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### Notes on the Structure of "Women in Love"

Portraying the vital emotional relationships of the characters in *Women in Love* Lawrence came up against the same difficulty as he encountered in his previous novel, *The Rainbow*: how to render the emotional life of his characters in all its complexity, with the turbulent depths which rationally can never be completely differentiated. In order to express the depths of personality in his previous novel, *The Rainbow*, he used a highly original kind of narrative description in which a complex use of the poetic image had a very prominent place.

In *Women in Love* Lawrence changed the descriptive method for the dramatic. *Women in Love* would have been impossible without the technical experience of the previous novel although in it Lawrence used new and different techniques. *Women in Love* meant a step further in the direction of greater technical virtuosity. In the process of writing *The Rainbow* Lawrence had learnt how to express the instinctive and irrational depths of the emotional life of his characters. The new knowledge was worked into the texture of *Women in Love*. The basic structural unit of *Women in Love* is a dramatic scene which is vividly rendered and simultaneously exists at several levels of meaning. Lawrence's virtuosity lies in the fact that in these dramatic scenes depicting the clash of characters there is a constant interplay between the contrasting categories of the superficial and the deep, the emotional and the rational, the conscious and the instinctual-irrational. In the course of such a scene he builds up the inner structure of the emotional relationship from the conscious attitude taken up by the characters down to the last turbulent layers of personality without any abrupt transitions.

Lawrence's intention in this novel is not to give a vivid descriptive picture of reality in the traditional realistic manner but to recreate the inner profile of persons, things and events. *Women in Love* as a visionary novel tries to capture the basic

inner rhythms and trends of development of the contemporary world as they are reflected on the psychical level. These general stylistic features of the novel affect very markedly the characterisation in the novel. The characters are highly individualized and differentiated, but difficult to grasp. The difficulty stems from the fact that Lawrence aims at giving us the essence of their personality. Hence the essential fluidity of the characters, the absence of hard, definite lines in their portraiture. In the attempt to realize his aim and to penetrate to the innermost core of personality Lawrence is confronted with the problem of how to express adequately the inarticulate depths of personality. To this purpose he uses a focal dramatic scene where he projects the emotional depths and the irrational margin of a character on to a seemingly insignificant action which thus acquires a vast psychological meaning. Round the focal point of action clusters a complex of meanings. The motivation in these scenes is prevalently or exclusively irrational. Within the complex structure of the novel they represent Lawrence's most original contribution to the novelistic technique. The basic structural articulation of the book rests on these dramatic scenes which bring into focus the instinctual depths.<sup>1</sup>

In the development of the European novel Dostoevski had already extended the basis of the character and of the action in the novel by his discovery of the irrational in human behaviour (he used the techniques of dream, hallucination, intuitive premonition etc.). But the motivation of the actions of his characters is never exclusively irrational nor does the essential structural articulation of the novel rest on such scenes, as is the case with Lawrence's *Women in Love*. Technically they are all differently executed, and it is here that Lawrence's technical skill comes into full play. But basically they all belong to the same category.

As to the technical execution the scenes within this category may be similar to a hallucinatory vision where things, persons and phenomena in general are brought into a sharp focus so that their inner meaning becomes crystal-clear while time seems to be suspended. Such is for example the well-known scene when Gerald forces his Arab mare to stand while the approaching locomotive comes to a standstill making a terrific noise. The "Coal-Dust" chapter begins on the realistic plane: Ursula and Gudrun walk along the road, the locomotive approaches, Gerald Crich arrives on a red Arab mare. But then as

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<sup>1</sup> Such structuring of the novel has its justification within Lawrence's theoretical thought. The novelist that is intensely interested in the affective and irrational part of the human register goes hand in hand with the theorist who argues that the spontaneous and instinctive part of the psyche represents the vital core of an individual.

the dramatic scene unfolds and the tension builds up in a gradual crescendo the reality begins to dissolve into a nightmare at the same time as Lawrence in his dramatic rendering of characters and events moves from the realm of the apparent to the realm of the essential. The apparent reality (the "picturesqueness" of Gerald) begins to dissolve, shows its diabolical other side, the character and the event suddenly acquire a deep, visionary meaning. The mare that winces from the approaching locomotive, Gerald who forces it to stand because — as he will explain in a later conversation — he wants it to get used to the common noises of the mining region, suddenly acquire a visionary meaning and provide a key for the understanding of the essential meaning of things. The executive will which this industrial magnate has set up as an absolute in this episode lapses into an inhuman automatism and deeply violates life. At the same time Gerald's motivation slips over from the rational into the irrational. In the dramatic contrast of the scene are clashed not only Gerald and the horse but in the further reverberation of meanings industrial civilization and nature both around man and in himself, and in the final confrontation the forces of destruction and death against the forces of life. In the flash of visionary perception — the episode is refracted through the consciousness of the Brangwen sisters — time is suspended although things go on happening as if in a nightmare.

