing role and she will at once be dispossessed of her very sense of self.

Of course, this is not something of which she herself is aware, but rather something which her anguish directly reveals. The heart of the matter is that, lacking ideological hindsight, she herself displaces the object of blame towards her daughter, who then becomes a kind of traitor in her eyes:

Virginia had had a father. This fact, which had been utterly ignored by the mother, was gradually brought home to her by the curious recoil of the hammer. Virginia was her father's daughter. Could anything be more unseemingly, horrid, more perverse in the natural scheme of things? ... Could anything ... be more disgusting than that he should resurrect again in the person of Mrs Bodoin's own daughter, her own *alter ego* Virginia, and start hitting back with a little spiteful hammer that was David's pebble against Goliath's battle-axe! (pp. 816-17).

One would want to read this as the narrator now rejoicing (at Rachel's expense) at seeing this literal father coming back to life in the shape of his daughter. Alternatively, one could interpret it as the metaphorical hammer of Patriarchy striking back to land on Rachel's head, and the father's resurrection as a metaphor for Patriarchy itself. The problem arising from this excerpt is that two self-cancelling discourses would appear to lie side by side: the literal and the figurative. The greatest irony of all, as the following will show, is that Virginia, far from being the father's daughter as Rachel herself thinks, she actually is — and has never ceased to be — her mother's daughter.

3. Discursive tricks, denaturalizing praxis

Compared with the rest of the cast, Virginia remains the most obscure personage of all. For one thing, one is not given many opportunities to discern her mental processes. But this concealment is already significant. First, it confirms Rachel's portrayal of Virginia as a reserved, withdrawn woman. Second and foremost, it positions the reader side by side with Rachel inasmuch as we know about her as little as Rachel does herself. Consequently, we are made to share Rachel's concern about her daughter, as well as her own irritation at not being able to comprehend Virginia's general behaviour or, indeed, her decision to marry such a contemptible figure as Arnault. This links with the third consequence: Virginia's relationship with Arnault astounds us as much as it does Rachel.

For most of the narrative Virginia is the object of everybody else's discourse, including the narrator's. As such, she comes out in sharp contrast to her mother. Her being a consciously willing working woman already opens a generational gap between mother and daughter. Virginia, of all the women characters encountered in previous tales, would ostensibly belong to the generation of Modern Woman. Added to this generational gap there would be an ideological abyss separating the women: the older adhering to an essentially upper class lifestyle, the younger more in tune with the lower middle class. However, when compared with the men representing her own class, she does not seem to be contaminated by their materialistic greed. The point is that, despite these positive traits, the very few instances of self-representation, added to some narrated events, prevent us from perceiving her in any sympathetic light.

Virginia emerges as a negativized character from two differing, though tightly interrelated angles: vis-à-vis Rachel, and above all, in her interaction with Arnault. With regard to Rachel, Virginia is as much an ambiguous figure as her mother is. On the one hand, she depends, to a very great extent, on her mother. This is something that the very narrated facts of her life evince. But most importantly, it is a dependence which she seems quite willing to acknowledge to herself: "Of course I go through life in mother's old shoes. If she died and left me without a supply, I suppose I should have to go in a bathchair", she would say, with her odd twisted little grin' (p. 808). As in the case of the hammer striking back on Rachel, this image of Virginia wearing her mother's old shoes is inherently humorous owing to the inextricability of the literal and the figurative. Nevertheless, the reader is already on the alert insofar as this humorous remark is permeated with some indefinite bitterness, as the 'grin' on her face would seemingly suggest. While conceding to her need of her mother in order to be able to walk safely through life, her bitterness would point to an ingrained desire to break the maternal bond.

After this moment of direct presentation, the narration forecloses any direct insight into her mind, until we come across another instance of self-representation which, although brief, is nevertheless revealing. Having heard about Rachel's gift of humorous witticism and how this gift has a belittling effect upon the men who visit them, we read:

[Rachel] tried to disown it [her humour]. She tried to pretend, even to Virginia, that she had the gift no more. But in vain; the hammer hidden up her sleeve hovered over the head of every guest, and every guest felt his scalp creep, and Virginia felt her inside creep with a little, mischievous, slightly idiotic grin, as still another fool male was mystically knocked on the head (p. 813).

What the narration discloses here is Virginia's admiration of her mother's cleverness. This is a paramount insight, especially when one considers that Rachel herself thinks very highly of Virginia's alleged intelligence. Thus, when one is allowed to perceive these women aside from male definitions, it becomes clear that what holds them together is not, after all, a 'female spell' as the men themselves define it, but mutual esteem. And yet this esteem is not, as we saw it was in the case of Rachel, correlated by respect on Virginia's side:

And Mrs Bodoin would wonder: How is she? How is she to-night? I wonder what sort of a day she's had? — And this thought would roam prowling through the house, to where Virginia was lying on her back in her room. But the mother would have to consume her anxiety till dinner-time. And then Virginia would appear, with black lines under her eyes, thin, tense, a young woman out of an office, the stigma upon her: badly dressed, a little acid in humour, with an impaired digestion, not interested in anything, blighted by her work. And Mrs Bodoin, humiliated at the very sight of her, would control herself perfectly, say nothing but the mere smooth nothings of casual speech, and sit in perfect form presiding at a carefully-cooked dinner thought out entirely to please Virginia. *Then Virginia hardly noticed what she ate* (p. 815-816; my emphasis).

If there is anybody coming out badly in this passage, it is certainly Virginia, particularly in view of the effect created by the juxtaposition of a lengthy elaboration on Rachel's effort to satisfy her daughter with the last staccato statement pointing to Virginia's absolute indifference to her mother's care. To be sure, the irony that permeates the excerpt also targets Rachel's rationalistic mind and the concomitant rational policing of her emotions. That is to say, one gets the sense at this particular moment that Virginia's "sickness" is the result of some sort of emotional starvation. While Rachel interprets Virginia's wearisome appearance as the stigma of work, the reader in turn would seemingly be entreated to consider Virginia's external aspect as the expression of an emotionally starved child.

However, one ought to be careful about confounding diagnosis with acquittal (a common critical error in Lawrencian scholarship): although the narration draws the reader's attention to the pernicious emotional effects of Rachel's privileging reason over spontaneous feelings (and thus in a way threatens to bring back the patriarchal conception

of maternal nurturance), it does not justify Virginia's hostile reaction to her mother. In fact, when Virginia's antagonism comes in full sight, not just as narrated phenomenon but as an experiential one, her outburst appears to be undeserved by her mother:

Virginia felt [the apartment] was the last grand act of bullying on her mother's part. she felt bullied by the assertive Aubusson carpet, by the beastly Venetian mirrors, by the big overcultured flowers. She even felt bullied by the excellent food, and longed again for a Soho restaurant and her two poky shabby rooms in the hotel. She loathed the apartment: she loathed everything. But she had not the energy to move. She had not the energy to do anything (p. 817).

Far from ascertaining that Rachel *is* a 'bullying mother', the narration expressly states that Virginia *feels* intimidated by her. What her *feeling* bullied by her mother reveals is her self-representation as a weaker, somehow smaller being than her mother. Bearing in mind her concurrent admiration for her mother's intellect, one may reach some insight into what the stakes are; rather than naturalizing women as being 'catty' to each other, the narration ostensibly points to a more common, everyday circumstance: the offspring's anxiety at not being able to achieve according to what they believe is their parent(s) expectations. Of course, what underlies this feeling is first, a deep desire to please the parent(s), and second, a similarly deep identification impulse. One only needs to look closely into the resolution of this tale to further comprehend Virginia's behaviour and ultimate decision to marry Arnault.

There is no need to elaborate on the way the narration constructs Arnault as a contemptible figure. More subtle is the way in which Virginia's interaction with Arnault sheds more light both on Virginia and the relationship between mother and daughter. This leads straight into the first picture we get of the relationship between Virginia and Arnault:

When he took her hand in his own soft still hands, there was something so caressing, so possessive in his touch, so strange and positive in his leaning towards her, that though she trembled with fear, she was helpless (p. 821).

[...]

She leaned against his breast and let him caress her. She gave a fleeting, half poignant, half vindictive thought to her mother.

[...]

She lifted her head and looked at him: the thick white brows, the glinting, tired dark eyes. How queer and comic! How comic to be in his power! (p. 822)

These three passages are paramount for their intrinsic suggestiveness. The second in particular evokes Virginia's ambivalence vis-à-vis her mother, one which is sparked off by Arnault's 'caressing' — the very first word which she associates with Arnault in the first passage; all this suggests that Virginia is getting from Arnault what she would have liked to obtain from her mother. Hence the 'poignancy' of Virginia's thought, that is, the pain of not having received this affection from her mother. Underlying her 'vindictiveness' there is in fact an intense passion for her mother.

The more closely one examines Virginia's perception of Arnault, the more Arnault seems to metamorphose into Rachel — both before our eyes and Virginia's. One notices, for example, the word 'positive' associated *now* with Arnault, or his very 'comicalness', a trait characteristically assigned to Rachel herself. In addition there is Virginia's feeling *dominated* by Arnault's 'power', which immediately reminds us of her previously feeling 'bullied' by her mother. This is worth emphasizing, for Virginia is not in the least a male fantasy of female masochistic submission to a superior male power. Rather, insofar as she projects her mother onto Arnault, what we find is Virginia's relinquishing herself to Arnault's *maternal* embrace.

Increasingly, Arnault becomes a male version of Rachel. For instance, one remarks upon the irony of Arnault's especial attraction towards Rachel's cherished 'Aubusson carpet', the very item which Virginia had come to loathe so much ('He recognized the *cachet*, and the lilies and swans of the Aubusson carpet really did something to him', p. 821); his tendency to use French, an inclination which is parodied in the word 'cachet' and which he clearly shares with Rachel; and finally, the way he wants Virginia to 'repose', a word which has been continuously associated with Rachel. Hence one gets the impression that in so marrying Arnault, she is in fact marrying Rachel's *alter ego*. Of course, Rachel lacks this hindsight, which explains why when one reaches the end of this story two clashing perspectives come into it: Rachel's and the reader's. The fact that these perspectives cannot possibly intersect makes any self-cancellation impossible; both perspectives coexist and give shape to the double-facedness of this very peculiar narrative.

Two things converge to make 'Mother and Daughter' peculiar. Firstly, there is the generic blurring that permeates it: while we see Rachel metamorphose into a paternalist mother, Arnault turns into a maternalist husband/father. Secondly, there is the framing of the story by the overarching voice of "Balzac": in the light of this story's highly irresolute resolution it appears that 'Mother and Daughter' is more than a simple case of stylization. If one thinks of Balzacian narratives as representing a brand of realism that heavily relies on cultural types, 'Mother and Daughter' comes out as a clear parody of the *stereotypical* aspect of this realism. This parodic aura further intensifies when one bears in mind that Balzac's literary practice as commonly represented is founded on the hope that reality is a totality which reason may comprehend in its entirety. We have seen how this (apparent) faith in reason is intensely ironized within the story at a thematic level. But more importantly, we have been able to appreciate the way in which, while resorting to the language of reason, 'Mother and Daughter' actually emerges as a fragmented reality which no single rational centre can possibly unify: for every voice is a counterpoint, and every viewpoint is nothing but a point of view.

'THE LOVELY LADY', OR "THE VICIOUS CIRCLE"³⁴

A dead intuitive body stands there and gazes at the corpse of beauty ... Modern people ... *cannot* feel anything with the whole imagination. They can see the living body of imagery as little as a blind man can see colour. The imaginative vision, which includes physical, intuitional perception, they *have not got*. ... And they stand in front of a Botticelli Venus, which they know as conventionally "beautiful" ... they are still dominated by that unnamed, yet overmastering dread and hate of ... the strange intuitional awareness of the body.³⁵

34. 'The Vicious Circle' is the actual heading of Chapter 11 of D. H. Lawrence's *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, and refers to the conclusion of the preceding chapter on 'Parent Love': 'And so, the charming young girl who adores her father, or one of her brothers, is sought in marriage by the attractive young man who loves his mother devotedly'; *Fantasia of the Unconscious* (1922), in *Fantasia of the Unconscious and Psychoanalysis of the Unconscious* (Harmondsworth: Penguin in association with Heinemann, 1971), pp. 11-195 (p. 128).

35. D. H. Lawrence, 'Introduction to these Paintings', first published in *The Paintings of D. H. Lawrence* (London, 1929); reprinted in *Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D. H. Lawrence* (London: Heinemann, 1936), pp. 551-84 (pp. 557-58).

Moving from 'Mother and Daughter' into 'The Lovely Lady' the mother-daughter dyad gives way to the mother-son tandem. Here again the reader is presented with two women entering into direct confrontation with each other. The chief difference between one tale and the other is that while in the former the cause of the symbiotic split is intrinsic to the relationship itself, the scission between the two heroines in 'The Lovely Lady' is extraneously motivated: a man now is the object of female discord. Yet, as was the case with 'Mother and Daughter', the pitting of women against each other in 'The Lovely Lady' soon emerges as a *pretext* to expose the pressure of male-centred ideology upon women at levels which are beyond their conscious cognizance.

1. A mother's son, a father's daughter

It can hardly be denied that an all-too-familiar mother-blaming discourse is what permeates 'The Lovely Lady'. Neither can one fail to appreciate that, just as Mrs Morel's "overmotherliness" in relation to Paul in *Sons and Lovers* is principally communicated through Miriam, and the idea of Mrs Durant's crippling effect upon Alfred in 'Daughters of the Vicar' is conveyed by Louisa, so is the mother-blaming discourse that riddles 'The Lovely Lady' mainly woven in by Cecilia:³⁶

[Robert] was, and Ciss knew it, more confused than shy. He was worse than she was. Cecilia's own confusion dated from only five years back. Robert's must have started before he was born. In the lovely lady's womb he must have felt *very* confused (p. 764; bold-faced characters mine).

...

Poor Robert was by nature a passionate man. His silence and his agonised, though hidden, shyness were both the result of a secret physical passionateness. And how Pauline could play on this! Ah, Ciss was not blind to the eyes which he fixed on his mother — eyes fascinated yet humiliated, full of shame. He was ashamed that he was not a man (p. 765).
[...]

But *what a devil* of a woman! She even knew that she, Cecilia, had mentally accused her of killing her son Henry ... And lately she had been thinking that Pauline was going to kill Robert as she had killed Henry. It was clear murder: a mother murdering her sensitive sons, who were fascinated by her: the Circe! (p. 768).

36. In all three stories the narration represents the sons's *felt* bitterness about their dependency on their mothers, whom they in turn blame for their own incapacity to love any other woman. Yet at the level of self-representation, that is, outside the discourse of their respective sons or suitors, neither Mrs Morel in *Sons and Lovers* nor Mrs Durant in 'Daughters of the Vicar' can be seen to fit into the frame in which the latter have put them.

What needs to be borne in mind in relation to this character-mediated portrayal of Pauline as a mother-monster or son-castrating figure is that, from the outset, the reader is enticed into sympathizing with Cecilia's judgement of Pauline by being significantly constrained to her stance:

[Pauline's] niece Cecilia was perhaps the only person in the world who was aware of the invisible little wire which connected Pauline's eye-wrinkles with Pauline's willpower (p. 481).

In so asserting that Cecilia is 'the only person *in the world*' who knows what lies behind Pauline's mask, the narration concurrently turns the reader into an accomplice to Cecilia's secret knowledge. Furthermore, inasmuch as the narration impels the reader to assume Cecilia's position, the reader is in turn made to share with her the prerogative to see Pauline in her dressing-room, that is, a privilege which neither of the men in this story (Robert, Sir Wilfred) is granted.

In contrast with *Sons and Lovers* where Miriam's opinion of Paul's mother is amply and convincingly contradicted by Mrs Morel's self-representation through dialogue and free indirect discourse, Pauline's unmediated characterization appears to strengthen Cecilia's negative judgement of her. Actually, even before Cecilia portrays her aunt as a "castrating" mother, the narration has already offered a direct insight into Pauline's mind such as to predispose the reader to subscribe to Cecilia's subsequent characterization of her:

Only with her niece Cecilia she did not trouble to keep up the glamour. Ciss was not very observant, anyhow; and more than that, she was plain (p. 482).

When one comes across this sentence articulating Pauline's private disparagement of her niece, the narration has already built in an identity nexus between the reader and Cecilia. Hence Pauline's reflection now, instead of bringing discredit on Cecilia, promotes the reader's negative view of her: for the implication is that only those who partake in Cecilia's lack of acuteness are allowed to see (as the reader is) her natural self. Perhaps more crucial is the fact that this brief insight into Pauline's mind cataphorically confirms the accuracy of Cecilia's diagnosis of Robert's poignant anxiety, one which from her point of view is contingent upon Pauline's maternal over-possessiveness.

Significantly, the next time one is permitted to see into Pauline's mind, Cecilia's version of Pauline is further consolidated:

'I am disappointed in you, Robert. There is no poignancy in you. Your father was a Jesuit, but he was the most perfect and poignant lover in the world. You are a Jesuit like a fish in a tank (p. 774).'

In the light of this self-confession underscoring Pauline's maternal egotism (her projection of her own unfulfilled desires onto Robert) it is not surprising to find some critics concluding that in this particular story Lawrence underwrites a Victorian literary tradition which condemns 'assertive females' for '[emptying] of their manliness' the men to whom they relate (sons or lovers).³⁷ It is unquestionable that this extract smacks of Lawrence's ideas about maternal love such as he expressed them in *Fantasia of the Unconscious*:

The unhappy woman beats about for her insatiable satisfaction, seeking whom she may devour. And usually, she turns to her child. ... Here, in her own son who belongs to her, she seems to find the last perfect response for which she is craving. He is a medium to her ... so she throws herself into ... a final and fatal devotion, that which would have been the richness and strength of her husband and is poison to the boy.³⁸

However striking these parallelisms may be, one should be cautious about superimposing this non-fictional grid upon 'The Lovely Lady', lest one misses how in this particular story, as was the case of the one examined earlier, the narration obstructs any *stable* sympathy towards any of the characters involved.

Even when at the outset the narration manipulates the reader into sharing Cecilia's hostile stance towards Pauline, it ultimately precludes any absolute identification with her by progressively revealing the real motivation that underlies her opposition to Pauline:

Oh, especially in Italian Cecilia heard the poisonous charm of the voice, so caressive, so soft and flexible, yet so utterly egoistic. She hated it with intensity as it sighed and whispered out of nowhere. *Why, why should it be so delicate, so subtle and flexible and beautifully controlled, when she herself was so clumsy?* Oh, poor Cecilia, she writhed in the afternoon sun, *knowing her own clownish clumsiness and lack of suavity, in comparison* (p. 774; my emphasis).

Therefore, like Virginia in 'Mother and Daughter', Cecilia's hatred of her aunt is not so much motivated by *jealousy*; rather, jealousy is only a facade covering Cecilia's

37. Michael Squires, 'Lawrence, Dickens, and the English Novel', in *The Challenge of D. H. Lawrence*, edited by Michael Squires and Keith Cushman (London and Madison, Wis.: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), pp. 42-61 (p. 51); Sheila MacLeod, *Lawrence's Men and Women*, p. 174.

38. D. H. Lawrence, *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, p. 125.

idealization of Pauline as an *enviable* paragon of perfection, or the person she herself would like to be. In fact, long before this climactic insight, Cecilia's desire to be like Pauline has already been hinted at on two other occasions. One recalls, for example, the way in which she decides to sunbathe in imitation of Pauline:

One afternoon it occurred to Cecilia that *she herself* might while away this rather long afternoon by taking a sun-bath (p. 766; my emphasis).

The banality of Cecilia's 'occurrence' dissipates when the narration discloses the meaning of the performance she is actually imitating:

'Enough sun, enough love-thrill, enough proper food, and not too much of them, *and a woman might live for ever* (p. 768; my emphasis).'

Pauline's explication of her sun-bathing ritual (incidentally reminiscent of the no less ritualistic sun-bathing sessions of the heroine in Lawrence's 'Sun') retroactively qualifies Cecilia's decision as the beginning of her own self-obliteration. The key issue here is that, in so duplicating her aunt's artful performance, Cecilia's critical stance towards Pauline's cosmetic game — such as one has been manipulated into sharing from the outset — turns now against herself, thus rendering her as censurable a figure as Pauline. What is more, the narration turns her into the main butt as one reaches the climactic drain-pipe episode:

Oh, it was awful. The sun shone, the sky was blue, all seemed so lovely and afternoony and summery. And yet, oh, horror! — she was going to be forced to believe in the supernatural! And she loathed the supernatural, ghosts and voices and rappings and all the rest (p. 767).

Here is an obvious instance of dramatic irony. More importantly, one recognizes at this particular point, and throughout the whole drain-pipe scene, a parody of traditional tales of the uncanny such as epitomized by Poe.³⁹ This question will be considered later. For present purposes, and with a view to understanding the import of the dénouement, what needs to be emphasized now is that in the extract quoted the narration undermines Cecilia, and forces the reader's critical detachment from her immediately before the resolution begins to unfold.

39. As Janice H. Harris remarks, this scene parodies 'the conventions of the genre as he has *Ciss* initially horrified at this visitation of the uncanny'; *The Short Fiction of D. H. Lawrence*, p. 228.

Just as the narration obstructs the reader's unqualified sympathy towards Cecilia, so does it preclude any possible perception of Robert as the defenceless victim he appears to be in the eyes of his cousin — or indeed, in the light of *Fantasia of the Unconscious*. While the narration promotes the reader's detachment from Pauline by foregrounding her intense egotism vis-à-vis her son, it likewise forecloses any commiseration with Robert by negatively exposing his deliberate procrastination of action, which is his failure to assume responsibility for his own life:

Perhaps Ciss was the only person who fathomed his awful shyness and *malaise*, his habitual feeling that he was in the wrong place: almost like a soul that has got into a wrong body. **But he never did anything about it** (p. 763; bold-faced characters mine).

Clearly the narrator plays down Pauline's liability by intimating Robert's contribution to the existing state of affairs: the narrator suggests that Robert can in fact take action in order to reverse the situation in which he appears to be enmeshed. Admittedly, inasmuch as this possibility is conveyed by the narrator, it could be argued that it is one to which Robert himself, being so deeply dominated by his mother, is blinded. But the narration makes it quite explicit that he himself is *consciously* aware of the factual possibility of taking his life in his own hands, of escaping his mother's "thralldom":

'My life, certainly, is a negative affair.'
 [Cecilia] hesitated before she dared ask him:
 'And do you mind?'
 He did not answer her at all. Her heart sank.
 'You see, I am afraid my life is as negative as yours is,' she said.
 'And I'm beginning to mind bitterly. I'm thirty.'
 She saw his creamy, well-bred hand tremble.
 'I suppose,' he said, without looking at her, '*one will rebel when it is too late* (p. 771; my emphasis).'

There is no doubt that in so encoding this dialogue the narration exposes Robert's delayed 'rebellion' to the effect of preventing any potential commiseration towards him. Actually, it goes further so as to make explicit that Robert's postponement owes to the comfortable position which his dependency on Pauline affords him:

[Robert] was a barrister, and, to his secret but very deep mortification, he earned about a hundred pounds a year. He simply *couldn't* get above that figure, though it was rather easy to get below it. Of course, it didn't matter. Pauline had money. But then, what was Pauline's was Pauline's, and though she could give almost lavishly, still, one was always aware of

having a *lovely* and *undeserved* present made to one: presents are so much nicer when they're undeserved, Aunt Pauline would say (p. 762).

Once again, what this instance of free indirect style reveals is not so much Pauline's inescapable economic subjection of Robert as much as the latter's *self-enslavement* rooted in material expediency. Contrast this excerpt with Robert's instance of direct speech: "And how can I marry?" he said. "I am a failure even at making money. I can't ask my mother for money."; Cecilia's reply is no less revealing: "Then don't bother yet about marrying," she said. "Only love me a little. Won't you?" (p. 773).'

Thus 'The Lovely Lady' cannot be simplistically summarized as a spoof of women's battling over a man, least of all as a case of matriphobia. In fact, the more one fathoms this story, the more the blame appears to be displaced towards the son as the actual representative of a Fatherly, indeed patriarchal discourse.

Earlier I alluded to Pauline's projection of her own unfulfilled desires upon Robert. Yet there is another side to her self-projection on her son, which re-surfaces in the following scene:

[Mother and son] deciphered manuscripts and discussed points, Pauline with that eagerness of a girl, for which she was famous ... Robert, solid, rather quiet and subdued, seemed like the elder of the two: almost like a priest with a young girl pupil. And that was rather how he felt (p. 764).

The narrator would be driving the reader to see this pair not as mother and son but as a daughter (pupil) and a father (teacher-priest). Which is to say that one is enticed into perceiving Pauline as vicariously reliving her own relationship with her dead father through her son, thus re-enacting Dollie's attempt to regress into those childhood days when she used to ride to the mountains with her father. This directly links with Pauline's self-dedication to the collection she has inherited from her father:

Her father had been a Consul in the East and in Naples: and a devoted collector of beautiful exotic things. When he died, soon after his grandson Henry was born, he left his collection of treasures to his daughter. And Pauline, who had really a passion and a genius for loveliness ... had laid the basis of her fortune on her father's collection. She had gone on collecting, buying where she could, and selling to collectors or to museums (p. 769).

Pauline's devotion to augmenting her father's art collection, the fatherly intellectual bond that unites her to Robert, and her compulsive concern with her personal looks — as if

attempting to turn herself into a work of art — would seemingly converge to suggest that Pauline is dominated by a dead father with whom she would be striving to fuse and to whom she would be offering herself as one more work of art for his collection *through her own son Robert*.⁴⁰ Once one realizes that Pauline's attachment to Robert is in fact a devotion to a father surrogate, 'The Lovely Lady' acquires an altogether new dimension.

