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Realism Versus Symbolism: the Double Patterning of "Sons and Lovers"

We want naturalistic surface but with some kind of inner burning. In Lawrence every bush burns.

Elisabeth Bowen

Sons and Lovers has always been the least controversial of Lawrence's novels. Generations of critics have sung its praise, admiring the vigour and profundity of the presentation of reality in that novel. Most critics also agreed that *Sons and Lovers* played a special role in Lawrence's spiritual development. The view has best been put by Leavis: "The acute emotional problem or disorder which queered his (Lawrence's) personal relations and the play of his intelligence has been placed — has been conquered by intelligence, manifesting and vindicating itself in creative art".¹ Yet, while admitting the decisive role *Sons and Lovers* played in Lawrence's spiritual development, most critics underrate the importance of that novel in Lawrence's development as a novelist. The usual view of *Sons and Lovers* is that this novel is a watershed, namely, that it is the culminating point of Lawrence's early phase and his greatest achievement in the realistic manner but that it is only with *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* that Lawrence starts his novelistic experiment. The most significant voice of dissent is Roy Pascall's. Roy Pascall drew the attention to the presence of symbolism in *Sons and Lovers* which is, essentially, a realistic novel.² It seems to me that the question has to be explored more fully. An attempt to relate *Sons and Lovers* to the great novels of Lawrence's next phase, *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, places *Sons and Lovers* in a perspective which allows

¹ F. R. Leavis, *D. H. Lawrence: Novelist*, Peregrine Books, 1964, pp. 19–20.

² Cf. Roy Pascall, "The Autobiographical Novel and the Autobiography", *Essays in Criticism*, April, 1959 and *Design and Truth in Autobiography*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1960.

us to perceive some elements of the total structure which may, otherwise, be overlooked, and thus contributes to our better understanding of this novel. It seems to me that the unique importance of *Sons and Lovers* in Lawrence's development as a novelist is that *Sons and Lovers* leads directly into the great novels of Lawrence's maturity. It is with *Sons and Lovers* that Lawrence discovered his basic novelistic interests and aims and started to search for narrative procedures which will be most congenial to his exploratory purposes. Instead of stressing the discontinuity in Lawrence's development I should like to stress the *continuity*, maintaining that *Sons and Lovers* may be viewed as a seed-bed of many of the narrative techniques Lawrence was to use later in a more complex and more highly elaborated form.

Sons and Lovers represents an important turning-point in D. H. Lawrence's work on the novel and at the same time a novel which is in many of its aspects characterized by a close interpenetration of the characteristics of the traditional and the modern novel. This double-faced novel is with one face turned towards the past, namely towards the traditional realistic novel with its vivid description of characters and milieus, and with the other face towards the future, namely towards the modern psychological novel which probes the deeper layers of personality. Apparently moving within the limits of straightforward narration it incorporates narrative procedures which will later on undermine the traditional structure. Written in Lawrence's extraordinarily fertile phase when, under a vigorous impulse, he started to explore in depth the network of personal relationships in which he grew up this novel is one of Lawrence's greatest triumphs. The great Oedipal theme of this novel was nurtured on the autobiographical situation in which the author found himself in the grip of powerful love-and-hate feelings towards his parents. At the same time in the complex of problems this novel deals with there are already present, overtly or covertly, many important constitutive elements of the later Lawrentian myth staging the conflict between the physical and the spiritual in the function of integration or disintegration of personality within the general framework of Lawrence's apocalyptic vision of the destruction of values in the contemporary highly urbanized, highly industrialized West-European civilization.

When writing this novel Lawrence relied on what was central and best in the realistic tradition. Scenic representation dominates the novel, the social setting in which the characters function is richly embodied, characters and their relationships are extremely vividly presented. Other features of the novel are also in full accordance with the realist

tradition: the omniscient narrator, the chronological and causal continuity of narration, and, above all, the language of the novel. Lawrence is still far from the narrative experiment of his next novel, *The Rainbow* (an experiment which is in the function of different characterology and a different novelistic structure); the language of *Sons and Lovers* is a vigorous, straightforward, supple language of realistic narration, richly concrete, impetuously carrying the theme forward. The first thing that strikes the reader is the forcefulness and conciseness of the linguistic formulation which records the essential. In contrast with the former two novels, *The White Peacock* and *The Trespasser*, the language of *Sons and Lovers* is divested of all irrelevancies and trivialities. These characteristics of the language — concrete specification, vividness and maximum concentration of meaning — characterize the novel as a whole.

Scenic representation is the basic narrative procedure of *Sons and Lovers*. The scenes follow close upon one another, the logic of their succession is natural and inevitable.³ They have cumulative significance, the cumulative building up of meanings is a distinctive feature of the structure of *Sons and Lovers*. Lawrence the experimentator will later on ingeniously use various techniques among which the discontinuity of narration will figure prominently (*Women in Love*). *Sons and Lovers* is based on a completely different structural model. The continuity of narration, the powerful throbbing of the theme under the surface of day-to-day living and its development in time represents one of the basic structural characteristics of the novel. In retrospect, the whole novel seems to be one pulsing *continuum*. The central Oedipal theme of the novel, richly embodied under the texture of day-to-day living, slowly but inevitably develops through innumerable scenic details from the son's birth until the mother's death. These two elemental events — a birth and a death — open and close the novel with a profound relevance. A great dramatic potential inheres in this relationship and Lawrence does full justice to it. The central theme is rich in developments but it also branches off into subsidiary or supplementary lines of action. It has antecedents (Gertrude Morel's relation to her husband and to her eldest son) and many offshoots (Gertrude Morel's influence over Paul's relations with Miriam and Clara). The

³ Compare Virginia Woolf's judgment on *Sons and Lovers*: "Words, scenes flow as fast and direct as if he merely traced them with a free, rapid hand on sheet after sheet... One of the curious qualities of *Sons and Lovers* is that one feels un unrest, a little quiver and shimmer in his page, as if it were composed of separate gleaming objects, by no means content to stand still and be looked at"; "Notes on D. H. Lawrence", *The Moment and Other Essays*, The Hogarth Press, London, 1947, pp. 80—81.

