D. H. LAWRENCE'S NEGLECTED ART: HIS THEORY AND PRACTICE OF DRAMA

by

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Between 1908 and 1913 D. H. Lawrence wrote six plays: The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd, A Collier's Friday Night and The Daughter-In-Law, three naturalistic dramas; and The Merry-Go-Round, The Married Man, and The Fight For Barbara, three comedies of manners. After a lapse of several years, in 1918 Lawrence wrote Touch and Go, a political drama of ideas followed after another interval by David (1925), also a play of ideas using a Biblical framework. Largely neglected until recently, Lawrence's drama spans his writing career and reflects what he was doing in his other work.

Although publication of The Complete Plays in 1966, the Peter Gill production in London of Lawrence's three naturalistic dramas in 1968, and the American production of The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd in 1973 resulted in an increased interest in Lawrence's playwriting, only three full-length studies of Lawrence's drama have appeared. Devoted primarily to either the biographical material in his drama or to the ideological similarities between Lawrence's drama and his work in other genres, none of the three studies examines the plays from the point of view of Lawrence's ideas about the distinction between drama and fiction.

In my study I examine Lawrence's plays based on his statements regarding the requirements of drama. In addition I compare The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd, A Collier's Friday Night and The Daughter-In-Law to the fiction similar to them

in plot and characters: "Odour of Chrysanthemums," Sons and Lovers, and "Fanny and Annie." Even though these three works of fiction are similar to Lawrence's three naturalistic plays, certain major differences exist between the plays and the fiction. In each case, these differences are largely the result of the distinction Lawrence drew between the primary emphasis of drama and that of fiction.

Although he followed his theory of drama more or less successfully in his three naturalistic plays, Lawrence did not follow it as well in his five remaining unsuccessful plays. Yet despite the relative failure of his three comedies and his plays of ideas, Touch and Go and David, Lawrence exhibits definite skill as a playwright in The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd, A Collier's Friday Night, and The Daughter-In-Law. In addition, Lawrence's less successful attempts at writing drama are not totally without merit, and certainly they are not totally without interest. To the student, all of Lawrence's drama offers fresh insight into Lawrence the man and Lawrence the artist.

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DEDICATION

William G. Sullivan, D. V. M.
d. March 25, 1976

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my father who suffered with me through disappointment and rejoiced with me in triumph.

November 8, 1976

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CHAPTER I

D. H. LAWRENCE: THE DRAMATIST

"I'm sure we are tired of the rather bony, bloodless drama we get nowadays--it is time for a reaction against Shaw and Galsworthy and Barker. . . ."[1] Thus Lawrence summarized and rejected the English stage of 1913, the year he completed his sixth drama. At his death, seventeen years later, he left approximately twenty-two volumes of fiction, twelve volumes of poetry, and ten volumes of essays, having received critical acclaim for some of them, and a certain amount of notoriety because of others. In addition he left eight complete dramas and two fragments. Largely overlooked by critics and scholars until recently, his playwriting, like his fiction and poetry, covers the entire span of his career and reflects the same concerns and ideas.

Although interest in Lawrence's drama revived in the late sixties because of the publication of The Complete Plays (1966) and because of the production of his three early naturalistic dramas (1968), there have been few serious appraisals of Lawrence as a playwright. When I began my dissertation on Lawrence's drama, Gerald Coniff's

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[1]Harry T. Moore, ed., The Collected Letters of D. H. Lawrence (New York: Viking Press, 1962), I, 182.

dissertation (1973) was the only full-length study preceding mine.[2] Since then, during the course of writing and revision, two other full-length studies have appeared--one a dissertation by Richard Clarke (1974)[3] and the other a book by Sylvia Sklar published in December 1975.[4] Both Mr. Coniff and Mr. Clarke have examined the plays primarily from the standpoint of their reiteration of ideas found elsewhere in Lawrence's work. Failing in her attempt to prove Lawrence a dramatist in his own right, Sylvia Sklar concentrates more on biography than she does on theory. None of these three full-length investigations of Lawrence's dramas nor any of the other shorter analyses of his dramatic efforts has examined Lawrence's plays and the fiction similar to them in the light of Lawrence's theory of the distinction between drama and fiction. In this study I will examine the plays and the fiction based on Lawrence's theory of the differences between the two genres, since the application of his theory to the pertinent works of fiction and drama is helpful in accounting for the profound differences between those dramas and works of fiction which are superficially alike. Lawrence's theory of

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[2]Gerald Coniff, "The Plays of D. H. Lawrence," (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Penn. State Univ., 1973.)

[3]Richard Ernest Clarke, "Autobiography, Doctrine, and Genre Comparison In The Plays of D. H. Lawrence," (unpublished doctoral dissertation Florida State University, 1974.)

[4]Sylvia Sklar, The Plays of D. H. Lawrence (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1975).

drama is also helpful in accounting for the relative success or failure of each of his eight plays.

If none of the previous critics of Lawrence's drama have taken into account his dramatic theory, all have noted that Lawrence began playwriting at the beginning of his literary career, and all have attempted to date his emergence as a playwright, most agreeing that A Collier's Friday Night was Lawrence's first play.[5] Apparently overlooked by these critics is a letter written in 1926 by Lawrence to Gertrude Cooper establishing unquestionably that The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd was his first play, written sometime between October 1908,[6] when he first went to Croydon, and November 1909, when he showed Jessie Chambers the manuscript copy of his

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[5]The following scholars have written full-length articles or books in which the plays are discussed at length and in which A Collier's Friday Night is dated the earliest of Lawrence's plays: Emile Delavenay, D. H. Lawrence: The Man and His Work (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1972); Christian Moe, "Playwright Lawrence Takes the Stage in London," D. H. Lawrence Review, 2 (Spring 1969), 93-97; Keith Sagar, "D. H. Lawrence: Dramatist," D. H. Lawrence Review, 4 (Summer 1971), 154-82; Arthur E. Waterman, "The Plays of D. H. Lawrence," in D. H. Lawrence: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Mark Spilka (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963), pp. 142-50; Raymond Williams, intro., Three Plays (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969) and Drama From Ibsen to Brecht (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1969).

[6]Ada Lawrence and Stuart Gelder, The Early Life of D. H. Lawrence (London: Martin Secker, 1932), p. 114. Lawrence wrote Gertrude Cooper on November 23, 1925: "I

second play, A Collier's Friday Night.[7] During these years at Croydon, Lawrence was just beginning as a writer, having published his first poems in The English Review in the fall of 1909. He had also tried his hand at fiction, having written several short stories, among them "Odour of Chrysanthemums." In addition he had begun his first novel, The White Peacock. More than this novel, because they are concerned with the conflicts between coal miners and their more intellectual wives, Lawrence's first two plays reflect his personal experience and thus adumbrate the subject matter of his more successful third novel, Sons and Lovers. The

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hear they have postponed the David play until March, and in December are doing the first play that I wrote while I was still in Croydon--The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd." Apparently the following scholars overlooked this letter: Sagar dates the play in 1910, after A Collier's Friday Night, which he erroneously dated in 1906, and after The Merry-Go-Round, which he guesses was written in 1910 also, before The Widowing ("D. H. Lawrence: Dramatist," pp. 155-60). Emile Delavenay and Raymond M. Williams date the play's composition in 1911 (The Man, p. 104; Three Plays, p. 7). Edward Nehls, Gerald Coniff, and Richard Clarke believe the play was started in 1911, but not finished until 1913 (D. H. Lawrence: A Composite Biography, I (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1957), 598 n 537; "The Plays," p. 40; "Autobiography," p. 27). Christian Moe, agreeing with Sagar that The Widowing was the third of Lawrence's plays, dates it, however, in 1914, after A Collier's and The Daughter-In-Law ("Playwright Lawrence," p. 94). This list does not include reviewers of the play's productions or of its publications, who, if they dated the play's composition, dated it, without exception, erroneously.

[7] J. D. Chambers, D. H. Lawrence: A Personal Record (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1965), p. 166.

Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd is a theatrical rendition of the short story, "Odour of Chrysanthemums," the composition of which coincides with that of the play. Ford Maddox Ford records having seen the story in the fall of 1909, at the time he read Lawrence's poems for the first time.[8] More certain than the order of story and play is the order of play and novel. A Collier's Friday Night, completed by November 1909, precedes the composition of the climactic eighth chapter of Sons and Lovers where it is recapitulated.