2. The lesson of the Master

In relation to the foregoing remark this study contends that 'The Lovely Lady' is a subtly conducted denunciation of "the lesson of the Master", that is, of the "lesson" which teaches women to obliterate themselves behind a mask of beauty for the pleasure of *a male spectatorship*. It should be noted at once that the exposure of the male gaze as chief originator of the double bind of the beauty game in which women like Pauline and Cecilia appear to be enmeshed already permeates other earlier Lawrence works. For example, it is already intimated in *Sons and Lovers*, where Mrs Morel, pressed by her own grown up children to look after her physical appearance, turns herself into a 'sight'; one recalls the subtle irony that arises from the juxtaposition of Mrs Morel's sarcasm about her own looks with the seriousness that pervades Paul's perlocutionary remark: 'Then she sniffed into her sarcastic manner, and was sure she looked a sight. *But she looked a lady, Paul declared, as much as Mrs Major Moreton, and far, far nicer*'.⁴¹

Likewise, the pressure that the beauty game exerts upon women is overtly foregrounded in 'The Thimble' (1915), a story which, were it not for the fact that it was composed some twelve years earlier, could have been taken for the second part of 'The Lovely Lady': for here is a woman who, although in love with Mr Hepburn, hesitates about marrying him because, like Robert, he is a barrister earning little money. Only when he joins the army will she agree to marry him:

40. As Pascal Aquien shrewdly remarks, 'tout se passe comme si Pauline, devenue oeuvre à son tour, cherchait à s'offrir fantasmatiquement à un père qu'elle tenterait de valoriser par sa passion pour un héritage dont Lawrence [sic] dit qu'elle faisait tout pour l'enrichir et l'améliorer'; 'Le visage et la voix dans "The Lovely Lady"', *Etudes lawrenciennes*, n° 2 (Université de Paris X, 1988), 71-80 (p. 73).

41. D. H. Lawrence, *Sons and Lovers*, p. 298; my emphasis.

'If you want to love your husband,' she said to her friends ... 'you should see him in khaki.' And she had really loved him, he was so handsome in uniform.⁴²

The heroine's concern with external appearances in 'The Thimble' is not harshly satirized; on the contrary, as the tale advances, the narration denaturalizes her preoccupation with beauty by bluntly presenting it as a painful burden which society has imposed on her:

She knew she was a beauty, she knew it was expected of her that she should create an impression of modern beauty. And it pleased her, it made her soul rather hard and proud; but also, at the bottom, it bored her.⁴³

When Lawrence re-wrote the tale in 1921 as *The Ladybird* the theme of female cosmetic beauty became more central. In the novella version one can even regard Lady Daphne as the precursor of Pauline Attenborough, especially when one sees her admiring in the mirror 'her wonderfully cared-for face, that had appeared in so many society magazines' while at the same time wondering about what would actually happen if her 'lovely bluegreen iris drawn tight like a screen ... should relax ... unfold, and open out the dark depths, the dark, dilated pupil', that is, as Pauline's eyes do in the privacy of her room.⁴⁴ But again, even though cosmetic beauty is criticized, the actual target of satire in this story is her husband Basil, the ultimate idealizer of woman, or the glance motivating Daphne's self-burial within a 'white sepulchre'.⁴⁵

Nowhere is the denunciation of the male gaze as epitomized by Basil (and Robert, as will be seen shortly) more categorical than in 'The Shades of Spring' (1914).⁴⁶ Even though this tale is not directly concerned with the game of beauty, it exposes its foundations: namely, the male reification of women into artful objects. In this story, the actual exposure falls to the male protagonist who, confronting his first love (Hilda), accuses himself of having 'taken her for something she was not':

that was his fault, not hers.
[...]

42. D. H. Lawrence, 'The Thimble', in *England, My England*, pp. 190-200 (p. 190); although written in 1915, it took Lawrence two years to get it published in *Seven Arts*; he completely re-wrote it in 1921 as *The Ladybird*, which was then published together with *The Captain's Doll* and *The Fox*. Refer to note 44 below.

43. 'The Thimble', p. 192.

44. D. H. Lawrence, *The Ladybird*, collected in *The Fox, The Captain's Doll, The Ladybird*, edited by Dieter Mehl (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 157-221 (p. 182).

45. *The Ladybird*, p. 182.

46. This story was composed in 1911 and published two years later by *Forum*; Lawrence substantially modified it in 1914 for its inclusion in *The Prussian Officer*.

He was startled to see his young love, his nun, *his Botticelli angel*, so revealed ... She only wanted to keep up a correspondence with him—and he, of course, wanted it kept up, so that he could write to her, *like Dante to some Beatrice who had never existed save in the man's own brain*.⁴⁷

The link which Syson establishes between his idealization of Hilda on the one hand, and women in Art (painting, literature) on the other is precisely what lies at the heart of 'The Lovely Lady'.

In effect, looking attentively into the first narratorial descriptions of Pauline it soon becomes apparent that here is something more than a *literally* ageless mother. Thus, as one is made to watch Pauline put on the mask of beauty, the narrator progressively weaves in the mask of a *literary archetype* which at once amalgamates the "angel" and the "witch":

Mrs Attenborough's *face* was of the *perfect oval*, and slightly flat type that wears best. ... Her nose rode serenely, in its finely-bridged curve. *Only the big grey eyes were a tiny bit prominent on the surface of her face ... The bluish lids were heavy*, as if they ached sometimes with the strain of keeping the eyes beneath them arch and bright; and at the corners of the eyes were fine little wrinkles which would slacken with haggardness, then be pulled up tense again, to *that bright, gay look like a Leonardo woman who really could laugh outright*.
[...]

She really had *the secret of everlasting youth*; that is to say, she could don her youth again like an eagle. ... Her son Robert, in the evenings, and Sir Wilfred Knipe sometimes in the afternoon to tea: then occasional visitors on Sunday, when Robert was home: for these she was her lovely and changeless self, *that age could not wither, nor custom stale*: so bright and kindly and yet subtly mocking, like Mona Lisa, *who knew a thing or two* (p. 761; my emphasis).

The Poesque resonances in the narratorial portrayal of Pauline, especially in the opening sentence, have not escaped Pascal Aquien, who shrewdly remarks upon Pauline's resemblance to the lady of 'The Oval Portrait'.⁴⁸ It is noteworthy that Poe's tale is about a 'maiden of rarest beauty, and not more *lovely* than full of *glee*', who '[hated] only Art which was her rival', and who perished for it in the end.⁴⁹ Yet the reverberations do not stop at 'The Oval Portrait': once Poe is brought into the arena one immediately recognizes

47. D. H. Lawrence, 'The Shades of Spring', in *The Prussian Officer and Other Stories*, edited by John Worthen (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 98-113 (p. 108; p. 110; my emphasis).

48. Pascal Aquien, 'Le visage et la voix dans "The Lovely Lady"', 76. Some of the intertextual parallels I shall be referring to hereafter have been noted by this scholar; it is perhaps unfortunate that, acutely discerning the manifold intertextual references implicit in 'The Lovely Lady', Aquien chooses to concentrate on the psychoanalytical implications of this tale to the effect of failing to put the tale's inherent dialogism into perspective.

49. From Edgar Allan Poe's 'The Oval Portrait', in *The Complete Tales and Poems* (New York and Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987; first publ. in 1938), pp. 290-92 (p. 291).

Pauline as the twin sister of another Poesque heroine — Ligeia — whose '*beauty of face* no maiden ever equalled' and 'whose *loveliness* was indeed "*exquisite*"' despite some indefinite '*irregularity*' on her face.⁵⁰

Interestingly, just as Pauline is covertly associated with a typically Poesque *angelic* heroine, she is also connected with both Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa and Walter Pater's reconstruction of the latter. As Aquien finely observes, there are striking textual similarities between Pauline and the '*monstruous*' Mona Lisa which Pater describes in his chapter dedicated to Leonardo da Vinci in *The Renaissance*.⁵¹ To Aquien's acute perception of Pauline's resemblance to Pater's Mona Lisa one ought to add her equally implicit affinity with Shakespeare's Cleopatra ('that age could not wither, nor custom stale'), an affinity which concurrently brings her close to the Marchesa of Aaron's 'instinctive, unwilling fancy'.⁵² Finally, one cannot forget the way in which Pauline emerges as the lady of an Impressionist painting:

[By] *candlelight* she looked, yes, a Spanish high-bred beauty of thirty-two or three. She set the candles to give her face just the *chiaroscuro* she knew suited her; her high chair that rose behind her face was done in old *green* brocade, against which her face emerged *like a Christmas rose* (p. 483; my emphasis).

In other words, Pauline is the fleeting *impression* of a lady, an *effect* carefully achieved through a combination of light and colour.

All the parallelisms suggested above would patently indicate that Pauline is not just an archetypal embodiment of the traditional angel/witch of patriarchal ideology but an embodiment of a whole tradition of polarized portrayals of women in literature and the visual arts from the Renaissance (Shakespeare/ Leonardo da Vinci) to the nineteenth

50. E. A. Poe's 'Ligeia', in *The Complete Tales*, pp. 654-66 (p. 655).

51. 'Si Lawrence associe Pauline à Mona Lisa "who knew a thing or two" sans rien ajouter sur l'objet de sa connaissance, Pater, avant lui, attribua à la Joconde un savoir mystérieux, tout entier marqué d'inquiétante étrangeté. Si Pauline et la Joconde ont le même regard ["*The bluish lids were heavy*" (*The Lovely Lady*); "*The bluish lids were heavy*" (*The Renaissance*)] c'est que toutes deux partagent le même souci: connaître l'éternité, "the secret of everlasting youth" pour Pauline, "[the] fancy of a perpetual life" pour la Mona Lisa de Pater', Pascal Aquien, 'Le Visage et la voix', 76.

52. William Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*, II. ii; D. H. Lawrence, *Aaron's Rod* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 251; Aaron's perception of the Marchesa as Cleopatra and of himself as Antony is loaded with ironic overtones, the target of the irony being Aaron himself; this irony in turn links with Aaron's reflection about his wife Lottie, in the course of which Aaron acknowledges to himself that his mistake with regard to Lottie is very much the mistake of many other men who 'profaning woman, still inversely worship her', p. 159.

century (E. A. Poe, Walter Pater/the Impressionists). Concomitantly, one could conjecture that in so pouring all the mirth upon this character, the narration in fact ironizes the very tradition which Pauline encapsulates, that is, an 'infinite variety' of *invariable* women. Again, Pascal Aquien strikes the right chord when arguing that Lawrence's 'The Lovely Lady', like Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, is fundamentally concerned with the 'démonstration brutale de l'artifice'.⁵³ This study further suggests that, in contrast with Wilde's, the artifice in Lawrence's tale is not an *end* in itself, but a *means* leading straight into the critical exposure of the *artificer*, which is nothing but the tradition at issue, and without which the artifice could not possibly have been brought into existence.

3. The glance behind the looking-glass

Unquestionably, Lawrence's tale entertains a silent dialogue with Wilde's — thus augmenting the intertextual force which permeates 'The Lovely Lady'. It is not, however, a repeat of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*; rather, Lawrence's story is a significantly revisionist re-writing of it insofar as it centralizes what Wilde pushes to the margins of the novel: Sybil's *episodic* tragedy, or the tragedy of a woman who 'would not follow the [beauty] game' and hence '[exposed] herself for what she [was] — not the fair sex'.⁵⁴ This in turn connects with what is the fundamental difference between the works. One recalls that in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* the reader watches the portrait change in the course of the novel while Dorian himself remains untransformed until the very end when his whole body suddenly disintegrates. In contrast, Pauline and "the lovely lady" are inextricably woven together all the way through.

This may seem banal, unless we realize that this is precisely the reason why, *from the reader's vantage point*, Pauline does not change when Cecilia 'suddenly [switches] on the strong light by the door' (p. 775): what the reader is made to see now is the same 'made-up', 'haggard' old woman of the opening pages, with exactly the same 'haggard and old and tired' eyes (p. 761); indeed, the same old 'coquettish' woman putting up the same youthful performance in front of her son ('[she] held her daintly-slippered foot to the fire',

53. Pascal Aquien, 'Le visage et la voix dans "The Lovely Lady"', 71.

54. Unna Stannard, 'The Mask of Beauty', in *Woman in Sexist Society: Studies in Power and Powerlessness*, pp. 187-205 (p. 192).

and '[her] body tried to repeat all the old graceful gestures' p. 777). Actually, the effect of Cecilia's action is not the destruction of the artifice but the smashing of the mirror, or Robert's refractory glance:

'Why, mother, you're a little old lady!' came the astounded voice of Robert: like an astonished boy: as if it were a joke.

'Have you only just found it out?' snapped the old woman venomously.

'Yes! Why, I thought——' his voice tailed out in misgiving (p. 776).

Pauline's rejoinder, like Rachel's reply to Virginia in 'Mother and Daughter', resonates with the reader's own voice. More importantly, through Robert's expletive the narration powerfully elucidates that, just as Hilda is Dante's Beatrice and Botticelli's angel in Syson's male 'brain', so is 'the lovely lady' the *artistic creation* of Robert, the glance in the 'mirrors' which Pauline asks to have 'taken away from her room' at the end of the narrative (p. 778): what this final gesture would seemingly indicate is that, had there been no male glance (Robert's) inhabiting these mirrors in the first place, there would never have been any 'lovely lady'. In the last instance, in so smashing the mirror, 'The Lovely Lady' indirectly debunks all those artistic images it has previously encoded: artistic images of women which, from Shakespeare's to Wilde's, have continually imprisoned women within the patriarchal binary paradigm of Witch-(Pauline)/Angel-(the lovely lady), and thus denied women's essential *fluidity*, that is, their mortal selves, their own bodies.⁵⁵

It is rather significant that just as 'The Lovely Lady' lays bare what lies behind the beauty game, it also opens a breach through which the reader may apprehend the way in which 'women almost inevitably turn against women *because* the voice of the looking glass

55. Unna Stannard locates the beginning of women's 'exclusive identification' in the Italian Renaissance, particularly in Raphael's sculpture and paintings where 'the female nude began to predominate'; this identification would then have become a '*fait accompli*' 'around the 1830s', when 'men gave up wearing bright colors, silks, laces, earrings, and perfumes and stopped setting their hair. Men no longer showed off their legs; instead they wore trousers ... they now conceal everything and signify their maleness by a symbol — the necktie'; 'The Mask of Beauty', p. 191. Compare with Lawrence's *Introduction To These Paintings*, where he severely criticizes a tradition which, beginning with Shakespeare, Dante and Botticelli, and ending with the Impressionists, have continually recoiled, like Shakespeare's Hamlet, from the horror of sex, thus covering it up with 'ideal beings, creatures that exist in idea, to one another, rather than flesh-and-blood kin', *Phoenix*, p. 556.

sets them against each other'.⁵⁶ As 'The Lovely Lady' progresses, the narration opens a critical chasm through which Cecilia's hostile attitude towards Pauline can be apprehended as rooted in an intense desire to be (like) Pauline. Having so distanced the reader from Cecilia by turning her into a butt, the narration concomitantly enables the reader to take heed of the dramatic irony in which Cecilia appears to be enmeshed: as she courageously brings herself to terminate Pauline's counterfeit (the beauty game), she unconsciously sets the machinery back into motion by stepping inside the frame from which she has just pushed Pauline:

Cecilia went down the covered passage to her own house, and dressed carefully for dinner, putting some white columbines at her breast. The drawing-room was lit with a softly-shaded lamp. Robert ... was waiting ... Cecilia came in with the white flowers nodding at her dusky breast. *Robert was watching her curiously, a new look on his face* (p. 775; my emphasis).

It could be argued that the narration at this point ironically represents the beauty/youth game as unbreakable. Alternatively, this passage could be seen to cast a mocking glance upon Cecilia's active collaboration in the patriarchal game which the narration, taken as a whole, powerfully disparages. Actually, when considered in the light of Pauline's death, this alternative is not as unlikely as it might first appear.

At first sight, Pauline's suicide would apparently contradict what I suggested earlier: that 'The Lovely Lady' is a revisionist re-writing of Wilde's. In effect, the similarity of the heroines' deaths is remarkable:

And two days later, Pauline was found dead in her bed, *having taken too much veronal*, for her heart was weakened (p. 778; my emphasis).

They ultimately found [Sybil] lying dead on the floor of her dressing-room. She had swallowed something by mistake, some dreadful thing they used at theatres. I don't know what it was, but it had either prussic acid or white lead in it.⁵⁷

56. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven, Conn., and London: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 40; my emphasis.

57. *The Picture*, p. 72.

Taking Pauline's death together with Cecilia's imitative behaviour of Pauline one would be inclined to surmise that, after all, this narration is perpetuating male-centred ideology. Yet to conclude so would severely overlook the import of Pauline's last stroke:

From the grave even she hit back at her son and her niece. She left Robert the noble sum of one thousand pounds; and Ciss one hundred. All the rest, with the nucleus of her valuable antiques, went to form the 'Pauline Attenborough Museum' (p. 778).

The implications that lie behind this apparently jocular closing paragraph are significant: in so creating her own museum, Pauline ceases to be a cultural artifact in order to become an *active* participant in Culture. In so promoting a woman to the rank of cultural precursor, the narration may even pour its mirth upon the male-centred culture in which Pauline, until then, has been imprisoned. Furthermore, it would also intimate that Pauline's *active* participation in Culture can only come into effect with the repossession of her body, a repossession which Cecilia unknowingly facilitates by breaking the mirror in which she has remained incarcerated until then. Needless to say, this is quite a revisionist reversal of the paradigm Female-Body-Nature/Male-Mind-Culture: for what the narrative does in fact is to blur its terms by rewriting instead a new, single proposition — Female (Body) Culture.

PART II

"COMPULSORY HETEROSEXUALITY"

*THE FOX*⁵⁸

You may say, the object reflected on the retina is always photographic. It may be. I doubt it. But whatever the image on the retina may be, it is rarely, even now, the photographic image of the object which is actually taken in by the man who sees the object. He does not, even now, see for himself. He sees what the kodak has taught him to see.⁵⁹

The novella to which this section turns now was first composed at the time when Lawrence was writing 'Tickets, Please' (Chapter 1), subsequently published in November 1920 in the *Hutchinson's Story Magazine*. It was then substantially re-written a year later with a view to be published in one volume (*The Ladybird*) with two other novellas composed in the same year: *The Captain's Doll* and *The Ladybird*.⁶⁰

Of the three works, it is perhaps *The Fox* which, from the outset, provoked the most disparate responses amongst the critics. As early as 1924 a woman 'novelist, essayist and critic' — Alyse Gregory — strongly objected to the presumed message of the story's dénouement:

'Away, oh women ... [seek] your salvation and ours in the dark caverns of willing obedience! Up, men, and assert your power. The only way you can keep your women docile is by seeking out some male purpose greater than sex'. It is absurd to think of ... March in *The Fox*, an eager, intelligent, modern young woman, once clear of the fog of sensuous desire, submitting her soul to the limited, murdering bully she married.⁶¹

58. I borrow the term 'compulsory heterosexuality' from Adrienne Rich's 'Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 5 (1979-1980), 631-60. All references to *The Fox* will be from D. H. Lawrence, *The Fox, The Captain's Doll, The Ladybird*, edited by Dieter Mehl (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 5-72; page references will be given in the main text after each quotation.

59. D. H. Lawrence, 'Art and Morality', *Calendar of Modern Letters* (November, 1925), in D. H. Lawrence, *Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays*, edited by Bruce Steele (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 163-68 (p. 164).

60. The volume was published under the title of *The Ladybird* in England (1921), and as *The Captain's Doll* in the U.S. (1923). By the time Lawrence began re-writing *The Fox* (October, 1920), he had just finished *Aaron's Rod* and *The Captain's Doll*, and was also working on a novel (*Mr Noon*), a book of travel-writing (*Sea and Sardinia*), and *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, that is, the work to which numerous critics have turned when examining *The Fox*.

61. Alyse Gregory (Isobel Powys-Marks), in *Dial* (January, 1924), reprinted in *D. H. Lawrence: The Critical Heritage*, edited by R. P. Draper (London and New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), pp. 217-23 (p. 219).

The body of criticism relating to this tale proves that this early critic's response has found frequent supporters up to the present.⁶² In modern times, however, the source of discomfort has shifted to a different, even if interrelated question: the way in which the novella represents a very strong female friendship which can apparently last only as long as man is kept at bay. Added to this, modern scholars have also been disturbed by what appears to be an attack on lesbianism.

Feminist scholars have always been preoccupied with the way in which male-centered ideology has recurrently striven to control woman's sexuality to its own advantage, not only by physical means but by other subtle ideological strategies: for example, by disguising or distorting the viability of non-heterosexual options for women, either expunging lesbianism from its cultural artifacts, or allowing this alternative to enter into these with a view to present it as abhorrent.⁶³ Several critics have regarded Lawrence's *The Fox* as one of such literary works seeking to demote lesbianism by representing it not just as an unnatural or unviable option but as a wholly unsatisfying one for its female protagonists.⁶⁴ Furthermore, this relatively widespread view has itself been recurrently based on the assumption that the text progressively works towards the reader's dismissal of Banford and a concomitant sanction of Henry's "murder".⁶⁵ It is precisely this last event that has led some critics to assert, as Alyse Gregory did many years ago, that *The Fox* makes a claim for male ascendancy and female submission.⁶⁶

62. Critical studies of *The Fox* are numerous (see annexed Bibliography) and have generally concentrated on three interrelated aspects: first, its mythological import; second, its relation to psychoanalysis; and third, its sexual politics. The reading that ensues does not seek to cover all aspects concerning *The Fox*. Rather, it focuses on those details which have been either neglected or inaccurately comprehended and which in turn have a bearing on the issue of divided women.

63. See Adrienne Rich's 'Compulsory Heterosexuality' on this score.

64. There are even some amongst these who find this narrative as transparently attesting to Lawrence's personal '[repulsion]' towards lesbianism; see for example Barbara Hardy, 'Women in D. H. Lawrence's Works', in *D. H. Lawrence*, edited by Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House Publ., 1986), pp. 133-46 (p. 133).

65. See for example Stephen Gill's Introduction to *D. H. Lawrence: Short Stories*, selected by the same author (London, Melbourne, and Toronto: Everyman's Library, 1981), pp. vii-xxxix (p. xxxi); David Holbrook, *Where D. H. Lawrence Was Wrong About Women* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press; London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1992), p. 86.

66. According to Frederick P. W. McDowell, *The Fox*, *The Ladybird*, and *The Captain's Doll*, together with *St Mawr* and 'The Princess' would all be works demonstrating Lawrence's 'fear of woman as predator and [his] insistence on man as the spiritual leader in intimate relationships' during the early 1920s; "'The Individual in His Pure Singleness': Theme and Symbol in *The Captain's Doll*", in *The Challenge of D. H. Lawrence*, edited

1. Narrative ambiguity and sexual conundrums

Bearing in mind the critical readings mentioned above, the first contention of this study is that the lesbian nature of the protagonists's relationship has been hastily examined, indeed, taken for granted.⁶⁷ Above all, the assumption that *The Fox* is a tract against lesbianism rests upon the moot conviction that the relationship between Banford and March is *unambiguously* lesbian.⁶⁸ What needs to be probed at once is how this certainty is so straightforwardly reached.

First, just as those Lawrenceian texts where the mother is a central figure have been very often filtered through *Sons and Lovers*, it appears that readings of *The Fox* have also been pre-informed by three specific works: *The Rainbow*, especially the chapter entitled 'Shame'; *The Plumed Serpent*, particularly in the light of Cipriano's opposition to Kate's clitoral orgasm; and *Lady Chatterley's Lover* with regard to Mellors's diatribe against lesbians.⁶⁹

Second, some such scholars have interpreted this relationship by taking up the male protagonist's stance. Janice H. Harris's is a case in point:

Although Lawrence never explicitly says that the relationship between March and Banford is lesbian, he heightens the *implication* in his revision of the tale. *Banford begs March to go to bed with her; March wishes she were sleeping with Henry rather than Banford ...* There are lesbian implications and this female friendship is preventing the "right" relationship, but in themselves those implications and that friendship are not seen as repulsive, threatening, ugly.⁷⁰

by Michael Squires and Keith Cushman (London and Madison, Wis.: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), pp. 143-58 (p. 143).

67. As Judith Ruderman herself has remarked, 'there is no explicit sexuality between the women': '*The Fox* and the Devouring Mother', *The D. H. Lawrence Review*, 10 (1977), 251-69 (p. 255).

68. See for example Leo Gurko, 'D. H. Lawrence's Greatest Collection of Short Stories — What Holds It Together', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 18 (1972-73), 173-82; Deborah Core, "'The Closed Door': Love Between Women in the Works of D. H. Lawrence', *The D. H. Lawrence Review*, 11 (1978), 114-31; Janice H. Harris, *The Short Fiction of D. H. Lawrence*, pp. 162-70; Michael L. Ross, 'Ladies and Foxes: D. H. Lawrence, David Garnett, and the Female of the Species', *The D. H. Lawrence Review*, 18 (1985-86), 229-38; S. E. Gontarski, 'Mark Rydell and the Filming of *The Fox*: An Interview', *Modernist Studies: Literature and Culture 1920-1940*, 4 (1982), 96-104. The list, of course, could be extended.

69. In relation to Mellors's tirade Evelyn Hinz appropriately remarks that he 'fait un usage maladroit du mot «lesbiennes» pour décrire à Constance les femmes qu'il a connues jusque-là'; 'Le féminisme, les femmes et la sexualité', *L'Arc*, 96 (1985), 48-57 (p. 50).