central theme is never out of focus in the course of the development of the novel (with certain qualifications in the part of the novel depicting Paul's relation to Miriam, where there are specific causes for its partial repression); its development represents the structural principle of the novel. In the opening chapters of the novel this theme is imperceptibly woven into the life of the whole large family, which is spread out before us in a realistic panorama. The rich presentation of the family life in its social setting is functional in that it supplies a powerful motivation for Gertrude Morel's channeling of her most vital interests in the personalities and destinies of her two favourite sons. Frustrated in everything, marriage, social and material status, exposed to multiple external pressures, Mrs. Morel finds in the intensified relation with her sons a compensation for all renunciations she has made in her life. This is a sector of her life where her personality, repressed elsewhere, finds a possibility of creative action. She projects her personality on to her sons, concentrating on them all her immense emotional potential. This basic thematic interest is embodied in a dense medium of details from day-to-day living, which interpret inner dramatic tensions within the family and, at the same time, the ethos of a small mining village in the industrialized Midlands towards the end of the last century. Lawrence's presentation possesses immense vitality. The Morel family is representative, and by his masterful handling of detail and scene Lawrence presents the ethos of the mining village (from the breadwinner's hard work in the mine to the close family life, relations at work, neighbourly relations, relations of the men of the village among themselves, relations of the women of the village among themselves, the unwritten rules of morality and custom etc.). By means of innumerable vivid details Lawrence builds up a three-dimensional picture in the realist manner. His brush flickers incessantly over the canvas, laying on vivid colour. It is the innumerable vigorous strokes of this quick brush that make up the total picture. Lawrence's intimate knowledge of the material makes possible the completeness of the picture, the depth of presentation. The writer's concentration on Gertrude Morel's relation to her husband or her eldest son, or the numerous small scenes which are concerned with other children or which portray the life of the family as a whole within the social community to which it belongs, are never felt by the reader as undesirable digressions serving the purpose of presenting a large social panorama for its own sake. Everything is relevant in one way or another, dependent on the central theme. The richness of the narrative texture is achieved by an inexhaustible wealth of details. Not only the great scenes which indelibly impress themselves on our mem-

ory (Mrs. Morel among the lilies in the garden before Paul's birth, or William's death) but innumerable small scenes — a scene with the pottery man from whom Mrs. Morel buys a dish with the cornflower pattern and the joy of the mother and the son over a good buy, a trip to Leaver's farm etc. — richly embody the relationship, forge the spiritual intimacy between the mother and the son, enmesh Paul in an invisible Oedipal net.

This steady moving forward of the theme on a widely deployed front represents an uncommon achievement. Lawrence superbly controls the narrative movement and, considering the autobiographical background, exhibits a remarkable self-discipline in the selection and incorporation of episodic fragments.⁴

Sons and Lovers is distinguished by an extraordinary vigour of narration. Each small scene is sharply focussed and well worked in depth. The relations between the characters are sharply delineated, the dialogue is tense with life. The scenes are functional in the highest measure. Even the smallest vignette contributes to a more comprehensive characterization of characters as well as to the further development of the action of the novel. The strength of the scene resides in well-observed, well-chosen, highly expressive details. By a resourceful manipulation of narrative planes Lawrence succeeds in presenting both the external and the internal levels of action. The reader is placed in the position of an observer who does not miss a single relevant detail, a scarcely noticeable grimace, a slight contraction of a facial muscle, a movement of the hand, a change of the tone of voice, but at the same time, owing to the author's unobtrusive interventions, he gains access to the inner worlds of the characters, participants in the scene, without consciously noticing the change of the narrative planes which seems to occur naturally. The narrative perspective changes imperceptibly while the narrative planes interweave and thus build up an integral scene.

While in the first part of the novel Lawrence convincingly placed the characters in their social setting, giving their sociological determinants (educational background, upbringing, patterns of behaviour of the community to which they belong), all of which in a certain measure determines their mutual relations, from the chapter "Lad-and-Girl Love" he concentrates primarily on Paul's emotional and sexual commitments. This chapter brings to an end the writer's full concentration

⁴ Cf. Harry T. Moore, *The Life and Works of D. H. Lawrence*, New York and London, 1951; Roy Pascall, "The Autobiographical Novel and the Autobiography", *Essays in Criticism*, April, 1959; Eliseo Vivas, *D. H. Lawrence: The Failure and the Triumph of Art*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1961, Chapter VII.

on the immediate social scene, the microcosm of the mining village, the social milieu that by all sorts of visible and invisible pressures conditions the Morel family; with Paul's adolescence the writer's central interest turns towards the complexity of his emotional and sexual relationships. This change of the gravity centre of the novel which moves on to the terrain of intimate psychology is characteristic of the novel as a whole. The realism of this novel does not follow the Balzacian formula (a description of a society functioning, changing and moving forward). The dominant features of realism are subordinated to a concentration on psychological problems inherent in a particular relationship. Thus Lawrence follows the characteristic turn of twentieth-century literature from the external to the internal, from large social panoramas to the particularities of the inner life of an individual, from techniques suitable for realistic presentation to techniques which will render the nuances of the deeper life of the psyche. *Sons and Lovers* strikingly exhibits this narrowing of focus, namely the writer's concentration on the deeper life of the psyche, whereby the sociological motivations are still present but are subordinated to the psychological and psychoanalytical ones. In *Sons and Lovers* an individual emotional relationship is in a close-up and this will remain Lawrence's central novelistic preoccupation.

I shall round off these brief remarks on Lawrence's realism in *Sons and Lovers* by interpreting one triumphantly realized scene, which shows Lawrence's great mastery of the realist mode. The scene when the Morel family waits for William's coffin to come and when Morel with the help of five more men brings it into the house represents a high water-mark of classical realism. I quote the entire scene:

On Saturday night, as Paul was turning the corner, coming home from Keston, he saw his mother and father, who had come to Sethley Bridge Station. They were walking in silence in the dark, tired, straggling apart. The boy waited.

"Mother!" he said, in the darkness.

Mrs Morel's small figure seemed not to observe. He spoke again.

"Paul!" she said, uninterestedly.

She let him kiss her, but she seemed unaware of him.

In the house she was the same — small, white, and mute. She noticed nothing, she said nothing, only:

"The coffin will be here to-night, Walter. You'd better see about some help." Then turning to the children: "We're bringing him home."

Then she relapsed into the same mute looking into space, her hands folded on her lap. Paul, looking at her, felt he could not breathe. The house was dead silent.

"I went to work, mother", he said, plaintively.

"Did you?" she answered, dully.

After half an hour Morel, troubled and bewildered, came in again.

"Wheer s'll we ha'e him when he does come?" he asked his wife.

"In the front room."

"Then I'd better shift th' table?"

"Yes."

"An' ha'e him across th' chairs?"

"You know there — Yes, I suppose so."

Morel and Paul went, with a candle, into the parlour. There was no gas there. The father unscrewed the top of the big mahogany oval table, and cleared the middle of the room; then he arranged six chairs opposite each other, so that the coffin could stand on their beds.

"You niver seed such a length as he is!" said the miner, and watching anxiously as he worked.

Paul went to the bay window and looked out. The ash-tree stood monstrous and black in front of the wide darkness. It was a faintly luminous night. Paul went back to his mother.