... as the trucks thumped slowly, heavily, horrifying, *one after the other, one pursuing the other, over the rails of the crossing.* (123)<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile the eternal trucks were rumbling on, very slowly, *treading one after the other, one after the other, like a disgusting dream that has no end.* (124)

They could see the top of the hooded guard's-van approaching, the sound of the trucks was diminishing, there was hope of relief from the intolerable noise... And, through the man in the closed wagon *Gudrun could see the whole scene spectacularly, isolated and momentary, like a vision isolated in eternity.* (124)<sup>3</sup>

As to the techniques of their execution the scenes with the irrational motivation may have some similarities with hypnosis. This is exemplified by Gudrun when she, in a sort of trance, dances towards the Scotch bullocks on the meadows in the "Water-Party" chapter motivated by an obscure wish to

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<sup>2</sup> References are to page numbers in D. H. Lawrence, *Women in Love*, Harmondsworth, 1961.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Mark Shorer: "Yet we must recognize, all through the novel, this attempt at the spectacular, the eternally isolated, which leads to the hallucinated effects, and throughout to the strangely irritating compulsive qualities of dreams"; *"Women in Love"*, *The Achievement of D. H. Lawrence*, ed. by F. J. Hoffman and H. T. Moore, University of Oklahoma Press; 1953, p. 173.

challenge the dangerous, hostile, external phenomenon, but at the same time with a secret confidence in her power to break it up and destroy it. These scenes may have some surface similarities with the dream and somnambulism. Gerald's behaviour in the "Death and Love" chapter may well illustrate this type of scene. On the verge of a nervous break-down after his father's death he wanders at night in the surroundings of Shortlands having completely lost his bearings and his feet as if of themselves carry him first to his father's recent grave and then to Gudrun, expressing thus some deep, unconscious drive in Gerald as well as a subtle, ambivalent connection between these two consecutive actions of his. Gerald's behaviour in the "Snowed-Up" chapter can be taken as a further example of this type of scene. After the final confrontation with Gudrun he climbs somnambulistically higher and higher up in the mountains led by a subconscious desire for death and disgusted by human relationships in general until he finally slips on the ice and falls down a steep declivity.

The scenes with irrational motivation may have a quality of a symbolic ritual of some sort. Such is the scene in the "Breadalby" chapter when Birkin, after having suffered an almost deadly blow dealt him by Hermione, walks away to the near-by woods and lies down in the thicket among the wild hyacinths and primroses which he sprinkles over himself, letting the fir needles prick him and the hazel boughs beat him upon the shoulder. Thus Birkin transforms an out-of-the-way thicket into a bridal bed expressing through this extravagant action which has only the slightest realistic support (the shock from the blow) his secession from human society. The extravagant scene gets into focus if we view it as a sort of symbolic ritual. The dramatic confrontation of Gerald and Gudrun in the "Rabbit" chapter has similar qualities. During the common effort to tame a rabbit gone wild they become aware of the similarities of their nature, of the secret, powerful desire for violence and destruction.<sup>4</sup>

The variety of techniques Lawrence uses in these scenes may best be exemplified by the difference between the two powerful scenes in Chapters XVIII and XIX ("Rabbit" and "Moony"). The scene in "Moony" where Birkin tries to break up the image of the moon in the pond is from the beginning to the end rendered on the plane of the concentrated deeper meaning. The use of the poetic techniques plays a very prominent part in the language pattern of the scene. On the other hand in the scene of the conflict of Gerald and Gudrun in "Rabbit" the

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<sup>4</sup> The elements of the sinister ritual in this scene were pointed out by Eliseo Vivas in his book, *D. H. Lawrence: The Failure and the Triumph of Art*, London, 1961.

two planes of presentation, the realistic and the symbolistic, constantly overlap and the motivation of the characters' actions slips over from the rational into the irrational and back again.

I should like to dwell upon these two scenes in some detail in order to illustrate more fully the variety of the Laurentian techniques. Here is the most essential part of the scene in "Moony" although it gets its full force only in its context:

He (Birkin) stood staring at the water. Then he stooped and picked up a stone, which he threw sharply at the pond. Ursula was aware of the bright moon leaping and swaying, all distorted in her eyes. It seemed to shoot out arms of fire like a cuttle-fish, like a luminous polyp, palpitating strongly before her.