70. Janice H. Harris, *The Short Fiction of D. H. Lawrence*, pp. 166-67; my emphasis.

Harris aims to revise Millett's heavy-handed interpretation of Lawrence's views on lesbianism as they presumably emerge from his works.⁷¹ In the process, she fails to realize that what she is actually expressing is not the tale's viewpoint but Henry's. Indeed, it is essential to recognize that it is through Henry that the question of lesbianism infiltrates the narrative: "Do you wish you were with Miss Banford? Do you wish you'd gone to bed with her?" he asked, as a challenge' (p. 54). In *Sons and Lovers* Mrs Morel makes a similar comment without, for that matter, having been interpreted as a sign of lesbianism on her part; thus, talking about her daughter's recent marriage she tells Paul that she finds it "strange that she should go from [her]": "It even seems to me hard that she can prefer to go with her Leonard".⁷² One could also compare March and Banford's relationship with Teresa and Marta's in Lawrence's 'The Mortal Coil' (1916; published in 1917): in this earlier tale too, the women sleep together without any lesbian implication, that is, apart from that arising from Marta's boyfriend himself (Friedeburg) at the discovery that they have died together in bed "Asphyxiated by fumes from the stove"; as the police officer tells him the news, Friedeburg's thoughts are represented in a manner which powerfully foregrounds what has characterized him all the way through: an unhealthy obsessive concern with external appearance and public opinion:

'Two young ladies found dead in your room,' said the police-official, making an official statement. But under this cold impartiality of officialdom, what *obscene* unction! Ah, what *obscene exposures* now!⁷³

One would want to argue, as Harris does, that in *The Fox* lesbianism also creeps in through March's represented consciousness:

She wished she could stay with him. She wished she had married him already, and it was all over. For oh, she felt suddenly so *safe* with him. She felt so strangely *safe* and peaceful in his presence. If only she could *sleep* in his *shelter*, and not with *Jill*. She felt afraid of Jill. In her dim, *tender* state, it was agony to have to go with Jill and *sleep* with her. She wanted the boy to *save* her (p. 56; my emphasis).

71. Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (London: Virago, 1977; first publ. in 1970), pp. 237-93.

72. *Sons and Lovers*, p. 285.

73. 'The Mortal Coil', in D. H. Lawrence, *England, My England and Other Stories*, edited by Bruce Steele (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 169-89 (p. 189; p. 188; my emphasis). This story was actually composed in 1913, then revised in 1916; the 1913 manuscript, however, has not survived, so that it is difficult to assess how substantial the changes were; see Bruce Steele's Introduction, pp. xlvii-xlviii.

As the passage clearly evinces, there is an essential difference between March's thoughts and Henry's question. One recalls that the sexual innuendoes of Henry's speech arise from the courtship context which frames it. Given that context it is apparent that Henry at that moment is comparing himself to Banford as *lover*. In contrast, March's represented thought about this same act is devoid of sexuality, as much as it is freight with maternal overtones. As Judith Ruderman has pointed out elsewhere, one of the characteristics of this story is that it is to a great extent dominated by 'the mother-child relationship'.⁷⁴ Therefore, it is clear that, in the representation of March's consciousness, the narration places the emphasis on her perception of Henry as capable of providing her with a protective 'shelter'. This becomes even more transparent in the connection which the text establishes between the words 'shelter' and 'sleep'; then, there are the other words (see italics above) pointing to March's almost infantile dependency.

Lesbianism also seems to be something one might want to infer from the way in which this narrative represents two women who appear to perform the roles of husband and wife in conventional heterosexual marriages. One has to be cautious here: it is intrinsically problematic to conclude that this is a lesbian couple *because* the *roles* they fulfil resemble those which one would normally associate with husband and wife. The danger of automatically establishing this parallel is that of conflating gender (social role) with sex (biological identity), thus reinscribing patriarchal discourse into one's own. It also amounts to accepting unproblematically a conception of lesbian relationships as inverted copies of heterosexual marriages.

What needs to be examined with regard to this question is not whether we *recognize* this couple as a reproduction of a conventional *ménage*, but to what extent the parallel is established *from within the narrative*. One can assert at once that it is the narrator of this story who first establishes this association when stating that March is 'the man about the place' (p. 7). Granted it is the narrator who first fuses sex with gender role, one needs to investigate further two particular matters: first, the degree of authority which

74. Judith G. Ruderman, 'The Fox and the "Devouring Mother"', 256; even though March's emotional dependency on Banford first, and then on Henry, is such that it strongly echoes the mother-child dependency, the present study would not go so far as to reduce the story to the 'devouring mother' paradigm.

the narrative invites the reader to confer upon this narratorial figure; second, the extent to which the narrative taken as a whole endorses this fusion.

It should be clear that the narrator's authority hinges on the degree of objectivity one is narratively entreated to attach to it. In *The Fox* one finds many pointers indicating the narrator's lack of objective knowledge. One can then assert that, in so explicitly punctuating the narrator's subjectivity, the narration opens a breach which permits the reader to resist ITS own conjectures. These pointers are, for example, the numerous markers of speculative thought scattered throughout the narrative; or the narrator's personal immersion in the world of Banford and March. Evidence of such an immersion is the fact that, while knowing everything about Banford and March's past, the narrator seems hesitant about Henry's identity: 'The young man — or youth, for *he would not be more than twenty, now* advanced and stood in the inner doorway' (p. 14; my emphasis).⁷⁵ Therefore, the narrator's ideological assumptions need to be collated with the ideology that ultimately emerges from the narrative as a whole. Before dealing with this question another issue needs to be addressed in connection with the assumed lesbianism of the women protagonists and the conflation of gender and sex referred to above.

Just as one might be led to infer that Banford and March constitute a lesbian couple on the basis that they conform to a traditionally marital division of labour, one might also reach this conclusion on the basis that they each dress according to traditional gender-defined codes of attire.⁷⁶ In relation to this issue it is necessary to distinguish three different viewpoints: the narrator's, Henry's, and March's.

The narrator's viewpoint on the subject of costume and sexual identity is not as transparent as it may first appear:

When [March] was out and about, in her puttees and breeches, her belted coat and her loose cap, she looked almost like some graceful, loose-

75. One could take this as a sign indicating that Henry is an archetypal figure — a fertility god. But, as will become evident in the course of this study, Henry, like Hadrian in 'Hadrian' [You Touched Me] fails in the end to rise to such a status, especially because he indelibly pertains and adheres to the world of decay and obsolete values that the war in which he is actively involved epitomizes.

76. Adrienne Rich rightly points out that feminine dress codes are just another patriarchal means of '[confining women] physically and [of] preventing their movement'; 'Compulsory Heterosexuality', p. 639. For a discussion of this code in modernist writers, see Sandra M. Gilbert, 'Costumes of the Mind: Transvestism as Metaphor in Modern Literature', *Critical Inquiry*, 7 (1980-81), 391-417.

balanced young man, for her shoulders were straight, and her movements easy and confident, even tinged with a little indifference, or irony. But her face was not a man's face, ever (p. 8).

Here, the narrator would presumably make dress coterminous with sexual identity. Matters complicate further when one comes across the causative logical connector 'for': the immediate effect of this connector is that it becomes difficult to elucidate whether the narrator considers March's "manly appearance" as an effect of her dress or of her bearing, that is, the '[easiness]' and '[confidence]' with which she moves about. Besides, there is the ambiguous concluding statement: 'But her face was not a man's face, ever', a remark which one could take as simultaneously rejecting ("dress and sex are not related") and reinscribing ("in spite of her dress she is a woman") patriarchal ideology.

In contrast with the narrator's ambiguity on this subject, Henry perceives dress as *false costume*, that is to say, as a disguise of the true sexual self of March. Thus, he sees her face as 'a graceful young man's' while she wears her working outfit (p. 23), and as yet 'another being' (p. 49) — a womanly woman — when she puts a dress on. The jocularity of the scene in which Henry is taken aback by March's wearing a dress is remarkable, particularly in the narratorial explanatory sentence 'If she had suddenly grown a moustache he could not have been more surprised' (p. 48), and in March's reaction: "'Oh, goodness! ... I might be a pink monkey!'" (p. 49). In so incorporating these contrapuntal utterances, Henry's absurd attachment to the patriarchal "'feminine" dress code' is brought to the fore.

In contrast, March's position vis-à-vis patriarchal dress codes is more complex: on the one hand, her anger at Henry's reaction professedly directs attention to her regarding dress as purely functional, bearing no relation whatsoever to sexual identity:

'Why,' he said, 'do you wear a dress, then?'
 [...] 'Of course I do. What else do you expect me to wear, but a dress?'
 'A land-girl's uniform, of course,' said he.
 'Oh,' she cried nonchalant, 'that's only for this dirty mucky work about here.'
 'Isn't it your proper dress, then?' he said.
 'No, not indoors it isn't,' she said (p. 48).

The difficulty about March's speech is that, at the time it takes place, Henry has already been with the two girls for several days without ever seeing March wearing a dress *indoors*. Or else the reader has been presented with indoor scenes where March has kept

her 'land girl's uniform'. One is then given to think that March herself adheres to patriarchal dress codes as much as Henry. That such might be the case finds further corroboration when we read that in her dress 'She felt unpeeled and rather exposed. She felt almost improper' (p. 50), the implication being that March herself perceives her "masculine" outfit as a protective costume against public exposure of her sexuality. Furthermore, insofar as she feels nude ('unpeeled') one is also given to assume that she too conceives her dress as an extension of — indeed, as identical to — her own flesh.

The crux of the matter is that just as the narration makes apparent both March's and Henry's adherence to a perception of dress as sexually definitory, it concurrently distances the reader from such an ideologically loaded fusion by presenting it as ludicrous — especially in so pouring all the mirth upon Henry in relation to this matter. One could then posit that with regard to the subject of dress and sexual identity the narration actually dislocates not just the symbiosis of sex/gender but 'the binaries of male and female signifiers'.⁷⁷

Several critics have accurately remarked that *The Fox* disrupts clear-cut definitions of female/male/ness.⁷⁸ All the characters in the story are represented as an admixture of what one recognizes as "typically" male and female traits. As we have already seen, following conventional cultural definitions March would appear to be a man on some levels (clothes, tasks, physical strength, self-confidence); yet on other levels, she appears to be a woman (especially in her emotional weakness and dependency on Banford and Henry alternatively). Similarly, Banford is on some levels a woman (clothes, tasks, physical frailty), and a man on others (she is represented by the narrator as a 'fighting cock', possesses a strong personality which will not yield to Henry's will-to-power, and is the only one of the three who is economically powerful). Finally, there is Henry who, for all

77. Jane A. Nelson, 'The Familial Isotopy in *The Fox*', in *The Challenge of D. H. Lawrence*, pp. 129-42 (p. 132).

78. Apart from Jane A. Nelson's as mentioned heretofore, see Jan Goode's 'Toward a Resolution of Gender Identity Confusion: The Relationship of Henry and March in *The Fox*', *The D. H. Lawrence Review*, 18 (1985-86), 229-38, and Judith Ruderman's '*The Fox* and the Devouring Mother'.

his "manliness", significantly finds himself attracted not to "March the woman", but first and foremost to the "boyishness" of March:⁷⁹

The youth watched [March] as she bent over the table, *looked at her slim, well-shapen legs, at the belted coat dropping around her thighs, at the knot of dark hair, and his curiosity, vivid and widely alert, was again arrested by her* (p. 16; my emphasis).

[...]

Particularly he watched March. She was a strange character to him. Her figure, *like a graceful young man's*, piqued him (p. 23; my emphasis).

Contrast Henry's initial attraction to March with his represented perception of her when wearing a dress and the thoughts such a perception sparks in him:

Seeing her always in the hard-cloth breeches, wide on the hips, buttoned on the knee, strong as armour, and in the brown puttees and thick boots, *it had never occurred to him that she had a woman's legs and feet. Now it came upon him. She had a woman's soft, skirted legs*, and she was accessible (p. 49; my emphasis).

In view of this excerpt, which significantly comes late in the narrative, one begins to wonder whether Henry's previous attraction to March has some homosexual nuances. When one adds to this that, as the narrative advances, Banford's attachment to March — though not March's attachment to Banford — acquires in turn sexual overtones, one also begins to ponder whether this narrative is, after all, presenting the reader with a world inhabited by androgynous beings; a world in which all sexual differences are blurred to the point of being erased.

2. The problematics of Banford's characterization

The exposition above has brought into focus the intrinsically complex nature of the narrative with which we are confronted and how this complexity affects the question of lesbianism. The aim of the exposition has not been to banish lesbianism, but to question the evidence which has led critics to take lesbianism as a transparent given.⁸⁰ Failing to

79. F. R. Leavis, *D. H. Lawrence: Novelist* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1973; first publ. in 1955), p. 314; Jan Goode, 'Toward a Resolution of Gender Identity Confusion: The Relationship of Henry and March in *The Fox*', 219.

80. I am aware that some critics' denial of the lesbianism of *The Fox* responds to an ethico-political dodge; such appears to be the case of David Holbrook when he argues that 'The relationship between Banford and March is clearly not a lesbian one, but one of those platonic relationships women strike up for expedient purposes, though later Lawrence writes about it as if it were a kind of "love" devoted to an absurd dream of happiness'; David Holbrook, *Where D. H. Lawrence Was Wrong About Women*, p. 90; my emphasis. I would like to mention in passing that I find the title of Holbrook's work seriously misleading, for, presenting itself as an apologia of feminist discontent vis-à-vis Lawrence's oeuvre, it turns out to be a salvage of Lawrence at Frieda's expense, that is, the actual "culprit" inasmuch as she is made responsible for what Holbrook considers is

acknowledge the complexity of this female relationship, some of these critics have been misled into considering the story as intending to naturalize heterosexuality, indict lesbianism, and ultimately proclaim male ascendancy.⁸¹

The indictment of lesbianism and advocacy of male ascendancy allegedly latent in *The Fox* are usually correlated with the belief that Banford is an altogether negatively characterized figure. But a close look into *The Fox* reveals that Banford is not such an unmistakably negative figure.⁸²

First of all, the narration precludes any possibility of interpreting Banford's insistent opposition to Henry as a *simple* matter of over-possessiveness or *hysterics*. In particular, one ought to bear in mind the scene during which her opposition is first expressed:

'And I know, I know he's only counting what he can get out of you ... If you marry him he'll just make a fool of you. He'll go off and leave you stranded. I know he will. If he can't get Bailey Farm out of us—and he's not going to, while I live (p. 37).'

That the reader is not in the least entreated to consider Banford's distrust of Henry as an *overreaction* becomes obvious when one realizes that, before Banford's outburst, the narration has already offered a paramount direct insight into Henry's consciousness:

He saw the fire-light leaping in the window of the sitting-room ... And he thought to himself, it would be a good thing *to have this place for his own*. And then the thought entered him shrewdly: why not marry March? (p. 23; my emphasis).

In other words, Banford's *guess* later on is made to coincide with what we readers *know* already: that Henry, like Hadrian, or like Henry and Arnault in 'Mother and Daughter', possesses a highly calculating mind, and that he regards marriage as nothing more than "a good deal".

Lawrence's betrayal of his true self; refer in particular to his 'Introduction' and his highly idiosyncratic reading of *Mr Noon*, pp. 15-44.

81. Deborah Core, "'The Closed Door': Love Between Women in the Works of D. H. Lawrence'; Michael L. Ross, 'Ladies and Foxes: D. H. Lawrence, David Garnett, and the Female of the Species'; P. T. Whelan, 'The Hunting Metaphor in *The Fox* and Other Works', *The D. H. Lawrence Review*, 21 (1989), 275-90; and Kate Millett: 'Henry, the masculine spirit and fox of the title, eliminates his lesbian competition, Jill Banford ... He then sits down to await the rigor mortis effect he intends to have on his bride, whose drugged loss of self shall give him that total control over her he requires so that he may transcend her into the male world of achievement', *Sexual Politics*, p. 265.

82. For a similar perception of Banford, refer to Keith Sagar, *The Art of D. H. Lawrence* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), p. 116.

Problems do arise, however, for Banford's subsequent opposition to Henry seems to become incommensurate with his wish to marry March — despite our knowledge of Henry's real motives. So much so that one is led to take Banford's protectiveness as a sign of *jealousy*. Here again one may run into difficulties, for it now falls into the narrator's hands to suggest that Banford's attachment to March is sexually charged. This is conspicuously so when the narration dramatizes Banford's reaction as Henry asks March to go out with him at the end of the farewell dinner:

'I should think you're never going out at this time of night, Nellie!' cried Banford.

'Yes, just for a minute,' said the boy ...

[...]

'Why it's ridiculous. It's bitter cold. You'll catch your death in that thin frock. And in those slippers. You're not going to do any such thing.'

There was a moment's pause. Banford turtled up like a little *fighting cock*, facing March and the boy.

'Oh, I don't think you need worry yourself ... I'll get the rug off the sofa in the dining-room. You're coming, Nellie.'

[...]

'Yes, I'm coming.'

And she turned with him to the door.

Banford, standing there in the middle of the room, *suddenly burst into a long wail and a spasm of sobs*. She covered her face with her poor thin hands, and *her thin shoulders shook in an agony of weeping* (p. 51; my emphasis).

Banford's reaction is certainly disproportionate to the events that are being recounted. Moreover, the sexual overtones implicated in the language which is used to describe her bodily reaction are outstanding, just as much as they are in the description of Mrs Nankervis's in 'Samson and Delilah', a tale which, as seen earlier, deals with the heroine's displacement of sexual desire. Added to this, there is the narrator's likening her to a 'fighting cock', a simile which is paramount inasmuch as it simultaneously links Banford's sexuality with *manliness*. It is as if, with the insertion of such a simile and the description of her physical response to this event, the narrator would be implying Banford's repressed lesbian desire for March. In turn, this sexual repression would be connected with Banford's adherence to traditional values (her concern with propriety). Yet it is at this precise moment that one may begin to feel somewhat uncomfortable, especially in view of an earlier passage:

She did not like to meet his clear, watchful eyes, she did not like to see the strange glow in his face, his cheeks with their delicate fine hair, and his ruddy skin that was quite dull and yet which seemed to burn with a curious heat of life. It made her feel a little ill to look at him: *the quality of his physical presence was too penetrating, too hot* (p. 28; my emphasis).

Taking this passage into account together with the one previously cited, a causative link appears to be established between Banford's suggested lesbianism and her fear of male sexuality. Nevertheless, there is a difference between this excerpt and the previous one: while in the former Banford's suggested lesbianism is rooted in the narrator's consciousness, her fear of Henry/male sexuality springs from the rhetoric inherent in the passage that purports to articulate her own feelings vis-à-vis Henry. There would appear to be yet another gap between what the narrator seems to imply and what the representation of Banford suggests. This gap is even more patent when later it is exactly the violence which inheres in male sexuality — as epitomized by Henry — that ultimately comes to the forefront. In so stressing the inextricability of male sexuality and violence, the narration would partly explicate Banford's sexual repression not as a simple matter of paranoia or man-hatred, but as founded on one particular reality: the close link between sex and violence such as we have seen it exposed in the stories examined in Chapter 2.

The inextricability of violence and male sexuality can already be traced in an earlier passage where Henry's plans to convince March to marry him are made explicit. One recalls here the lengthy *hunting* metaphor (framed within Henry's consciousness) which explicates the game of courtship in terms of 'hunter', 'quarry', and 'bullets' (pp. 23-24); or the way in which violence in connection with sexuality is brought to the surface in Henry's represented hopes:

He hoped again that she would have him. He hoped with his *blood suddenly firing up* that she would agree to marry him quite quickly ... He wanted, whatever else happened, to *snatch her* into a hasty marriage and a *consummation with him* ... He hoped he could touch her soft, creamy cheek, her strange, *frightened face*. He hoped he could look into her dilated, *frightened dark eyes*, quite near. He hoped he might even put his hand on her bosom and feel her soft breasts under her tunic (p. 47; my emphasis).

This insight brings to the fore the violent nature of Henry's sexual desire for March. Significantly, the 'March' of Henry's sexual fantasy as represented here is 'frightened' —

the same participle recurs twice, a detail which immediately kindles quasi-rape connotations.

Finally, violence and sexuality are also tightly linked in March's psyche. Just as Henry imagines March as his 'frightened' victim, March perceives herself in her dreams as the resisting victim of two consecutive, although unsuccessful, sexual aggressions. As another critic has observed, these dreams allude to an essential split in March: one between 'le refus de l'agression et le désir de satisfaire ses propres «tendances insatisfaites»'.⁸³

Given the way in which sexuality and violence are so closely connected in *The Fox*, it becomes evident that Banford's repressed sexuality does not come forth as altogether unfounded. Consequently, to argue that the narration invites the reader to comprehend her fear as scornful prudery is misleading. Granted that Banford is a problematic character, she is not negatively so — unless, of course, one perceives her from Henry's stance. Furthermore, as the resolution elucidates, she is actually an *indispensable* character.

3. A dramatically elusive object of desire

Generally speaking, Banford's role has not been paid its due, partly because scholars have most often concentrated on March, and more particularly on her dreams and their relation to her on-going experience. But unless one re-examines the significance of Banford, many points concerning the resolution of *The Fox* will yet remain obscure.

Any understanding of the importance of Banford's role in the novella hinges on a careful examination of the antagonism between Banford and Henry:

'Yes, imagine it! That's what we've got the place together for, is it, to be bossed and bullied by a hateful red-faced boy, a *beastly laborer* ... We ought never to have *lowered ourselves*. And I've had such a fight with all the people here, not to be pulled down to their level (p. 37; my emphasis).'

What is paramount about Banford's hostile speech is that the narration situates the reader within Henry's spatial stance as he eavesdrops on it, thus enabling him/her beforehand to comprehend fully the power which Banford unwittingly exercises over Henry. This power notably comes to the forefront in the course of the following conversation:

83. J. P. Naugrette, 'Le Renard et les rêves: onirisme, écriture et inconscience dans "The Fox"', *Etudes Anglaises: Grande Bretagne, Etats Unis*, 37 (1984), 142-55 (p. 149); even though the ongoing reading does not go along with Naugrette's entire argument, it certainly coincides with his perception of the dream as indicative of March's unconscious dividedness between sexual desire and fear of aggression.

'When do you expect the wedding to come off?' [Banford] spoke in a jeering tone.

'Oh, the wedding!' he replied. 'I don't know.'

'Don't you know anything?' said Banford. 'Are you going to clear out on Friday and leave things no more settled than they are?'

'Well, why shouldn't I? We can always write letters.'

'Yes of course you can. But I wanted to know because of this place. If Nellie is going to get married all of a sudden, I shall have to be looking round for a new partner.'

'*Couldn't she stay on here if she was married?*' he said. *He knew quite well what was coming.*

'Oh,' said Banford, 'this is no place for a married couple. ... It's quite useless your thinking of staying on here if you marry. Absolutely!'

'Yes, but *I wasn't thinking of staying on here ... I am going back to Canada.*'

'*And taking her with you?*'

'*Yes, certainly*' (p. 43; my emphasis).

It is worth noticing that the dialogue follows the first eavesdropping scene and Henry's subsequent killing of the fox. Its relevance derives from the negative light it retroactively casts on Henry, for not only has the narration elicited earlier that he knows the answer to what he is asking Banford now; his speech also contradicts his previously represented thoughts ('[He] thought to himself that one could live easily enough here', p. 34). The essential point is that in so exposing Henry's question about the farm as an obstrusive pretext to gainsay Banford's opinion of himself, the narration collaterally reveals Banford's ascendancy vis-à-vis Henry: her power over Henry is such that, as this extract evinces, it even coerces him into moulding his future in opposition to what Banford herself thinks.

It is in the light of Banford's influence upon Henry that one is to comprehend another crucial insight into Henry's mind:

He was cogitating all the time. He had wanted March to marry him and go back to Canada with him. And he had been sure she would do. *Why he wanted her he didn't know.* But he did want her. He had set his mind on her. And he was convulsed with a youth's fury at being thwarted (pp. 44-45; my emphasis).

Not only does Banford determine Henry's future plans: as the extract just quoted proves, her power over him goes so deep so as to make him actually believe what he has *fabricated* in order to thwart Banford. More important still, one is progressively driven to perceive Henry's increasing desire for March as directly dictated by successive expressions of social contempt towards him made by Banford. Thus, after Henry eavesdrops for the second time

on Banford as she tries to stop March from '[lowering]' herself through a marriage to Henry (p. 46), one is obliged to look once more into Henry's troubled consciousness:

And so!—this was what they thought of him ... he disliked the Banford with an acid dislike. *And he felt drawn to the March again. He felt again irresistibly drawn to her* (p. 47; my emphasis).

Therefore, Henry's venal interest in March increases as he himself becomes more aware of Banford's social contempt for him. Yet parallel to it there is also a sexual attraction towards March, though one which is not what one might want to call a purely instinctual one.

Numerous critics have tended to perceive Henry as a personification of the fox, that is, of 'instinctive sexual impulse'.⁸⁴ In contrast, this study contends that whereas March's perception of the fox and of Henry-as-fox stand for March's spontaneous sexual instincts, Henry's sexual attraction towards March is socially, that is, externally induced. More accurately, it is propelled by a progressive awareness of Banford's attachment to March, a bond which, as pointed out before, *he* himself endows with sexual (lesbian) significance. Hence it would appear that, for Henry, March ceases to be merely a potentially valuable acquisition in order to become a sexually desirable object when he begins to perceive her as already the sexual partner/property of Banford.

Interestingly, Banford's possessiveness is not sparked off until she herself begins to intuit that Henry might have a special interest in March. Actually, Banford's hostility towards Henry commences before she even knows that Henry has proposed to March. Of course, our own perception of Banford's hostility as rooted in jealousy is itself manipulated from within the narrative. It is only because we have witnessed what has happened between Henry and March in the barn (the marriage proposal) that Banford's words ring with jealous overtones:

'Whatever have you been doing all this time?' she asked *fretfully*. 'I thought you were never coming in. And it's ages since you stopped sawing. What were you doing out there?'

84. Stanley Renner, 'Sexuality and the Unconscious: Psychological Drama and Conflict in *The Fox*', *The D. H. Lawrence Review*, 21 (1989), 245-74 (p. 254); see also Leo Gurko, 'D. H. Lawrence's Greatest Collection of Short Stories — What Holds It Together'; P. T. Whelan, 'The Hunting Metaphor in *The Fox* and Other Works', and F. R. Leavis, *D. H. Lawrence: Novelist*, amongst others.

'Well,' said Henry, 'we had to stop up that hole in the barn, to keep the rats out.'

'Why I could see you standing there in the shed. I could see your shirt sleeves,' *challenged* Banford (p. 27; my emphasis).

That she is beginning to feel displaced by Henry is perhaps more apparent when later we read:

Banford was also trying to read ... But between those two she felt fidgety. She kept moving and looking round and listening to the wind and *glancing secretly from one to the other of her companions* (p. 29; my emphasis).