Although Lawrence did not write another play until 1912, he was busy writing and publishing his fiction and poetry. During these intervening years, 1909 to 1912, Lawrence's mother died in December 1910--a traumatic event for him--and a month later, in January 1911, his first novel, The White Peacock was published, followed by his second, The Trespasser, in 1912. He also had begun Sons and Lovers when, in the spring of 1912, he met Frieda Weekley. Soon after, he and Frieda eloped to Germany and subsequently to Italy. At this time money problems, along with domestic ones, plagued Lawrence. It was in this year that he wrote his three comedies, The Merry-Go-Round, The Married Man, and The Fight for Barbara. Decidedly inferior, the first two, he admitted, were "impromptus." The stimulus for writing all three may have been the urgent need to make money. In addition to

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[8]Edward Nehls, D. H. Lawrence: A Composite Biography, I (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1957), 106.

the hopes of financial reward, no doubt writing them gave Lawrence pleasure, as he indicated in a letter to Edward Garnett, an editor at Duckworth and Lawrence's early mentor. Writing these plays may have been therapeutic, serving Lawrence as a diversion from the constant strain of Frieda's grief and guilt over having left her husband and children. Apparently Garnett chided Lawrence at this time for wasting effort he should have spent on his revision of Sons and Lovers. Despite Garnett's justifiable deprecation of his comedies, Lawrence insisted on the pleasure he got from his playwriting and intimated that it might, at some time, bring him financial gain:

> I enjoy so much writing my plays--they come so quick and exciting from the pen--that you musn't growl at me if you think them waste of time. At any rate, they'll be stuff for shaping later on, when I'm more of a workman. And I look at the future, and it behoves me to keep on trying to earn money somehow.[9]

With this letter of January 1913, Lawrence enclosed the manuscript copy of The Daughter-In-Law, his sixth play, which he felt confident was stageworthy:

> I am going to send you a new play I have written. It is neither a comedy nor a tragedy. . . . I do think this play might have a chance on the stage.[10]

Although it did not make the stage in his lifetime, The

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[9]Moore, Letters, I, 175.

[10]Ibid.

Daughter-In-Law repeated the conflict of A Collier's among mother, son, and son's beloved and marked a return to the mining town milieu of the first two dramas and to their naturalistic mode. Like them also, it had its parallel fictional version in the short story "Fanny and Annie," written after it in 1918.[11] In addition, The Daughter-In-Law proved Lawrence's progress as a dramatist in its successful reworking of comic elements found in the inferior comedy preceding it, The Merry-Go-Round.

After finishing The Daughter-In-Law, Lawrence became embroiled in the writing of The Sisters, the novel that became The Rainbow (1915) and Women In Love (1920). He did not try his hand again at drama for five years. In 1918 Douglas Goldring, Ford's assistant on The English Review when it first published Lawrence, requested Lawrence to write a play for the People's Theatre Society, a group Goldring had founded to espouse Socialistic doctrine. After finishing the first draft of Women In Love in 1916, Lawrence had been concerned with reading and writing philosophical tracts. During the years 1918 to 1919, he wrote a book of history, Movements in European History, a series of essays on American literature which later became Studies in Classic

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[11]Delavenay, p. 442. Delavenay mistakenly suggests that "Fanny and Annie" is a rewriting of the pre-war sketch, "Shadow in the Rose Garden." In its plot and characters it is much closer to The Daughter-In-Law, being, with the exception of the strike situation in the drama, an exact duplication, which "Shadow" is not.

American Literature, and a series of four essays on education, "Education of the People." The play he wrote for Goldring, Touch and Go, reflects his interest at this time in ideological writing, which began with Women In Love, Lawrence's fictional tract for the times. Although Touch and Go is an "idea" play, it is not, as Goldring had thought it would be, a practical socialistic drama. The socio-economic "ideas" it propounds are more akin to the idealism of earlier utopian socialists, although they are Lawrence's own, better expressed later in Lady Chatterley's Lover.

The years between Touch and Go and his last play, David, written in 1925, Lawrence spent traveling and writing, producing three more novels and writing more poems and short stories. In Mexico, he finished The Plumed Serpent in February 1925. Disappointed in this novel and ill, in April of that year Lawrence began David in New Mexico while recuperating. Like Touch and Go, David is a drama of "ideas" and like it also, David reflects what Lawrence was doing in his fiction. In the play, Lawrence uses Christian myth to teach the cyclic theory of religion he attempted to teach in The Plumed Serpent, there using Aztec myth.

Lawrence was intensely interested in putting David on stage. Because the production committee of the People's Theatre Society had rejected Touch and Go for production, at this time none of Lawrence's plays had been performed professionally. The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd, however, had

been produced by an amateur group in 1920. Perhaps disappointment that none of his drama had been produced, especially Touch and Go, prompted Lawrence to reject Alfred Knopf's initial offer to publish David:

> I am a bit tired of plays that are only literature. If a man is writing 'literature,' why choose the form of a play? And if he's writing a play he surely intends it for the theatre. . . .[12]

Lawrence's intention that David be produced was realized, although it did not reach the stage before his first play, The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd, which was performed professionally in London by an amalgamation of The Stage Society and the Three Hundred Club in December 1926. David, also performed by The Stage Society, after many production setbacks, finally made its appearance five months later in May 1927. These were the only two performances of Lawrence's drama during his lifetime, neither one of which he saw. Since his death, only three others have been produced: The Fight for Barbara in 1967 and A Collier's Friday Night and The Daughter-In-Law together with The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd in March through April 1968. In addition to its revival in London, The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd was very successfully produced by Arvin Brown in New Haven, Connecticut during November 1973. This production was televised and broadcast on the Public Broadcasting System twice, once in 1974 and again in 1975.

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[12]Letters, II, 845. Letter dated July 1, 1925.

Although these modern productions of The Widowing were well received, critical reception of the production of The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd in 1926, was less enthusiastic, but, on the whole, favorable. Shaw, for one, pronounced the dialogue the finest he had heard.[13] Reviewers, who generally found it intense realistic drama, objected most often to the length of the corpse-washing scene at the end of the play. Some reviewers, however, objected not only to the length of this scene, but to its inclusion at all, calling it "sordid" and "gruesome."[14] David fared less well. In fact, its production was a disaster. One reviewer called it a "fiasco," lacking all dramatic movement.[15] Another said the play resembled a movie using a series of tableaux and that the characters were mere puppets "pulled by the hoary hand of a prophet."[16]. Lawrence's reaction was to call the critics of David "ball-less," and no doubt its comparison to a movie infuriated him as he was quite critical of film in The Lost Girl (1920), where he implied that movies were

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[13]Nehls, III, 121.

[14]"A Playgoer's Notebook," The Graphic, 25 Dec. 1926, no pagination; Horace Shipp, "Home Products and Foreign Affairs," English Review, 44 (Jan. 1927), 120-21.

[15]"Omicron," rev., Nation and Athenaeum, 41 (28 May 1927), 261.

[16]Richard Jennings, rev., The Spectator, 138 (28 May 1927), 939-40.

not "art" at all, but an occasion for the viewer to wallow in his own ego.[17]

In contrast to the reviewers of the twenties, critics of Lawrence's dramas in the late sixties, were much more sympathetic. His brand of naturalism, judged sordid and gloomy by London audiences in the early part of the century, was much more palatable to British taste after the mid-century. Reception of Peter Gill's production of The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd, A Collier's Friday Night, and The Daughter-In-Law in 1968 was not only favorable but glowing. A new dramatic genius was hailed--a pronouncement Sean O'Casey had made, unheeded in 1934, when he reviewed the publication of A Collier's Friday Night.[18] None of the reviewers of the Gill trilogy objected to the corpse-washing scene at the end of The Widowing. Instead of condemnation,

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[17]D. H. Lawrence, The Lost Girl (New York: Thomas Seltzer, 1921). Lawrence's criticism of movies is conveyed through the heroine, Alvina Houghton, who describes the clientele of her father's movie-house, "The Pleasure Palace" in Lumley:

> The film is only pictures, like pictures in the Daily Mirror. And pictures don't have any feelings apart from their own feelings. I mean the feelings of the people who watch them. Pictures don't have any life except in the people who watch them. . . . The /movie-goers/ can spread themselves over a film, and they can't over a living performer. They're up against the performer himself. And they hate it. (p. 133).

[18]Sean O'Casey, New Statesman, 8 (28 July 1934), 124.

one critic praised it as the most unforgettable moment in the play.[19] And, obviously with tongue in cheek, another wrote that the scene might have been a bit too long--" outlasting the audience's interest about thirty seconds."[20] Most critics agreed that the three together made a masterpiece of naturalistic theatre; as one American reviewer for Time magazine put it, "I have seldom seen a London audience so hushed and spellbound."[21] American critics were no less enthusiastic over the performance of The Widowing at New Haven's Long Wharf Theatre in 1973. Clive Barnes in The New York Times even speculated that Lawrence might turn out to be one of the most important playwrights of the seventies.[22]

One reason for the enormous success that the plays enjoyed on both sides of the Atlantic was a revival in the late fifties and early sixties of naturalistic playwriting in England, and a continuation of it in American playwrights Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams. The Royal Court Theatre, where Lawrence's plays were produced, was also where John

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[19]Phillip French, "The Major Miner Dramatist," New Statesman, 75 (22 March 1968), 390.

[20]Christian Moe, "Playwright Lawrence Takes the Stage in London," D. H. Lawrence Review, 2 (Spring 1969), 97.

[21]"The London Season: Posthumous Triumph," Time, 5 April 1968, p. 72.

[22]Clive Barnes, rev., The New York Times, 20 November 1973, p. 31.