And his shadow on the border of the pond was watching for a few moments, then he stooped and groped on the ground. Then again there was a burst of sound, and a burst of brilliant light, the moon had exploded on the water, and was flying asunder in flakes of white and dangerous fire. Rapidly, like white birds, the fires all broken rose across the pond, fleeing in clamorous confusion, battling with the flock of dark waves that were forcing their way in. The furthest waves of light, fleeing out, seemed to be clamouring against the shore for escape, the waves of darkness came in heavily, running under towards the centre. But at the centre, the heart of all, was still a vivid, incandescent quivering of a white moon not quite destroyed, a white body of fire writhing and striving and not even now broken open, not yet violated. It seemed to be drawing itself together with strange, violent pangs, in blind effort. It was getting stronger, it was reasserting itself, the inviolable moon. And the rays were hastening in in thin lines of light, to return to the strengthened moon, that shook upon the water in triumphant re-assumption.

Birkin stood and watched, motionless, till the pond was almost calm, the moon was almost serene. Then, satisfied of so much, he looked for more stones. She felt his invisible tenacity. And in a moment again, the broken lights scattered in explosion over her face, dazzling her; and then, almost immediately, came the second shot. The moon leapt up white and burst through the air. Darts of bright light shot asunder, darkness swept over the centre. There was no moon, only a battlefield of broken lights and shadow, running close together. Shadows, dark and heavy, struck again and again across the place where the heart of the moon had been, obliterating it altogether. The white fragments pulsed up and down, and could not find where to go, apart and brilliant on the water like the petals of a rose that a wind has blown far and wide.

Yet again, they were flickering their way to the centre, finding the path blindly, enviously. And again, all was still, as Birkin and Ursula watched. The waters were loud on the shore. He saw the moon regathering itself insidiously, saw the heart of the rose intertwining vigorously and blindly, calling back the scattered fragments, winning home the fragments, in a pulse and in effort of return.

And he was not satisfied. Like a madness, he must go on. He got large stones, and threw them one after the other, at the white-burning centre of the moon, till there was nothing but a rocking of hollow noise, and a pond surged up, no moon any more, only a few broken flakes tangled and glittering broadcast in the darkness,

without aim or meaning, a darkened confusion, like a black and white kaleidoscope tossed at random. The hollow night was rocking and crashing with noise, and from the sluice came sharp, regular flashes of sound. Flashes of light appeared here and there, glittering tormented among the shadows, far-off, in strange places; among the dripping shadow of the willow on the island. Birkin stood and listened and was satisfied.

Ursula was dazed, her mind was all gone. She felt she had fallen to the ground and was spilled out, like water on the earth. Motionless and spent she remained in the gloom. Though even now she was aware, unseeing, that in the darkness was a little tumult of ebbing flakes of light, a cluster dancing secretly in the round, twining and coming steadily together. They were gathering a heart again, they were coming once more into being. Gradually the fragments caught together reunited, heaving, rocking, dancing, falling back as in panic, but working their way home persistently, making semblance of fleeing away when they have advanced, but always flickering nearer, a little closer to the mark, the cluster growing mysteriously larger and brighter, as gleam after gleam fell in with the whole, until a ragged rose, a distorted, frayed moon was shaking upon the waters again, reasserted, renewed, trying to recover from its convulsion, to get over the disfigurement and the agitation, to be whole and composed, at peace. (278—280)

Discontinuity of narration is a marked characteristic of the structure of *Women in Love*. This shows most clearly if *Women in Love* is compared with the traditional novel. If we take a cross-section of a traditional novel at any point in the development of the story we see that the characters of the novel find themselves in a situation the determinants of which are given and that they act prompted by a motivation which is both psychologically and socially motivated. In the traditional novel a character develops gradually through a series of situations and throughout this process the laws of causality and chronology are strictly respected. In *Women in Love* we come across discontinuity of narration. The characters and their relationships are not revealed gradually through a series of situations which develop one out of another. The essential continuity of development is undoubtedly there but it is rendered in a different way.<sup>5</sup> In the complex structure of *Women in Love* Lawrence renders only the crisis in the development of the relationships between the characters. Every new encounter between Birkin and Ursula or between Gerald and Gudrun marks a new point in the development of their relationships. It is here that the discontinuity of narration comes in. At the new meeting they are both changed in a way; in the meantime they have undergone new experiences although the novel's attention has not been focused

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<sup>5</sup> Of course, we have to bear in mind that the characters in a Lawrence novel primarily exist in the function of their mutual relationship and that the human phenomenon he is primarily interested in is, according to his own definition, "the changing rainbow of our living relationships".

on them, and now, in the scene taking place before the reader's eyes, a sudden shift into a new phase of the development of their relationship is effected. The reader is confronted with a situation the determinants of which are not given (compared with the traditional novel); hence the difficulty he has in finding his bearings. The characteristic example of this technique is the moon scene.