At ten o'clock Morel called:

"He's here!"

Everyone started. There was a noise of unbarring and unlocking the front door, which opened straight from the night into the room.

"Bring another candle", called Morel.

Annie and Arthur went. Paul followed with his mother. He stood with his arm round her waist in the inner doorway. Down the middle of the cleared room waited six chairs, face to face. In the window, against the lace curtains, Arthur held up one candle, and by the open door, against the night, Annie stood leaning forward, her brass candlestick glittering.

There was the noise of wheels. Outside in the darkness of the street below Paul could see horses and a black vehicle, one lamp and a few pale faces; then some men, miners, all in their shirt-sleeves, seemed to struggle in the obscurity. Presently two men appeared, bowed beneath a great weight. It was Morel and his neighbour.

"Steady!" called Morel, out of breath.

He and his fellow mounted the steep garden step, heaved into the candle-light with their gleaming coffin-end. Limbs of other men were seen struggling behind. Morel and Burns, in front, staggered; the great dark weight swayed.

"Steady, steady!" cried Morel, as if in pain.

All the six bearers were up in the small garden, holding the great coffin aloft. There were three more steps to the door. The yellow lamp of the carriage shone alone down in the black road.

"Now then!" said Morel.

The coffin swayed, the men began to mount the three steps, with their load. Annie's candle flickered, and she whimpered as the first men appeared, and the limbs and bowed heads of six men struggled to climb into the room, bearing the coffin that rode like sorrow on their living flesh.

"Oh, my son — my son!" Mrs Morel sang softly, and each time the coffin swung to the unequal climbing of the men: "Oh, my son — my son — my son!"

"Mother!" Paul whimpered, his hand round her waist. "Mother!"

She did not hear.

"Oh, my son — my son!" she repeated.

Paul saw drops of sweat fall from his father's brow. Six men were in the room — six coatless men, with yielding, struggling limbs, filling the room and knocking against the furniture. The coffin veered, and was gently lowered on to the chairs. The sweat fell from Morel's face on its boards.

"My word, he's a weight!" said a man, and the five miners sighed, bowed, and, trembling with the struggle, descended the steps again, closing the door behind them.

The family was alone in the parlour with the great polished box. William, when laid out, was six feet four inches long. Like a monument lay the bright brown, ponderous coffin. Paul thought it would never be got out of the room again. His mother was stroking the polished wood. (171—173)⁵

External data which possess great expressive force take over a major role in this scene, suggesting the characters' states of mind. The setting is especially important: the parlour, used only for solemn occasions, is emptied in the middle, six chairs stand one opposite another and wait for the coffin to be put on them. Out of the wide expanse of undulating hills death comes. Lawrence does not dwell on the thoughts and feelings of the characters, participants in the scene. We watch them from the outside. Each of them is isolated from the others by pain. Yet even here Paul's link with his mother asserts itself. It is characteristic that the only psychical datum which is thrown into relief on the general background of pain and despair ("The house was dead silent.") is Paul's concern for his mother. While the writer passes in silence over the characters' thoughts, external details become the main vehicle of dramatic pathos: the six chairs that "wait", the arrival of the coach with one lit lamp down in the road, a group of miners surrounding the coach who appear to struggle with something in the dark. The cumulative force of details conveying the slow moving of the funeral cortège in the *chiaro-scuro* distribution of lights suggests the tragic moment in the family life, the invasion of the home by death. The writer follows the funeral cortège closely, in a slowed-down rhythm. The close-up technique singles out one descriptive detail after another. The writer's eye does not miss anything, the steep rise of the garden, the grouping of the miners ("Morel and Burns, *in front*, staggered"), the yellow coach lamp which lonely shines down there in the road, but the coffin with William's dead body is kept in focus all the time. This weight under which the miners stumble, which is suddenly "heaved" aloft (the verb is charged with the dynamics of movement) into the lit space is in the centre of attention. A striking image compresses the inner meaning of physical details:

⁵ References are to page numbers in D. H. Lawrence, *Sons and Lovers*, Penguin Books, 1966.

... and the limbs and bowed heads of six men struggled to climb into the room, bearing the coffin *that rode like sorrow on their living flesh.*

This image performs the function of correlating the physical and the psychical data. The weight and the size of the coffin (the miners stumble under it, it fills the whole space: "Like a monument lay the bright brown, ponderous coffin. Paul thought it would never be got out of the room again") are correlated with the pain which weighs the family down. Owing to Lawrence's masterful handling of the scene the coffin which appears on the scene by the natural logic of things is endowed with a special expressive force and becomes a dramatic agent, the chief vehicle of the dramatic pathos of the scene. By focussing the attention on this coffin which bears the main burden of the drama the sorrow of the Morel family is psychically embodied.

From the rich text of this scene I should like to single out one more detail. The adjective that Lawrence gives to the noun "flesh" in the description of the group of miners who look as if they were struggling with something is "living":

... the limbs and bowed heads of six men struggled to climb into the room, bearing the coffin that rode like sorrow on their *living flesh.*

In the light of this adjective the dynamics of the description of the carrying of the coffin gets a new dimension. From the moment the coach bearing the coffin appears down in the road Lawrence stresses the *movement* of the miners' bodies. They jostle, huddle together, separate again, straining and stumbling, exerting themselves to the utmost, giving the impression as if they were struggling with something. (The word "struggle" is repeated four times, Lawrence insists on it.) The full expressive force of the adjective "living" is made clear at the end of the passage in contrast with another descriptive detail:

Like a monument lay the bright brown, ponderous coffin. Paul thought it would never be got out of the room again.

These bodies in movement, the straining, struggling limbs, movements co-ordinated in the joint effort, *this world of the living*, contrasts powerfully with what is in the focus of the scene as a descriptive, physical, and as a psychical reality: a dead, lifeless, inert mass of the coffin in which William's dead body lies. William, a boy and a young man who was full of tremendous vitality is now a "monumental" object that lies spread out over six chairs and immobile dominates the room.

In this scene Lawrence uses the well-tried resources of realism. He does not approach his characters directly and does

not render their inner processes in great detail; on the contrary, he builds up his scene by using details of external reality which have great expressive force. The creative montage of these details is achieved in such a way that each successive detail reinforces the meaning of the previous one and that the inner dramatic tension increases all the time. The descriptive physical reality which constitutes the setting, the firm, solid world of outer reality throws into powerful relief the characters' states of mind. Such a disciplined approach gives a restrained dignity to the event, which the author, perhaps, by a direct rendering of the subjective processes in the characters may not have achieved.