Thus we see that as the narrative advances, *desirability* ceases to emanate directly from March in order to become mutually mediated through Banford and Henry: just as March becomes desirable for Banford when she intuits that March is desirable for Henry, Henry begins to feel sexually attracted towards March when he begins to perceive Banford as a sexual rival. Furthermore, as the antagonism between Banford and Henry increases, the desired object — that is, March — is increasingly pushed to the background. This is most conspicuously so in Henry's response to March's letter:

In his mind was one thorn—Banford. *He took no heed of all March's outpouring: none.* One thorn rankled stuck in his mind: Banford. In his mind, in his soul, in his whole being, one thorn rankling to insanity. And he would have to get it out. He would have to get the thorn of Banford out of his life, if he died for it (p. 59; my emphasis).

At this point Henry's hostility towards Banford reaches its climax, and as it does so, Banford's stature augments: for Henry's hatred progressively transforms Banford into one of the most powerful Lawrencean female characters, a power which is heightened, rather than diminished, by her own death. This leads straight into a close examination of the story's dénouement: it is at this point that the failure of Henry and March's marriage acquires an altogether different dimension when seen in the light of Henry's mediated desire for March. One begins to discern the ending as an inverted reiteration of yet another problematic ending, that of *Women in Love*.

4. A Missing connector and an unbridgeable abyss

Approaching the end of *The Fox*, that is, following Banford's death, what immediately comes to the fore is the distance that separates March and Henry. In effect, the *pictorial* image which is woven into the ending of the story cannot go unnoticed: March and Henry

sitting *physically close to each other* 'among the rocks on the cliff' (p. 71). Nor can one fail to appreciate how this image is juxtaposed to the representation of the characters's *individualized* mental processes through free indirect style. The effect of this juxtaposition is to underscore, not without some amount of bitter irony, the characters' mental apartness. This sense of interpersonal estrangement further increases as one looks closely into each of their thoughts, for it is then that one realizes that the distance which separates them cannot possibly be bridged: as in the case of Dollie and Romero in 'The Princess', March sits 'still' waiting for Henry to take 'her destiny' in his hands, while he himself waits for her to come towards him and submerge herself in him (p. 69). The narration leaves us with two characters who cannot meet because each of them is waiting for the other to reach forward.⁸⁵

It is here that one discerns what constitutes the crucial thrust of *The Fox*: as the narration opens this unbridgeable gap between March and Henry, the absence of Banford concurrently begins to gain such a force that one would be inclined to take the ending as obliquely pointing to Banford's imperative indispensability for the pair's survival and, ultimately, as leading the reader to comprehend Banford as the key to their coupling.

At the moment when Banford is removed from the fictional arena, dialogue is demoted in favour of represented consciousness; linguistic interaction gives way to mental estrangement. Hence Banford would appear to be the one who enables March and Henry to interact, an impression which would be further strengthened by the way in which Banford, even though literally dead, is strongly resurrected in the minds of both March and Henry. When one feels the force of such a presence — indeed, when one becomes aware of the way in which Banford inhabits these minds — *The Fox* can no longer be perceived as an expression of animosity towards female friendships.

85. One is reminded here of Clarissa's comment in *Aaron's Rod*: at Tanny's suggestion that she is the perfect match for Jim insofar as both want to be loved, she humourously responds: "We both want to be loved, and so we miss each other entirely. We run in two parallel lines, that can never meet"; *Aaron's Rod*, edited by Mara Kalnins (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 57.

Earlier this study argued that Henry's desire for March hinged on Banford. It is only in this light that one can understand the tenor of Henry's represented thoughts as one reaches the end:

Sometimes he thought bitterly that he ought to have left her. He ought never to have killed Banford. He should have left Banford and March to kill one another (p. 70).

Rather than hinting at March's perverse stubbornness in so refusing to submit to Henry, this insight powerfully reveals, first, the artificiality of Henry's own desire for March; second and foremost, the indestructibility of the bond that unites these two women, for Henry's disappointment in March is nothing but his disappointment in the discovery that the desired object is only valuable as long as it remains *attached to Banford*.

What is most challenging about this ending is that, as March and Banford are reunited in Henry's mind, the symbiosis is broken in March's:

Day after day she had been responsible for the coming day, for the coming year: for her dear Jill's health and happiness and well-being. ... And she had failed. She knew that ... she had failed. ... It had seemed so easy to make one beloved creature happy. ... She was glad Jill was dead (p. 68).

This is a very important epiphanic moment, indeed. Above all, it represents March's realization that all her life she has been mistakenly drawing her own sense of selfhood, that is to say, the meaning of her own existence, from Banford. And yet the dramatization of her realization and her concomitant acceptance of Banford's death as a "happy" event in her life ought not to be interpreted as perversely entreating the reader to regard Banford's death with gleeful eyes. To do so would be to overlook yet another crucial passage which vividly dramatizes the almost existential anguish that such a break produces in March:

She was glad it was over. She was glad to sit on the shore and look westwards over the sea, and know the great strain had ended. She would never strain for love and happiness any more. And Jill was safely dead. Poor Jill, poor Jill. It must be sweet to be dead.

For her own part, death was not her destiny. She would have to leave her destiny to the boy. But then, the boy. He wanted more than that. He wanted her to give herself without defences, to sink and become submerged in him. And she—she wanted to sit still, like a woman on the last milestone, and watch. She wanted to see, to know, to understand. She wanted to be alone: with him at her side (p. 69).

The passage articulates the lure of suicide in March's mind, an attraction which comes forth as a fleeting desire to fuse her *self* with Banford's in the realm of the dead, just as

much as Mabel in 'The Horse Dealer's Daughter' (1921) attempts to reunite with her dead mother by drowning herself in the pond. Following this unmediated insight into her mind as she is momentarily assailed by a death drive, the narration rehearses her pulling herself together and the acceptance of her newly acquired independent self.

We thus reach the last lines of *The Fox* which, although essentially open-ended, do not leave everything indeterminate. In this regard, it is the contention of this study that, rather than claiming for male ascendancy, the novella ultimately presents a man who fails to rise to the heroic stature of March. Indeed, in sharp contrast with the latter's success, Henry falls short of living for his own self *with* March: just as he had let his life be moulded by Banford before, he now appears to be desperately counting on March in order to regain the very selfhood which, in a way, he would seemingly have lost with the disappearance of Banford: 'And then he would have her, and he would have his own life at last. He chafed, feeling he hadn't got his own life. He would never have it till she yielded and slept in him' (p. 70).

The foregoing analysis, rather than attempting to exhaust all the possible implications in *The Fox*, has aimed to register the narrative intricacies which need to be taken into account before making any judgements in relation to the way the story relates to male-centred ideology. Ultimately, it has sought to demonstrate that beyond appearances, rather than naturalizing the impossibility of lasting alliances amongst women, *The Fox* actually underscores the strength of the bond that unites both heroines. As for March and Henry's marriage, it is clear that, in so coming to a formal close while both characters are still struggling against each other's will, the narrative not only avoids the "they lived happily ever after" close characteristic of sentimental literature, it far more importantly preserves the reader's creative freedom to write in a plethora of different endings to the protagonists's struggle. One could imagine, for example, that once in America March realizes that her marriage to Henry, instead of liberating, actually obstructs her development into full being. In the Lawrencian *oeuvre*, one of women's most favoured responses to the disappointment of such hopes, as the next two stories illustrate, is the decision to take the risk and 'ride away' in search of other life alternatives.

CHAPTER 4
WOMEN IN SEARCH OF UTOPIA
'THE WOMAN WHO RODE AWAY' AND *ST MAWR*¹

'Utopian thought', Toril Moi observes, 'has always been a source of political inspiration for feminists and socialists alike':

Confidently assuming that change is both possible and desirable, the utopian vision takes off from a negative analysis of its own society in order to create images and ideas that have the power to inspire to revolt against oppression and exploitation.²

The search for 'Utopia' — Rananim as Lawrence called it in his letters of January and February 1915 — is a central concern in Lawrence's oeuvre, especially in the novels he wrote between 1917 and 1925 (the so-called leadership/anti-feminist period): *Aaron's Rod* (1917-1921), *The Lost Girl* (1920), *Kangaroo* (1922), *The Plumed Serpent* (1923-1925). It is also pivotal in the two stories which this chapter will examine: 'The Woman Who Rode Away' and *St Mawr*, composed one after the other in the summer of 1924 (like 'The Princess') while Lawrence was still working on *The Plumed Serpent*. All these fictions have in common a hero/heroine who, profoundly disillusioned with the prevailing system and a conventional mode of life which they feel is utterly inane, set off in pursuit of the Utopian dream.

1. 'The Woman Who Rode Away', included in *The Complete Short Stories of D. H. Lawrence* (London: Heinemann, 1955), 3 vols, vol. 2, pp. 546-81; *St Mawr*, included in *St Mawr and Other Stories*, edited by Brian Finney (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 21-155. All quotations will be from these editions respectively and page numbers will be given in the main text after each quotation.

2. Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory* (London and New York: Routledge, 1985), p. 121.

'The Woman Who Rode Away' and *St Mawr* have been frequently examined against the background of what is commonly regarded as Lawrence's disastrous work, *The Plumed Serpent*. Both stories were composed while the latter was still in process. In all three works 'Utopia' is sought in a (New) Mexican physical locale. Although the parallels with this particular novel cannot be denied, the stories come closer to the earlier *Aaron's Rod* and *The Lost Girl* both formally and thematically. Formally, 'The Woman Who Rode Away' and *St Mawr* have the same bipartite structure as the Italian novels: an analysis of the protagonists' situation and rationalisation of their existential discontent (missing from *The Plumed Serpent*) precedes the account of their quest. Thematically, none of the stories is so much concerned — as *The Plumed Serpent* is — with a programmatically political solution as with finding a more vitally authentic alternative mode of existence outside the tedium and inanity of conventionality. Then, as with the male protagonist of *Aaron's Rod*, the heroine(s)'s escape is at once a desertion from a claustrophobic physical space and the no less stifling experience of institutionalized marriage.

The interest in studying 'The Woman Who Rode Away' and *St Mawr* in the same chapter is that, while the search for 'Utopia' is central in the two stories, each looks for it in the opposite direction. The woman who rides away, in some sense reminiscent of Kate Leslie in *The Plumed Serpent*, looks back into the past of cultural primitivism. Lou and Mrs Witt also set out to discover the ideal community in 'wild' America; once there, however, they recognize that its culture does no longer embody the ideal they were looking for, whereupon they withdraw from society altogether, turning their eyes forward into a future *yet to come*.

In view of the alternatives each of these stories *ostensibly* offers it is not surprising to find that each of them has given rise to earnest critical responses. To be sure, 'The Woman Who Rode Away' has been the object of more negative reviews, especially for allegedly presenting female submission to male power as the ultimate 'Utopia'. But even when *St Mawr*, in contrast with the former, has often been appraised positively (particularly since F. R. Leavis declared it superior to T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*) it has also been faulted for being essentially escapist and, in the last instance, for professedly

showing the women's retreat into the margins of society as the uniquely viable course of action.³ As this study aims to demonstrate, such allegations are imprecise and, ultimately, misconceived.

'THE WOMAN WHO RODE AWAY': AN UNRECOVERABLE PAST

The truth of the matter is, one cannot go back. Some men can: renegade.
... I know now that I could never go back. Back towards the past, savage
life. One cannot go back. It is one's destiny inside one.⁴

Peter Balbert has rightly commented that many of the extant 'frantic readings' of 'The Woman Who Rode Away' fall short of heeding how point of view is here articulated.⁵ Failing to pay attention to this essential structuring device, several scholars have been misled into regarding the story as 'the peak of Lawrence's anti-feminism':⁶ David Cavitch, Kate Millett, and Charles Rossman, to cite early examples, all object to 'The Woman Who Rode Away' on the grounds that Lawrence releases in it his personal animosity towards women in general, and Mabel Luhan in particular.⁷ In more recent times David Holbrook's comment on this story summarizes the views of some of his contemporaries, such as R. P. Draper, Lois P. Rudnick, Thérèse Vichy, and Brenda Maddox amongst others:⁸

[It] is an exercise in the totally controlled, subjugated, and annihilated woman as the exorcism of the dreaded woman, so that male mastery may be upheld ... Lawrence indulges in the fantasy of what he would

3. 'St Mawr seems to me to present a creative and technical originality more remarkable than that of *The Waste Land*', F. R. Leavis, *D. H. Lawrence: Novelist* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973; first publ. in 1955), p. 271.

4. D. H. Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977; first publ. in 1923), p. 144.

5. Peter Balbert, *D. H. Lawrence and the Phallic Imagination: Essays on Sexual Identity and Feminist Misreadings* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1989), p. 111.

6. Mark Kinkead-Weekes, 'The Gringo Senora Who Rode Away', *The D. H. Lawrence Review*, 22 (1990), 251-65 (p. 251).

7. David Cavitch, *D. H. Lawrence and the New World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 163-69; Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (London: Virago, 1977; first publ. in 1970), pp. 285-93; Charles Rossman, "'You Are the Call and I Am the Answer": D. H. Lawrence and Women', *The D. H. Lawrence Review*, 8 (1975), 255-328 (pp. 298-300).

8. Lois P. Rudnick, 'D. H. Lawrence's New World Heroine: Mabel Dodge Luhan', *The D. H. Lawrence Review*, 14 (1980), 85-111; R. P. Draper, 'The Defeat of Feminism: D. H. Lawrence's *The Fox* and "The Woman Who Rode Away"', in *Critical Essays on D. H. Lawrence*, edited by Dennis Jackson and Fleda Brown Jackson (Boston, MA: G. K. Hall, 1988), pp. 158-69; Thérèse Vichy, 'L'ironie dans *The Woman Who Rode Away*', *Etudes lawrenciennes*, n° 6 (Université de Paris X, 1991), 69-81; Brenda Maddox, 'Reluctant to Kiss: Elaine Feinstein's *Lawrence's Women*', *The Times Literary Supplement*, 15 January (1993), p. 5.

unconsciously like to do to woman. The upshot is "She gets what she deserves"; it is "inevitable that what is done to her must be done, in order that the world should be put right," or "that my soul should be put right."⁹

Not only do these critics miss the 'incisive' quality of the heroine's 'vision', as Balbert puts it, but also the extent to which the hostility they themselves experience vis-à-vis her killers, that is their outrage at her murder, is actually encoded in the narrative.¹⁰ In the last instance this critical limitation results from these readers' elucidation of the tale's ideological import almost exclusively in terms of its dénouement without regard for the actual path that leads into it.

1. Precluding melodrama

Unlike the stories examined so far, 'The Woman Who Rode Away' establishes from the outset what is to be hereafter the prevailing filtering viewpoint of the overall narrative — the woman's:

She had thought that this marriage, of all marriages, would be an adventure. Not that the man was exactly magical to her. ... it was obvious that the adventure lay in his circumstances, rather than his person. But he was still a little dynamo of energy, in spite of accidents survived, and what he had accomplished he had accomplished alone. One of those human oddments there is no accounting for.

When she actually *saw* what he had accomplished, her heart quailed (p. 546; bold-faced characters mine).

Such is the excerpt through which the reader enters the woman's world, one which at once submerges us into the heroine's own mind. This opening already illustrates one of the distinctive structural features of the overall narration: its chinese-box design. One notices that as the passage draws to a close the voice of a classical omniscient narrator would seemingly interrupt the woman's train of thoughts in order to cast an ironic glance toward her husband. In actual fact the irony emerges from the woman's represented mental discourse. More exactly, this *apparent* narratorial intervention is on close examination the woman's inner realization of the incongruity between what she cheerfully expected and what she actually encounters: a very bleak scenery. Furthermore, in so graphically drawing attention to the verb 'saw' a contrast is actually being drawn between her husband's proud *verbal account* of his own achievements prior to her marriage ('what he had accomplished

9. David Holbrook, *Where D. H. Lawrence Was Wrong About Women* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press; London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1992), p. 119.

10. Peter Balbert, p. 3.

he had accomplished alone') and what she herself witnesses *in situ* after marrying him. Finally, this beginning already foreshadows what will later spark off tragedy: the woman's naive belief in others' *fictions*.

Having so confined the reader to the woman's disillusioned mind the narration proceeds to register her visualization of the landscape:

Great green-covered, unbroken mountain-hills, and in the midst of the lifeless isolation, the sharp pinkish mounds of the dried mud from the silver-works. Under the nakedness of the works, the walled-in, one-storey adobe house, with its garden inside, and its deep inner veranda with tropical climbers on the sides. And *when you looked up* from this shut-in flowered patio, *you saw* the huge pink cone of the silver-mud refuse, and the machinery of the extracting plant against heaven above. No more (p. 546; my emphasis).

This is the heroine's — and the encoded reader's/'you' — vision of 'the power and detritus of industry' and apprehension of 'the depressing irony of pink slime amid the pastoral greenery'.¹¹ The relevance of this description lies not so much in that it bares the ravaging effects of industrialisation but in that it reflects upon the woman herself. Like Dollie's visualization of the landscape in 'The Princess' this is not an objective scenery, but a mental landscape. Hence the necessity to attend to the salient features of her selective view: 'green-covered', 'lifeless isolation', 'the walled-in, one-storey adobe house', a 'garden inside', an 'inner veranda', a 'shut-in patio' (my emphasis). Clearly what arrests the woman's eye and makes her heart 'quail' is the sight of sheer enclosure and restriction of movement that characterizes this landscape: a landscape, it should be recalled at once, which apart from standing for her husband's self-proclaimed 'achievement' also and more importantly epitomizes her own *marriage*. Thus marriage, rather than being an 'adventure' as she had expected, turns out to be an imprisoning experience for the woman.¹²

From this point onwards this sense of imprisonment is consistently stressed to the effect of sharpening the oppressive situation in which the heroine is enmeshed:

To be sure, the great wooden doors were often open. And then she could stand outside, in the vast open world. And see great, void, tree-clad hills piling behind one another, from nowhere into nowhere (p. 546).

11. Balbert, p. 117.

12. Janice H. Harris, *The Short Fiction of D. H. Lawrence* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1984), p. 185.

Coming across this passage the reader is first made to partake in the woman's momentarily liberating optimism only to be made to experience with her later the painfully ironic realization of these doors opening into 'nowhere', her fatal recognition of there being just one exit: out into the grave:

And in his battered Ford car her husband would take her into the dead, thrice-dead little Spanish town forgotten among the mountains. The great, sun-dried dead church, the dead portales, the hopeless covered market-place, where the first time she went, she saw a dead dog ... Deadness within deadness (pp. 546-47).

Therefore the strength of this narrative as it begins to unfold issues not just from the way it formally manipulates the reader into empathizing with the woman's sense of marital confinement. More importantly, it derives from the manner in which it intensifies our own experience: one notices that while the narration carries on foregrounding this sense of oppression, the reader remains unremittingly shut in the mind of a woman who is in turn captive within a (marital) landscape from which there is no visible escape.

Having so worked through the reader's empathetic understanding of the woman, a new centre of consciousness intervenes. As soon as this new self steps in, the following portrayal of the woman's husband ensues:

Her little, wiry, tough, twisted, brown-eyed husband was fifty-three, a man as tough as wire, tenacious as wire, still full of energy, but dimmed by the lapse of silver from the market, and by some curious inaccessibility on his wife's part.

He was a man of principles, and a good husband. In a way, he doted on her. ... But essentially, he was still a bachelor ... his capital was all a bachelor's. He was boss of his own works, and marriage was the last and most intimate bit of his own works.

He admired his wife to extinction, he admired her body, all her points. ... Like any sheikh, he kept her guarded among those mountains of Chihuahua. He was jealous of her as he was of his silver-mine: and that is saying a lot (p. 547).

...
He was a squeamish waif of an idealist, and really hated the physical side of life. He loved work, work, work, and making things. His marriage, his children, were something he was making, part of his business, but with a sentimental income this time (p. 548).

Notably, this new angle of vision confounds itself with the woman's critical perception of her husband, to the effect that her own negative description of him gains in authenticity. At first, this new narrating instance remains impersonally neutral. Then, gradually, it becomes conspicuously censorious of a husband who, one should note in passing, is strikingly

reminiscent of three other Lawrencian tycoons of western industrial capitalism: Gerald Crich in *Women in Love*, Sir William in *Aaron's Rod*, and Clifford in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. As this new voice rises, the capitalist ideology which this husband presumably stands by is progressively drawn forth. Yet more than a simple romantic elegy to the end of pastoral life, the narrator critically punctuates the tentacular pervasiveness of capitalism typified by the husband's transposition of market relations into the private sphere: a transposition whereby he debases his wife and children into marketable commodities and his marriage into a contract of ownership.

The decisive question in view of future events is that the woman, unlike her other fellow-Utopia seekers (Aaron, Alvina, Somers, Lou and Mrs Witt) has no real consciousness of her own personal situation. Although her physical vision is acute, she lacks genuine insight. True, she *feels* that her personal situation is a life burial. But from this it does not automatically follow that she fully *comprehends* the meaning of her unsufferable condition. In point of fact the narrator's irruption into the fictional arena endows the reader with the ideological acumen which the woman herself lacks. Because she herself does not possess any such wisdom, she will be driven to act later under the instruction of the same deceptive *romanticism* which has led her into the situation where she finds herself at present: the same romanticism, that is, which has misled her into conceiving marriage as an exciting 'adventure'.

Thus we see that the narration, as the story begins to unfold, underscores the woman's oppressive condition within the institution of marriage in a capitalistic context. Soon afterwards a second centre of consciousness intervenes to the effect of reinforcing both our sympathies vis-à-vis her and our antagonism towards her husband. Concurrently, as this newly independent voice is brought into the arena the woman/reader symbiosis is parenthetically broken to the effect that the reader, being compelled into a detached stance, is enabled to discern the ideological grounding of the woman's calamity. It is at the moment when such a breach is opened that the reader is encouraged to endorse the woman's urge to break free and comprehend this need as 'anchored in the social reality of a

conventional and empty marriage'.¹³ Notably, and in contrast with the woman, the narration up to this point unremittingly forecloses the emergence of the censured husband as the subject of his own discourse.

The husband's voice is first released in the course of a critical conversation between him and a nameless engineer. It is rather significant that the narration, by keeping speech parentheticals to a strict minimum, procrastinates the identification of the interlocutor called Lederman as the woman's husband until this conversation is over. Even when the two speakers are identified as 'the young man' and 'Lederman' respectively from the beginning of this conversation, the fact remains that the husband has been assigned no name until then. The importance of this informational delay lies in that the reader is prevented from establishing any immediate connection between Lederman and the woman's husband. In turn, the deferral of this link bars any possible biased judgement of Lederman's discourse. This is crucial in view of what lies at the core of Lederman's speech: the demystification of the Indians. Having so dispelled any potential prejudice against the source of this negative portrayal of the Indians the text drives the reader to invest credence in Lederman's demystifying discourse.

In contrast with Lederman the young man becomes now the ironical target: "I wonder," said the young man, "what there is behind those great hills" (p. 548). Contrary to what one would have expected the young man's *mysterious* rhetorical question is followed by a sharply *realistic* answer: "More hills," said Lederman. "If you go that way, Sonora and the coast. This way is the desert — you came from there — and the other way, hills and mountains" (p. 548). These two opening statements are paradigmatic of the ironic tone (humorously so at this particular point) which permeates the entire dialogue, the ultimate target being the young man's naively exotic attraction to the Indians' life-style. The source of this irony, however, is not extraneous to the narrative: it is the effect created by the idiosyncratic structuring of the dialogue. Moreover, the meaningful silence of the narrator cannot go unnoticed: a silence which speaks not just for what it does not say —

13. Sheila MacLeod, *Lawrence's Men and Women* (London: Paladin Grafton Books, 1987; first publ. in 1985), p. 139.

that Lederman is the woman's husband — but also for the way it is later complemented by the speculative remark which brings this dialogue to a close:

'I don't know about mysteries — howling and heathen practices, more or less indecent. No, I see nothing wonderful in that kind of stuff. And I wonder that you should, when you have lived in London or Paris or New York —'

'Ah, *everybody* lives in London or Paris or New York' — said the young man, as if this were an argument (p. 549; bold-faced characters mine).

This intervention stands out against the silence which the narrator has maintained throughout vis-à-vis Lederman's speech. This needs to be borne in mind, especially when one considers that it is the young man's *romanticizing* discourse which finds 'full echo in the woman's heart': 'She was overcome by a *foolish romanticism* more *unreal* than a girl's' (p. 394; my emphasis). It is here and not elsewhere that one hears the highly personal, censorious tone of the narrator, thus alerting the reader to ITS shifting nature: for here, as in all the stories previously examined, we are confronted with a narrator that teeters between concurrence and nonconcurrence with the characters, now sympathizing with the woman's condition, now becoming critical of her. The object of criticism at this point is the woman's taking fiction for reality. The fact is, faced with such an overtly *personalized* reaction on the narrator's part the reader is discouraged from melodramatically identifying with any of the characters in the story, including the woman herself. The reader is invited, in other words, to maintain a critical distance from the situation which the narrative presents.

Following this dialogue, the narration proceeds to report Lederman's account about the Indians:

There was supposed to be one tribe, the Chilchuis, living in a high valley to the south, who were the sacred tribe of all the Indians. The descendants of Montezuma and of the old Aztec or Totonac kings still lived among them, and the old priests still kept up the ancient religion, and offered human sacrifices — so it was said. Some scientists had been to the Chilchui country, and had come back gaunt and exhausted with hunger and bitter privation, bringing various curious, barbaric objects of worship, but having seen nothing extraordinary in the hungry village of savages (p. 550).

What is interesting about the husband's indirect version of the Indians is its multilayered structure: here is an example of reported speech ('There was supposed to be') *within*

represented speech ('so it was said'). The narration reports Lederman's account who in turn reports a "communal belief" from which he ostensibly detaches himself. His detachment, one notices, follows the reference to 'sacrifices'. One recalls that in the course of his conversation with the young engineer Lederman makes it clear that for him these 'human sacrifices' are plain murders: 'Some of them are quite wild ... They kill a missionary at sight' (p. 549). This distinction is paramount in view of the following narratorial intervention:

Though Lederman talked in this off-hand way, *it was obvious* he felt some of the vulgar excitement at the idea of ancient and mysterious savages (p. 550; my emphasis).