Birkin has returned from France, where he has been a considerable time. What has happened to him in the meantime, what is the direction he has developed in, what are his present thoughts and moods? Ursula, who happens to have come to the pond at night and perceives Birkin walking beside the pond, does not know anything about him in this new phase of their mutual relationship. Nor is the reader in a better position. The scene in which Birkin tries to break up the image of the moon in the pond strikes us with great force because it comes so unexpectedly and we are completely unprepared for it, or at least we think so at the moment. The element of surprise contributes to the tremendous impact of the scene but at the same time it makes great demands on the writer. He has to use the scene in the most economical and the most intense way. In order to make it convincing although there is no continuity in narration, in order to extract the maximum meaning from the scene and catch all the nuances of the situation, that is, Birkin's inner state, Lawrence uses a special technique: he compresses the language highly, uses its creative possibilities to the maximum. Owing to the highly organized language pattern, a simple action, the throwing of the stone in the water in order to break up the moon's image, is given a deep psychological meaning. By intensifying the language pattern Lawrence's narrative description at such moments approaches quite closely the autonomous realm of poetry (the use of a complex of poetic images which illuminate one another, cut across one another, shade off into one another and are closely interdependent, the grouping of the language material around the key metaphors and words which are the main carriers of the meaning, the strict functionality of every word, the complex links between the separate parts of the structural unit etc.). Thus by using a highly compressed language pattern in the focal situation with the prevalently irrational motivation Lawrence expresses some essential elements of Birkin's personality (emotional chaos, a nihilistic drive, an active although submerged desire for violence as the observe of his misanthropy). By means of this scene Lawrence throws light on the deepest emotional and irrational layers of Birkin's personality and implicitly, through the poetic images, suggests a complex meaning.

The detailed analysis of the scene lays bare several elements. The first thing that strikes the eye is the Van Gogh-like dynamics of the scene, achieved by means of an almost exclusive use of verbs of movement (leaping, swaying, shoot out, palpitating, exploded, flying asunder, rose, fleeing, forcing their way in . . . running under . . . writhing, striving, drawing itself together . . . scattered, leapt up, burst, shot asunder, swept over, running close together . . . pulsing up and down, flickering etc.).

The dramatic pathos of the situation is achieved by the fact that the moon is rendered animistically, as an almost living being that is being attacked, staggers under the blow, suffers violence, defends itself, succumbs at moments, and then again develops fighting tactics. Owing to his general animistic vision of natural phenomena Lawrence the poet, for whom — as for the Etruscans in his travel book *Etruscan Places* — everything in nature lives, does not find any difficulty in such a vivid, semi-personified rendering of the moon. After Birkin's action the moon is "leaping", "swaying", "It seemed to shoot out arms of fire", "palpitating strongly", "The furthest waves of light, fleeing out, seemed to be clamouring against the shore for escape", "But at the centre, the heart of all, was still a vivid, incandescent quivering of a white moon", "a white body of fire writhing and striving", "It seemed to be drawing itself together with strange, violent pangs, in blind effort". Afterwards when the moon's body is already broken up the fragments develop a fighting tactics, wishing to reunite, to get together, to recompose a whole. "Gradually the fragments caught together heaving, rocking, dancing, falling back as in panic but working their way home again persistently, making semblance of fleeing away when they have advanced, but always flickering nearer . . ." etc.

In the centre of the language pattern of the scene there are two key notions, two pairs of sharply contrasted images. They represent the poles between which the action takes place. They are the carriers of the basic meaning. In the first group there are the images and metaphors clustering around the image of light. They are sharply contrasted with the images of the shadows and darkness. In the second group there are the images and words clustering round the notion of the fragments (with all the related metaphors "like the petals of a rose that a wind has blown far and wide", "a few broken flakes" etc.). They are sharply contrasted with the images and words expressing the notion of the whole ("the heart", "the heart of the rose", and especially the very word "whole" which appears at the end of the passage, and is thus given a special emphasis, associated with the words "composed" and "at peace"). These two groups of images shade off into one another so that it is impossible to separate them. The action of the struggle between the light and



the dark is closely connected with the action of the breaking up of the whole into fragments which, scattered far and wide, search for a way to come together, to reunite, to recompose the whole.

The Jungian type of criticism, searching for the archetypal images and situations in literature, would, perhaps, find in this scene echoes of the ancient myths, the symbolism of the struggle between the light and the dark as well as the symbolism of the torn body which grows whole again.<sup>6</sup> I quote the key images:

Rapidly, like white birds, the fires all broken rose across the pond, fleeing in clamorous confusion, battling with the flock of dark waves that were forcing their way in. The furthest waves of light, fleeing out, seemed to be clamouring against the shore for escape, the waves of darkness came in heavily, running under towards the centre.

... only a battlefield of broken lights and shadows, running close together. Shadows, dark and heavy, struck again and again across the place where the heart of the moon had been, obliterating it altogether. The white fragments pulsed up and down, and could not find where to go, apart and brilliant on the water... etc.