II

The absorption of the best traditions of realism is a source of strength of *Sons and Lovers*. Yet, this novel is already an intersection-point between the traditional and the new stylistic features.⁶ I have already spoken of the inward turning of the novel. This thematic re-orientation has serious repercussions on the organization of the novel. The tradition of the Victorian novel does not wholly determine the novel. Unobtrusively and yet significantly, accents fall differently, within the traditional structure processes of dislocation have already begun which will later lead Lawrence to the re-structuring of the traditional form. The novel abounds in narrative devices which, in a more or less articulate form, anticipate Lawrence's next phase.

A distinctive feature of *Sons and Lovers* is a deeper psychological dimensioning of characters than is usually the case with the traditional novel. The emotional potential of the main characters contains turbulent depths which this novel indicates for the first time in the Lawrentian *oeuvre*. Lawrence himself discovers these new areas in characterology with this novel; this is where the great importance of this novel for his later development lies. In *Sons and Lovers* Lawrence made full use of the possibilities inherent in realistic narrative procedures and at the same time became aware of their limitations. In retrospect, it seems inevitable that *Sons and Lovers* with its stylistic features preceded *The Rainbow*. In his first mature novel Lawrence became fully aware of his main thematic interest, which, naturally, has numerous repercussions in characterology, structure, language etc. With this novel he realized the maximum possibilities of realism. In his next novel he will abandon the realistic mode. In *Sons and Lovers* he presents the relations and conflicts between characters primarily through

⁶ Cf. Roy Pascal, *o. c.*, see note 2.

scenic representation, dialogue, gesture, the author's description of the character's state of mind. But the traditional narrative procedures, no matter how subtly he used them, were not fully adequate instruments in the thematic exploration of the stirred emotional depths and the irrational dimension of characters. In his next novel, *The Rainbow*, Lawrence radicalized his novelistic experiment. Wishing to realize as completely as possible his conception of the deeper dimensioning of characters he structured the novel on new principles.

Yet, in *Sons and Lovers* Lawrence already confronts the problem which narrative procedures to apply in order to realize the deeper dimension of the emotional and the erotic life of his characters.

How are we to understand from the perspective of realistic motivation the early scene of conflict between Gertrude and Walter Morel which arose over William? Morel has without his wife's knowing cut William's hair. A painful scene of conflict ensues in which the confrontation of parents and particularly Mrs. Morel's reaction seem violently disproportionate, utterly incommensurate with the fact that has given rise to the quarrel. I quote the entire scene:

William was only one year old, and his mother was proud of him, he was so pretty. She was not well off now, but her sisters kept the boy in clothes. Then, with his little white hat curled with an ostrich feather, and his white coat, he was a joy to her, the twining wisps of hair clustering round his head. Mrs. Morel lay listening, one Sunday morning, to the chatter of the father and child downstairs. Then she dozed off. When she came downstairs, a great fire glowed in the grate, the room was hot, the breakfast was roughly laid, and seated in his armchair, against the chimney-piece, sat Morel, rather timid; and standing between his legs, the child — cropped like a sheep, with such an odd round poll — looking, wondering at her; and on a newspaper spread out upon the hearthrug, a myriad of crescent-shaped curls, like the petals of a marigold scattered in the reddening firelight.

Mrs Morel stood still. It was her first baby. She went very white, and was unable to speak.

"What dost think o' 'im?" Morel laughed uneasily. She gripped her two fists, lifted them, and came forward. Morel shrank back.

"I could kill you, I could!" she said. She choked with rage, her two fists uplifted.

"Yer non want ter make a wench on 'im", Morel said, in a frightened tone, bending his head to shield his eyes from hers. His attempt at laughter had vanished.

The mother looked down at the jagged, close-clipped head of her child. She put her hands on his hair, and stroked and fondled his head.

"Oh — my boy!" she faltered. Her lips trembled, her face broke, and, snatching up the child, she buried her face in his shoulder and cried painfully. She was one of those women who

cannot cry; whom it hurts as it hurts a man. It was like ripping something out of her, her sobbing.

Morel sat with his elbows on his knees, his hands gripped together till the knuckles were white. He gazed in the fire, feeling almost stunned, as if he could not breathe.

Presently she came to an end, soothed the child and cleared away the breakfast-table. She left the newspaper, littered with curls, spread upon the hearthrug. At last her husband gathered it up and put it at the back of the fire. She went about her work with closed mouth and very quiet. Morel was subdued. He crept about wretchedly, and his meals were a misery that day. She spoke to him civilly, and never alluded to what he had done. But he felt something final had happened.

Afterwards she said she had been silly, that the boy's hair would have had to be cut, sooner or later. In the end, she even brought herself to say to her husband it was just as well he had played barber when he did. But she knew, and Morel knew, that that act had caused something momentous to take place in her soul. She remembered the scene all her life, as one in which she had suffered the most intensely. (24—25)

Has this scene been written in conformity with the realist tradition? Or does Lawrence here, perhaps, try to do something new? This scene indicates that Lawrence is groping for narrative procedures which will strike deeper into characters, whereby the irrational dimension already tentatively emerges as a constituent of the characters' psychology. This scene of a quarrel which arose over a trifle, with apparently guileless motivation on Morel's part, suggests the frightening gulf which has already opened between Morel and his wife. Here, for the first time in the novel, we can get an idea about Mrs. Morel's violent hatred of her husband. The scene suggests Mrs. Morel's character (the force of personality, the depth of her affective potential in its creative and in its destructive aspects) as well as the essential characteristics of her relation to her husband (the violence of her hatred of him which outgrew all rational reasons).⁷ What baffles us in this scene is the novelty of Lawrence's narrative procedure which is not yet fully developed and for which we have not been sufficiently prepared. The relevance of this scene stands out all the more clearly when we come back to *Sons and Lovers* after reading the later novels, *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*. From this perspective it can be perceived that the scenes similar to this one foreshadow the future two great novels in which the forces of the unconscious play a significant role and determine a different dimensioning of character. In the early scene from *Sons and Lovers* we can already discern the rudiments of the narrative procedure which will be used by Lawrence on a larger scale, with incomparably greater complexity, in focal scenes with

⁷ For a different interpretation of this scene see Eliseo Vivas, o. c., see note 4, pp. 180—181.

irrational motivation in *Women in Love*.⁸ These scenes which disclose the depths of personality will be more subtly prepared for by the cumulative force of details, scenes, descriptions, which act like anticipatory hints. Thus the determinative elements of a situation will be given earlier, although unobtrusively, so that their real significance is grasped only in retrospect.⁹

In the scene between Walter and Gertrude Morel we come upon one of Lawrence's first attempts at this narrative procedure. The disparity between the slightness of the occasion and the great importance which the scene assumes in the consciousness of characters, if not in that of the readers, is enormous.