The problem here is that what the narrator states is 'obvious' is not so evident for the reader, especially when one takes heed of Lederman's indifference vis-à-vis the 'savages' such as it has been unmediatedly conveyed through dialogue, and in a less immediate form, through indirect speech. Undoubtedly, one is faced here with an instance of two clashing discourses: on the one hand, that which the narration weaves in; on the other, the narrator's, whose personally biased involvement is now cogently foregrounded. In view of these dissenting discourses one may surmise that the interest of the narration is twofold: first, to guarantee the reader's endorsement of Lederman as demystifier of the Indians; yet to secure the reader's critical detachment from him as the woman's patriarchal guardian.

In effect, one notices the way in which, subsequent to this dialogue, the narrative further underscores the unbearable position of the woman within the male dominated world which she inhabits:

Of late, to break the monotony of her life, she had harrassed her husband into letting her go riding with him, occasionally, on horseback. She was never allowed to go out alone. The country truly was not safe, lawless and crude (p. 550).

But she had her own horse, and she dreamed of being free as she had been as a girl, among the hills of California.(p. 550).

...
She set off without a qualm, riding astride on her strong roan horse ... Peering into the distance, she set off from her home. Manuel and the little boy stood in the gateway to watch her go. She did not even turn to wave them farewell (p. 551).

In a way reminiscent of Aaron's escape from the felt suffocation of domesticity regardless of his wife's and children's destinies, the woman of this story finally transgresses the

established patriarchal order by abandoning husband and children; as she does so, it is clear that the reader is invited to regard it not as an immoral act but as a vital necessity.

2. A precarious modernity

The fact that this woman ostensibly challenges male authority should not mislead us into regarding her as a proto-feminist.¹⁴ That she is not a modern woman is something which the narrative consistently stresses before the Indians enter the fictional arena:

Curiously she was not afraid, although it was a frightening country, the silent, fatal-seeming mountain slopes, the occasional distant, suspicious, elusive natives among the trees, the great carrion birds occasionally hovering, like great flies, in the distance, over some carrion or some ranch-house or some group of houses ... Curious that she was neither afraid nor lonely. Indeed, the loneliness was like a drink of cold water to one who is very thirsty. And a *strange* elation sustained her from within. She ... camped at night ... She had seen cattle and had crossed several trails. There must be a ranch not far off. She heard the strange wailing shriek of a mountain-lion, and the answer of dogs. But she ... was not really afraid. She was buoyed up always by the curious, bubbling elation within her (pp. 551-52).

Commenting on this excerpt Balbert explains that faced with the wilderness of this land this woman 'is dazed enough to ignore the coded scenery that warns her of the murder beyond the hills'.¹⁵ Balbert implies that this is a romantically humanized description of nature. To be sure, the mystery which this scenery exudes, the speaking voices it contains, together with the seemingly fatalistic signs that inhere in it, yield a very romantic image of nature. But this romantic perception of nature does not predicate on the *text* itself, but on the *agent* who focalizes this scenery. While the voice of the narrator intermingles with the represented perception of the woman so as to stress the extraordinarily courageous nature of her escape ('Curiously she was not afraid ...') and justify it once again as being vitally necessary ('the loneliness was like a drink of cold water to one who is very thirsty'), the representation of the woman's visualization of the landscape dramatically corroborates the earlier narratorial indictment of the woman's 'foolish romanticism'.

14. According to Holbrook, Lawrence would be allegedly 'full of rage against the white, "independent", self-conscious woman', *Where D. H. Lawrence Was Wrong About Women*, p. 123; similarly, Rudnick contends that through the heroine Lawrence reveals his 'terror of the modern woman', 'D. H. Lawrence's New World Heroine: Mabel Dodge Luhan', 99.

15. Balbert, p. 119.

Added to the woman's romanticism, the story explicitly underlines her lack of political consciousness:

And now, as she neared, more or less, her destination, she began to go vague and disheartened. ... She was weary and spent with her two nights in the open, afraid of the coming night. She didn't know where she was going, or what she was going for. Her horse plodded dejectedly on, towards that immense and forbidding mountain-slope, following a stony little trail. And if she had had any will of her own left, she would have turned back, to the village, to be protected and sent home to her husband (pp. 552-53).

This insight vividly reveals the woman's breakout not as *consciously* motivated as are Lou's or Lady Chatterley's respective challenges to the preordained social order but as rooted in a purely physical necessity or, more accurately, as instinctively prompted. Hence the woman's crisis at this point, incidentally calling forth the very title of the story. Having no real awareness of what she is riding away from or where she is riding to, the woman now hesitates, as if transitorily tempted to return to the secure haven of patriarchal marriage and transfer the responsibility of her own life to her husband. As the closing statement makes clear, the woman eventually rides on for the same reason that she rode away in the first place: because her instincts once again take over her conscious will, which is the will of her old subjugated female self. Ultimately, it is the woman's 'yielding to the intimate urging of her blood' and her surrendering of 'civilised certainties' which the narration punctuates.¹⁶

This links with another important insight into the woman's mind:

She lay wrapped in her blanket looking at the stars, listening to her horse shivering, and feeling like a woman who has died and passed beyond. She was not sure that she had not heard, during the night, a great crash at the centre of herself, which was the crash of her own death. Or else it was a crash at the centre of the earth, and meant something big and mysterious (p. 552).

This is undoubtedly one of the most dramatic turning points in the story. In this passage one attends to the woman's mental process as she strives to comprehend the experience she has undergone 'during the night'. The insight is unquestionably cryptic, but only to the extent that the experience is ineffable — out of *conscious* reach — for the woman herself. This in turn explains the characteristic semantic elusiveness of the entire excerpt, as well as

16. Balbert, p. 120.

its dubitative and hypothetical morpho-syntactic texture. In the last instance, the reader is pushed into a similar epistemological search, for just as the woman tries to translate her feelings into verbal language, so does the reader strive to elucidate the import of her feelings through her own confused discourse. Of course, the surrounding narrative context provides the reader with sufficient clues to interpret her experience as that of a woman suffering from what we might call an existentialist anguish: that of an individual in the process of breaking the ties which, although impeding her development as an independent human being, nevertheless provided her with some sense of security and belonging, an axial 'centre' to which she could turn and rest.¹⁷

So far I have dwelled on the precariousness of the heroine's modernity, a precariousness which I have defined in terms of the woman's romantic imagination and her intellectual inability to understand the significance of her own flight. To this one should add her adherence to some of the values, indeed gender definitions, characteristic of the male-dominated world which she has left behind. Her collusion with male-centred ideology is explicitly educed in the way she relates to the Indians as she meets them for the first time:

She met his black, large, bright eyes, and for the first time her spirit really quailed. The man's eyes were not human to her, and they did not see her as a beautiful white woman. He looked at her with a black, bright inhuman look, and saw no woman in her at all. As if she were some strange, unaccountable thing, incomprehensible to him, but inimical. She sat in her saddle in wonder, feeling once more as if she had died (p. 555).

This passage represents the woman's perception of the young Indian and her personal interpretation of how *he seems to perceive her*. One notices her disappointment at the thought that the Indian does not appreciate her female beauty, a thought which distinctly indicates her subliminal attachment to the phallogocentric world epitomized by her husband. Therefore what the text ostensibly highlights in this excerpt is that this woman, although having *physically* escaped patriarchal bondage, still remains under the rule of deeply ingrained patriarchal values; she 'attempts to make the Aztecs scrutable through

17. The similarity between this woman's experience and the phenomenon of modern individuality as theorized by Erich Fromm in his *The Fear of Freedom* are noticeable. The parallels between Lawrence and Erich Fromm have actually been examined with great acumen by Daniel J. Schneider in his *D. H. Lawrence: The Artist as Psychologist* (KANSAS: The University Press of Kansas, 1984), pp. 260-75.

conventional formulae of female will and sexuality that she has *learned* in her own world'.¹⁸ It is precisely in this light that one should approach the following piece of information: 'She waited for him to help her down. He merely stood holding the horse's bridle' (p. 556). What this short extract brings to the fore is, once again, the woman's unknowing adherence to a male system of values, gender codes of behaviour which, binding as they are in the male dominated world she has ridden away from, do not appear to prevail amongst these Indians.¹⁹

Later in the story, one comes across another important passage which further illustrates the way in which the heroine of 'The Woman Who Rode Away' enters the intricate path towards emancipation carrying with her an internalized repository of residual patriarchal values:

The men were not interested in her nor in her belongings. There they squatted with their hats on their heads, eating, eating mechanically, like animals. ... And they showed no more sign of interest in her than if she had been a piece of venison they were bringing home from the hunt, and had hung inside a shelter ... she had a moment's thrill of fear and anxiety ... Would they attack her now?

But no! They were as if oblivious to her (p. 557).

Here is a woman who, imbued with male values, assumes that femaleness naturally sparks off sexual desirability amongst men. Nevertheless, matters are more complicated than this. One notices that just as the woman reifies her femaleness — she perceives it as a sexually attractive *thing* — she is in turn disturbed by the idea that for these Indians she may be an 'unaccountable thing' or a 'piece of venison'. That is to say, she reifies herself while simultaneously fearing the thought of the Indians's reifying her. It is important to stress that such contradictoriness inheres in the woman's mind; failing to appreciate it one might risk taking this passage as putting the reader on an ideological spot.

There is yet another question to be tackled in relation to this particular insight: the woman's fear of being attacked. Given the context, it is obvious that hers is the same fear of rape which assails Dollie Urquhart in 'The Princess'. There is an important difference

18. Balbert, p. 121; my emphasis.

19. In *Mornings in Mexico* (1927) Lawrence reflects upon the Mexicans' attitude toward white men and women and concludes: 'To them a white man or white woman is a sort of phenomenon; just as a monkey is a sort of phenomenon; something to watch, and wonder at, and laugh at, but not to be taken on one's own plane'; reprinted in *Mornings in Mexico and Etruscan Places* (London: Heinemann, 1956), p. 24.

between these two stories, however: one recalls that prior to Dollie's rape the narration has amply justified her fear by situating her in a world where male violence is dominant and, more important, by disclosing the terms in which the Mexican aggressor apprehends her (as prey). In comparison, one never gets the sense that the Indians of 'The Woman Who Rode Away' are in the least sexually interested in her, not even as game. It is here where one is likely to feel some discomfort, for her fear invites ridicule when contrasted with the Indian's disinterestedness. Yet this begs for some circumspection, especially because the fact remains that the Indians' impersonality is in turn the woman's assumption, one which the narration neither affirms nor denies by keeping the Indians' thoughts about her out of reach.

3. Female emancipation and/or white colonialism

Actually when the narration does represent the Indian's perception of the woman, her *womanhood* issues as inextricable from her *whiteness*:

The young man looked at her. ... He saw, in the full evening light, the faint sub-smile of *assurance* on her rather large, calm, *fresh-complexioned face*; the weary, *bluish lines* under her large *blue eyes*; and in her eyes, as she *looked down on him*, a half-childish, *half-arrogant confidence* in her own *female power*. But in her eyes also, a curious look of trance (p. 554; my emphasis).

One may be driven to present this description as evidence attesting to Lawrence's acrimony vis-à-vis the heroine. Undoubtedly, it smacks of spite against the woman. Yet, rather than *asserting* that the woman *is* in actual fact self-assured and 'arrogant', the narration at this point conveys the Indian's apprehension of her. The key point to realize on this account is that the Indian's perception of the woman is *ironically* invalidated beforehand because, prior to it, the reader has been provided with many insights into the woman's mind cataphorically proving the Indian's apprehension of her self-assuredness as completely misleading. Or else this excerpt is representing not the resentful reaction of a man against a seemingly independent woman but the antagonistic response of the representative of a colonized people against what the latter perceives as an embodiment of white colonialism.²⁰

20. For an extensive examination of the racial question in this story refer to Mark Kinkead-Weekes, 'Gringo Senora Who Rode Away', *The D. H. Lawrence Review*, 22 (1990), 251-65.

Further problems intervene, however, when one comes across the following narratorial statement:

The black eyes watched her shrewdly. She, for all her weariness, smiled faintly in the pride of her own adventure and the assurance of her own womanhood, and the spell of madness that was on her (p. 554).

Here the focalizing agent is no longer the Indian but the narrator. It is rather remarkable that at this point the narrator appropriates the Indian's phraseology — 'arrogance' becomes 'pride', and 'confidence in her own power' turns into 'assurance of her own womanhood'. In so making the narrator formally concur with the Indian's view of the woman, the import of the latter's is felt to gain credence. Yet at the same time one notes the apologetically justifying tone inherent in the narrator's appeal to her 'weariness' and 'the spell of madness that was on her'. In other words, while fundamentally concurring with the Indian's perception of the woman, the narrator simultaneously presents her apparent arrogance as rooted not in her femaleness but in her tragic flaw, that is, her romantic inclination. Then, there is the ironic phrase 'the assurance of her own womanhood': ironic, indeed, insofar as the narration, before reaching this point, has predisposed the reader to regard the woman's perception of her own femaleness not so much as *her own* but as her *colonial capitalist male husband's* for whom his wife is at once a commodity *and* an almost sacred goddess:

In a way, he *doted on her*. He never quite got over his *dazzled admiration* of her ... He *admired* his wife *to extinction*, he *admired her body*, all her points (p. 547; my emphasis).

Therefore one seems to be faced here with a woman whose very sense of (female) identity is 'given', not just 'by her whiteness, and her colonial status as a Señora', but by *her own subliminally colonized status*.²¹

Although gender and race appear in this story as almost inextricable, the fact is that, as in 'The Princess', race does not ultimately supersede gender: the narrative, in other words, does not in the least condone the Indians' behaviour towards the woman *on racial grounds*. It is accurate to say that when the Indians come into the arena this woman's adherence to those very values and gender conceptions which constitute the ideological support of her subservient status within Lederman's world is consistently underlined. But it

21. Kinkead-Weekes, p. 255.

is also true that it obstructs any potential praise of the Indians' world as a viable, least of all desirable alternative:

She met his black, large, bright eyes, and for the first time *her spirit really quailed*. ... She sat in her saddle in wonder, feeling once more as if she had died (p. 555; my emphasis).

Notably, this insight calls forth the very beginning of the story, especially that particular moment in which we read that '[w]hen she actually *saw* what [her husband] had accomplished, *her heart quailed*' (p. 546; hold-faced characters mine). The effect of this remarkable parallelism is that of bringing the Indians onto an equal footing with Lederman, thus presenting the woman's journey as circular, non-progressive. Considered in this light, her 'feeling once more as if she had died' would anaphorically intimate not so much the 'crash' which she thought she had heard while camping at night in the open, but that other metaphorical death she appears to have undergone after marrying Lederman: 'Her conscious development had stopped mysteriously with her marriage, completely arrested' (p. 547). Her riding away drags her back to square one, having merely exchanged Lederman's '[*moral*] slavery' (p. 547; my emphasis) for the Indians' *physical* captivity.²² Like Aaron's 'flight to freedom', it is as if her journey '[had] no meaning beyond the single act of going away'.²³

4. Demystifying primitivism

Having come full circle, the second and third sections of 'The Woman Who Rode Away' read as an extended and carefully handled demystification of the Indians' primitive society. This demystifying process begins at the moment in which the reader is made to follow the woman as she approaches the Indians' homeland:

And the track curved round and down, till at last in the full blaze of the mid-morning sun, they could see a valley below them, *between walls of rock*, as in a great chasm let in the mountains. A green valley, with a river,

22. This circular narrative design which we have already seen operating in other stories ought to be compared with Lawrence's anti-evolutionary conceptualization of history such as he expressed it in several non-fictional works; this conceptualization is particularly explicit in *Mornings in Mexico*, where Lawrence expresses his conviction that progression is not linear but circular: 'Strange that we should think in straight lines, when there are none, and talk of straight courses, when every course, sooner or later, is seen to be making the sweep round, swooping upon the centre', p. 36; see also p. 4 for Lawrence's position vis-à-vis the concept of 'evolution'.

23. John Goode, 'D. H. Lawrence', in *The Twentieth Century (Sphere History of Literature in the English Language, vol. 7)*, edited by Bernard Bergonzi (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1970), pp. 106-52 (p. 144).

and trees, and *clusters* of low flat sparkling houses. It was all tiny and perfect, *three thousand feet below*. ... There it was, all small and perfect, looking magical, as any place will look magical, seen from the mountains above (pp. 558-59; my emphasis).

This is a multi-perspectival panoramic view of the Indians' habitat. The subtle irony which permeates it cannot go unnoticed: at an overt level, the irony emerges from the sudden narratorial generalization closing this passage, the effect of which is that of breaking the 'magic' spell which the narration creates at the outset; at a more covert level, the irony inheres in the syntactic structure of the excerpt, and more specifically in the two appositional phrases — 'three thousand feet below' and 'looking magical' — which negatively qualify the alleged 'perfection' and 'magical' nature of the place as a mere optical illusion. One might even go further to suggest that the distorting effects of *distance* to which this passage alludes intimates the misrepresentation issuing from *perspectival detachment* in general: not merely spatial but temporal, that is, historical. Herein lies one of the principal thrusts of this story, the way it sheds light upon the woman's lack of historical perspective and her resulting failure to recapture for the present that which is actually an *a priori sentimentalized past*.

In spite of its magical aura, the physical world which the woman — and the reader with her — now enters conveys the same sense of imprisonment as does the one from which she has run away:

They passed the maize, and came to a big *wall* or earth-work made of earth and adobe bricks. The wooden doors were open. Passing on, they were in a *network* of *small* gardens, full of flowers and herbs and fruit trees, each garden watered by a *tiny* ditch of running water. Among each *cluster* of trees and flowers was a *small*, glittering white house, *windowless*, and with a *closed door*. The place was a *network* of *little* paths, *small* streams, and *little* bridges among square, flowering gardens (p. 561; my emphasis).

In view of all the greenery and abundance of water which superficially characterizes this site one would be inclined to think that the woman now is entering into some kind of Shangri'La. But the truth is other: taking the first descriptive passage cited earlier, for example, one realizes that an overwhelming sense of enclosure and impossibility of movement (see italics) is what actually lurks beneath the manifestly welcoming nature of the place. In the second excerpt, this impression augments in the face of the manifest

proliferation of elements semantically connoting the idea of confinement (see italics). In so encoding these physical descriptions, the narration would ostensibly suggest that the woman has reached the bottom of a literal cul-de-sac. This landscape, after all, is a replica of the one which is described at the beginning. As she gets to the end of this closed passage, the woman becomes a *literal* prisoner:

When she was thus dressed, they took her away, barefoot, to a little house in the stockaded garden. The young Indian ... brought in a jar, together with a long wooden bowl. Then he fastened the gate-door of her house, and left her a prisoner (p. 564).

It is evident that in so explicitly foregrounding her condition as prisoner the narration prevents any sentimental perception of the Indians. And, more important, it precludes any interpretation of her staying as 'masochistic'.²⁴ This must be borne in mind, especially in view of the woman's future conduct and the terms in which several critics have negatively reacted to it.

The final outcome of the woman's "adventure" has given rise to variegated and sometimes opposed interpretations.²⁵ This is not surprising in view of the various intensely problematic passages it incorporates, as for example the scene in which the woman is stripped before the older men of this tribe:

[The young Indian] looked at the two men by the door. They came quickly forward, and suddenly gripped her arms as she stood, without hurting her, but with great power. Then two of the old men came, and with curious skill slit her boots down with keen knives, and drew them off, and slit her clothing so that it came away from her. In a few moments she stood there white and uncovered. The old man on the bed spoke, and they turned her round for him to see. He spoke again, and the young Indian deftly took the pins and comb from her fair hair, so that it fell over her shoulders in a bunchy tangle.

24. It is Laurence Steven's conviction that Lawrence actually 'characterizes the woman as a masochistic thrill-seeker [wanting] to be victimized'; "'The Woman Who Rode Away': D. H. Lawrence's Cul-de-Sac', *English Studies in Canada*, 10 (1984), 209-20 (p. 214).

25. Representative negative reactions to the ending of 'The Woman Who Rode Away' can be found in Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics*, pp. 285-87; Lois P. Rudnick, 'D. H. Lawrence's New World Heroine: Mabel Dodge Luhan', *The D. H. Lawrence Review*, 14 (1980), 85-111; Frank Kermode, *D. H. Lawrence* (New York: Viking Press, 1973), esp. p. 119; Sandra M. Gilbert, 'The Female Imagination and the Modernist Aesthetic', *Women's Studies*, 13 (1986), 1-10. For more even-handed interpretations, the reader should refer to: Elizabeth M. Wallace, 'The Circling Hawk: Philosophy of Knowledge in Polany and Lawrence', *The Challenge of D. H. Lawrence*, edited by Michael Squires and Keith Cushman (London and Madison, Wis.: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), pp. 103-20; see also her 'Teaching Lawrence: Raise Your Hand — How Many of You Buy a Record Album and then Play it Only Once?', *The D. H. Lawrence Review*, 19 (1987), 318-24; Mark Kinkead-Weekes, 'The Gringo Senora Who Rode Away', *The D. H. Lawrence Review*, 22 (1990), 251-65; Sheila MacLeod, *Lawrence's Men and Women*, esp. pp. 143-46.

Then the old man spoke again. The Indian led her to the bedside. The white-haired, glassy-dark old man moistened his fingertips at his mouth, and most delicately touched her on the breasts and on the body, then on the back. And she winced strangely each time, as the finger-tips drew along her skin, as if Death itself were touching her (pp. 563-64).

This is unquestionably one of the most elusive passages contained in 'The Woman Who Rode Away', especially when it comes to elucidating who is the actual focalizer which mediates it. At first it would appear that the narration now registers the woman's visual perceptions and sensations. But then, as one is offered a view of the woman from behind, it would appear that the passage is focalized by the narrator. After this, the narration seems to become dual, for now it appears to represent both the woman's *felt sensations* as she is touched and the narrator's *visualization* of the man touching her ('[the old man] touched her on the breasts and on the body, then on the back'). But perhaps most disturbing is the interpretive *possibility* which the passage itself allows in through the insertion of the loosely polysemic verb 'wince': namely, the potentiality of being confronted here with an "impossible perspective" catching the finger's touching the woman's back and the painful expression on her face at once, as if the old man's touch and the narrator's sight were now indistinct.

This links with the stance which the narration compels the reader to assume in the course of the entire scene, one which can be better appreciated by comparing it with the rape scene in 'The Princess'. As I remarked in Chapter 3, the power of the rape scene in 'The Princess' derives from the fact that the reader is situated *within* Dollie's mind while she is being raped; in contrast, the reader is compelled to remain an *outsider* as the woman is stripped by the Indians, that is, the narration assigns the reader the uncomfortable position of *voyeur*. Not surprisingly, Gilbert protests that at this point 'The Woman Who Rode Away' turns into a pseudo-pornographic exultation over the woman's humiliating experience.²⁶ It is undeniable that the scene verges on the pornographic; whether it 'exults over' the woman's ordeal is a moot point.

Actually the resistance which the reader may feel in so being compelled to a *voyeuristic* position is not a mere matter of pragmatics. Of course, the text writes in the

26. Gilbert, 'The Female Imagination', 5

reader's external standpoint. But the preceding context has already predisposed the reader to react against such a stance and, concomitantly, to be disapproving of the Indians' comportment. First of all, as was the case with Romero in 'The Princess', the narrative up to this point has kept the Indians' mental workings at bay, thus preventing us from considering their behaviour towards the woman in what would have been perhaps a more sympathetically understanding light. Above all, when this passage arises the narration has sufficiently elicited that the Indians' ceremonies — in particular their killings — are devoid of any ritualistic import. In particular, one recalls the dialogue between Lederman and the young engineer before the woman sets off; in the course of that dialogue it becomes evident that the Indians are fully aware of what killing somebody means in modern civilization:

'They kill a missionary at sight. And where a missionary can't get, nobody can.'

'But what does the government say?'

'They're so far from everywhere, the government leaves 'em alone. And they're wily; if they think there'll be trouble, they send a delegation to Chihuahua and make a formal submission' (p. 549).

Not only does Lederman's remark punctuate the Indian's integration in civilized society, however marginal it might be, it also and far more importantly lays bare the Indians' compliance with the rules of the game.²⁷ As such compliance suggests, their killings are no longer a matter of ritual sacrifice *in their own eyes*, but of plain murder. Lederman's speech, therefore, functions as a reminder of the Indians' rootedness in history, as does the encoding of the following conversation between the woman and the young Indian:

'But,' she faltered, 'why do you hate us so? Why do you hate me?'

He looked up suddenly with a light smile on his face, and a startling flame of a smile.

'No, we don't hate,' he said softly, looking with a curious glitter into her face.

'You do,' she said, forlorn and hopeless.

And after a moment's silence, he rose and went away (pp. 571-72).

Clearly one is not enticed into regarding these Indians as a primitive people religiously holding on to archaic rituals in the midst of contemporary society; instead, they emerge as a 'tormented' colonized race getting their revenge on the colonizer by using the woman as a

27. 'But the great white monkey has got hold of the keys of the world, and the black-eyed Mexican has to serve the great white monkey, in order to live. He has to learn the tricks of the white monkey-show'. D. H. Lawrence, *Mornings in Mexico*, p. 26.

scapegoat. This is something which the Indian's silence particularly evinces: a silence which at once buttresses the woman's assumption that she is a murder victim and ominously foreshadows her doom.²⁸

It is obvious that before being confronted with the pseudo-ritualistic scene under consideration the narration has already foreclosed any possible appraisal of it from a religious standpoint, as well as the reader's adopting the impassive position of ritual observers. The grounds have already been laid for the reader to deem this "ritualistic stripping" as nothing but sheer physical abuse.

A second difficult passage raises similar problems towards the end. I am referring to the excerpt which addresses woman's independence and whose apparently enthusiastic prophecy of a regression to female subservience has provoked many hostile reactions. To be sure, the reference to the 'Mene Mene Tekel Upharsin' (p. 569) particularly endows the entire vision with prophetic force. Matters complicate, however, when one realizes, first of all, that this is not the narrator's *unitary vision*.