If there were still any doubt left about the meaning of Birkin's action, the following layer of the language pattern of the scene would dispel it. Throughout the scene can be traced a consistent train of images and words which express violence and thus characterize Birkin's action ("threw *sharply* at the pond"; "the moon... *all distorted*"; "a *burst* of sound"; "a *burst* of brilliant light"; "the moon had *exploded* on the water, and was *flying asunder*"; "the flock of dark waves... *forcing their way in...*"; "the heart of all... not quite *destroyed*... not even now *broken open*, not yet *violated*"; "The moon *leapt up white and burst through the air*"; "Shadows, dark and heavy, *struck again and again across the place where the heart of the moon had been, obliterating it altogether*" etc.).

All the violence implicit in Birkin's action is summed up in Lawrence's description of the final phase of Birkin's action when the moon's image has been completely broken up and Birkin is completely satisfied:

He got large stones, and threw them, one after the other, at the white-burning centre of the moon, till there was nothing but a rocking of hollow noise, and a pond surged up, no moon any

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<sup>6</sup> In her book *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry* Maud Bodkin connects the intensity of the meaning of the scene with the archetypal image that, according to her, is built into its foundations. This is the "moon-image as related in man's imagination to the lives of women, and burdened with the obscure mingled feelings they excite". She further mentions "the description of that interplay of white fire flakes and waves of darkness that is, also, in a secondary sense, description of the waves of contending feelings in the minds of the lovers". *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry*, Oxford University Press, 1963, pp. 292—293.

more, only a few broken flakes tangled and glittering broadcast in the darkness, without aim or meaning, a darkened confusion, like a black and white kaleidoscope, tossed at random... Birkin

The words which depict this state of complete destruction, chaos and confusion are not chosen at random but are in harmony with the whole passage. They point with great force at the basic meaning of Birkin's action, at some deeply suppressed emotional drives in him.

All the elements of the language pattern of the scene that I have mentioned so far form a very marked aspect of the moon stood and listened and was satisfied. scene. Its total meaning is complex and, naturally, it is not exhausted by this commentary. But as the critics who have written about this scene (F. R. Leavis, G. Hough, Maud Bodkin, Eliseo Vivas)<sup>7</sup> have primarily elaborated its bearing on Birkin's

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<sup>7</sup> F. R. Leavis and G. Hough do not elaborate the meaning of the scene in great detail. Leavis says: "The possessiveness he (Birkin) divines in Ursula is what (though that, we may feel, is not all) he sees in the reflected moon" (*D. H. Lawrence, Novelist*, Chatto and Windus, 1955, p. 180). G. Hough follows in Leavis's footsteps: "... his (Lawrence's) mythology is a little rusty, but it is clear enough that the moon is the white goddess, the primal woman image, *das ewig weibliche*, by whom he is obviously haunted" (*The Dark Sun*, Penguin Books, 1961, p. 99). Mark Shorer interprets the basic meaning of the scene in terms of the conflict between the life and death impulses in the characters which, according to him, determines the general rhythm of the novel. "The chapter called 'Moony' shows us Ursula's conflict of despair and desire, to yield or to will; and Birkin's conflict between desire and destructiveness, in the elaborate moon image, reflected on the water, which he attempts to destroy. But like life, it persists in reasserting itself" ("*Women in Love*", *The Achievement of D. H. Lawrence*, p. 171). A. P. Bertocci's interpretation is different. In the course of his exploration of the symbolic overtones in the texture of *Women in Love* he examines with particular interest the connotations of the notion of "whiteness". He thinks that "it belongs to death". "Thus in 'Moony' it is the 'white and deathly smile of the moon', the Syria Dea, the 'white body of fire' in the water that 'leaping up white' in fragments like 'white birds' refuses to be violated... Is it the peace of death that the moon recovers as its rose recomposes itself?" ("*Symbolism in Women in Love*", *A D. H. Lawrence Miscellany*, ed. by Harry T. Moore, Heinemann, 1961, p. 94). All these critics in their different ways appreciate the powerful impact of the scene. The other group of critics deny Lawrence any measure of success in the realisation of this scene. Francis Fergusson: "If you go to Lawrence with a great deal of free and undefined emotion, he will orchestrate it for you; he will provide sensuous molds for your emotion to flow into. Birkin's continual smashing of the moon's reflection in the pond is a good example of this. The scattering and the regathering of the sparkles of light will do to embody any sort of struggle for control, for the very reason that the image itself has no exact reference and the context does not provide it. It is like romantic music: it might be about anything, and only if you ask what it is all about, do you feel that something has been put over you" ("*D. H. Lawrence's Sensibility*", *Forms of Modern Fiction*, ed. by William Van O'Connor, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1962, p. 74). David Daiches denies the spontaneity of Lawrence's inspiration

relation to Ursula, I have thought it necessary to single out that aspect of the total meaning of the scene which the critics have not dwelt upon.<sup>8</sup>