But he felt *something final had happened* . . . But she knew, and Morel knew, *that that act had caused something momentous to take place in her soul. She remembered the scene all her life, as one in which she had suffered the most intensely.*

Where does that come from? What justifies the disparity, what is the third term of reference which reconciles the slightness of the occasion with the enormity of the characters' reactions? Later on when the passions have cooled off Mrs. Morel looks at the situation calmly and reasonably. She herself says:

Afterwards she said she had been silly, that the boy's hair would have had to be cut, sooner or later. In the end, she even brought herself to say to her husband it was just as well he had played barber when he did.

But if we accept this evaluation we, in fact, approach the scene from the wrong angle. Not logic, but powerful affects are at work here. The scene represents a moment from the *continuum* of the characters' lives but it does not represent *any* moment. Neither shall we grasp its real significance if we approach it as a scene rendering a representative aspect of the relation between Morel and his wife (ceaseless quarrels and conflicts) in the realist manner. It seems to me that the scene is focussed rightly if it is understood as a moment of insight which in a flash reveals the innermost core of a character or the relation between characters. What is revealed in this case is the irrational dimension of Mrs. Morel's relation to her husband. What closes the gulf between the cause and the effect is a motivation which has outgrown the realistic tradition. The motivation is not only psychologically appropriate to the characters and the situation in which they find themselves (the realist formula) but it probes the irrational depths of the characters' affective potential.

⁸ Cf. Višnja Sepčić, "Notes on the Structure of *Women in Love*", *Studia Romanica et Anglicana Zagradiensia*, 21—22, 1966.

⁹ Cf. Eliseo Vivas, *o. c.*, see note 4, Chapter X.

Some elements which help us to understand the scene have been given. Shortly before the scene we come upon the following author's commentary of the relation between Walter and Gertrude:

She made much of the child, and the father was jealous.

At last Mrs. Morel despised her husband. She turned to the child; she turned from the father...

While the baby was still tiny, the father's temper had become so irritable that it was not to be trusted. The child had only to give a little trouble when the man began to bully. A little more, and the hard hands of the collier hit the baby. Then Mrs. Morel loathed her husband, loathed him for days; and he went out and drank; and she cared very little for what he did. Only, on his return, she scathed him with her satire.

The estrangement between them caused him, *knowingly or unknowingly*, grossly to offend her where he would not have done.

The adverbs "knowingly or unknowingly" give us a clue to the scene. Motivation which prompts Morel to act as he did is not, in fact, completely innocent. It is an indirect, timid, and yet spiteful mode of revenge, a punishment inflicted upon the child which gets more and more of the mother's love, and, at the same time, an attack upon the mother. This confused, undifferentiated motivation which Morel is not conscious of, and which is never explicitly mentioned by the writer, is nevertheless implied by the text. The scene shows clearly an imbalance of power. Morel's attempt at a revenge is indirect and half-hearted. It calls forth a violent reaction, completely out of proportion with the cause.

She gripped her two fists, lifted them, and came forward. Morel shrank back.

"I could kill you, I could!" she said. She choked with rage, her two fists uplifted.

It is this disproportionate reaction that shows best the degree of alienation between Mrs. Morel and her husband. For her her husband is a stranger who encroaches upon her territory (the children) and does violence there. She completely identifies herself with her children. Morel is alienated, dispossessed, cast out. He himself becomes particularly sharply aware of it in this scene; hence his staring in the fire, clenching of fists, feeling that somebody has struck him on the chest and that he cannot breathe:

Morel sat with his elbows on his knees, his hands gripped together till the knuckles were white. He gazed in the fire, *feeling almost stunned, as if he could not breathe.*

In the course of the scene Walter Morel becomes intuitively aware of the frightening truth concerning his relationship with

his wife. By this characteristic, too, this scene heralds the two future novels, *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*. They contain scenes of apparently incomprehensible conflicts where what occurs is partially or completely outside the range of the full conscious awareness of characters (e.g. the conflicts between Anna and Will Brangwen or those between Ursula and Skrebensky in *The Rainbow*; or the conflicts between Gerald and Gudrun in *Women in Love*). Yet, in some inarticulate way, the characters register these seismic disturbances in the depths and thus gain intuitive insights into one another.

While the scene between Walter and Gertrude Morel is an early example of the use of the irrational motivation in a dramatic scene, there are several other categories of scenes in *Sons and Lovers* which have transcended the realistic stylistic convention and which foreshadow Lawrence's later narrative procedures.

The swing scene between Paul and Miriam, and scenes similar to it, are on the main line of development which leads to *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*.¹⁰ The event is slight as later occurrences in *Women in Love* (Gerald's swimming in the lake in the "Diver" chapter, Birkin's stoning of the image of the moon in the pond, Gerald's and Gudrun's taming of the rabbit). Yet, this scene, the realistic surface of which is fully preserved, is given a dimension of deeper meaning. This inner charge of meaning gives the scene a dramatic tension. The text reverberates with meanings other than literal, and this becomes clearer in retrospect, when the Paul-Miriam relationship has described a full curve. The swing episode which occurs in the early phase of their relationship suggests some basic temperamental differences between Paul and Miriam. Paul sets off with a vigorous movement, giving himself up entirely to the swinging motion:

He set off with a spring, and in a moment was flying through the air... every bit of him swinging, like a bird that swoops for joy of movement... For the moment he was nothing but a piece of swinging stuff; not a particle of him that did not swing.
(187)

Miriam is fascinated with Paul's capacity of total identification with a physical activity. She is constitutionally incapable of doing it. Her lack of physical courage, her inhibitions are too strong. She feels the attraction of the swing, but is afraid of it. The moment Paul gives her a thrust and starts

¹⁰ Roy Pascall was the first to explore the question of the symbolic scenes in *Sons and Lovers* in his article "The Autobiographical Novel and the Autobiography" and in his book *Design and Truth in Autobiography*.

swinging her, she loses control over herself and almost faints from fear.¹¹

She felt the accuracy with which he caught her, exactly at the right moment, and the exactly proportionate strength of his thrust, and she was afraid. Down to her bowels went the hot wave of fear. She was in his hands. Again, firm and inevitable, came the thrust at the right moment. She gripped the rope, almost swooning.

"Ha!" — she laughed in fear. "No higher!"

"But you are not a bit high!", he remonstrated.

"But no higher."