This passage opens with a narratorial statement: 'For hours and hours she watched, spellbound, and as if drugged' (p. 269)'. One notices how this voice announces the forthcoming *representation* of the woman's vision. And, more important, it *cataphorically* denaturalizes this forthcoming vision by presenting it from the outset as irrational and artificially induced. Given that what follows is the representation of sensuous perceptions (the sound of the 'drumming' and the 'singing', and the vision of the 'dance') one is inclined to surmise that the announced narrative shift has now occurred. Yet an unsettling statement crops up: 'she seemed at last to feel her own death; her own obliteration'. In view of this *hypothetical* construction the narration encodes two equally plausible interpretations: either this is the narrator trying to interpret the woman's feelings, or the sentence articulates the woman's hesitant conviction of feeling now 'her own death'. The latter is not as far fetched as it might first appear, especially as it calls forth once again that moment in the first section:

28. Peter Balbert, p. 124.

She was not sure that she had not heard, during the night, a great crash at the centre of the earth, which was the crash of her own death. Or else it was a crash at the centre of the earth, and meant something big and mysterious (p. 552).

Moreover, one needs to bear in mind that the woman's feeling of death towards the end immediately follows her vision of a dance where men are foxes (hunters) and women birds (preys). Therefore, one may be given to deduce that her feeling dead is the result of her identifying herself with the women/birds, the potential victims of the hunt which the dance symbolizes.

The next sentence reads: 'As if she were to be obliterated from the field of life again.' In relation to this clause, Gilbert comments that the adverb 'again' smacks of 'the destruction of another "highly bred white woman" — Mrs Morel, in *Sons and Lovers*'.²⁹ A more accurate view would be to suggest that the referent of this deictic is in fact *diegetic*, which is to say that it anaphorically points to that previously experienced state (a kind of vegetative condition or death-in-life) to which the narrative alludes at the beginning of the story: 'her conscious development had stopped mysteriously with her marriage, completely arrested' (p. 547). The essential matter to consider is that in so calling forth her deadly marital condition, the narration now would be stressing once more the circular pattern of the woman's experience.

A second problem is the way the passage alludes to 'womanhood' within a present tense context:

Her kind of womanhood, intensely personal and individual, was to be obliterated again, and the great primeval symbols were to tower once more over the fallen independence of woman. The sharpness and the quivering nervous consciousness of the highly-bred white woman was to be destroyed again, womanhood was to be cast once more into the great stream of impersonal sex and impersonal passion (p. 569).

Formally, this statement transgresses fictional borders as it appears to point to the past *history* of women's oppression. At the same time, however, the opening statement of the excerpt calls forth an earlier statement with a similarly universal import and which ostensibly contradicts the one under consideration: 'Curious that she was not afraid nor lonely. Indeed, the loneliness was like a drink of cold water to one who is very thirsty' (p.

29. Gilbert, 5.

552). Furthermore, the gender issue ('womanhood') appears to be juxtaposed with the double question of 'consciousness' and 'individualism' inextricably linked to the white race to which the woman belongs. Finally, the last two terms are directly contrasted to 'impersonality', that is, an impersonal mode of consciousness such as one would want to associate with mythical primitivism. The point is that gender, race and primitivism are so tightly knotted together in this excerpt that it frustrates any attempt to pull out their ends. The reader is thus compelled at this point to acquiesce to the inseparable coexistence of all three issues. At most, one is permitted to suspend any definite judgement and further ask whether or not the balance ultimately tilts to one side or another.

5. A final aporia

The closing "sacrificial" scene of 'The Woman Who Rode Away' has caught most scholars' attention, especially for its characteristic phallic imagery.³⁰ That the scene is loaded with sexual overtones does not need further emphasis. Instead, it is paramount to recognize that, inasmuch as the narrative assigns the woman protagonist the role of focalizer, she herself is the source of such phallic imagery:

On either side the dry pool the lines of dancers had formed, and the dance was continuing without intermission, against a background of bushes.

But what she *felt* was that fanged inverted pinnacle of ice, hanging from the lip of the dark precipice above. And behind the great rope of ice she *saw* the leopard-like figures of priests climbing the hollow cliff face, to the cave that like a dark socket bored a cavity, an orifice, half-way up the crag (p. 579; my emphasis).

...
Turning to the sky, she looked at the yellow sun. It was sinking. The shaft of ice was like a shadow between her and it. And she realized that the yellow rays were filling half the cave, though they had not reached the altar where the fire was, at the far end of the funnel-shaped cavity.

Yes, the rays were creeping round slowly. As they grew ruddier, they penetrated farther. When the red sun was about to sink, he would shine full through the shaft of ice deep into the hollow of the cave, to the innermost (pp. 580-81).

The sexual innuendoes that pervade her vision clearly arise from the very specificity of the objects to which she herself assigns saliency (the 'sun' and its 'yellow rays', the 'shaft of ice', the 'fire' which is located at the end of the 'cavity') and the way she hypnotically

30. For an interpretation of the phallic symbolism that runs through the sacrificial scene see Lois P. Rudnick, 'D. H. Lawrence's New World Heroine', 99.

concentrates on the changing direction of the rays. In her selective perception of her surroundings she subliminally converts the whole setting into a symbolic space of sexual intercourse. In turn, this symbolic (impersonal) space becomes humanized (personal) as the 'sun' ceases to be *for the woman* an inanimate thing — an 'it' — and becomes in turn humanly sexualized — a 'he'.

In view of these sexually overloaded visions, one needs to take heed of two important facts: as I observed earlier, the narration has alerted the reader beforehand that these visions are artificially induced, thus obstructing any possible reading of them as evidence attesting to the woman's conversion to the Indians' faith; rather, one is driven to conclude in the face of them that the Indians have finally overcome her by sheer exhaustion ('The Indians, with their heavily religious natures, had made her succumb to their vision', p. 574). This links with the second point: coming across these passages, it would appear that the woman is acting as a medium of the Indians' vision, particularly of the old priest's. Not only do the Indians manage to turn her into such by drug consumption; there is also the very position she is compelled to adopt, namely one in which she cannot avoid the constant contemplation of all the shiny objects which fill the cave.³¹ Hence these visions actually dramatise some kind of 'magnetic' process whereby the old priest presiding over the ceremony appears to transmigrate into the woman's body and *utter* his own *vision* from within it.³²

The closing lines of the story focus in a more overt way upon the thought transference process referred to above. Here the woman stares at the old priest who is

31. This argument draws from Barthes's analysis of Poe's 'La vérité sur le cas de M. Valdemar': a propos of the phenomenon of Mesmerism in connection with Poe's tale, Barthes informs us: '[Mesmer] and the Marquis Armand de Puységur ... discovered that magnetism could provoke somnambulism ...; in 1829, it appears that it had been possible, under hypnosis, to carry out the painless ablation of a tumour; in 1845 ... Braid of Manchester codified hypnosis by provoking nervous fatigue through the contemplation of a shining object'; he then goes on to define 'magnetism' as something 'fluid' which 'passes from one subject to another'. Whether Lawrence had Poe's tale in mind when writing 'The Woman Who Rode Away' lies beyond the scope of my argument. Suffice it to suggest that the ending of Lawrence's story smacks of Mesmerism, just as much as does his predecessor's; Roland Barthes, 'Textual Analysis of Poe's "Valdemar"', in *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, edited by Robert Young (London and New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), pp. 133-61 (p. 144).

32. In a way, this is something which Wallace herself appears to intuit when observing that the narrative ostensibly illustrates that the primitive can only be experienced by a 'dissolving mind'; Elizabeth M. Wallace, 'The Circling Hawk', p. 115.

himself watching the sun. Interestingly, the man's eyes are described as 'black mirrors', thus suggesting again that the woman is under hypnotic influence: in so looking into the man's mirror-like eyes, she is in fact looking straight into the 'sun'. This further illuminates the transition from past tense narration to a kind of prophetic tense:

They were anxious, terribly anxious, and fierce. Their ferocity wanted something, and they were waiting the moment. And their ferocity was ready to leap out into a mystic exultance, of triumph. But they were anxious.

Only the eyes of the oldest man were not anxious. Black, and fixed, and as if sightless, they watched the sun, seeing beyond the sun. And in their black, empty concentration there was power, power intensely abstract and remote, but deep, deep to the heart of the earth, and the heart of the sun. In absolute motionlessness he watched till the red *should send* his ray through the column of ice. Then the old man *would strike*, and strike home, accomplish the sacrifice and achieve the power.

The mastery that man *must hold*, and that *passes* from race to race (p. 581; my emphasis).

Admitting that this is quite a discomfiting ending, the uneasiness partly derives from the way in which the narrative so insistently brings into sharp focus the 'anxiety' felt by the Indians themselves. But this feeling is then juxtaposed to their 'ferocity', thus turning their 'anxiety' into something more than eagerness and desire. There is no subterfuge here, for the narration explicitly unveils, as so often before, the murderous quality of the event which is about to occur as well as the Indians' conscious awareness of their own complicity in the killing. Therefore this is no encomium of a primitivist ritual, but rather an overt acknowledgement of the inability of this primitive people to transcend their personal rootedness in history.

Some uneasiness arises too from the blurred identity that lies behind the last prophetic utterance. Formally, it is possible to interpret it as the woman now reading and articulating the old priest's thoughts. But as key words are reiterated — 'power, power', 'deep, deep', 'the heart of the earth, and the heart of the sun' — one is given the impression that two voices are simultaneously at work, as if the previously *disembodied* voice of the old Indian were now striving to break out. Then, the introduction of the perceptive verb 'watch' concurrent with a change of tense pointing towards a potential

future, would intimate that the priest's voice has finally materialized.³³ Once the narration allows this interpretive possibility to come in, the Indians may be seen to appropriate the role which they have been refused all along: the prerogative of speaking for themselves without any muffling mediation. At the same time, the woman appears to be irretrievably shut up, as in traditional patriarchal discourse.

This, however, is not the only interpretive possibility which the narration, in being so elusive, allows in. In fact, this cryptic coda also comes forth as a further instance of voice impersonation: while the *vision* is undoubtedly the Indians', the *voice* of the woman still prevails. In this new light the killing of the woman stands out as necessarily desirable: in so announcing her death, the narration forecloses any prospect of her regressive, phallogentric utterance having any resonance after she is gone.³⁴

The narrative culminates in a note of uncertainty: either this text finally liberates the Indians' voice so that they cease to be a discursive *object*, or it justifies the necessity to kill the woman so as to prevent the survival of a phallogentric discourse. Either way, the woman is silenced.

Yet there is more to this peculiar coda. As some critics have rightly pointed out, the 'mastery' to which the lines refer has never been dramatised in the course of this narrative.³⁵ In point of fact the Indians' claim to such mastery has been continually undercut by having been presented as a primitivistic sham and subterfuge. In this light, the prophetic message cannot but resound with intense irony and sheer disbelief. The very last line would then point to a different centre of consciousness, not just for the irony it carries with it, but also for the tense shift which closes the story with a universalizing present, ostensibly taking the reader beyond fictional boundaries. With the introduction of such a

33. Similarly Peter Balbert observes that this is 'the Chilchui's reading of a destiny in which they must prevail': 'The story concludes with a description of hypnotic absorption by the Chilchui as they prepare to kill the Woman ... Lawrence lets the rhythm of the fiction's lines precisely embody the vision of Indian experience', p. 127.

34. According to Graham Hough a 'different and weaker ending would be that the woman should live with the Chilchui, learn to know their gods, but remain herself — and then return to the world ... here Lawrence knows quite clearly that the sacrifice of the autonomy of the ego, its submergence by the flood of the unconscious, is a terrible thing, and that no compromise is possible'; *The Dark Sun: A Study of D. H. Lawrence* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., 1956), pp. 144-45.

35. Janice H. Harris, *The Short Fiction*, p. 187.

provocative, transfictional statement the narration would compel one to react with hostility. More specifically, the anger one may feel when confronted with this line is not extraneous to the text but encoded in it. It is a line which entices the reader into rejecting the Indians' alternative as a desirable goal: not only for the woman who rode away, but for any woman who might attempt to escape patriarchy. As Wallace shrewdly observes, the tale could be seen to emerge after all as 'a compelling statement on the final deathly consequence of trying to go backward rather than forward into consciousness'.³⁶

From the outset 'The Woman Who Rode Away' presents itself as a challenge to the culture text. Here is the story of a woman who rides away from a stereotypical patriarchal husband who refuses her any sense of subjecthood by deifying her while simultaneously — indeed, paradoxically — turning her into a marketable commodity. As she journeys into the mountains, the narrative progressively encodes an overwhelming atmosphere of helplessness and hopelessness. The woman, after all, falls into the hands of a people who, like her husband, both reify and deify her. Having apparently come full circle, the story ends with the announcement of the woman's death.

It could be argued that in so killing a woman who has courageously challenged patriarchy 'The Woman Who Rode Away' prevents her challenge 'from coming into fruition in lived experience', in the last instance '[remaining] a safer protagonist for the culture text'.³⁷ Admittedly, but there is yet another side to this story which at a deeper level of narration jeopardises a traditionally patriarchal praxis. I am alluding to the way in which the heroine, while muffled at the level of *plot*, emerges as the subject of her own discourse at a *structural* level. In effect, as I have indicated in the course of the foregoing exposition, she is the only one whose mental processes are unmediatedly represented, while her husband's and the Indians' are suppressed. It is precisely here where one ought to situate the inconclusiveness of 'The Woman Who Rode Away': in the end, the narrative does not permit the reader to decide whether or not the woman is actually silenced, an

36. Elizabeth M. Wallace, 'Teaching Lawrence: Raise Your Hand — How Many of You Buy a Record Album and then Play it Only Once?', 320.

37. Susan S. Lanser, *The Narrative Act: Point of View in Prose Fiction* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 261.

inconclusiveness which is paralleled at the level of plot, inasmuch as her death, albeit foreseen, is left unaccomplished.

With regard to the question of primitivism, the text positions itself quite unproblematically. 'The Woman Who Rode Away' progressively saps such primitivism in manifold ways, be it by foregrounding the Indians' brutality, or by making explicit that a regression to the primitive mode of consciousness which these Indians intimate is at the least undesirable, and at most virtually impossible, unless by artificial means. Insofar as primitivism cannot transcend history, it is presented as necessarily a sham; and inasmuch as it lacks authenticity, it is inherently destructive.³⁸ In brief, primitivism cannot and must not be a desirable point of reference. Ultimately, the narrative dramatizes not the impossibility of the woman breaking free from patriarchal bondage, as much as the impossibility of her successfully doing so by looking back into a sentimentalized past.

*ST MAWR: 'A RATTLING OF CHAINS'*³⁹

And your own soul will tell you that however false and foul our forms and systems are now, still, through the many centuries since Egypt, we have been living and struggling forwards along some road that is no road, and yet is a great life-development. We have struggled on, and on we must still go. We may have to smash things. Then let us smash. And our road may have to take a great swerve, that seems a retrogression.

But we can't go back.⁴⁰

It is generally agreed that *St Mawr* is a caustic assault on capitalism and its pervasive effects in society. Indeed, everything in this fictional world seems to be ruled by market values, be it personal relationships, personality, or even emotions. Conceding that *St Mawr* manifestly targets capitalism and, at a less overt level, its ideological grounds, commentators of this story tend to disagree in regard to Lou's final decision to withdraw

38. In *Mornings in Mexico*, D. H. Lawrence is explicit on this subject: 'The Indian way of consciousness is different from and fatal to our own way of consciousness. Our way of consciousness is different and fatal to the Indian. ... The fuller we realize, and accept, this, the better, and leave off trying, with fullsome sentimentalism, to render the Indian in our own terms ... [The] life of the Indian, his stream of conscious being, is just death to the white man', pp. 45-46.

39. 'The most unfree souls go west, and shout of freedom. The shout is a rattling of chains, always was'; D. H. Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977; first publ. in 1923), p. 12.

40. D. H. Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature*, p. 145.

from society altogether. More precisely, the debate centres around the question of whether or not Lou's resolution is hailed as a hopeful panacea in the midst of human decadence.⁴¹ Amongst those who perceive Lou's choice as unconvincing, some have contended that Lawrence actually falls into a kind of Schopenhauerian resignation.

The discussion over the ending hinges on the weight which critics have conceded to Mrs Witt's interventions as the story comes to a close. This is where *St Mawr* would prove most characteristically resistant: for here one is confronted with a fluid pattern of 'attraction and repulsion', as Schneider would put it, vis-à-vis its characters, especially as regards Mrs Witt and Lou and the different views they respectively represent.⁴² It is in the light of this fluidity that a reassessment of the ostensibly digressive history of Las Chivas is needed. As this study aims to illustrate, this shift importantly illuminates Lou's choice.

1. Swimming, drifting, floating fishes in the stream⁴³

From the opening paragraph of *St Mawr*, Lou Witt emerges as the immediate target of a highly ironic and intensely subjectivized narrator:

Lou Witt had had her own way so long, that by the age of twenty-five she didn't know where she was. Having one's own way landed one completely at sea (p. 21).

This is the introductory narratorial statement through which one is led into the world of *St Mawr*, an introduction which at once harks back to the world of *Kangaroo*, particularly in Jaz's analogous existential observation:

'Go into the middle of Australia and see how empty it is. You can't face emptiness long. You have to come back and do something to keep from

41. Unlike Moynahan, for whom this is an unproblematic 'boost to feminism', Harris discerns some ambivalence in relation to the 'feminist thrust' of *St Mawr*, especially in view of its dénouement; Julian Moynahan, 'Lawrence, Women, and the Celtic Fringe', in *Lawrence and Women*, edited by Anne Smith (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1978), pp. 132-34; Janice H. Harris, *The Short Fiction of D. H. Lawrence*, p. 291.

42. Daniel J. Schneider, 'Alternatives to Logocentrism in D. H. Lawrence', in *D. H. Lawrence*, edited by Peter Widdowson (London and New York: Longman, 1992), pp. 160-70 (p. 165). For Schneider, such would be the characteristic design of *The Rainbow*, a pattern which he in turn conceives as one of the formal means to which Lawrence resorts in an attempt 'to overcome the falsifications of logocentrism' (p. 164). The same pattern recurs in all the stories examined heretofore; as will be seen in due course, the concentric design of *St Mawr* acquires a dimension comparable to that assigned by Schneider to *The Rainbow*.

43. 'For the relatedness and interrelatedness of all things flows and changes and trembles like a stream, and like a fish in the stream the characters in the novel swim and drift and float and turn belly-up when they're dead', D. H. Lawrence's 'The Novel' (1925), originally published in *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine and Other Essays* (Philadelphia, December 1925); reprinted in D. H. Lawrence, *Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays*, edited by Bruce Steele (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 179-90 (p. 185).

being frightened at your own emptiness, and everything else's emptiness.⁴⁴

It is important to realize that in the staccato presentation of Lou the narrator of *St Mawr* does not so much deride Lou's womanly independence as much as it alludes (as Jaz does in *Kangaroo*) to Lou's individual autonomy ('[having] her own way') as illustrative of a universal human condition which encompasses both the encoded reader and the narrator ITSELF: 'Having *one's* own way landed *one* completely at sea' (p. 21; my emphasis). Through the selection of this clichéd metaphor, Lou's state is presented as paradigmatic of the profound sense of loss and sheer isolation which universally overcomes modern free individuals in the face of the infinity ('sea') of the universe. Furthermore, as the oxymoronic concatenation of 'landed' and 'sea' suggests, it is a feeling which ultimately and inevitably results in insecurity, or the free individual's sense of standing on very precarious grounds.

After introducing Lou as an ironized prototype of modern individuality, the narrator proceeds to uncover the myriad of internalized impersonal authorities to which this presumed *free* individual and her set would *submit* unawares. For example, the narrator begins by mordantly deriding Lou's behaviour as she complies with the rules dictated by conventional decorum. After seeing with 'dismay' that her mother is riding in Hyde Park with her groom, Lou feels immediately compelled 'to buy herself a horse and ride at her mother's side, for very decency's sake' (p. 26). Similarly, she willingly covers her self with a form which is wholly decreed by communal customary standards:

She, with her odd little *museau*, not exactly pretty, but very attractive; and her quaint air of playing at being well-bred, in a sort of charade game ... all this made up her charm and her failure. She didn't quite belong (p. 21).

This is one of the many examples of double-voiced narration typical of *St Mawr*.⁴⁵ Here the narrator mimicks the fictional community's favourable opinion of Lou's amiable countenance while simultaneously underscoring her courtesy as theatrical performance.

44. D. H. Lawrence, *Kangaroo* (London: Heinemann, 1955; first publ. in 1923), p. 207.

45. The double-voicedness of *St Mawr* is Avrom Fleishman's object of study in his 'He Do the Polia in Different Voices: Lawrence's Later Style', in *D. H. Lawrence: A Centenary Consideration*, edited by Peter Balbert and Phillip Marcus (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 169-79.

At this point the narrator's ironic portrayal of Lou does not differ much from Rico's, whose 'flirting' after getting married to Lou is also presented as a facade: 'He wouldn't be the handsome Rico if he didn't [flirt with other women still]' (p. 21). In this passage the reader hears the voice of Lou's community *and* her own speech — as the conjunction 'But' in the following sentence retrospectively indicates. Therefore her adherence to conventional forms does not merely come out as the object of the narrator's discourse, but also as the object of Lou's self-representation. Lou emerges at once as an actress in the social play of which we are spectators, and as one of its main scriptwriters.

In Lou's represented speech one immediately recognizes her bondage to and complicity with the more anonymous authority of capitalism: 'But she had "got" him' (p. 21). This sentence brings to the fore Lou's exacerbated attachment to market values: that is, her conception of marriage as property acquisition and her correlative commodification of Rico.⁴⁶ Herein lies one of the many ironies about Lou as we are made to perceive her at the beginning of *St Mawr*, that colluding with capitalism she in turn becomes its victim:

So what sort of American was she, after all?
And what sort of European was she either? *She didn't "belong"*
anywhere (p. 21; my emphasis).

Taken verbatim, this sentence simply conveys Lou's lack of national identity. Yet this statement stands too close to that in which we read that 'she had "got" [Rico]' for us not to observe the connection inhering in the typographical idiosyncrasy of both verbal forms. Lou's sense of national deracination is exposed as indicative of her being the victim of the capitalist system which she professedly supports: in a world where human beings like Rico are transformed by Lou and her likes into commodities, selfhood appears to become inextricable from 'belonging'. More precisely, the loss of one's self emerges as the insurmountable prerequisite for the redemption of one's lost self, whereupon the vicious circle of *St Mawr* comes to the forefront.

46. Lou's portrayal harks back to Lawrence's explication of the connection between the emergence of the social individual and his/her obsession with material acquisition in his essay on John Galsworthy: 'the whole necessity for thus materially insuring oneself with wealth, money, arises from the state of fear into which man falls who has lost ... his peculiar nuclear innocence, and fallen into fragmentariness'; 'John Galsworthy' (1927), first published in *Scrutinies By Various Writers*, edited by Edgell Rickword (London, 1928), reprinted in D. H. Lawrence, *Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays*, pp. 209-20 (p. 212). Once again, one notes the parallels between Lawrence and Erich Fromm. Refer to footnote 17.

In the next few pages, the reader bears witness to the way in which Lou and Rico engage in a pathetic quest to discover someone or something to which they might *belong*. In the public sphere, they anxiously strive to adhere to 'a certain layer of English society' (p. 23), a struggle which would seemingly be pursued in the private realm of their marriage too: as the narrator would want us to believe, their marital relationship is more a question of mutual 'nervous *attachment*' than of 'spontaneous passion' (p. 24; my emphasis).

From the outset, the reader is confronted with two modern youths striving to 'belong', to 'attach themselves to', to win public approval: as if they were trying to swim back ashore and away from the 'sea' where Lou is said to have 'landed'. As they swim towards firmer grounds, we watch them shed their too cumbersome selves and become unsubstantial forms; forms, that is, which they then strive to mould according to the actual exigencies of the market:

Rico was becoming an almost fashionable portrait painter. At least *he* was almost fashionable. And Lou too was almost fashionable: almost a hit (p. 23).

Soon afterwards a second detached observer is introduced into the arena: Mrs Witt. The moment she comes in, her own negative appreciation of this fictional world converges with the narrator's. Added to this, the narration assigns her a detached, superior stance, hence making her take a seat side by side with the narrator from which to behold a *spectacular* world. After seeing Mrs Witt so placed on an equal footing with the narrator, the reader is further manipulated into taking a seat 'by' Mrs Witt and not amongst Lou's set.

This the narrative achieves by temporarily, albeit significantly, dethroning the reader from the detached position s/he has enjoyed from the outset and forcing him/her to become one more actor in the play:

a) So, to the great misgiving of Rico, behold Mrs Witt in splendidly tailored habit and perfect boots, a smart black hat on her smart grey hair, riding a grey gelding as smart as she was, and looking down her conceited, inquisitive, scornful, aristocratic-democratic Louisiana nose at the people in Picadilly, as she crossed to the Row, followed by the taciturn shadow of Phoenix, who sat on a chest with three white feet as if he had grown there.

b) In she sailed, ... — And yes, there were lovely girls ... And awfully well-groomed papas, and tight mamas who looked as if they were going to pour tea between the ears of their horses ...

c) Rico and Lou, sliding round Hyde Park Corner and up Park Lane in their car would watch the steely horsewoman and the saturnine groom with a sort of dismay. Mrs Witt seemed to be pointing a pistol at the bosom of every other horseman or horsewoman, and announcing: *Your virility or your life!— Your femininity or your life!* She didn't know herself what she really wanted them to be: but it was something as democratic as Abraham Lincoln and as aristocratic as a Russian Czar, as highbrow as Arthur Balfour, and as taciturn and unideal as Phoenix. Everything at once (pp. 25-26; bold-faced characters mine).

Coming up against these passages some commentators have by-passed the way in which the reader is forced into continuously shifting positions. This has led them to conclude in the face of them that Mrs Witt is a figure which one is made to look at with disdain.⁴⁷ There is, to be sure, bitter satire in these extracts; whether Mrs Witt is the butt is a debatable point. Actually, Mrs Witt's case resembles Henry's in relation to Banford in *The Fox*: it appears that these scholars have mistaken Mrs Witt for what is essentially Rico's negative construction of her.