This scene in a particularly intense way exemplifies an important element of Birkin's mental make-up of which we have been intermittently conscious throughout the novel. The moon scene not only renders it vividly present but brings into full light all of its implications. It shows the obverse of Birkin's misanthropy, which is a very marked component of his total make-up. While possessing a lucid insight into some of the most essential trends of development of the contemporary world and of the mental disproportions of modern man, Birkin not only foretells doom, he ardently invokes it. His attitude of severe criticism of and opposition to contemporary society shades off into an intense disgust and hatred of the whole human species and his misanthropy which knows no bounds stirs up in him chaotic feelings, nihilistic impulses, an active wish for violence and destruction. The words which Birkin uses in his sharp condemnation of the contemporary world anticipate, from the very beginning, his action in the moon scene.

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in this scene. "But the often admired scene, in chapter XIX, where Birkin throws stones at the moon's reflection in the water trying to break it up, is really less impressive: it is too obviously fictive, too *voulu*" (*The Novel and the Modern World*, rev. ed., The University of Chicago Press, 1960, p. 170).

<sup>8</sup> In his elaborate interpretation of the scene Eliseo Vivas goes much further than both Leavis and Hough. He makes a theoretical distinction between a "quasi-symbol" such as the mare episode (Chapter IX) or the Mino episode (Chapter XIII) and a "constitutive symbol" such as the scenes in Chapters XVIII ("Rabbit") and XIX ("Moony"). A "quasi-symbol" defines a situation dramatically in such a way that the total meaning can be grasped and easily translated into discursive terms. A "constitutive symbol" on the other hand represents a complex of meanings the total meaning of which is elusive and does not lend itself to translation into discursive terms although we can grasp it intuitively. Vivas explains the scene in "Moony" primarily as it relates to Birkin's relation to Ursula but brings into the open the manifold psychological implications of Birkin's inner state and of his general make-up. He says: "Above all the scene conveys the depth of frustration and the ambivalent and still formless nature of his feelings towards Ursula. But it conveys much more. In the ghastly drama, particularly in the cursing of Cybele, Lawrence gives us the full depth of hopelessness and incoherent disruption from which Birkin is suffering, the threat and the frustration that are tearing him." Vivas connects Birkin's state of inner disruption with the problems which, according to him, Birkin has in his intimate relationships with Ursula on the one hand and with Gerald on the other. "I take it therefore that Birkin is expressing the ancient and deep-rooted fear some men have felt towards women... Another one of the frustrations it expresses is related to two chapters in the book: Chapter XVI, entitled 'Man to Man' in which Birkin proposes to Gerald that they swear *Blutbruderschaft*; and Chapter XX, entitled 'Gladiatorial' in which Gerald and Birkin wrestle naked in Gerald's living-room" (o. c., pp. 259—260 and pp. 263—264).

Talking to Mrs. Crich in Chapter II ("Shortlands"):

"Not many people are anything at all", he answered, forced to go deeper than he wanted to. "They jingle and giggle. It would be much better if they were just *wiped out*. Essentially they don't exist, they aren't there". (27)

Birkin's interior monologue in Chapter V ("In the Train"):

"Well, if mankind is *destroyed*, if our race is *destroyed* like Sodom, and there is this beautiful evening with the luminous land and trees, *I am satisfied*. That which informs it is all there, and can never be lost. After all, what is mankind but just one expression of the incomprehensible... Let mankind *pass away* — time it did... Humanity is a dead letter. There will be a new embodiment in a new way. Let humanity *disappear as quick as possible*". (65)

Talking to Ursula in Chapter XI ("An Island"):

"But I abhor humanity, *I wish it was swept away*. It could go, and there would be no *absolute* loss, if every human being perished tomorrow. The reality would be untouched..."

"*So you'd like everybody in the world destroyed?*" said Ursula. "I should indeed". (141)

The key words in these passages: "wipe out", "destroy", "disappear", "sweep away", anticipate directly Birkin's action in the moon scene. They all contain a germ of the element that is fully developed in the scene in "Moony". Birkin is not only an abstract thinker, his misanthropy has tapped the reserves of destructive energy in him. His nihilism explodes in the scene of the breaking up of the moon's image which in a particularly intense way renders visual and concrete his formerly expressed theoretical statements. By the highly intense use of language Lawrence achieves psychological depth in the scene.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> To redress the balance it must be said immediately that this is not the complete truth about Birkin. At the other pole of his personality there is an intense search for the meaning of the individual existence in the crumbling down of the old order and the disintegration of the old values and sanctions. The violence of his opposition to the contemporary world contains many positive components. It is the indication of his painful sense of the absence of any real values and a powerful incentive for his search of positives. On the ideological level, the whole narrative movement of the novel is framed between these two poles of his personality. But in his complex and highly idiosyncratic personality the sound and the unsound, the positive and the negative, are closely interwoven. The violence of his social critique embraces a marked misanthropic trait, the wholesale negation of the human. His solutions open a new range of problems, and his positives are far from being definitive and wholly valid. Birkin is not a balanced personality; he shares complexes of psychological characteristics with the other characters in the novel whose doom he foretells. In the novel he is placed between Ursula, Hermione, Gerald and the African statuette. Every one of these relationships throws light upon him. The hypertrophic intellectualism is an essential element of his make-up. In "Breadalby" he is one of the leading exponents of the highly