He heard the fear in her voice and desisted. Her heart melted in hot pain when the moment came for him to thrust her forward again. But he left her alone. She began to breathe. (187—188)

The techniques used in the swing episode and the scenes similar to it will be developed much further in *Women in Love*, where a slight, seemingly unimportant act, whose motivation is partly or totally irrational (Birkin's stoning of the moon image), focusses a complex state of mind. A turbid, not fully articulate mood is projected upon a slight external action and thus rendered concrete in a dramatically charged scene. One more parallel needs to be drawn. The scenes similar to the swing episode appear in their "allotropic" variants all throughout the novel and are thus the writer's means of creating conceptual constants.¹² In *Women in Love* this is one of the indispensable structural devices in building up the novel. The "allotropic" scenes which are used as a means of throwing into relief the conceptual constants regarding the characters and their relationships serve as a necessary corrective of the discontinuity in narration, which is a salient feature of the

¹¹ The swing scene is discussed by Roy Pascall and by Harry T. Moore in his book *The Life and Works of D. H. Lawrence*, New York and London, 1951. Appendix D, attached to the book, bears the title: The Genesis of *Sons and Lovers* (as revealed in The Miriam Papers). On the basis of the preserved fragments from one of Lawrence's early versions of *Sons and Lovers* and the fragments and commentaries written by Jessie Chambers Moore reaches important conclusions with regard to the genesis of *Sons and Lovers*. The swing episode appears in these fragments. Moore follows the evolution of this episode and concludes that while in the early version Miriam's reaction in this episode seems to be motivated by mere nervousness, in the final version it acquires a deeper meaning. Moore says: "...in *Sons and Lovers* Miriam's ecstatic fear of the swing seems rather sexual — the dread and excitation of sex felt by a Victorian girl inclined to virginity" (pp. 377—378).

¹² Cf. Roy Pascall: "We remember Miriam in a series of attitudes — her fear of the swing, her suffocating love for her little brother, her caressing of flowers. None of these is likely to be historically untrue. But because they are singled out and put into relief, they sharply delineate that aspect of her character that is decisive within the framework of Lawrence's theme. They become symbolic to a degree that autobiography, in which incidents also acquire a symbolic character, can rarely allow itself" (*Design and Truth in Autobiography*).

structure of *Women in Love*. There are some essential differences between the swing episode in *Sons and Lovers* and the later narrative procedures in *Women in Love*. In the latter novel the dramatic scene embodies affective complexes which have their source in the turbulent irrational depths. The motivation has completely outgrown the realistic stylistic convention. The swing episode is an essentially realistic scene with the symbolic overtones which suggest certain basic temperamental characteristics of Paul's and Miriam's personalities. Yet, with scenes similar to this one Lawrence has already started to move in the direction of *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*. In *Women in Love* this narrative procedure is realized in a number of variants. The first category comprises episodes which are primarily done on the descriptive plane, such as e. g. Gerald's swimming in the lake in the "Diver" chapter, where the rich narrative texture gives rise to a number of associations and overtones and thus transforms an ordinary occasion into the character's inner portrait. The second variant may be exemplified by Birkin's stoning of the moon image in the pond. The description of the breaking up of the moon image into fragments and the interplay of the broken flakes of light and the oncoming waves of darkness is dramatically charged and moves in a dramatic crescendo towards a climax. The third category comprises completely dramatized scenes which may be exemplified by a scene in the "Rabbit" chapter where Gudrun and Gerald tame a rabbit gone wild.

That Lawrence attained a high degree of mastery over this basic narrative procedure, in the characteristic idiom of *Sons and Lovers*, of course, will be shown by an interpretation of the wild-rose bush episode, which fuses in an indissoluble union the two levels of meaning, literal and metaphorical. I quote the essential part of the scene:

One evening in the summer Miriam and he went over the fields by Herod's Farm on their way from the library home. So it was only three miles to Willey Farm. There was a yellow glow over the mowing-grass, and the sorrel-heads burned crimson. Gradually, as they walked along the high land, the gold in the west sank down to red, the red to crimson, and then the chill blue crept up against the glow.

They came out upon the high road to Alfreton, which ran white between the darkening fields. There Paul hesitated. It was two miles home for him, one mile forward for Miriam. They both looked up the road that ran in shadow right under the glow of the north-west sky. On the crest of the hill, Selby, with its stark houses and the up-pricked headstocks of the pit, stood in black silhouette small against the sky.

He looked at his watch.

"Nine o'clock!" he said.

The pair stood, loth to part, hugging their books.

"The wood is so lovely now," she said. "I wanted you to see it."

He followed her slowly across the road to the white gate. "They grumble so if I'm late," he said.

"But you're not doing anything wrong," she answered impatiently.

He followed her across the nibbled pasture in the dusk. There was a coolness in the wood, a scent of leaves, of honeysuckle, and a twilight. The two walked in silence. Night came wonderfully there, among the throng of dark-trunks. He looked round, expectant.

She wanted to show him a certain wild-rose bush she had discovered. She knew it was wonderful. And yet, till he had seen it, she felt it had not come into her soul. Only he could make it her own, immortal. She was dissatisfied.

Dew was already on the paths. In the old-oak wood a mist was rising, and he hesitated, wondering whether one whiteness were a strand of fog or only campion-flowers pallid in a cloud.

By the time they came to the pine-trees Miriam was getting very eager and very intense. Her bush might be gone. She might not be able to find it; and she wanted it so much. Almost passionately she wanted to be with him when he stood before the flowers. They were going to have a communion together — something that thrilled her, something holy. He was walking beside her in silence. They were very near to each other. She trembled, and he listened, vaguely anxious.

Coming to the edge of the wood, they saw the sky in front, like mother-of-pearl, and the earth growing dark. Somewhere on the outermost branches of the pine-wood the honeysuckle was streaming scent.

"Where?" he asked.

"Down the middle path," she murmured, quivering.

When they turned the corner of the path she stood still. In the wide walk between the pines, gazing rather frightened, she could distinguish nothing for some moments; the greying light robbed things of their colour. Then she saw her bush.

"Ah!" she cried, hastening forward.

It was very still. The tree was tall and straggling. It had thrown its briers over a hawthorn-bush, and its long streamers trailed thick right down to the grass, splashing the darkness everywhere with great split stars, pure white. In bosses of ivory and in large splashed stars the roses gleamed on the darkness of foliage and stems and grass. Paul and Miriam stood close together, silent, and watched. Point after point the steady roses shone out to them, seeming to kindle something in their souls. The dusk came like smoke around, and still did not put out the roses.

Paul looked into Miriam's eyes. She was pale and expectant with wonder, her lips were parted, and her dark eyes lay open to him. His look seemed to travel down into her. Her soul quivered. It was the communion she wanted. He turned aside, as if pained. He turned to the bush.

"They seem as if they walk like butterflies, and shake themselves," he said.

She looked at her roses. They were white, some incurved and holy, others expanded in an ecstasy. The tree was dark as a shadow. She lifted her hand impulsively to the flowers; she went forward and touched them in worship.

"Let us go," he said.