Osborne and Arnold Wesker, two young exponents of naturalism, had their plays produced in the late fifties and sixties. John Osborne's Look Back in Anger was produced in 1956 and Arnold Wesker's trilogy, Chicken Soup with Barley, Roots, and I'm Talking About Jerusalem were produced in 1960. In America, Tennessee Williams, much influenced by Lawrence,[23] kept alive his brand of naturalism in such plays as Cat on a Hot Tin Roof (1955), The Night of the Iguana (1961), and The Seven Descents of Myrtle (1968), while Arthur Miller produced After the Fall and Incident at Vichy in 1964 and The Price in 1968. Of course, implied above is another reason for the plays' favorable reception in England during the sixties--the demise of Victorian sensibility and morality. Yet another is that Lawrence's star as a fiction writer had risen by this time. Whereas in the twenties he was censored, in the sixties he was acclaimed a genius.

This change in critical attitude towards Lawrence and the resultant increasing interest in him was no doubt largely responsible, too, for the production of the autobiographical The Fight for Barbara in 1967 at the Mermaid Theatre in London. Making a total of four of Lawrence's dramas to be

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[23]In 1942 Tennessee Williams and Donald Windham published their dramatization of Lawrence's short story "You Touched Me." Instead of taking place after WW I as in the story, the drama takes place after WW II. The drama was produced in the fall of 1945 and ran two months. As John Gassner wrote in Theatre at the Crossroads (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), the play was Williams' payment of an overdue debt to D. H. Lawrence (p. 83).

revived, The Fight is a dramatic transcript of Lawrence's and Frieda's elopement. A less notable success than the other three, its interest lies primarily in its autobiographical revelations.[24]

Although only The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd and David were produced in Lawrence's lifetime, three plays were published: The Widowing (1914), Touch and Go (1920), and David (1926). There was no cause-effect relationship between publication and production in the case of The Widowing or David, since The Widowing was published in 1914 and not professionally produced until December 1926. David, published by Alfred Knopf in March 1926, was published then only because Lawrence was already assured of its production, set originally for the following September. Lawrence had made it clear to Knopf that he did not want the play published unless it was produced. Touch and Go, though intended for production, was not produced, but its publication came about because of that. Douglas Goldring, embarrassed over his group's rejection of the play for the theatre, persuaded C. W. Daniel to publish it as part of a series of plays entitled Plays for a People's Theatre.[25]

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[24]For critical reaction to The Fight see Helen Dawson, "Running Off With Lawrence," The Observer, 13 Aug. 1967, p. 18; and Irving Wardle, "Forgotten Play Shows Power of Genius," The Times, 10 Aug. 1967, p. 5.

[25]Nehls, II, 36.

After Lawrence's death, The Fight for Barbara was published in 1933. A Collier's Friday Night followed in 1934. The Married Man was published in 1940, and The Merry-Go-Round in 1941, both by the Virginia Quarterly Review. Ironically, The Daughter-In-Law, judged the best of Lawrence's efforts by many scholars, was the only drama remaining unpublished until Viking published The Complete Plays in 1966.

Despite the probable responsibility of this publication for the revival of Lawrence's plays on the London stage in 1967 and 1968, only three full-length studies have been precipitated by the publication and the productions, and those, as noted above, have appeared only fairly recently. While one of these studies is primarily biographical in its analysis of Lawrence's drama, the other two explore ideological similarities between Lawrence's drama and his other works. Although these similarities are worth noting, it is the marked differences, not the similarities between Lawrence's drama and his fiction that help answer the question why he was a greater fiction writer than he was a dramatist. Of course, genre requirements and limitations account for some of the differences between Lawrence's three plays--The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd, A Collier's Friday Night, and The Daughter-In-Law--and the fiction so closely resembling them in plot and characters--"Odour of Chrysanthemums," chapter eight of Sons and Lovers, and "Fanny and Annie." Also accounting for some of the differences between his

dramas and his fiction is Lawrence's perception of the distinction between the two. I hesitate to call the distinction Lawrence drew a "theory" (although I did so above), since he never developed his ideas nor wrote of them further after his letter to Max Mohr, who had sent Lawrence his first novel, Venus in the Pices, for criticism. Mohr, who had written only drama previously, thus evoked from Lawrence the distinction he perceived between the two genres:

> You have written drama so much, you are more concerned with the mechanism of events and situations, than with essential human character. This is where I think the novel differs fundamentally from drama. The novel is concerned with human beings and the drama is concerned with events. A drama is what happens, and a novel is what is. You are not really interested in people: You don't care what they are inside themselves. . . .So you write novels as if your characters were puppets: much more than when you write plays (Lawrence's emphases).[26]

Drama is what happens--not much of a theory, although there are implications that enlarge the statement somewhat. Quite obviously Lawrence does not mean that character is unimportant since he suggests in his last statement above to Mohr that dramatic characters ought not to be mere "puppets." Furthermore, Lawrence could not mean that character is unimportant since he accused Shaw, Galsworthy, and Barker of writing "bony and bloodless" drama, that is, drama without people, without flesh or passion, drama concerned with ideas only. Lawrence states that in drama action is primary, so

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[26]Letters, II, 1047.

that if character is important, which he suggests, it must reveal itself primarily through action.

Even though there is no further extension and interpretation by Lawrence of these particular statements, he made other declarations pertinent to his conception of drama. Implying strenuous objection to Scribe's formula of the well-made play, he called Shaw, Galsworthy, and Barker "the rule and measure mathematical folk."[27] In addition, if drama should be what happens, it ought not to be what happened; it ought not, as Lawrence phrased it, be "too rounded off," a criticism he made of Synge's drama, even though he praised Riders to the Sea as the "genuinest bit of dramatic tragedy, English, since Shakespeare."[28] In a letter to Garnett, Lawrence confided, nevertheless, that "even Synge, whom I admire very much indeed, is a bit too rounded off, and as it were put on the shelf to be looked at. I can't bear art that you can walk around and admire."[29] One cannot be sure what Lawrence meant exactly by "rounded off," but he suggests that artifice is too much apparent in some of Synge's drama, so that it seems finished and smooth as a sculpture--obviously well-wrought--and artificial.

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[27]Letters, I, 182.

[28]Letters, I, 76. Letter to Mrs. Hopkin, dated April 26, 1911.

[29]Letters, II, 827.

Throwing some light on Lawrence's possible meaning, Raymond Williams pointed out in his introduction to Three Plays that Lawrence identified himself with Synge and Chekhov--Synge because he wrote about ordinary people using their own language, and Chekhov because of the shape of his drama.[30] Chekhov apparently refused to "round off" his plays. Because he concentrated more on the interaction between people, he was often accused by contemporary theorists of writing formless drama.[31]

That drama or any art should not appear artificial and that drama is what happens comprise Lawrence's two principal statements on the subject of playwriting.[32] Certainly neither requirement is original with Lawrence. Zola's "slice of life" naturalism demanded that life be merely recorded by the artist objectively; presented as it was, and hence, like life, his

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[30]D. H. Lawrence, Three Plays, introd. by Raymond Williams (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969), p. 11.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Earlier than the letter to Mohr, in the preface he added to Touch and Go in 1919, Lawrence defined tragedy, not as a generic term, but tragedy as it applies to human situations, specifically as it applied to the conflict between labor and capital, the conflict illuminated in Touch and Go (London: C. W. Daniel, 1920). For Lawrence, that conflict would have been "tragic" only if it ended in a regeneration of man:

> If it were a profound struggle for something that was coming to life in us, a struggle that we were convinced would bring us to a new freedom, a new life, then it would be a creative activity, a creative activity in which death is a climax in a progression towards new being. And this is tragedy (Preface, p. 11).

art was not "rounded off." It was the opposite of "artificial." That action is the primary element of drama is Aristotelian and Aristotle said it more cogently: "tragedy. . . .is an imitation not of men, but of an action, and of life, and life consists in [sic] action. . . ."[33] Although Lawrence's theory coincides with Aristotle's in regard to its emphasis on action, it quite decisively conflicted with the theory of the reigning dramatist of his age--George B. Shaw. Shavian emphasis fell on dialogue, not action, since his drama was the drama of ideas: "Now you have exposition, situation, and discussion: and the discussion is the best of the playwright."[34] Lawrence, who wanted to de-emphasize the intellectual side of man, obviously found emphasis on "discussion" distasteful. In contrast to Shaw's, Susanne Langer's theory of drama is one that Lawrence would approve: in fact, it seems almost to be an interpolation and extension of Lawrence's own. According to Miss Langer, "all happenings to be dramatic, must be conceived in terms of acts, and acts belong only to life. . . ."[35] Acts Miss Langer defines as "any human response" so that

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[33]Aristotle, "From the Poetics" in Tragedy: Vision and Form, ed. Robert W. Corrigan (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co., 1965), pp. 424-27.

[34]G. B. Shaw, "The Quintessence of Ibsenism" in The Theatre In Our Times, ed. John Gassner (New York: Crown Publishers, 1954), p. 127.

[35]Susanne K. Langer, Feeling and Form (New York: Charles Scribners and Sons, 1953), p. 312.