The "Rabbit" chapter is done in an entirely different way. In that chapter there is a constant interplay between the different levels of meaning, the realistic and the symbolic, the superficial and the deep, while the motivation of the characters constantly slips over from the rational into the irrational and back again. The realistic appearances are kept in the foreground all the time, but, as the scene unfolds, the writer concentrates more and more on what is happening beneath the appearances, namely on the stirred instinctual depths. Thus by superimposing different levels of meaning one upon another Lawrence achieves a complexity of meaning, succeeds in giving to an apparently insignificant action (the taming of a rabbit) a deep symbolic dimension.

On the realistic level of narration, where the rational motivation is valid, Gudrun complies with Winifred's wish. Winifred wants to draw her rabbit, Bismarck. They go to the far end of the yard, open the hutch, Gudrun takes the rabbit out and while it starts kicking wildly she tries to tame it. The girls are joined by Gerald, who strikes the rabbit on the head so that it goes quiet all of a sudden and then takes it to a plot of green grass, where the rabbit first runs around as if mad and then calms down and starts nibbling the grass. All the time, at intervals, the writer keeps a realistic, natural, simple conversation between Gerald, Gudrun and Winifred. Winifred serves the writer's purpose in that she strengthens the realistic plane where things, persons, and events keep their concrete, literal meaning. As a child, she is completely unaware of what is happening before her eyes. The intuitive perceptions of Gerald and Gudrun about each other, their subterranean confrontation, the atmosphere highly charged emotionally pass unperceived by her. Winifred serves as a sort of realistic measure. Against her

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abstract attitude towards life. It is significant that even after the break-down of their love-affair Hermione keeps up a friendship with him. Every time they meet Birkin is back again in the old world of abstract concepts, while Ursula always feels excluded from these discussions. The intense and unremitting intellectuality is an essential element of his being. All the other characters in the novel are well aware of it. On the other hand a strong sensuality which knows no bounds constitutes his link with Gerald. In the bankruptcy of all ideological and moral convictions and allegiances the life of the senses acquires a transcendental value and is transformed into a cult. Even later on when Birkin tries to transcend the cult of the physical sensation for its own sake and to build his intense sensuality into a reverential ritualistic attitude towards the mystery of the sources of life he does not defend himself when Ursula flings a heavy accusation in his teeth in the course of one of their violent quarrels. "He knew he was perverse, so spiritual on the one hand, and in some strange way, degraded on the other" (347). Birkin belongs to his age. He too is subjected to the process of the fragmentation of personality. He is different from the other characters in that he has an intense desire for transcending this disintegrative state, for attaining the wholeness of being.

we can measure the irrational depths of what is happening between Gerald and Gudrun.

From the moment when Gudrun takes the rabbit out of the hutch and it begins to kick wildly in her hands the rational motivation topples over into the irrational. The wild defence and the mad irrational fight of the creature arouse in Gudrun the reciprocal impulses: cruelty, the desire for violence and destruction. Gerald who approaches grasps intuitively the secret meaning of her action. He takes the rabbit over, wishing to help Gudrun within the system of the rational motivation. But the rabbit's wild kicking arouse in him the same impulses in an even greater measure. The implacable mechanism of his will is set in action and he tames the rabbit in the same way as much earlier, in the "Coal-Dust" chapter he brought his pure-bred Arab mare to a standstill. In the same way as she was fascinated by Gerald's wild temperament and his cruel and implacable will in the mare episode so now in this action of Gerald's Gudrun reads her own destiny<sup>10</sup>. But at the same time through their successive confrontations and intuitive "recognitions" she has become more and more aware of her reserves of strength, of her capacity for ironical distancing as well as of her power over Gerald. Gerald, whose inner stability is precarious because of the disproportionate development of his personality, is a slave to his own sensuality. Thus, in their final conversation which sums up the whole scene the natural, realistic dialogue which has been kept throughout the scene suddenly modulates into the penetratingly deep. All that has been implicit in the dramatic action of the scene — the deep emotional upheaval of the cha-

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<sup>10</sup> The desire for subjection and ironical fatalism as an attitude to life represent one psychical pole of her personality. This is felt to be a constant value of her personality throughout the novel, from her fascination with the deformed mining region of the Midlands where people are subjected to the machine, her relationship with Gerald, the subtly perverse play with Loerke to the final summing-up of her attitude in the symbol of the mountain peaks:

"But the cradle of snow ran on to the eternal closing-in, where the walls of snow and rock rose impenetrable, and the mountain peaks above were in heaven immediate. This was the centre, the knot, the navel of the world, where the earth belonged to the sky, pure, unapproachable, impassable.