There was a cool scent of ivory roses — a white, virgin

scent. Something made him feel anxious and imprisoned. The two walked in silence.

"Till Sunday," he said quietly, and left her; and she walked home slowly, feeling her soul satisfied with the holiness of the night. He stumbled down the path. And as soon as he was out of the wood, in the free open meadow, where he could breathe, he started to run as fast as he could. It was like a delicious delirium in his veins. (196—199)

On the realistic level the scene is realized extremely vividly, the landscape is drawn with vibrant sensibility, the interaction between the landscape and the characters creates a specifically Lawrentian, immediately recognizable, poignant emotional tonality. The moment has been singled out from the *continuum* of Paul and Miriam's friendship but at the same time it reduces a significant phase of this relationship to its essential formula. The swing episode foreshadows the failure of that youthful love in the far future, the wild-rose bush episode triumphantly endorses its basic values. Miriam aspires to moments of spiritual ecstasy pervaded by the high-frequency vibrations of emotion and sensibility. The objective correlative of this aspiration of hers is the wild-rose bush episode. This moment represents the sublimation of an emotional relationship on to a highly elevated plane, the spiritualization of erotics. Paul's and Miriam's sharing of an intense experience implies the joint partaking of a sort of spiritual sacrament. It is not accidental that the word "communion" with its sacral connotations occurs twice ("They were going to have a communion together... It was the communion she wanted").

The wild-rose tree becomes luminous with a spiritual light. The roses ("some incurved and holy, others expanded in an ecstasy") glimmer, charged with a mysterious spiritual significance, arousing ecstasy in the souls of the lovers ("Point after point the steady roses shone out to them, seeming to kindle something in their souls"). It is characteristic that Miriam is an initiator of this moment of the consecration of the mutual relationship and that she transfers a cluster of emotions, associated with an act of religious worship, on to the terrain of personal relationship. It is also characteristic that Paul's reaction differs somewhat from Miriam's although they both completely share the ecstatic moment. While Miriam is tense in anticipation ("By the time they came to the pine-trees Miriam was getting *very eager* and *very intense*... She *trembled*... Down the middle path, she murmured, *quivering*"), Paul is much calmer ("He looked round, expectant... She trembled, and he listened, *vaguely anxious*"). The intensity of the moment almost hurts him ("He turned aside, *as if pained*"). It is Paul who makes easier a return to the ordinary

with a casual remark that the roses are like butterflies and who finally proposes that they should go back. The roses are primarily Miriam's ("her roses"); the only dissonance in this luminous, harmonious moment is felt by Paul alone. The roses for him have "a white, virgin scent". The writer consistently suggests Paul's inner split until the end of the scene. Immediately after the description of the scent of the roses ("white, virgin"), Paul feels anguished without being able to trace the cause of anxiety ("Something made him feel *anxious* and *imprisoned*"). After parting with Paul Miriam walks home in a mood of solemn happiness; Paul, however, as soon as he finds himself on a large, open meadow starts a mad race. Paul's running has a double meaning: the memory of the ecstasy which has just been lived through and which has set his soul aflame merges with a desire to run away from it and thus once again confirms the equivocal nature of Paul's feeling for Miriam. It is highly significant that a slight crack shows in the perfection of the moment. It will broaden and deepen in the course of the novel until it breaks up the relationship.

The scene cuts deep into the characters individually and into their mutual relationship. It sums up the essential quality of their relationship, its inspiration and beauty as well as its limitation. The scene category to which this episode belongs points forward to the complex symbolic scenes in *Women in Love* through which Lawrence refracts the essential characteristics of characters and their relationships. Of course I do not want to suggest that there is no difference between these two types of scenes. In the symbolical scenes of *Women in Love* the motivation is primarily or exclusively irrational. In exploring the psyche of his characters Lawrence went much further, especially as regards the techniques of indirect portrayal of unconscious impulses and drives.

Yet, it must be stressed that, structurally, there is a vital difference between the swing episode and the wild-rose bush episode in *Sons and Lovers*, and the scenes in *Women in Love* which are a later development in the same direction. In contrast with the focal scenes with irrational motivation from *Women in Love*, the scenes from *Sons and Lovers* do not play a crucial role in the structuring of the novel. In *ultima linea*, in the total structure of *Sons and Lovers* both the swing episode and the wild-rose tree episode function as a single beat in the pulsing of the theme; they do not play a vital role in the structural articulation of the novel. Within the rigorous dramatic structure of *Women in Love* the scene when Birkin stones the moon image in the pond or the scene when Gerard and Gudrun tame a rabbit gone wild act as decisive turning-points in the development of the action. By disclosing the

innermost core of characters concerned, by enabling the characters to gain profound intuitive perceptions about one another and their mutual relationship these episodes move the action for one significant step forward. The swing episode has an entirely different function within the structural scheme of *Sons and Lovers*. Our attention has not been drawn to that episode by narrative rhythm, the episode has not been made conspicuous. An inattentive reader may easily miss the symbolical overtones, reacting to the scene as to one of the many details which depict the early phases of the Paul—Miriam relationship. Nor for the characters themselves does the scene have the revelatory significance enabling them to reach important conclusions about one another. (Compare the similar devices in *Women in Love*). The swing episode does not have a dramatic, climactic significance in the structuring of the novel. If it were omitted from the text the novel would lose a scene which is important for our understanding of the Paul—Miriam relationship. Yet, even if the scene were omitted from the text, this relationship would be comprehensible to the reader owing to the *continuous development of the theme*, which is realized by means of innumerable scenic details all of which point in the same direction. To bear this out I shall mention only one episode which takes place much later. Paul has returned to Miriam ("The Test on Miriam"). He picks up cherries, swinging high up in the tree, and this physical action brings him a certain sensuous pleasure, a joy in physical existence. Miriam stands under the cherry tree in rapturous contemplation of the evening clouds. For her this is a moment of quiet contemplation and aesthetic pleasure. This episode, too, one in a long line, in a less concentrated form recapitulates the significance of the swing episode. To sum up, a number of episodes possessing greater or lesser concentration of meaning build up conceptual constants in characterology and the portrayal of relationships between characters. We shall best grasp the difference if we compare the swing episode with the moon-breaking scene in *Women in Love*. The scene from *Women in Love* acts as a turning-point in the relation of the two of the main characters and, consequently, in the development of the theme. Within the structure of *Women in Love* the scene expresses a complex of meanings in a *unique* way. The further development of the dramatic action would be incomprehensible to the reader if the scene were omitted from the text. *Women in Love* is built up on crucial moments in the development of the characters' relationships, each of which embodies a unique complex of meanings.