The first quotation above cited gives warrant for this. Formally, it would be a scornful description of Mrs Witt. On close inspection, the narrator is in fact parodying how Rico himself would have perceived Mrs Witt had he been there at the moment of her entrance in Piccadilly. To be more precise, the narrator ridicules Rico's anxiety at Mrs Witt's blatant infringement of those etiquette codes which he himself champions later in the narrative.⁴⁸ Yet there is another target: the reader, who brought down to the level of Rico, is mockingly transformed into one of the herd under attack. In so treating the reader, the narration becomes intensely challenging in that it covertly incites him/her to resist being "Rico-ized".

In extract (b) the reader is impelled to resume the initial position next to Mrs Witt, being thus enabled to contemplate from a privileged stance the inanity which distinguishes

47. According to Sheila MacLeod, Mrs Witt wins the reader's sympathy in the course of the story 'despite' Lawrence's 'intention' to present her as 'a castrating figure' and a "grimalkin"; for F. R. Leavis and Rosemarie Bodenheimer Mrs Witt progressively transmutes from a *negativized* destructive attitude towards life to a saddening and *pitifully* passive resignation; Sheila MacLeod, *Lawrence's Men and Women*, p. 160; F. R. Leavis, *D. H. Lawrence: Novelist*, p. 285; Rosemarie Bodenheimer, 'St Mawr, A Passage to India, and the Question of Influence', *The D. H. Lawrence Review*, 13 (1980), 134-49 (pp. 138-39).

48. Interestingly, the contrast between Mrs Witt's unconventionality and Rico's inflexible conformism to protocol is analogous to that which *Women in Love* draws between Birkin and Gerald.

the society of Hyde Park. Yet, as we read extract (c), we are forced to dismount once more and become one of those figures whose foolishness we have just been made to deride. So much so that, as I remarked earlier, the reader's urgency to leave the ground and mount on Mrs Witt's horse is sharpened.

Therefore, as the story unfolds, and prior to the introduction of St Mawr, only the narrator and Mrs Witt appear to escape the satirization of the chimera of individual freedom. Only they fathom the internalized anonymous authorities to which the inhabitants of this fictional realm, Rico and Lou amongst them, unconsciously submit. This state of affairs changes with the entrance of St Mawr into the arena. At this point one witnesses Lou's epiphanic recognition of the fallacy of autonomous existence. Acting as a mental stimulus, the horse's presence succeeds in opening Lou's eyes to the shallow theatricality of human existence while simultaneously evoking for her a more authentic, primeval reality. The essential problem is that, as Lou gains this new insight, the narrator would appear to draw closer to her and away from Mrs Witt.

This attitudinal change on the narrator's part can be best appreciated in the following passage:

[Lou] was beginning to be afraid of her mother's insatiable curiosity, that always looked for the snake under the flowers. Or rather, for the maggots.

Always this same morbid interest in other people and their doings, their privacies, their dirty linen. Always this air of alertness for personal happenings, personalities, personalities, personalities. Always this subtle criticism and appraisal of other people, this analysis of other people's motives. If anatomy pre-supposes a corpse, then psychology pre-supposes a world of corpses. Personalities, which means personal criticism and analysis, pre-supposes a whole world-laboratory of human psyches waiting to be vivisected. If you cut a thing up, of course it will smell. Hence, nothing raises such an infernal stink, at last, as human psychology.

Mrs Witt was a pure psychologist, a fiendish psychologist. And Rico, in his way, was a psychologist too. But he had a formula. "Let's *know* the worst, dear! But let's look on the bright side, and believe the best." (pp. 44-45).

One notices how this passage smoothly moves from an immediate conveyance of Lou's exasperation at what she interprets as 'her mother's' will to scientific knowledge about subjectivity, into the narrator's coinciding animosity with regard to Mrs Witt's 'psychologism' in the closing paragraph. In a way remarkably reminiscent of the narrator's/Somers's disquisition about the impossibility, indeed undesirability, of 'an exact

science dealing with individual life' in *Kangaroo*, what the narrator in *St Mawr* appears to resent about Mrs Witt is her dissection of human beings, that is, her misapplication of 'D'Annunzio's' scientific formula '*L'anatomia presuppone il cadavere*' to 'living creature[s]'.⁴⁹ Interestingly, as Lou's and the narrator's discourses converge in order to communicate a negativized portrayal of Mrs Witt, they unwittingly come forth as prey to their own discourses, for their own discursive practice is in turn perceived by the reader as *psychologising* as Mrs Witt's is. This is no facetious remark: the issue is paramount because it sheds light upon the ultimate thrust of *St Mawr*, that is, the assertion of subjectivity being always already constructed in language and therefore, a priori, condemned to failure in its search for essential realities. So much is this the case that when one comes across the passage cited above it is as if the reader were enticed into exclaiming as does Mrs Witt when she spurns 'the hollow mockery of things': 'As if [Lou/the narrator] knew of anything better!' (p. 23).

This phenomenon frequently recurs. Furthermore, it is not restricted to the cases of Lou and the narrator, for Mrs Witt occasionally falls prey to the trap of language too. This is most apparent in the course of a conversation between Mrs Witt and Lou during which both women, following a discussion with Cartwright about 'the Great God Pan', ponder over the 'Pan' they find missing in all the men they have ever met:

'Listen Louise. — I've been in love innumerable times ... — yet for fifteen years I've left off wanting to have anything to do with a man ... And why? — Do you know? — ... Because I couldn't see that peculiar hidden Pan in any of them ... — Do you understand what I mean? Unfallen Pan!'

'More or less, mother.'

'But now my third eye is coming open, I believe. I am tired of all these men like breakfast cakes ... Isn't it extraordinary, that young man Cartwright talks about Pan, but he knows nothing of it all. He knows nothing of it all ... only the fallen Pan with goat legs and a leer — and that sort of power, don't you know —'

'But what do you know of the unfallen Pan, mother?' (pp. 66-67).

Lou's challenge is indeed felicitous, but one feels that it applies to her as well.⁵⁰

49. *Kangaroo* (London: Heinemann, 1955; first publ. in 1923), p. 300.

50. One is reminded here of the endless discussions between Birkin and Ursula in *Women in Love*, especially of the way in which the latter continuously tells Birkin that he is no different from the rest in spite of all his rhetoric. Furthermore, Lou's rejoinder parallels Aaron's in one of his fiercest discussions with Lilly: 'You talk, and you make a man believe you've got something he hasn't got? But where is it, when it comes to? What

The further one follows Mrs Witt and Lou in their search for Pan, the more one gets the impression that such a primal wholesome existential condition cannot be else than an unsubstantial linguistic expression. As the narrative advances, in other words, one is driven to share sympathetically what has been from the start Mrs Witt's original vision — that language continually displaces reality:

Mrs Witt, like many other people, always expected to find the real *beau monde* and the real *grand monde* somewhere or other. She didn't quite give in to what she saw in the Bois de Boulogne, or in Monte Carlo, or on the Pincio: all a bit shoddy, and not very beau and not at all grand. There she was ... completely prepared to despise the *monde* she was entering in Rotten Row (p. 25).

Once again, in so parodying Mrs Witt's cosmopolitan speech manners, the narrator would be ostensibly positioning the reader against her snobbery. Moreover, it would be impelling us to apprehend her as one more amongst the 'many other people' who inhabit this world. Yet behind the narrator's satirization of Mrs Witt's snobbish sophistication the narration discloses an exceptional character who challengingly denounces the ersatz quality of language. Indeed, what is revealed by Mrs Witt's (represented) distinction between '*grand monde*' and '*beau monde*' on the one hand, and '*beau*', '*grand*' and '*monde*' on the other, is not an ostentatious grandiloquence as the narrator would have us believe, but a shrewd understanding of the way in which social forms have substituted for ostensible primordial essences.

Later the narrator's hostility against Mrs Witt is further neutralized from within the narrative: 'They were in the society columns next morning ... And Mrs Witt liked it, let her say what she might' (p. 26). This illustrates explicitly the narrator's lack of affinity with Mrs Witt. Yet it wants convincing force, first because the comment remains suspended in the air without unmediated corroboration of what it asserts; but above all, because it is retrospectively undermined by what is perhaps the most existentialist utterance on Mrs Witt's part, that is, when some pages later she expresses her feeling that she is an absolute nonentity, and her entire life an empty grapheme:

have you got more than me or Jim Bricknell! Only a bigger choice of words it seems to me"; *Aaron's Rod*, edited by Mara Kalnins (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 104.

'I begin to wonder if I've ever been anywhere. I seem to have been a daily sequence of newspaper remarks, myself. I'm sure I never really conceived you and gave you birth. It all happened in newspapers notices ... Bury everything I ever said or that was said about me, and you've buried *me*. But since Kind Words Can Never die, I can't be buried, and death has no sting-aling-aling for *me*!' (pp. 92-93).

Mrs Witt's proto-deconstructionist remark retroactively makes the above cited narrator's comment fall into a void.

Thus we see that the narrator's hostility towards Mrs Witt is, at crucial moments in the course of *St Mawr*, significantly undercut from within the narrative itself. This needs to be stressed in view of what is commonly argued: that Mrs Witt passes from a negative character into a sympathetic figure. It would be more accurate to say that the narration presents Mrs Witt as a sympathetic figure from the start to the detriment of those voices which negatively portray her: Rico, Lou, and the narrator.

2. Obfuscated identities

The narrator's hostility toward Mrs Witt ostensibly subsides as the story progresses. This attitudinal change, in turn, coincides with Lou's increasing closeness to her mother as she herself begins to understand what she had previously judged to be Mrs Witt's exceedingly arbitrary will to annihilate verbally whatever and whomever might come within her visual range. The key point to realize is that, as the narrator's animadversion on Mrs Witt abates, *St Mawr* becomes increasingly problematic.

One notices that, as Lou draws closer to her mother, Lou and the narrator in turn would seemingly merge into one undifferentiated consciousness — as if mutually usurping each other's identity. This can be illustrated by referring to those lengthy passages representing Lou's three consecutive visions following *St Mawr*'s break (pp. 78-84). These passages have been regarded as D. H. Lawrence's own misanthropic intrusive visions. Certainly these visions resonate with Lawrence's voice such as we hear it in his essays. And yet, within fictional boundaries, not only are Lou's thoughts *formally* rooted in Lou's consciousness, they also befit a mind which the reader has seen growing more and more cynical ever since the purchase of *St Mawr*. Indeed, what these visions represent is the climactic moment which crowns Lou's ascending process of existential anxiety. Problems

do arise, however, from the fact that Lou's thoughts cataphorically blend with the narrator's at one particular point:

What's to be done? Generally speaking, nothing. The dead will have to bury their dead, while the earth stinks of corpses. The individual can but depart from the mass, and try to cleanse himself. Try to hold fast to the living thing, which destroys as it goes, but remains sweet. And in his soul fight, fight, fight to preserve that which is life in him from the ghastly kisses and poison-bites of the myriad evil ones (p. 80).⁵¹

Compare this with that other narratorial meditation upon the history of civilization as we move into the ranch:

All savagery is half-sordid. And man is only himself when he is fighting on and on, to overcome the sordidness. ... And all the time, man has to rouse himself afresh, to cleanse the new accumulations of refuse. To win from the crude wild nature the victory and the power to make another start, and to cleanse behind him the century-deep deposits of layer upon layer of refuse: even of tin cans (p. 151).

The similarity between both passages is remarkable at both thematic and phraseological levels. So much is this the case that retrospectively, once again, it becomes immensely difficult to draw any clear demarcation between Lou's and the narrator's discourses. Hence it does not come as a surprise if some critics, somehow intuiting that Lou's subjectivity lingers over the account of the history of Las Chivas, have been led to surmise that, as we reach the end, the narrative would be leading us into perceiving Lou as a reincarnation of the New England Woman.⁵² In effect, just as Lou's voice intermingles with the narrator's, so does the New England Woman's, whence the idea that the reader is confronted with some kind of metempsychotic experience as the story comes to an end.

Unfortunately, this kind of argument sidesteps that the narrator's voice in the excerpt above cited *also* blends with Mrs Witt's. One thinks, for example, of the similar

51. One notes in passing how the voices of both Aaron and Lilly merge within Lou's *monolithic* vision, thus attesting once again to the dangers of pinning Lawrence's own voice behind any single character:

"Then what's to be done?" [said Lilly].

"Nothing, as far as I can see. You get as much amusement out of life as possible, and there's the end of it."; interestingly, Lilly's question follows Aaron's statement on the impossibility of finding any ideal community in the existing world, implying that 'Utopia' is in fact an unrecoverable (pre)mental condition; *Aaron's Rod*, p. 103.

52. F. R. Leavis, *D. H. Lawrence: Novelist*, p. 296; Avrom Fleishman, 'He Do the Polis in Different Voices: Lawrence's Later Style', pp. 147-48 and pp. 177-78; Margot Norris, 'The Ontology of D. H. Lawrence's "St Mawr"', in *D. H. Lawrence*, edited by Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House Publ., 1986), pp. 297-312 (pp. 310-11).

Darwinian innuendoes which saturate Mrs Witt's thoughts as she ponders over her daughter's generation:

Perhaps she despised the younger generation too easily. Because she did not see its sources of power, she concluded it was powerless. Whereas perhaps the power of accommodating oneself to any circumstance and committing oneself to no circumstance is the last triumph of mankind.

Her generation had had its day. She had had her day ... And with a great contempt she despised the world that had come into place instead ... In such a world, there was nothing even to conquer ... A great complicated tangle of nonentities ravelled in nothingness. So it seemed to her (p. 101).

Apart from this passage echoing the narrator's later comment on the history of humanity, it importantly brings forth Mrs Witt's magnanimity. This moment of self-introspection elevates her to a plane which will prove later to be unattainable for Lou. While Lou demonstrates great acumen for external realities, not once does she devote some attention, as Mrs Witt does here, to her own self. This in turn links with Lou's final act of self-aggrandizement, an act which will constitute the central interest of the next section.

The more one reads on, the more one gets the feeling that all the inhabitants of this world, including the narrator, are only mirrors of each other. Rico reflects both Lou and Mrs Witt in the way he longs to be taken 'at once into another world, away from the life of the senses' (p. 50); and to the horse St Mawr, who in turn reflects Lewis, whose image is returned by Phoenix, whose vision of London is a replica of Mrs Witt's. Even Laura emerges as Lou's mirror-image: not just because Laura would like to cut herself off from the artificiality of social play (p. 124); but because she, like Lou, bemoans a universally unwholesome mode of being:

'Isn't it extraordinary,' Laura continued, 'that you never get a *really*, perfectly satisfactory animal! There's always something wrong. And in men too ... There's always something — something wrong — or something missing. Why is it?' (p. 126).

Laura's remark does more than parallel Lou's own intuition about the fragmentariness intrinsic to all beings: it strongly echoes an earlier observation made by Mrs Witt prior to her debate with Lou about what the ideal man would be. On that particular occasion, after pondering over the contrast between the 'animal' in Lewis and the 'mind' of the men she has admired in her life, Mrs Witt ends up exclaiming: 'How strange life is! If it gives one thing, it takes away another' (p. 59).

In view of the echoing phenomenon which permeates *Sr Mawr* it is not surprising that its ending has given rise to such opposite interpretations. I noted earlier that the digressive history of the ranch is for some a pointer to Lou's positive supervision of the New England Woman; for others, it negatively illuminates Lou's blindness to the factualities revealed in this account. The key point is that the obfuscation of identities alluded to earlier makes both meanings almost equally plausible.

I have already suggested that the narrator's changing attitude towards Mrs Witt parallels Lou and Mrs Witt's drawing closer to each other. Actually, the two women become like twin minds. This is more conspicuous when one compares the following instances of represented thought:

a) Mrs Witt's thinking about Europe: 'That *closeness*, that sense of *cohesion*, that sense of being *fused into a lump with all the rest* ... this drove her mad (p. 100; my emphasis)'.

b) Lou's represented exhilaration at the sight of the ocean: 'Marvellous! The marvellous beauty and fascination of natural wild things! The horror of man's unnatural life, his *heaped-up civilization* (p. 129; my emphasis)'.

There is yet another occasion in which all three subjectivities (Lou, narrator, Mrs Witt) blend, this time all at once:

The two American women stood high at the window, overlooking the wet, close, hedged-and-fenced English landscape. Everything enclosed, enclosed, so stifling. The very apples on the trees looked so shut in, it was impossible to imagine any speck of "Knowledge" lurking inside them. Good to eat, good to cook, good even for show. But the wild sap of untameable and inexhaustible knowledge — no! Bred out of them. Geldings, even the apples (p. 97).

The interesting point is that, as Mrs Witt finds a mirror in both Lou and the narrator, so does she (like Lou) progressively emerge as a reincarnation of the New England Woman.

The closer one examines Mrs Witt the more she would appear to be a representation of a "transmigrated soul". One recalls, for example, Mrs Witt's 'energy' and compulsive need 'to *do something*' (p. 24) and the 'energy' and 'blind frenzy' that characterizes the New England Woman as she first settles on the ranch (p. 144). Then, early in the story, Mrs Witt wishes she could 'cleave with some of [the] grimness of the big, dangerous America, into the safe, finicky-rooms of London' (p. 24), as if she herself had been in the Mexican ranch and seen through the eyes of the settler's wife:

life, intense, bristling life, full of energy, but also, with an undertone of savage sordidness ... a peculiar undercurrent of squalor, flowing under the curious *tussle* of wild life (p. 148).

The impression that Mrs Witt is the New England Woman *having descended from the mountains* grows stronger when the narration offers us an insight into Mrs Witt's thoughts about Lewis and the pre-verbal world he (like St Mawr vis-à-vis Lou) intimates for her:

And yet, what made him perhaps the only real entity to her, his seeming to inhabit another world than hers. A world dark and still, where language never ruffled the growing leaves, and seared their edges like a bad wind ... She had realised another world, silent, where each creature is alone in its own aura of silence (p. 104).

In retrospect, Mrs Witt's penetrating knowledge of a pre-linguistic world flows out like a *déjà vu*. It is as though Mrs Witt were unconsciously recollecting now the very world which the settler's wife faces up to when at the ranch: a world, one recalls, surrounded by 'pine-trees' which 'hedged one in with the aroma and the power and the slight horror of the pre-sexual primeval world. The world where each creature was crudely limited to its own ego' (p. 145).

All the above examples serve as demonstrations that just as Lou's quasi-mystical experience at the end of the story recalls the New England Woman's, there are no less strong parallels between the latter and Mrs Witt's. This with the crucial proviso that whereas Lou would appear to incarnate in the end the trader's wife as she optimistically settles on the ranch for the first time, Mrs Witt emerges as the woman descended from the mountains with her newly gained wisdom, which is fundamentally twofold: first, the knowledge of 'her irreversible alienation from nature' (p. 148); and second, the ultimate recognition that there is no 'paradise on earth' (p. 150).

3. Changing Places

The last pages of *St Mawr* constitute, according to Michael Ragussis, an exemplary case of dramatic irony: the history of Las Chivas effects a kind of Brechtian rupture enabling the reader to fully comprehend that Lou ultimately 'becomes the victim of her own false dreams and hopes' — that is the dream of there being an ultimate reality for her to grasp.⁵³

53. Michael Ragussis, 'The False Myth of *St Mawr*: Lawrence and the Subterfuge of Art', *Papers on Language and Literature*, 11 (1975), 186-96 (p. 195).

The truth is that such a dramatic irony does not arise *exclusively* from our knowledge of the history of Las Chivas — a knowledge which, as Ragussis rightly points out, Lou does not possess. It also and more importantly issues from the discursive circularity of Lou's pseudo-mystical parlance about the landscape of Las Chivas, one which would obliquely lay open the cyclic pattern of her journey, not just in relation to the New England Woman, but in relation to her own self. Despite all the distance travelled, and notwithstanding her perspicacious discernment of societal falsities, she nevertheless fails to turn her glance inwards, thus ending up mentally — if not physically like the woman who rode away — at the point from which she started.

It is important to remember that one of the most important differences between mother and daughter is the former's capacity for introspection. In effect, one recalls that moment in which the narration offers the reader an insight into Mrs Witt's mind as she tries to understand, first of all, what she believes is her destructive nature, and second, the reasons why in the past she had such great 'respect for the mental powers' (pp. 100-101). On that special occasion she even goes so far as to query her own righteousness in relation to her disdain for 'the younger generation' (p. 101). As we saw then, this self-critical moment augments Mrs Witt's stature while simultaneously foregrounding Lou's own inability to look inside herself as her sight constantly remains fixed on external realities. It is precisely this inability that Mrs Witt herself points out as we come towards the end:

'I don't hate men because they're men, as nuns do. I dislike them *because* they're not men enough: babies, and playboys, and poor things showing off all the time, even to themselves. I don't say I'm any better. I only wish, with all my soul, that some men *were* bigger and stronger and *deeper* than I am'

'How do you know they're not —?' asked Mrs Witt.

'How *do* I know?—' said Lou mockingly (p. 154).

In a way redolent of Mrs Morel's critical attitude towards Paul's remonstrance about the 'well-to-do middle-class', Mrs Witt's question underscores her incisive perception of two interrelated shortcomings in her daughter: first, her failure to probe her own self before

judging her contemporaries; second, and, more important, her self-aggrandizement, a shortcoming which will evince itself in her last speech.⁵⁴

When approaching such a speech it is essential to bear in mind that the motivation of Lou's retreat into Las Chivas is her revulsion from a society which has damagingly domesticated the animal in man, his instinctive being (pp. 81-82). She has realized that modern man is unsatisfactorily fragmented. Added to this, there is her awareness that modern man's self-control is directly connected with his fear of 'the hard, lonely responsibility of real freedom' (p. 82). Hence she decides to withdraw from society altogether and seek retirement in an *uncivilized* milieu where she might recover that wholesomeness of being which she cannot find in the man-made world.

Herein lies the twofold irony which emerges from Lou's litany: not only does she herself end up dissolving her own self into a 'bigger spirit', that is, giving herself up; more importantly, as she utters her speech what is supposed to be uncivilized becomes intellectually *humanized*:⁵⁵

'There's something else for me, mother. There's something else even that loves me and wants me. I can't tell you what it is. It's a spirit ... And it's here, on this ranch. It's here, in this landscape ... It's something to do with wild America ... it's my mission to keep myself for the spirit that is wild, and has waited so long here: even waited for such as me. Now I've come! Now I'm here. Now I am where I want to be: with the spirit that wants me ... I am here, right deep in America, where there's a wild spirit wants me ... It needs me. It craves for me' (p. 155).

Lou's animistic romancing of this supposedly 'wild America' is strikingly noticeable in the way her speech imparts to it human emotions such as 'love'. Moreover, one cannot but grin at the sound of phrases such as 'wants me', 'waited for such as me', 'needs me', 'craves for me', indeed, it seems there are too many 'mes' in her speech. Clearly Lou's speech sounds facetious in the light of a landscape for which, as we have previously read, 'Man did not exist' (p. 146). But it is even more pathetic when we realize that Lou is making the same mistake as when she was faced with St Mawr for the first time, a mistake

54. D. H. Lawrence, *Sons and Lovers*, edited by Helen Baron and Carl Baron (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 298.

55. To this twofold irony one should add the irony of her *purchasing* the landscape which she so admires, just as she purchases St Mawr at the beginning, or indeed, as she "gets" Rico. Her withdrawal, in other words, rather than emerging as a *heroic* act, comes forth as a *class* privilege, that is, the privilege of the leisure, wealthy classes.

which Mr Saintsbury on that occasion does not cease to point out and which Lou in turn repeatedly fails to hear.

Nowhere in the course of this story is Lou's deafness more strongly heard, or her blindness more powerfully seen than in the course of her conversation with Mr Saintsbury prior to her purchase of St Mawr: over and over Mr Saintsbury accentuates her anthropomorphic error, and again and again she fails to understand him. For example, when she asks if the horse 'has got any tricks', Mr Saintsbury notably replies: "'Not tricks exactly. But he's one of these temperamental creatures, as they say. Though *I* say, every horse is temperamental, when you come down to it'" (pp. 28-29); and when following this Lou inquires where St Mawr is 'raw' he no less significantly answers that "'if he was a human being, you'd say something had gone wrong in his life. But with a horse, it's not that exactly'" (p. 29); finally, when she asks him if the horse has ever made "'a break'", the man makes it explicit that with a horse one would rather talk about "'accidents'" instead of "'breaks'", thus drawing a clear distinction between conscious/human action and instinctive/animal *reaction* (p. 29). As this conversation comes to an end, it is evident that Lou remains as ignorant as ever, as her subsequent address to St Mawr demonstrates: "'May I say *how do you do?*", she said to the horse' (p. 29).⁵⁶ From then on, she will recurrently fail to perceive St Mawr other than in human terms.

The similitude between Lou's humanized apprehension of St Mawr at the beginning and her personification of the landscape at the end is in fact put into perspective in the course of another conversation. This takes place at Corrabach; the subject is Pan. There, Mr Cartwright could be seen as setting the theoretical foundation of Lou's dramatized apprehension of St Mawr and Las Chivas.

In spite of its superficial triviality, the narrative confers authoritative credibility upon Mr Cartwright's Pantheistic discourse: firstly, by keeping narratorial asides to a

56. In a particularly humorous article, D. H. Lawrence makes anthropomorphism the target of his criticism. In this essay, which takes the form of a monologue, Lawrence talks to himself as follows: 'I shall leave off addressing [the brown hen]: "Oh my flatfooted plush armchair!" I realize that is only impertinent anthropomorphism on my part'; 'Him with His Tail in His Mouth' (1925), in *Phoenix II: Uncollected, Unpublished and Other Prose Works by D. H. Lawrence*, collected and edited by Warren Roberts and Harry T. Moore (London: Heinemann, 1968), pp. 427-35 (p. 433).

strictest minimum so that no external subjectivity casts a shadow over it; then, by making Lou sharply intercept Mrs Witt's criticism of Mr Cartwright after the conversation has come to an end (p. 67). Thus, the reader is impelled to accept Mr Cartwright's diagnosis of Greek *anthropomorphism* as the historical moment when the primal bond between man and nature is irrevocably broken:

"Don't you imagine Pan once was a great god, before the anthropomorphic Greeks turned him into half a man?" [said Cartwright]
 "Ah! — maybe. ... But I have noticed the limitation in myself — my mind has no grasp before the Greeks arose. Mr Well's Outline does not help there, either," the Dean added with a smile (p. 65).⁵⁷

At the end of this conversation Lou would have seemingly understood Mr Cartwright; but only "seemingly", for as becomes characteristic of Lou, one moment she appears to understand and the next she demonstrates the opposite. A clear example would be the way she thinks of St Mawr and the meaning of his 'break' in ethical terms.