"any reactions are acts, visible or invisible."[36] Human reaction, particularly the invisible, is what interested Lawrence most, and in his three successful naturalistic dramas, what happens reveals character, and a major part of what happens is the "human response" and reactions of his characters.

If in opposition to a Shavian brand of theatre, in choosing naturalism for his early efforts, Lawrence was not out of step with European drama of the time, even though the idea drama of Shaw, Galsworthy, and Barker and the sentimental comedies of Barrie held sway on the London stage. Galsworthy, Barker, and Shaw wrote realistic "problem" plays, Shaw, of course, being the reigning genius of the three. Galsworthy unmasked the inequities of the judicial system in Justice (1910) and of the double standard of the law in The Silver Box (1906). In Strife (1909) he explored the clash between capital and labor. After 1919 Shaw continued to write realistic dramas like Pygmalion (1913), although he became interested in history and fantasy in such plays as Saint Joan (1923) and Heartbreak House (1913). Several other playwrights produced fantasies in the second and third decades, their predecessor being Barrie who wrote the enormously popular Peter Pan in 1904, and who continued interesting audiences

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[36]Langer, Feeling, p. 307.

with such sentimental fantasies as A Kiss for Cinderella (1916), Dear Brutus (1917), and Mary Rose (1920). Two older playwrights writing fantasies were Arthur Wing Pinero (The Enchanted Cottage, 1922) and Henry Arthur Jones (The Pacifists, 1917). Having given up writing drama by the twenties, Granville-Barker during the first decade of the century wrote three important problem plays in the Shavian tradition: Waste (1907), The Voysey Inheritance (1905), and The Madras House (1910). Evidently Lawrence's early naturalistic dramas, written between 1908-1913 were opposed to popular London theatre of the time.

Even so, a group of dramatists in and around Manchester were writing plays similar to Lawrence's naturalistic endeavors. Chief among these playwrights were Standley Houghton (Hindle Wakes, 1912), Harold Brighouse (Followers, 1915), and Allan Monkhouse (The Good Cham's Diamond, 1918),[37] who were attempting to do for the laboring class of Northern England what the Irish nationalist playwrights were attempting to do for Ireland and what The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd, A Collier's Friday Night, and The Daughter-In-Law did for the coal miners of the Midlands. Thus, these early dramas of Lawrence's if out of step with the

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[37]Ernest Reynolds, Modern English Drama (Norman: Univ. of Okla. Press, 1951), p. 141. A number of these playwrights' dramas were produced at the Gaiety Theatre in Manchester, under the sponsorship of Annie Horniman, who had financed Shaw's Arms and the Man in 1894.

London stage, were not out of step with the entire block of British drama.

Nor did Lawrence's other plays, all inferior to these three, diverge drastically from other English drama. The Merry-Go-Round and The Married Man are Lawrence's attempts at comedies of manners, set, however, in the countryside, rather than in the city drawing room. The Merry-Go-Round retains the mining-town milieu of the earlier dramas, while The Married Man has as its background an undisclosed provincial village near Wolverhampton. The Fight for Barbara, a comedy based on Lawrence's elopement with Frieda, a married woman, concerns a favorite comic theme of dramatists from Pinero, Jones, and Wilde to Shaw--love, marriage, and adultery.[38] Later with Touch and Go (1920), an "idea" drama, Lawrence definitely fell in step with the popular English drama of the twenties. In David (1925), also an idea drama, Lawrence used a biblical framework to promote his cyclic theory of religion.

But the plays worth producing--The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd, A Collier's Friday Night, and The Daughter-In-Law--written between 1909-13, even though in the mainstream of European naturalism, would not have been accepted by London audiences. According to John Gerber, Strindberg's and O'Neill's brand

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[38]John Gerber, Representative Modern Plays (New York: Scott, Foresman, 1953), p. 2.

of naturalism, similar to Lawrence's own, found no expression on the English stage early in the century because "morbid sex conflicts violated the English sense of good taste."[39] Sadly agreeing about the lingering Victorian sensibility, Sean O'Casey pointed out in his review of the publication of A Collier's Friday Night that the play certainly would not have been accepted when it was written, nor, he added, would it have been accepted in 1934 when he reviewed it.[40]

Although among his failures, Lawrence's last two plays, Touch and Go and David, like the three earlier naturalistic dramas, mirror what he was doing in his fiction. Both plays reflect the messianic turn of the fiction he was writing at the time. The message of Touch and Go Lawrence successfully preached later in Lady Chatterley's Lover, and his cyclic theory of religion is more skillfully handled in The Plumed Serpent than it is in David.

What accounts for the success of three of Lawrence's plays and the failure of the other five? In part the answer lies in Lawrence's choice of subject matter and type, and in part it lies in his success in The Widowing, A Collier's Friday

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[39]Ibid, p. 7. It should be pointed out that Lawrence's naturalism preceded that of O'Neill's, although it did not precede either of Strindberg's naturalistic tragedies, The Father (1887) and Miss Julie (1889). Even though O'Neill began writing plays in 1912, his first naturalistic drama was Bound East for Cardiff, produced in 1916.

[40]Sean O'Casey, p. 124.

Night, and The Daughter-In-Law in following his theory by revealing character primarily through what happens. The other five failed because Lawrence did not reveal character through action, and in addition, in the case of the comedies, the type was foreign to his genius. Ironically, his two idea plays were "bonier" and "more bloodless" than any Shaw ever wrote. Why? In the fiction similar to the dramas in the ideas proposed, Women In Love and The Plumed Serpent, Lawrence saved his characters from bloodlessness through the use of an omniscient point of view, a point of view denied him in drama. In The Merry-Go-Round much of the action exists for plot's sake only; in The Married Man there is little action, the main intent of the play being to reveal Lawrence's ideas about the relationship of men and women in marriage; in The Fight for Barbara, the action is scanty, and the drama seems merely to be the working off of Lawrence's anger at Frieda for her toying with the notion of returning to her husband because of her guilt feelings. Why Lawrence chose comedy in these plays, a genre foreign to him, is suggested in his letter to Garnett quoted above. Lawrence needed money desperately in 1912; in fact, he and Frieda were living off borrowed funds. Because a comedy of manners was the London audience's favorite drama, Lawrence probably thought he might have a chance to get one produced. Both Shaw and Galsworthy cloaked their ideas in comedies of manners, and Barrie too was successful with What Every Woman Knows and The Admirable

Chrichton. But, as Garnett pointed out to Lawrence, his plays needed quite a bit of revision, which Lawrence did not do because he was busy revising Sons and Lovers and before that was done, he had begun The Sisters, the work that absorbed him for several years.

Not only does Lawrence's theory partially account for the success or failure of his drama, but the distinction he drew between drama (what happens) and fiction (what is) also accounts for the profound differences between The Widowing and "Odour of Chrysanthemums," A Collier's Friday Night and Sons and Lovers, and The Daughter-In-Law and "Fanny and Annie." In addition, Lawrence's statement of the difference between the two genres gave a hint that he would never become known as a great playwright. For Lawrence, what happened was never as important as his characters' internal reactions to both the external and internal happenings within themselves and other people. For this reason, because Lawrence was ultimately interested in "what people were inside themselves," drama could not satisfy his genius.

Lawrence's particular interest in his characters' "inner lives" will be evident in the following three chapters where his naturalistic dramas are compared to their fictional versions. Lawrence, following his theory of the distinction between fiction and drama produced a powerful play, The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd, a play so good that its American production in New Haven (1973) prompted one New York critic to

say, "I'd go much farther than New Haven to see the other two Lawrence plays done at the Royal Court Theatre."[41] Yet, despite his success in this play, by employing an omniscience limited to the character of Elizabeth Bates, Lawrence produced an even greater short story, "Odour of Chrysanthemums."

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[41]Julius Novick, "D. H. Lawrence Wrote Plays Too," The New York Times, 25 Nov. 1973, sec. D, p. 24.

CHAPTER II

THE WIDOWING OF MRS. HOLROYD: ANAGNORISIS IN A DARK WORLD

Ford Maddox Ford, Lawrence's first publisher, recognized Lawrence's genius after he had read the first paragraph of "Odour of Chrysanthemums." It is a fine short story, one of Lawrence's best, climaxing in Elizabeth Bates' recognition at the death of her collier husband that he had been just as separate from her in life as he was in death. A similar recognition is the climax of The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd, the composition of which coincides with that of the story. In his introduction to Three Plays (1969), a volume containing The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd, A Collier's Friday Night, and The Daughter-In-Law, Raymond Williams, noting the similarities of these plays to the fiction Lawrence was writing at the time, asserts that "Lawrence's dramas are not theatrical versions of his fiction, but an attempt to express his experience in another form."[1] Professor Williams is more nearly correct than Harry Moore who wrote, without further elaboration, that The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd was a "dramatization" of "Odour of Chrysanthemums."[2]

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[1]D. H. Lawrence, Three Plays, intro. Raymond Williams (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969), p. 9.

[2]Harry Moore, The Intelligent Heart (New York: Farrar, Straus and Young, 1954), p. 11.