Sons and Lovers has a highly integrated form of an entirely different kind. It is built upon the gradual, continuous

development of the theme which draws its strength from the cumulative force of details. The scenes with symbolical overtones which reveal the essence of characters and their relationships are not placed in such a way that the structural articulation of the novel rests on them. They do not act as structural joints. Highly illuminated for a moment, they easily and naturally merge with the stream of scenic details which flows on, carried on the general forward movement of the narrative rhythm. They do not stand out in relief, the writer does not emphasize them. *Sons and Lovers*, which is still within the realistic tradition, and the symbolistic novels of Lawrence's next phase have entirely different structural rhythms.

Yet, the symbolistic techniques have already at many points penetrated into the realistic structure. I shall mention one more in order to complete the picture. In *Sons and Lovers* Lawrence uses fairly extensively the narrative device of the exteriorization of the inner processes in characters, the projection of the character's affective complex upon a phenomenon of external reality, whereby the demarcation line between the subjective and the objective is blurred. Internal reality with its multiple charge of meaning penetrates into and merges with external reality. (The careful reader of *The Rainbow* will immediately recognize the link.) I shall illustrate this with the following passage:

He worked feverishly and mechanically, so that he could escape from himself. It grew late. Through the open door, stealthily, came the scent of madonna lilies, almost as if it were prowling abroad. Suddenly he got up and went out of doors.

The beauty of the night made him want to shout. A half-moon, dusky gold, was sinking behind the black sycamore at the end of the garden, making the sky dull purple with its glow. Nearer, a dim white fence of lilies went across the garden, and the air all round seemed to stir with scent, as if it were alive. He went across the bed of pinks, whose keen perfume came sharply across the rocking, heavy scent of the lilies, and stood alongside the white barrier of flowers. They flagged all loose, as if they were panting. The scent made him drunk. He went down to the field to watch the moon sink under.

A corncrake in the hay-close called insistently. The moon slid quite quickly downwards, growing more flushed. Behind him the great flowers leaned as if they were calling. And then, like a shock, he caught another perfume, something raw and coarse. Hunting round, he found the purple iris, touched their fleshy throats and their dark, grasping hands. At any rate, he had found something. They stood stiff in the darkness. Their scent was brutal. The moon was melting down upon the crest of the hill. It was gone; all was dark. The corncrake called still.

Breaking off a pink, he suddenly went indoors.

"Come, my boy," said his mother. "I'm sure it's time you went to bed."

He stood with the pink against his lips.

"I shall break off with Miriam, mother," he answered calmly. (358—359)

In this passage the landscape focusses Paul's state of mind, interpreting it for us; the night, the moon, and especially the overpowering scents of flowers from the garden become active agents in Paul's inner drama. At the beginning of the passage Paul is already restless, over-excited, he wants to run away from himself and his inner contradictions. ("He worked feverishly and mechanically, so that he could escape from himself"). The first thing that reaches him from the outside, offering him a possibility of escape, is the scent of madonna lilies, which "prowls" outside and "stealthily" enters the room through the open door. The streaming of scents from the garden acts as a secret call on Paul. We learn this from the word "suddenly" and Paul's abrupt movement ("Suddenly he got up and went out of doors"). The night scents from the garden, heavy with promises and suggestions, penetrated his soul without consciously registering with him and worked a change in him. In contrast with the spiritual ecstasy shared with Miriam in the wild-rose bush scene Paul's excitement in this passage is of a different kind; sensuous, instinctual and violent, it belongs to another order of things. In the former scene the senses were quietened while the gleaming points of ecstasy were kindled in the spirit; here the beauty of the night arouses in him a need of physical action ("The beauty of the night made him want to shout"). Lawrence throws into relief those elements of the landscape which have powerful sexual connotations. The ecstatic points of white roses, gleaming within a limited space ("on the darkness of foliage and stems and grass") are contrasted with the glowing of the red moon which has encompassed the whole night sky. (We know from earlier phases of the novel that the moon acts on Paul in such a way that it powerfully awakens instinctual life in him.) The forms of things are blurred: "A *dim* white fence of lilies went across the garden". (Compare the clear outlines of the roses: "Some incurved and holy, others expanded in a ecstasy".) The primary reality out there in the garden, exerting its powerful influence upon him, intoxicating his senses, is the streaming of the night scents of flowers. In this enchanted landscape in which everything has undergone an animistic metamorphosis the air, heavily saturated with scent, seems to be rocking ("and the air all round seemed to stir with scent, as if it were alive"), the lilies "*flagged all loose, as if they were panting*", they *lean behind him as if they were calling*. With every successive detail the sexual connotations become more insistent. Paul suddenly becomes aware of yet another scent, different from that of the lilies. While the lilies create

the atmosphere of rapturous intoxication, the other scent calling to Paul is "raw" and "coarse". Paul tries to identify it and finds its source, the purple irises. They are neither elegant nor refined, all the elements of their description stress their connection with the earth. Their scent is "raw" and "coarse", their flower-cups "fleshy" and stems are likened to dark, grasping hands. The irises were the last element needed to complete the symbolic landscape which interprets the awakening of the repressed sexual impulses in Paul. While the lilies seem to suggest the enchantment of the senses, the irises with their connotations ("raw", "coarse", "brutal") bring in an element of unpoeticized bodily touch. Rebelling against the spiritual love Paul accepts the whole range of the physical, from the rapturous poetry of the senses down to "rawness", "coarseness" and even "brutality". Moreover, it is only when he reaches the iris that it seems to him that his discovery is real and complete. ("At any rate, he had found something").

The inner course of Paul's emotions, about which the author did not say anything explicitly, crystallized into a definitive attitude, a decision. He enters the house and *calmly* says to his mother (the word "calmly" has the whole force of this narrative passage behind it): "I shall break off with Miriam, mother", he answered *calmly*. Incidentally, these are the first words he utters in this scene.

The character's complex state of mind has been projected upon the landscape which becomes its interpreter although this does not detract from its authentic, physical presence. The moon, the garden in the night, the lilies, the iris, are vivid physical presences but at the same time they suggest the circling of inner emotional currents of feeling in the protagonist. Every detail of external reality is rigorously functional, subordinated to the purpose of the projection of the character's mood in its totality. As regards the compression of the multiple meaning on to a minimum space, it is difficult to go further than Lawrence went in this passage.

By using the freedom of creative imagination as well as the insights gained by painful personal experience, in *Sons and Lovers* Lawrence released the tragical potential of his complex theme. From the forceful, concentrated realistic notation which records the essential to the suggestive play of symbolistic intimations *Sons and Lovers* bears witness to the manifold possibilities of the novelistic form. The discipline of realism and the imaginative resourcefulness of symbolism, the interaction of these two literary methods enabled Lawrence to suggest the universal in a highly specific local milieu and subtly to define, in its modern disguise, an archetypal human experience.