Therefore, when we reach this dénouement, the narrative has sufficiently sensitized us to comprehend Lou's withdrawal as ironically delusory. Moreover, in her apparently subversive withdrawal from society she ends up reinstating in her own speech the very anthropocentric foundations of the system which she has been opposing from the outset, that is the foundations upon which binary thinking rests and which promotes the Mind to the detriment of the Instincts. The foregrounding of Lou's shortcoming falls in the hands of Mrs Witt.

Even when much of what Mrs Witt does and says importantly illuminates Lou's overall limitations, her role has not been paid the attention it deserves. For example, one cannot overlook the contrast that the narrative sharply etches between Lou's wordy experience of this landscape and the quiet excitement which the scenery provokes in Mrs Witt:

57. Also in 'Him with His Tail in His Mouth' Lawrence suggests that anthropomorphism and the Greeks, particularly Plato, represent a step backwards in the history of civilization; he then asks: 'Hadn't somebody better write Mr. Wells' History backwards, to prove how we've degenerated, in our stupid visionlessness, since the cave-men?', *Phoenix II*, p. 434.

Mrs Witt climbed the steep slope above the cabins, to the mouth of the little canyon. There she sat on a fallen tree, and surveyed the world beyond: a world not of men. She could not fail to be roused (p. 153).⁵⁸

Actually, Mrs Witt's quietude should be considered in connection with the increasing inaudibility of her voice as we read through the last pages of *St Mawr*. It is almost as if Mrs Witt, like the New England Woman who loses her speech ('she could not keep even her speech', p. 147) had fallen out of language altogether: 'Her mother had gone dumb and, as it were, out of range ... There was no getting a word out of Mrs Witt, these days', (pp. 132-33). Then, as Lou tells Mrs Witt about her purchase of the ranch, one begins to discern the real significance behind Mrs Witt's growing quiet:

'Mother, I've bought a ranch.'
 'It's just as well, for I can't stand the noise of automobiles outside here another week.'
 'It is quiet on my ranch, mother: the stillness simply speaks.'
 'I had rather it held its tongue ... I feel as if the sky was a big cracked bell and a million clappers were hammering human speech out of it' (p. 151).

Mrs Witt's repartee, apart from drawing attention to Lou's anthropomorphic inclination, intimates her final acknowledgement that language does not merely displace reality, it completely erases it, leaving no reality to be grasped outside it. This becomes more conspicuous when, at Lou's question — "'Don't you think it's lovely?'" — Mrs Witt significantly replies: "'I can see it is lovely'" (p. 152). Her remark is paramount, not only for the distinction she draws between *essential* being and *sensual* appearance; also because it foregrounds her final capitulation to the impossibility of objective knowledge. This is a highly ironic ending, especially when one bears in mind that, throughout the narrative, Mrs Witt has been presented as a stern defender of rationalism ("There's nothing I admire in a man like a good *mind*", p. 59), in contrast with Lou, who all along has been the apologist of a complete reversal of patriarchal thinking:

'I think one gets so tired of your men with mind, as you call it. ... It seems to me there's something else besides mind and cleverness ... Perhaps it is the animal' (p. 59).

58. For the parallels between Mrs Witt's response to the American landscape and Mrs Moore's reaction to the Marabar caves in E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* see Rosemarie Bodenmeier, 'St Mawr, A Passage to India, and the Question of Influence', *The D. H. Lawrence Review*, 13 (1980), 134-49.

As we reach the end, the women would appear to have exchanged places: for now it is Mrs Witt who ostensibly undermines the fundamental premises of patriarchal humanism, that is to say, the human mind as the source of transcendental knowledge; whereas Lou, in her intellectualizing of nature and self-absorption seemingly lays back the grounds upon which binary patriarchal thinking rests and from which the artificiality of modern life emerges. Actually, the irony inherent in her egotistic speech heightens when considered in the light of her most challengingly critique of patriarchy:

Lou was a bit scared at the emptiness of it all, and the queer, phantasmal self-consciousness. Cowboys just as self-conscious as Rico, far more sentimental, inwardly vague and unreal. Cowboys that went after their cows in black Ford motor-cars: and who self-consciously saw Lady Carrington falling to them, as elegant young ladies from the East fall to the noble cowboy of the films, or in Zane Grey. It was all film-psychology.

...

[Inwardly] they were self-conscious film-heroes. The boss himself, a man over forty ... showed off before her in a strong silent manner, existing for the time being purely in his imagination of the sort of picture he made to her, the sort of impression he made on her.

So they all were, coloured up like a Zane Grey book-jacket, all of them living in the mirror. The kind of picture they made to somebody else (p. 131).

Lou's perception of the Texan setting is arresting inasmuch as it links in one single stroke, (a) the construction of the self in general ('film-heroes') and of gender stereotypes in particular ('young ladies from the East [falling] to the noble cowboy of the films') by the discourse of the (male)/other; (b) capitalism as the dominant underlying mode of production ('Cowboys that went after their cows in black Ford motor-cars'); and (c) the mimetic aesthetics ('all of them living in the mirror') that informs literary and film production ('Zane Grey' s novels and Western 'films').⁵⁹

This is not the only time Lou challenges the ideological foundations of male centred ideology. One recalls, for example, her subversive rewriting of the greeting notices when arriving in Santa Fé:

59. The conceptualization of reality as a film script is a recurrent motif in some of D. H. Lawrence's later novels: in *The Lost Girl*, for example, where the cinema progressively displaces live theatrical performance; in *Aaron's Rod*, where Aaron likens Sir William Franks' mansion hall to 'the imposing hall into which the heroine suddenly enters on the film' (p. 133); and in *Kangaroo*, where 'Pictoria' and the 'School of Arts Library' constitute one single building dominated by the presence of Zane Grey, who, most interesting of all, appears to attract a wide female readership (p. 211).

Welcome Mr Tourist said a great board on one side of the high-road. And on the other side, a little nearer to town: *Thank you, Mr Tourist*.

"Plus ça change—" Lou began.

"Ça ne change jamais—except for the worse!" said Mrs Witt, like a pistol going off. And Lou held her peace, after she had sighed to herself, and said in her own mind: "*Welcome Also Mrs and Miss Tourist!*" (p. 132-33; bold-faced characters mine).

One notes how, apart from unveiling the way in which capitalism marginalizes women, her rewriting exposes language itself as the medium in which patriarchal ideology is enacted. Through Lou's incisive apprehension of reality the reader is made to appreciate the multifarious mechanisms to which male-centred consumer culture resorts in order to guarantee the perpetuation of its male-centred ideological foundations. The irony then is that after demonstrating such an immense ideological acumen, she ultimately fails to escape, as Mrs Witt does, the trap of language; incapable of withdrawing from it, she in turn becomes as 'self-conscious' and 'sentimental' as Rico or the cowboys she has previously criticized.⁶⁰

Given that the narration represents Lou's position as falsifying while at the same time promoting Mrs Witt's, it could be objected that *St Mawr* advocates resignation and denies the hope of any panacea. Yet to contend so would be a failure to heed Mrs Witt's discourse in all it has to say. Although it is correct that *St Mawr* rules out any ontological solution which might lead to the demolition of the philosophical foundations of the hegemonic patriarchal order, it does not immediately follow that the narrative forecloses *action* altogether at the level of praxis. Even when it represents Mrs Witt as giving up the struggle, the narrative does not in the least endow her choice with universal import; on the contrary, it cogently foregrounds its *private* character:

'No doubt you are right about men ... But *at your age*, the only sensible thing is to try and keep up the illusion. After all, as you say, you may be no better' (p. 155; my emphasis).

60. Interestingly, Lawrence criticizes St John de Crèvecoeur and other promoters of the wild America utopian dream such as Thoreau and Jean-Jacques Rousseau for idealizing nature: 'This Nature-sweet-and-pure business is only another effort at intellectualizing. Just an attempt to make all nature succumb to a few laws of the human mind'; *Studies in Classic American Literature*, p. 31.

What Mrs Witt implies is that it is for the young generations to keep utopia alive, or, as another critic would put it, to keep up the illusion 'of being ... powerful and coherent [agents] in the world' so as to be able to 'survive as human beings'.⁶¹

Actually, Mrs Witt's is not a cry in the desert: it finds an echo in the narratorial voice of the story about the trader's wife. When after observing that "'ever since men and women were men and women, people who took things seriously, and had time for it, got their hearts broken"' Mrs Witt concludes that having one's heart broken is "'a beginning rather than an end"' (p. 154), one cannot but hear that other previous voice:

man has to rouse himself afresh, to cleanse the new accumulations of refuse. To win from the crude wild nature the victory and the power to make another start, and to cleanse behind him the century-deep deposits of layer upon layer of refuse: even of tin cans (p. 151).

This is not an explanation of Lou's final choice; neither can one perceive her as the fresh start to which this narrator alludes. To argue so would ignore the discursive similarity to which I have just referred. Furthermore, one wonders how Lou's choice as it is represented in her last speeches could be wedded with a discourse which asserts that 'man is only himself when he is fighting on and on, to overcome the sordidness' (p. 151).

In consideration of the argument elaborated here one could conclude by stating that *St Mawr* is an *eternal* (utopian) journeying to no final port, but a hopeful journeying nonetheless. And even if *St Mawr* finally surrenders the idea of ever '[ripping] the whole thing off', it *does* hold on to the idea that by constantly '[cleansing] the new accumulations of refuse' one will not 'let it stick'.⁶² Furthermore, while thematically capitulating to the actual impossibility of transcending subjectivity/language in order to regain wholesomeness of being, *St Mawr* as a work of art offers itself as the only realm where patriarchal binary thinking appears to be finally superseded: for, as this study has shown, in *St Mawr* all subjectivities continually merge and diverge; linearity becomes concentric; temporality is detemporalized. Above all, *St Mawr* is just *St Mawr*: now here, then gone.

61. Alison Light, 'Fear of the Happy Ending: *The Color Purple*, Reading and Racism', in *Plotting Change: Contemporary Women's Fiction*, edited by Linda Anderson (London, Melbourne, and Auckland: Edward Arnold, 1990), pp. 85-98 (p. 94).

62. Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément, *The Newly Born Woman* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), reprinted in part in *Feminist Literary Criticism*, edited and introduced by Mary Eagleton (London and New York: Longman, 1991), pp. 110-34 (p. 119).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The foregoing survey has closely examined ten Lawrencian short fictions of varying lengths, written over a span of ten years (1918-1928), and *originally* compiled in five different collections: *The Ladybird* (1921), *England, My England and Other Stories* (1922), *St Mawr Together With The Princess* (1925), *The Woman Who Rode Away* (1928), *The Lovely Lady* (1933).

The arrangement of the survey has been thematic and not chronological on the assumption that any *organicist* approach to Lawrence's oeuvre must encounter difficulties related to composition, revision, and publication particulars. I have already remarked that Lawrence continuously revised his works as he went along. In the particular case of his shorter fictions, he even altered many of them after publication for subsequent collections. Very often, different versions of the same story would appear in British and North-American journals; the differences between the versions would sometimes come directly from Lawrence's pen, at others from the editor(s)'s; if modified by the latter, this was sometimes without consultation with Lawrence himself. The author sometimes repudiated such changes after publication. To make matters more difficult, subsequent revisions of any such published story were unsystematically made taking one version or the other as base texts (a choice which could be dictated by authorial preference, availability, or expeditiousness). Therefore, attempts to account *systematically* for Lawrence's artistic "growth" and, collaterally, any "developmental" explication of the ideological underpinnings of his fiction, are likely to be problematical and can be misleading.

This links with what has been the principal purpose of this study: as indicated in the introduction, it has sought to shed light on the complexity and scope of Lawrencian narrative techniques with a view to demonstrating the inadequacy of prevailing critical generalizations about the presumed ideological "unsoundedness" of Lawrence's post-war fictions. Concomitantly, this thesis has responded to a vital necessity to bring into critical focus the plethora of abstract and frequently textually unfounded discussions of Lawrence's relationship to feminism.¹ By offering detailed readings of a formally and thematically representative sample of his post-war short fictions in the light of specific feminist concerns, I have endeavoured to disclose the technical intricacies which distinguish them and how these directly affect meaning production. In the course of these readings it has become apparent that the principal indictments made against Lawrence's post-war sexual politics (see Introduction) cannot be sustained on the basis of his fiction.

After summarizing the extant literature on the subject of Lawrence's short fiction on the one hand, and of the relationship of his literary production to feminism on the other, a brief description of the critical postulates and analytical procedure informing the specific readings developed in this thesis has been provided. Chapter 1 has examined 'Hadrian' and 'Tickets, Please' in relation to the two basic levels at which patriarchal hegemony operates: institution (family, marriage) and subliminal indoctrination (socialized gender roles). These readings have concentrated upon the narrative features predominantly characterizing the texts in question, features which in turn are paradigmatic of Lawrence's technique of narrative organization: as regards 'Hadrian', the main focus has been on *the double axis* (horizontal and vertical) upon which the story is founded; in reading 'Tickets, Please' I have been fundamentally concerned with unfolding *the shifting relationship between narrator and narratee*. Following these detailed examinations two propositions have been advanced. First, I have suggested that these stories enable the reader to apprehend the perniciousness of patriarchy: 'Hadrian' uncovers the way in which, by setting two

1. A similar criticism has often been made in relation to the extant literature about one of Lawrence's contemporaries — Conrad. See, for instance, the effort made by Jakob Lothe to counter the prevailing tendency amongst Conradian scholars to '[proceed] from the critical assumption ... that literary content precedes form', *Conrad's Narrative Method* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 2.

marginalized groups against each other, patriarchy succeeds in perpetuating its hegemony; 'Tickets, Please', on the other hand, is seen to expose how patriarchal socialization overdetermines social/sexual interaction. Not only do these stories debunk the two fundamental modes of patriarchal domination, they also point *narratively* (albeit covertly) an incriminating finger to the specific literary medium — Victorian realism — that helps perpetuate this male-centred ideology.

Chapter 2 has reviewed 'Samson and Delilah', 'The Princess', and 'None of That' in relation to the subject of male violence against women. In all three stories the main emphasis has fallen upon two particularly difficult narrative functions in Lawrencian fictions: *point of view* and *narrative voice*. In the case of 'Samson and Delilah' I have shown that in order to understand the ideological implications of this tale one needs to be specially aware of spatial constraints and shifting modes of representation. This also applies to 'The Princess', although here I have further evidenced the significance of *frequency* as regards instances of *unmediated representation* of the characters's viewpoint, and of the *nature* of these unmediated insights, both paramount aspects vis-à-vis the story's ideological project. Point of view and voice have been deemed pivotal in 'None of That' as well, not only because they are fundamental structuring devices, but because they in turn constitute the principal thematic interest of the tale: the story emerges, generally, as a reflection on subjectivity as a hindrance in the search for truth, and more specifically, as a metacommentary on story-telling. This chapter has ultimately concluded that these stories do not advocate female submission, least of all do they condone male violence against women. More accurately, the two first tales have been deemed to represent two women in the process of breaking through the moral carapace which suppresses their essential sexuality; concurrently, they have been seen to intimate and dramatize respectively the violence which results when the woman's sexual emancipation is unparalleled by their male counterparts' liberation from patriarchal conceptualizations of female sexuality. 'None of That' goes further than its sister tales in its ideological implications: for just as it reveals the "culture lag" to which I have just alluded, it also unveils the violence which a patriarchally normative naturalization of (masculine) heterosexuality generates.

'Mother and Daughter', 'The Lovely Lady', and *The Fox* have been scrutinized in Chapter 3. Here the leading thematic preoccupation has been women's estrangement from each other. Part I has followed closely the *intertextual dynamics* (manifest in 'Mother and Daughter', latent in 'The Lovely Lady') of the first two tales and its effect upon our understanding of the division between women which both stories represent. These readings have evinced that the pitting of women against each other is a pretext, first, to bring to light the pressure which male-centred ideology exerts upon women at subliminal levels; second and foremost, to undermine through ironic disclosure traditionally stereotyping modes of representation of women in literature. Part II has offered a corrective re-reading of *The Fox*. Narrative *ambiguity*, plot *dédoublement*, structural *fragmentation* and *open-endedness* have constituted the focus of interest. By attending to these key narrative features I have been able to demonstrate that what on the surface appears to be a denunciation of lesbianism is in fact a simultaneous affirmation of the strength and lasting nature of the heroines' bond and a dismissal of the sentimental (heterosexual) marriage resolution.

Finally, Chapter 4 has turned to 'The Woman Who Rode Away' and *Sr. Mawr*. The thematic interest in this chapter has been the exploration of possible alternatives to what is presented as the prevailing order (patriarchal capitalism) in both fictional realms. Compared to preceding chapters, this has been more broad-ranging in terms of the narrative techniques it has examined. This in turn has responded to the necessity of articulating what is the essential quality of both texts: their intrinsic *volubility*, which in turn emerges as an effect of their *blurring* of all possible discursive frontiers. In the course of this chapter textual examples have been provided in order to illustrate how, in a characteristically Lawrencian way, voices and perspectives now converge, now diverge, resulting in the last instance in an *aporic* obfuscation of identities. Similarly, it has been seen how the *linearity* of the plot interacts with the *circularity* of structure, thus creating a sense of oxymoronic "dynamic paralysis" which is further enhanced by narrative *inconclusiveness*. The significance of this fluidity, however, cannot be fully comprehended unless one considers it in the perspective of the thematics it helps shape. The two texts

examined in this chapter dramatize the heroines' flight from what they feel is a highly unsatisfactory state of affairs. In the course of this search two alternatives are rejected: the existential ideal is not to be sought in the past (the woman who rode away), nor in absolute seclusion from society (Lou). Only one alternative appears to be possible, which is the one expressed by Mrs Witt: a kind of recycling option whereby one can only hope to build upon the already existing detritus, the kind of "dynamic paralysis" which both stories articulate at the level of form.

This recapitulative outline does not do justice to the complexity of Lawrence's narratives such as this thesis has attempted to bring into prominence. Above all, it cannot *dynamically* encapsulate the myriad moments of ambiguity, paradox, and aporia which permeate them; their characteristic resistance to closure; the way they constantly impel the reader to revise previous conclusions as the reading proceeds; the way in which one is continually moved from sympathetic understanding to critical detachment vis-à-vis the characters, and so on. In brief, it does not do justice to the characteristically Lawrencean narrative fluidity which the analyses included in this study have attempted to exhibit, as it were, by "amplification". It is this kinetic character — reminiscent of the 'shimmery' quality which Paul Morel would like to achieve in his own paintings, or 'the perfect beauty' of the 'wheeling ... [floating] ... [undulating]' surface of the 'living landscape' which the New England woman contemplates in *St Mawr*² — which situates Lawrence's fictional mode of writing next to his contemporaries'. Failing to apprehend the "voluble" nature of Lawrence's fictions may (as has happened in the past) lead to serious misreadings, especially as regards the issues which they raise.

Lawrence's narratives, of which the selection of texts examined in this study is illustrative, do not give the reader any respite. It is in this sense that the author of this thesis considers them intrinsically provocative. His narratives, that is, do not teach: they reach out. More importantly, inasmuch as they raise controversial gender issues while at the same time precluding any passive reading, they are "consciousness-raising" as opposed

2. *Sons and Lovers*, edited by Helen Baron and Carl Baron (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 183; 'St. Mawr', in *St. Mawr and Other Stories*, edited by Brian Finney (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 21-155 (p. 145, p. 146).

to "ideologically sedating". Amongst all the narrative devices considered here, there are two which particularly endow his fictions with their typically stimulating flavour: on the one hand, his complex handling of "represented speech and thought"; on the other, Lawrence's idiosyncratic narrators.

Like most modernist writers, Lawrence made extensive use of "represented speech and thought" technique. Needless to say, this was not new in the history of English fiction. Yet there was a difference between the modernists' use of it and their predecessors', both in terms of frequency and sophistication: the former display the progressive elimination of typographical tags transparently demarcating the represented speech or thought of characters; the postponement of linguistic markers (in the manner of "she felt", "he thought") for a long stretch of narrative; or indeed, the total elimination of any such markers, thus impelling the reader to resort to the surrounding context in search of interpretive clues. As the foregoing study has amply evinced, this sophisticated utilization of "represented speech and thought" has significant relevance with regard to meaning production in Lawrence's narratives. First of all, it largely disrupts the reader's *linear* apprehension of the narrated events. One recalls that what characterizes modernist writings is a conscious rejection of narrative conventions, one of which is linearity. As a recent critic specializing in the modern short story reminds us, this preference for 'uneven textual surface[s]' amongst the modernists cannot be fully understood independently of the fundamental thematic concern which they help fashion: the sense of existential fragmentariness, with regard to both the perceiving subject and perceived object.³ This concern, as we have been able to appreciate, also lies at the core of Lawrence's stories: by means of a remarkably complex handling of point of view and voice, Lawrence's narratives

3. Dominic Head, *The Modernist Short Story: A Study in Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 20, 185; Head chooses not to include D. H. Lawrence in his survey on the basis that his stories are 'conservative in structure and form' (p. 34). This thesis is not comparative in scope; yet it amply demonstrates that Lawrence's short stories have many points in common (formally and thematically) with the experimental writing which characterizes the short story production of the authors examined in Head's — Joyce, Mansfield, Woolf, Wyndham Lewis, Malcolm Lowry. In this sense, the author of this thesis would rather agree with Charles Bohner, for whom Lawrence 'must be at the centre of any discussion of the modern short story'; 'Review of Joseph M. Flora, ed., *The English Short Story, 1880-1945: A Critical History* (Boston, MA: Twayne, 1985)', *The D. H. Lawrence Review*, 18 (1985-86), 88-90 (p. 89).

enhance his characters' dramatized experience of fragmentariness while simultaneously compelling his readers to partake actively in the unfolding of it.

Secondly, the technique of "represented speech and thought" endows Lawrence's stories with their characteristically *ambiguous* aura. In the course of the readings offered in this study we have come across numerous instances where it is virtually impossible to elucidate the exact centre of consciousness from which the narrated events are being transmitted. In turn, I have illustrated with textual examples how on some such occasions the narration brings together not just differing interpretive possibilities, but at times even mutually self-cancelling alternatives.

Thirdly, we have seen that it is in Lawrence's use of this technique of representation that one must locate the source of much of the *irony* which permeates his fictions. It is perhaps unfortunate that, in having so frequently failed to pay heed to Lawrence's complex utilization of this particular method, scholars have taken many of the ironic instances arising from it as authorial interventions and carriers of *the* overall ideology of the texts in question. Ultimately, it has often led to a misapprehension of the way in which Lawrence's mode of representation bars dogmatism from his narratives.

A special feature — as well as an added difficulty — in Lawrence's fictions is that "represented speech and thought" is not used only in combination with effaced narrators. On the contrary, disregarding Henry James's strictures, Lawrence endowed narrators with loud, outspoken voices. Instead of "depersonalizing" his writings by resorting to the Jamesian method of multiple perspectives gravitating around a "central consciousness" (*The Portrait of a Lady*) or a central image (*The Golden Bowl*); and instead of reducing his narrators to transparent media as is often the case in Joyce and Woolf, Lawrence subjectivized his story-tellers to such a degree that at any moment one would expect them to become actors in their own right, alongside the rest of the cast.

We have seen these narrators in action in the course of this survey: unashamedly judging and rebuffing the characters which they present, undercutting their speech, disrobing them of their idiosyncratic phraseology or identity; narrators who even at times reach forward so as to drag the reader into the arena in order to transform her into one

more butt. True, they are less conspicuously personalized than their novelistic counterparts (in *Mr Noon*, *Kangaroo*, *The Lost Girl*, and *Aaron's Rod*); that is, there is rarely explicit mentioning of a "dear" or "gentle reader" such as one finds in some of his late novels. Yet the *potentiality* of such addresses is there: in the form of a present tense, the occasional use of the personal pronoun "you" or the universal "one", the narrators' limited spatial stance, and above all, in their expressive mannerisms. Uncritically adhering to Jamesian strictures, numerous Lawrencian scholars have negatively interpreted these voices as intrusively authorial, in turn encapsulating the underpinning ideology of the stories they present. The fact is, once the narrators' subjectivity is foregrounded, they come forth, not as authoritative organizing principles, as much as characters in their own stories, 'subject to be quoted with [the] other characters'.⁴ Instead of effacing story-tellers, Lawrence's tales erase discursive hierarchies. The reader is thus left with a polyphonic choir, whereby any ideological conclusion can only be elucidated by carefully attending to the interaction of all the choric voices involved, including the narrator's.

Clearly the foregrounding of narrators sets Lawrence apart from the so-called modernists who at the time were writing in the wake of Henry James's call for "impersonality" in literature. Interestingly, it is precisely this narrative difference which brings him closer to contemporary modes of writing: for the fact remains that, as one commentator has shrewdly observed, in so 'flaunting the hallowed code of narrative impersonality' Lawrence would be seen to '[eschew] not only the formal control such invisible detachment permitted, but the long-cherished illusion of reality'.⁵

4. Anne Banfield, 'Narrative Style and the Grammar of Direct and Indirect Speech', *Foundations of Language*, 10 (1973), 1-39 (p. 38).

5. Philip Sicker, 'Surgery for the Novel: Lawrence's *Mr Noon* and the "Gentle Reader"', *The D. H. Lawrence Review*, 20 (1988), 191-207 (p. 203).

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