Although both drama and fiction are, as Lawrence wrote of "Odour," "full of my childhood's atmosphere,"[3] the only important event they actually share is the death of the drunken collier-husband: Charles Holroyd in the play and Walter Bates in the story. And because of the differences between them, even that event--the climactic accidental deaths of the men--produces a different effect in the play than in the story. Because of Lawrence's perception of the difference between the emphasis of drama (what happens) and that of fiction (what is, or "essential human character"), The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd becomes an entirely different story from "Odour of Chrysanthemums."

The difference in emphasis between drama and fiction is reflected in the titles of each, although shortly before the publication of the play in 1914, Lawrence wrote Mitchell Kennerly, the publisher, suggesting Afterdamp as an alternate title because Edward Garnett did not like The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd.[4] However, Lawrence did not like Afterdamp (the poisonous gas that asphixiates both trapped miners), so The Widowing remained the title of the play. It is significant that Lawrence rejected Afterdamp and retained The Widowing, despite Garnett's objections. Afterdamp, or something

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[3]D. H. Lawrence, The Collected Letters, ed. Harry T. Moore (New York: Viking Press, 1962), I, 159. In a letter to Ernest Collins, dated 14 November 1912, from Villa Igea.

[4]Letters, I, 223-24. Letter dated 8 September 1913.

similar, is the only title that could fit both story and play, their only true similarity being the men's deaths from the poisonous gas. Still, Afterdamp does not suit the emphasis of either The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd or "Odour of Chrysanthemums," while the titles Lawrence gave them do fit the emphasis of each. Both titles belie the distinction Lawrence saw between drama, where what happens was his primary concern, and fiction, where what is, or "essential human character," was his primary concern.

The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd employs verbal action in its title--it is not The Widow, Mrs. Holroyd, but the "widowing," because it is the action causing her widowhood that is important. Charles Holroyd's dying is the climactic action. Indeed, the drama is not about Mrs. Holroyd; it is about dying, not just about Holroyd's physical death, but about the emotional dying each partner experiences within the marriage. That is part of the irony of the title. As the play unfolds, it becomes apparent that Mrs. Holroyd's husband has been as figuratively dead to her in their marriage as he is, in fact, at the end of the play. It is part of the irony, also, that Mrs. Holroyd's wish for widowhood comes true.

"Odour of Chrysanthemums," on the other hand, does not indicate action in its title, and the story concerns itself, not so much with action, as with Elizabeth Bates' thoughts and feelings about her husband and her marriage, symbolized

for her by the odor of chrysanthemums. In the story, she says to her daughter, "It was chrysanthemums when I married him, and chrysanthemums when you were born, and the first time they ever brought him home drunk, he'd got brown chrysanthemums in his button hole."[5] The point is that the title itself indicates the viewpoint of the story--it is only to Elizabeth that the odor of chrysanthemums is symbolic and distasteful. Her daughter finds them beautiful. Because "Odour of Chrysanthemums" is told from Elizabeth Bates' point of view, not even Bates' death is the climactic action of the story, as Holroyd's is in the drama. The true climax of "Odour" is Elizabeth's anagnorisis as a consequence of her husband's fatal accident.

Since the viewpoint is limited to Elizabeth in "Odour of Chrysanthemums" not much happens, except within her mind. The story begins as she awaits the arrival of her frequently late and drunken husband. She has two children, Annie and John, who wait with her. After she puts the two to bed, she goes out for help to look for her husband, because it is a matter of pride that she will not go to the pub herself in search of him. She calls at the Rigleys', and Mr. Rigley, a butty (a coal-mining term for a miner whose position is equivalent to a foreman's) with her husband, leaves to look

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[5]D. H. Lawrence, The Complete Short Stories (New York: Viking Press, Inc., 1961), II, "Odour of Chrysanthemums," p. 289. Future references will be documented in the text.

for Bates. Elizabeth waits at the Rigleys'. When he returns, Rigley tells Elizabeth to go home. On her arrival, she finds her mother-in-law waiting for her, saying she has been sent by Rigley, who has told her that her son has had a pit accident. The two women wait anxiously for Rigley's return. When he comes, he tells them Bates' accident was fatal. After bringing the body in, the miners leave. The story ends as mother and wife wash the pit grime off the body and change the dead miner's clothes. While washing the body, Elizabeth realizes that Bates' death has made him absolutely separate from her and forever unreachable, but that in life, they had each been just as separate, just as dead to each other: "She had refused him what he was--she saw it now. She had refused him as himself. . . .They had denied each other in life" (p. 301).

Mrs. Holroyd's anagnorisis is similar and occurs at the death of her husband like Mrs. Bates'. However, long before Holroyd's death, The Widowing[6] becomes a completely different story. When the drama begins, Mrs. Holroyd is bringing in a load of clothes, when Blackmore, an electrician with the mining company and a frequent visitor, surprises her. She complains to him of her husband's drinking and of his being late. While she is talking, she tries to light a hanging lamp and breaks the lampglass. Promising to replace it, Blackmore leaves. She gives her children Minnie, six, and Jack, eight, their

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[6]D. H. Lawrence, The Complete Plays (New York: Viking Press, 1966), pp. 10-61. Future references will be documented in the text.

meal and the scene ends as she takes them to bed. The second scene begins with Lizzie folding clothes and crying. Holroyd enters drunk with two ladies of questionable reputation. After he gets rid of them, the two fight, and Holroyd goes out again.

The second act begins several hours later when Mrs. Holroyd is awakened by Holroyd's drunken shouting and banging on the door. He is accompanied by Blackmore who helps Lizzie get the miner settled after he and Blackmore briefly fight because Holroyd angrily accuses Blackmore of having an affair with his wife. The act ends after Blackmore asks Lizzie and her children to come with him to Spain. The third act begins like the first with Lizzie and the children waiting for Holroyd who is late for dinner. Blackmore arrives and Lizzie sends him out in search of her husband. Soon after, her mother-in-law comes, reporting the news that Holroyd has been in a pit accident. Mr. Rigley, a butty with Holroyd, arrives shortly after to report that the accident was fatal and that Blackmore and several of the miners are on the way with Holroyd's body. After everyone leaves, Lizzie Holroyd and Holroyd's mother wash his body and Lizzie laments: "I never loved you enough--I never did. What a shame for you. . . .But you didn't try. I would have loved you. . . .You couldn't help it--my dear, my dear, you couldn't help it" (III, 59).

The difference in the action between "Odour" and The Widowing are apparent. These differences are caused by Lawrence's addition of Blackmore to the drama, and by Charles Holroyd's

repeated appearances alive on stage, once tipsy in the company of the two women and a second time inebriated in the company of Blackmore. In the story Elizabeth Bates does not have a lover, nor does Walter Bates appear alive. The additional action of the drama together with the differences between them in point of view result in several profound differences between story and drama. One is that Lizzie Holroyd's character is entirely different from Elizabeth Bates'. In addition, because Holroyd appears alive and because Blackmore acts as a foil for him, the audience's perception of Holroyd's character and of his responsibility for his and Lizzie's unhappy marriage is entirely different from the reader's perception of Bates' character and of his responsibility for his bad marriage with Elizabeth. Hence, Bates' death and Holroyd's death produce entirely different reactions--Bates' death in the story is not the tragedy that Holroyd's is in The Widowing.

Partly responsible for this difference in the reaction to the death of Bates and the reaction to Holroyd's death are the radical differences between Elizabeth Bates and Lizzie Holroyd, whose basic dissimilarity is perhaps suggested by their names. "Lizzie," a diminutive of "Elizabeth" is ordinarily a child's nick-name, and certainly, Lizzie Holroyd is childish in many respects. In contrast, "Elizabeth," the form of the name ordinarily used for an adult, has regal associations, and Elizabeth, with her "imperious mien" is much too regal a person to be called "Lizzie." But even

though the two women are almost opposites in temperament, they share several superficial similarities. Both have small children, a boy and a girl (Minnie, six, and Jack, eight in The Widowing; John, five, and Annie, a school-age child, in "Odour"). Both Lizzie and Elizabeth are unhappily married to irresponsible colliers who drink excessively. In addition, both are more refined than their husbands and detest not only their husband's vulgarity and drunkenness, but the actual physical circumstances of their lives, living as they both do, in rat-infested homes. Lizzie Holroyd looks down on her neighbors in Bestwood, complaining to Blackmore that there is nothing there "if you can't be like the rest of them--as common as they're made" (I. i, 16). And her mother-in-law laments her son's marrying a "clever woman," telling Lizzie, "You thought yourself above him" (III, 49). Indeed, as she complains to Blackmore, Lizzie Holroyd does consider herself above living in "This vile Hole! I'd never have come to live here, in all the thick of the pit-grime. . . if it hadn't been for him. . . .This place is fairly alive with rats. They run up that dirty vine in front of the house" (I. i, 15-16).