It filled Gudrun with a strange rapture. She crouched in front of the window, clenching her face in her hands, in a sort of trance. At last she had arrived, she had reached her place. Here at last she folded her venture and settled down like a crystal in the navel of snow and was gone". (450)

Gudrun's way of reacting to this symbolic landscape powerfully expresses her fatalistic resignation to what exists and its inexorable laws but the ironical paradox which is of the essence of her being makes her start, within this symbolic landscape, within this general life feeling, her dangerous, subversive game of undermining Gerald's inner reserves, that finally ends with Gerald's death.

racters and their reciprocal intuitive perceptions — is brought into the open and explicitly stated.

"It's mad," she said. "It is most decidedly mad."

He laughed.

"The question is," he said, "what is madness. "I don't suppose it is rabbit-mad."

"Don't you think it is?" she said.

"No. That's what it is to be a rabbit."

There was a queer, faint, obscene smile over his face. She looked at him and was him, and knew that he was initiate as she was initiate. This thwarted her and contravened her, for the moment.

"God be praised we aren't rabbits," she said in a high, shrill voice.

The smile intensified a little on his face.

"Not rabbits?" he said, looking at her fixedly.

Slowly her face relaxed into a smile of obscene recognition.

"Ah, Gerald," she said in a strong, slow, almost man-like way.

"All that, and more." Her eyes looked up at him with shocking nonchalance.

He felt again as if she had hit him across the face — or rather as if she had torn him across the breast, dully, finally. He turned aside. (273—274)

On the irrational plane the salient elements of the dramatic rendering of the scene are the elements of ritual incantation. They extend the meaning of the scene by means of the symbolic suggestion. These elements of the stylistic treatment of the scene were very well brought out by Eliseo Vivas in his book on Lawrence. Vivas mentions the "demonic marriage" of Gerald and Gudrun in this scene, "the mystic communion of Gerald and Gudrun of which the officiating priest is a kicking, angry rabbit and the witness is a child".<sup>11</sup> This seems to me to be perfectly true and to contribute to our understanding of the scene.

The wild rabbit dominates the scene, acquires an esoteric meaning, gets transformed into a fetish of a sinister ritual of some sort, into a basic emblem of the situation which symbolizes the wild, destructive forces, characteristic of the Gerald-Gudrun relationship. At the very beginning Lawrence gives a short, realistic description of the rabbit. But very soon afterwards he leaves the domain of realistic description. The rabbit's body is not clearly and precisely seen. By means of metaphors Lawrence describes primarily the rabbit's movements, its wild kicking ("... its body flying like a spring coiled and released ... lashed out ... the black and white tempest at arms' length ... the thunderstorm that had sprung into being in her grip ... lashed out, flinging itself into a bow" etc.). In proportion as the scene moves towards the climax the realistic elements in the description of the rabbit get completely subjected to the symbo-

<sup>11</sup> O. c., pp. 245—246.

listic which make a profuse use of metaphor and hyperbole. Thus the rabbit gets completely transformed into a symbolistic emblem of the situation.

The long, *demon-like* beast lashed out again, spread on the air as if it were flying, looking something like a dragon, then closing up again, *inconceivably* powerful and explosive. (271)

It is only at the end, when the irrational storm in Gerald and Gudrun has subsided and the rabbit is not needed any more for the symbolic purposes to intensify and to render dramatically and visually the basic meaning of the situation that Lawrence gives a vivid realistic description of the rabbit ("... its nose twitching like a bit of fluff in the wind"; "... a soft bunch with a black, open eye . . . , it hobbled calmly forward and began to nibble the grass with that mean motion of a rabbit's quick eating").

Interest in the development of the vital emotional relationships of the characters distinguishes Lawrence's art from the very start. In his first great novel, *Sons and Lovers*, he masterfully uses the traditional model of a realistic novel to this purpose but at the same time becomes conscious of its limitations. In the next two novels, *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, Lawrence concentrates on the exploration of the emotional and the instinctual depths of the characters in a far greater measure. This particular interest of his, which constituted an innovation in the English novel, aroused the need for the discovery of a number of new novelistic devices and techniques by means of which he could adequately express these new and yet untapped layers of personality. The use of these techniques in the two great novels of his maturity undermined from within and eventually transformed the traditional form. Some of the characteristic technical devices which Lawrence used in *Women in Love* in order to express the affective complexes and the emotional relationships of the characters with their inarticulate depths are hinted at in this paper.