Elizabeth Bates, too, regrets her mistake in marrying, regrets having come to such a place: "Ah, what a fool I've been, what a fool! And this is what I came here for to this dirty hole, rats and all, for him to slink past his very door" (p. 289). And, like Lizzie, she is refined. She refuses to go in search of her husband herself, to go to "The Prince of

Wales," the pub Bates habituates: "She had never yet been to fetch him, and she never would go" (p. 291). That, like Lizzie, Elizabeth is above the "common herd" is implied by Mrs. Rigley's response to Elizabeth's request that her husband search for Bates. She questions Elizabeth in "a tone tinged with respect" (p. 291).

Added to these factual similarities between Lizzie and Elizabeth are two factual differences, which make for profound differences in the reader's response to each woman's situation. These differences are in part responsible for the perception of Lizzie as an unfaithful, impetuous woman, and of Elizabeth as a faithful, independent person. Lizzie Holroyd has inherited over a hundred pounds from her uncle (III. 51), which inheritance allows her a choice in her marital situation. At the end of the first act, even before Blackmore asks her to go away with him, she tells Holroyd to leave and not to come back. His reply is, "What! You think you're something, since your uncle left you that money" (I. ii. 27). Later, at the beginning of the third act, when Lizzie tells Minnie and Jack that they may leave Holroyd, Minnie asks who would work for them if they left. Lizzie reassures her, announcing her financial independence, "I've got a lot of money now, that your uncle left me" (III. 45).

Elizabeth Bates, in contrast, has no money, and her only inheritance is a third pregnancy (p. 288). She is indeed as "trapped" in her marriage as her husband is later trapped in

the mines. Because she does not have the choice Lizzie's money gives her, or the choice of leaving her husband for a lover, Elizabeth is more pitiable in her situation than Lizzie is in hers.

But, of course, these two differences between Elizabeth and Lizzie are only part of the differences between them. Besides the choice her money gives her because of Blackmore, Lizzie Holroyd shows an unfaithfulness not evidenced in Elizabeth. In addition, Lizzie's involvement with Blackmore allows for the revelation, through her interaction with him and the dialogue between them, of yet other basic differences between the two women. Lizzie Holroyd is not only unfaithful and impetuous, she is indecisive as well. Her indecisiveness is reflected in her vacillation between Holroyd and Blackmore, in her inability to make up her mind about how she feels about either of them. She says she doesn't care about Holroyd, yet shows that she still does. In the second act, she endlessly wavers, also, between saying "yes" and "no" to Blackmore, who sums up Lizzie's state of mind correctly when he says to her, "you don't know what you wish, or what you want" (II. 34).

In the midst of the scene (I. ii) with the two tarts, when Mrs. Holroyd is most exasperated with her husband, she attempts to stop him from chasing a rat for fear he will be bitten. She screams to him that rats are poisonous and then "stretches out her arms to keep back her husband who is about

to kneel and search under the sofa for the rat" (I. ii. 20-21). Later, in the second act, again Lizzie shows her concern for Holroyd when he and Blackmore fight. She attempts to stop Blackmore from hitting her husband (II. 33), and when Blackmore trips him, an act she doesn't see, she exclaims, ironically, "Oh, what has he done to himself?. . . .Aren't you going to get him up?" (II. 34). Yet shortly after in the same act, Lizzie wishes her husband dead. Evidently, she despises him, yet loves him, a conclusion Blackmore himself comes to:

> Blackmore: I suppose you really care about him, even now?
>
> . . .
>
> Mrs. Holroyd: I did care for him--now he has destroyed it--
>
> Blackmore: I don't believe he can destroy it (II. 37).

Nevertheless, despite his insight, only a few minutes after the above exchange, Blackmore continues asking Lizzie to come away with him. In this almost farcical dialogue, both hedge, answering the other by responding with yet another question, as Lizzie did above:

> Blackmore: Will you come with me? . . . Will you?
>
> Mrs. Holroyd: But you don't love me?
>
> Blackmore: Why don't I?
>
> Mrs. Holroyd: You don't.
>
> . . .
>
> Blackmore: And do you love me?

This characteristic of their exchanges demonstrates that neither one really knows how he feels. Certainly Lizzie does not. Minutes after she says she does not know if she loves Blackmore, or if she will go away with him, she says "yes" to both:

> Blackmore: Then come with me. Will you?
>
> She goes forward and flings her arms around his neck.
>
> . . .
>
> Mrs. Holroyd: Yes--I love you, I do love you--(II. 38-43).

Why does Lizzie finally say she loves Blackmore? Unfortunately, this is not the first time her impetuousness has led her to make, perhaps, an unwise decision. Holroyd, dirty in his pit-grime, unconscious from drink at her feet, threatened to hit her earlier in his drunken rage; now, Blackmore, gentle and sober, a "clean" electrician, offers to take her away from all this "grime," both physical and mental. Why wouldn't she want to escape? Desire to escape an unpleasant situation earlier led Lizzie to marry Holroyd in the first place. To get out of being pestered by men, to get out of the odious job of being a barmaid for her uncle, she married the first man who asked her--Holroyd:

> I married him to get out of my place. . . .I was left an orphan when I was six. My Uncle John brought me up, in the Coach and Horses at Rainsworth. . . . Then he fell out with me because I wouldn't wait in the bar. . . .So to get out of it, I married the first man that turned up (II. 41-42).

When she gives into Blackmore's demand only seconds after this

confession, it is evident that Lizzie is repeating an old response to an old situation: if things are unpleasant--escape. Because of her inability to cope with her problems, because of her immaturity, this is Lizzie's answer.

Finally, Lizzie Holroyd's immaturity is reflected in her reaction at the time her husband's body is brought in. She becomes hysterical, shouting, "Oh, it's too awful!" So violent is her grief that Blackmore tells her to quiet down, "You'll disturb the children," he says (III. 55).

Elizabeth Bates' response is totally different. Instead of becoming hysterical, she calms her grieving mother-in-law, cautioning her to be quiet because of the children: "'Hush!' said Elizabeth, with a sharp twitch of a frown. 'Be still, mother, don't waken th' children: I wouldn't have them down for anything'" (p. 295). Despite Elizabeth's care, Annie wakens when her father's body is brought in and calls downstairs. Calm, and in control, Elizabeth climbs the stairs and reassures her child that their father is home, and asleep (p. 298). Instead of hysteria and indecision, Elizabeth Bates displays decisiveness and stability. She accepts reality. Her husband dead, she thinks of life--her children: "There were the children--but the children belonged to life. This dead man had nothing to do with them. . . .She was a mother. . . ." (p. 301).

Lizzie Holroyd, too, is a mother, but not of the same caliber as Elizabeth Bates--certainly she is not cut from the granite Elizabeth is. Lizzie seems rather to be a child

herself, and at one point in the play, her small daughter Minnie, only six years old, admonishes her not to start a fight when her father returns and at the same time implies that Lizzie could, if she would, make things better between herself and her husband. At the beginning of the third act, while they are waiting for her father, Minnie says "wistfully": "'Appen if you said something nice to him, mother, he'd happen to go to bed, and not shout" (III. 45). A few minutes later, Blackmore having come and gone again in search of Holroyd, Minnie repeats her advice, this time pleading with her mother not to start a "row," as she puts it: "And you won't say anything to him, mother, will you?. . .You won't begin of him--row him" (III. 46). It is clear that Minnie blames her mother, at least partly, for the "row" Lizzie has with Holroyd. Besides Lizzie's guilt on this count, she has also criticized their father in front of them and so turned her children against him; at least she has succeeded with Jack, if not Minnie. In the first act, after Jack and Minnie report seeing their father dancing at the inn, Jack says, "I bet he'll never go to work to-morrow, mother--will he?" (I. i. 14). Jack's question indicates his fear and insecurity. It is evident he has heard his mother say many times before, "he'll never go to work tomorrow." Lizzie's answer to her son's question is clearly designed to turn him against his father. Instead of reassuring Jack that his father will go to work and dropping the matter, she says:

> Goodness knows. I'm sick of it--disgracing me.
> There'll be the whole place cackling this now.
> They've no sooner finished about him getting
> taken up for fighting than they begin on this.
> But I'll put a stop to it some road or other.
> It's not going on, if I know it: it isn't (I, i, 14).

If Jack did not feel insecure before, he would now. A child of eight, he must wonder what his mother means by "I'll put a stop to it some road or other." Although Lizzie does not make clear to Jack at this point what she plans to do, she does the next evening, and it is evident then that she has succeeded in turning her son against his father.

The third act begins the next evening at seven o'clock; Holroyd is about three hours late. Minnie says she wishes her father would come, and Jack says, "I hate him. I wish he'd drop down th' pit-shaft" (III, 45). The psychological damage Lizzie has already done her son is apparent in this remark. Yet, Lizzie does something even worse at this point--she gives Jack a "double message." After having taught him to hate his father, she now tells him he musn't. She replies: "Jack!--I never heard such a thing in my life! You musn't say such things--it's wicked" (III, 45). Evidently Jack thought his mother wanted him to hate his father and that by doing so he would gain her approval, but she now says he's "wicked" to do what she has taught him to do. Lizzie's children, obviously fearful and insecure because of their parent's bad marriage, are told now that they <u>may</u> leave Holroyd <u>someday</u>--nothing definite, nothing <u>secure</u>, just <u>may</u> <u>someday</u>:

> Mrs. Holroyd: Perhaps we'll go to another country, away from him--should we?
>
> . . .
>
> Jack: When should we go?
>
> Mrs. Holroyd: Some day.
>
> Minnie: But who'd work for us? Who should we have for a father?
>
> Jack: You don't want a father. I can go to work for us.
>
> . . .
>
> Minnie (after a general thoughtful silence): An' would my father stop here?
>
> Mrs. Holroyd: Oh, he'd be all right.
>
> Minnie: But who would he live with?
>
> Mrs. Holroyd: I don't know--one of his paper bonnets, if he likes (III, 45).

Minnie quite evidently wants her father, not someone else, and Jack quite evidently has won the oedipal battle with Holroyd, suggesting he will assume the role of husband to his mother--"I can go to work for us," he pronounces. With Lizzie's last remark that Holroyd perhaps will live with one of his paper bonnets, she makes Minnie feel that the father she loves and wants to remain with has rejected her.

These evidences of the damage Lizzie has done her children indicate that she, in contrast to Elizabeth Bates, is selfish, thoughtless, and even destructive of her children. In addition, she is childish, often on the verge of hysteria, as she is when the two tarts show up with Holroyd, and again before the rat scampers across the room; also, after the women leave and

later both during and after Blackmore's fight with her husband. These outbursts all precede her wildness when Holroyd's body is brought in. The numerous occasions when Lizzie is either screaming, or crying, or both, indicate her definite instability. Perhaps she has cause to be hysterical, but Elizabeth Bates has the same kind of husband, the same kind of life. Minnie earlier implied her mother's partial guilt in making her marriage an unhappy one, and Lizzie's mother-in-law later does the same. Granting that her son is a trial, the elder Mrs. Holroyd points out to her daughter-in-law that even so, she is not entirely blameless. She mentions that people are talking about her and Blackmore and that Lizzie is particularly to blame in her condescending attitude toward Holroyd: "You thought yourself above him, Lizzie, an'. . .what man wouldn't leave a woman that allowed him to live on sufferance in the house with her, when he was bringing the money home? (III. 48-49). She further suggests that all her son needed was "a bit of coaxing and managing." Lizzie does anything but coax. Yet later, when Holroyd dies, she admits responsibility for making him jealous. It is hard to get around the fact of Blackmore; her guilt there is unquestionable.

Clearly, Lizzie's own actions and speech, Minnie's remarks, and the grandmother's criticisms above make Lizzie Holroyd a much less admirable woman than Elizabeth Bates. In her actions and speech, Elizabeth reveals herself as strong, stable, calm, and, as she is described in the beginning of the

story, a woman of "imperious mien" (p. 284). The contrast between Elizabeth's and Lizzie's characters is pointed up in the parallel speech in the story by Elizabeth's mother-in-law. Here, unlike Mrs. Holroyd, Mrs. Bates laments that her "darling" boy has turned out to be such a "handful": " . . . there's no mistake he's been a handful of trouble he has! . . . You've had a sight of trouble with him, Elizabeth, you have indeed." (pp. 294-95). Her mother-in-law does not blame Elizabeth, and indeed, Elizabeth is blameless to the reader. In contrast, Lizzie must clearly share blame for the trouble she has with Holroyd. The effect of this difference is that Holroyd becomes a sympathetic character; his death becomes the tragedy that Bates' is not. But, this is not only because of the differences between Lizzie's and Elizabeth's behavior and characters, but also because of other major differences between story and drama--the limited viewpoint and the absence of Bates in the story, the appearance twice of Holroyd and the addition of Blackmore to the drama, who, besides revealing Lizzie's character, reveals Holroyd's because he is a foil to the collier. What kind of man is Holroyd?

Granted, a man in a drunken rage who abuses the person who helped him home, and who then threatens physically to attack his wife, seems unlikely to attract much sympathy. Yet, Holroyd does so. For all his apparent bestiality, he is a man of sensitivity and "fire and physical splendour," too. Thus Rolf Gardiner put it in 1926, when he criticized the

actor who played Holroyd for lacking these qualities--qualities he believed Lawrence meant the miner to have.[7] Holroyd's "fire and physical splendour" are obviously what attracted Lizzie to him. It was not simply that he was a means of escape--he was, in addition, an attractive one. When Blackmore asks if she had liked him for his good looks and strength, she replies, "I liked that as well" (II. 37). As well as what else is never revealed. Instead Lizzie later indicates that "passion" and physical attractions were all he had: "There's just his body and nothing else" (II. 42). But, as her mother-in-law points out, when they married, that was enough for Lizzie: "You could have eaten him ravishing, at one time, Lizzie" (III. 49).

The perfect foil to Holroyd in this regard is Blackmore. Passion and physical splendor are definitely lacking in him. Blackmore is "clean"; he appears at Lizzie's house "swarfed and greased" (I. i. 11). He does no gruelling physical work in the pit; he is an electrician doing "gentleman's work" as he calls it (I. ii. 12). Blackmore would never get drunk nor hit Lizzie, but she could say good-bye to passion if she lived with him. He admits that he doesn't know if he loves

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[7]Edward Nehls, D. H. Lawrence: A Composite Biography, III (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1959), 121. Letter dated 13 December 1926. After seeing The Widowing the previous night, Rolf Gardiner wrote Lawrence that the only flaw in the play was the actor playing Holroyd, who "wasn't fine or big enough. . . not that touch of fire and physical splendour I feel was the hidden ore in the body of him as you meant him perhaps."

her and the feelings he admits are hardly those of a fired-up Don Juan:

> Blackmore: I don't know anything about love. Only I've gone on for a year, now, and it's got stronger and stronger--
>
> Mrs. Holroyd: What has?
>
> Blackmore: This-this wanting you, to live with me. . .(II, 39).

Not only does Blackmore fail to use the word "love," but he, at twenty-seven, claims he does not know if he's ever been in love. When Lizzie asks, "And have you ever been in love?" he replies, "I don't think so. I don't know" (II, 39). In light of Lizzie's promise to run away with Blackmore, her mother-in-law's innocent remark in the last act that "You don't know what it is to live with a man that has no feeling" gains ironic significance: the night before, Lizzie had made plans to do just that--to live with a man who has little feeling.

Although Blackmore is deficient, it seems, in "feeling," Holroyd is not. Even Lizzie grants him that when he dies. She blames herself for his death, because, as she says to Blackmore, he "felt" her killing him: "He'd have come up with the others, if he hadn't felt--felt me murdering him. . . .If he hadn't felt, if he hadn't <u>known</u>, he wouldn't have stayed, he'd have come up with the rest" (III, 58). But Lizzie had been killing Holroyd in another way, too, long before her infidelity with Blackmore. As her mother-in-law

points out, Lizzie had "put herself above" her husband, and in doing so, she made him feel inferior. It is obvious that Holroyd has been hurt by her, that he is sensitive to her condescension toward him. He complains that Lizzie "begrudges" him "ivry morsel" and that she treats him like a dog (I, ii, 28, 30). To this she replies, "A dog would be better" (I, ii, 28). Her scalpel tongue cuts him down to size, and because of Lizzie's attitude of superiority Holroyd brings the two trollops home, a deed for which he afterwards feels guilty and ashamed. He brings them only because he wants to shame Lizzie as she has shamed him by making him feel inferior. One feels compassion for him when he tells Lizzie, after the women leave, that they are as good as she; in reality, he is saying, "I'm as good as you":

> Holroyd (ashamed yet defiant, withal anxious to apologize): Wheer's my slippers?
>
> . . .
>
> Mrs. Holroyd: Don't expect me to speak to you after tonight's show. How dare you bring them to my house, how dare you?
>
> . . .
>
> Holroyd: I s'll do what the deuce I like. They're as good as you are. . . .They're women as good as yourself, every whit of it (I. ii. 28 - 29).

Holroyd regrets having brought the tarts home, not only because of Lizzie, but because it bothered him a great deal that his children saw them. If he is a drunken brute to his wife, he is also a father sensitive to his children's reactions.

When Jack and Minnie awaken and appear on the scene, Holroyd ushers them off with their mother, and Clara and Laura notice immediately that his joviality has disappeared. In addition to his good spirits' leaving him, Holroyd now wants the women to leave, too:

> Clara: . . .You shouldn't have brought us if you were going to turn funny over it. . . .Now I'm going to be quiet.
>
> Holroyd: Tha'd 'appen better. . . .Should we be goin' then?. . . .Come on, let's be movin'--
> (he glances apprehensively at the stairs.) (I. ii. 23-24).

If Holroyd is reluctant to have his children witness his misdeeds, Blackmore is not. In contrast to the emotional collier, Blackmore is intellectual, but he is also sly and sneaky. His name, like Lizzie's and Elizabeth's is an ironic (in his case) indicator of the true character of the "clean" engineer, who is nonetheless "more black" inside than the coal-begrimed collier is outside. In fact, he is a thief: he takes whatever he wants--another man's wife or a lampglass. In the beginning of the play, when Blackmore returns from the mines with a replacement for the lampglass Lizzie has broken, Minnie asks him, "Did they give it you, Mr. Blackmore?" He replies unabashedly, "No, I took it" (I. i. 15). Later, his sneakiness makes him a coward in his fight with the blind-drunk Holroyd. Holroyd, barely able to stand, is first tripped by Blackmore, who has hidden himself from Holroyd's view, then kicked (II. 34).

Despite Holroyd's drunkenness, this scene is partially responsible for making him a sympathetic figure, unlike his counterpart in fiction. Also responsible are Lizzie's unfair treatment of her husband and Blackmore's deficits in feeling, which contrast with Holroyd's passions.

In contrast to Holroyd who is seen and heard in the drama, Walter Bates, known primarily through his wife's consciousness and incidentally through slighting remarks made by his father-in-law, and then later by his mother, is a totally unsympathetic character. Although Elizabeth, after his death, indicates her partial guilt for their unhappy marriage, the reader, since Bates does not appear alive, never sees her treatment of him, as he does Lizzie's of Charles Holroyd. Everything known about Bates is negative. Elizabeth's conversation with her father early in the story reveals that Bates spends money his family needs on drink and brags at the pub about how much he will spend before he leaves (p. 285). Added to this evidence of Bates' selfishness and irresponsibility are Elizabeth's thoughts as she looks at her children in bed: "The mother looked down at them, at the brown silken bush of intertwining curls in the nape of the girl's neck, at the little black head of the lad, and her heart burst with anger at their father, who caused all three such distress" (p. 290). It is evident not only from Elizabeth's point of view but from her father's and her mother-in-law's as well that Bates has caused nothing

but distress. When his own mother admits it, the picture one has of Bates is black indeed.

The result of such differences between story and drama--Elizabeth's maturity and fidelity, Lizzie's immaturity and infidelity, Holroyd's injured pride, Bates' selfishness and the addition of Blackmore to the drama--is that the climactic scenes in each become entirely different tragedies. Also the reason each collier remains behind in the pit has a great deal to do with making Holroyd's death the tragedy Bates' is not. Bates remains merely to finish a "stint" (p. 295), while Holroyd, peevish and out of sorts, stays because he wants to come up alone (III. 56), and the reason for that is his injured pride.

On the other hand, in the story, told from Elizabeth's consciousness, the tragedy becomes Elizabeth's, really--she realizes too late for it to matter, that in their marriage she and her husband "had denied each other life." The reader has no feeling for Bates; he feels no sorrow when Bates dies. He feels, instead, regret for Elizabeth, that her knowledge came too late, and sorrow for the ubiquitous and eternal human situation in which men and women, "trapped" in unhappy marriages, mutually destroy each other.

This mutual destruction is part of the tragedy in The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd. Like Elizabeth and Walter Bates, Lizzie and Charles Holroyd have certainly "denied each other life" in their marriage. He has been a widower and she a

widow long before her "widowing." But, instead of feeling nothing about Holroyd's death, the audience or reader of the drama feels sorrow. Because Holroyd did not deserve his fate, his death is a tragedy, and one has less sympathy for Lizzie than he has for Elizabeth Bates, since several times during the second act Lizzie as well as Blackmore wishes her husband dead:

> Mrs. Holroyd: I wish he was dead; I do, with all my heart.
>
> . . .
>
> Blackmore: I wished as hard as I've ever wished anything in my life--
>
> Mrs. Holroyd: What?
>
> Blackmore: That I'd killed him. I've never wished anything so much in my life. . . .
>
> . . .
>
> My God, I hate him! I wish either he was dead or me.
>
> . . .
>
> If wishing of mine could kill him, he'd soon be out of the way (II. 34, 36, 40, 41).

Even Holroyd's son adds his wish for Holroyd's death at the beginning of the last act, ironically on the evening his father dies. Doubling the irony is that Holroyd dies almost as Jack wishes him to: "I hate him. I wish he'd drop down th' pit-shaft" (II. 45). Such death-wishes, taking the place of Fate and the Gods of Greek tragedy, add to the tragic irony of Holroyd's death.

Also of utmost importance in accounting for the tragic effect of this last scene in the drama is that the impact of Holroyd's death gains intensity because the scene takes place before the audience's eyes, not in their imaginations. Even the reader of The Widowing is forced to be aware of the body and of the washing of it in a way he is not in the story. Because in drama thought cannot be shown except through speech, mother and wife talk about Holroyd as they wash his body, and Lizzie reveals her thoughts and feelings about him in soliloquy after her mother-in-law leaves. Also, as the two women wash Holroyd, a description of their particular actions as they wash is given in directive passages throughout the scene. On the other hand, when the reader of "Odour" is told that mother and wife wash Bates' body, almost all the action shifts to Elizabeth's consciousness and climaxes in her insight into her marriage. Because the story is told from Elizabeth's viewpoint, the body is not important and receives little attention. Of much more importance are Elizabeth's thoughts and feelings in reaction to it.

Attesting to the power of the scene's production on the London stage in 1968 was Simon Gray, and noting its intensity also was Julius Novick, a critic of its American production in 1973. Gray thought that Mrs. Holroyd's lament over the dead body of her husband "struck a note as deep and full as the great choric threnodies of Greek tragedy," while Novick

compared its "grieving dignity" to Synge's Riders To The Sea.[8] Although critics of the earlier production of The Widowing (1926) tended to single out the scene for criticism, calling it "gruesome" and "too prolonged,"[9] their criticism may not have been due entirely to Victorian squeamishness, but to an actual flaw in the production. Suggesting such an error, Lawrence wrote his American friend E. H. Brewster that "they ruined Mrs. Holroyd by trailing out the last scene all wrong."[10] If the producer ruined the scene in 1926, it was evidently not ruined in its modern productions as no one criticized the scene, and instead of being singled out for blame, it was singled out for praise.

Not only in this last powerful scene, but throughout the drama, Lawrence followed his theory. In order for character to reveal itself through action, through what happens, Lawrence added Blackmore, who provides in addition to action an effective dramatic foil for Holroyd. Sustaining the action missing in the story are the appearances of Holroyd alive, once

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[8]"Lawrence the Dramatist," New Society: The Social Science Weekly, 21 March 1968, p. 424; "D. H. Lawrence Wrote Plays, Too," The New York Times, 25 Nov 1973, sec. D, p. 3.

[9]"Omicron," Nation and Athenaeum, 40 (18 Dec 1926), 422; Ivor Brown, "The Theatre: Love and the Other Thing," Saturday Review, 142 (Dec 1926), 727; "A Playgoer's Notebook," The Graphic, 25 Dec 1926, no pagination; Horace Shipp, "Home Products and Foreign Affairs," English Review, 44 (Jan 1927), 120-21; "H. H.," rev., Outlook, 58 (24 Dec 1926), 629.

[10]Letters, II, 963-64. Letter dated 6 February 1926 from Villa Mirenda.

with his two tarts and once with Blackmore. These changes Lawrence made in the action between the two resulted in a successful dramatic effort, where what happens produces an entirely different story from that of "Odour," where Lawrence chose an omniscient point of view. There, what is, or the "essential character" of Elizabeth Bates was Lawrence's concern, and there, too he was successful because his point of view helped him reveal the "inner life" of Elizabeth.

Publication of The Widowing in 1966 (The Complete Plays) and again in 1968 drew comments from two reviewers, who, noting the similarity between story and play, thought the play inferior because of Blackmore's intrusion. The earlier reviewer stated that "the introduction of a lover in the play is a distraction from the main theme at best, and at worst, a total corruption of it.[11] The later critic agreed that introduction of Blackmore detracted from the central conflict and that, furthermore, he was not very convincing.[12] Without Blackmore, however, not much would happen--the major loss of action would be to the second act, where Holroyd's and Blackmore's fight consumes half of it, and dialogue between Blackmore and Lizzie the other half. Without Blackmore in the drama, Holroyd would come home drunk and pass out to leave

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[11]"Writing the Play," London Times Literary Supplement, 17 Nov 1966, p. 1041.

[12]Rev., The Complete Plays, London Times Literary Supplement, 3 June 1969, p. 253.

Lizzie to soliloquize for thirty minutes. Also, because Blackmore acts as a foil for Holroyd, he adds to the artistic merit of the drama.

Besides being criticized on account of Blackmore, the play was criticized for being "inconclusive." A few critics of the first publication (1914) and of the 1926 production charged that the ending of the play was unresolved because the outcome of Blackmore's and Lizzie's alliance is uncertain. Reviewing the published play, H. E. Woodbridge said such a fault would handicap the drama on stage.[13] One reviewer in 1926 agreed: he thought that "Lawrence bolted from a good dramatic situation when he refused to answer how the lovers would face the shadow of Holroyd's death, since it is uncertain whether or not his death was due to carelessness brought on by desperate jealousy over their affair."[14] It is evident that not only those critics objecting to the introduction of Blackmore but those criticizing the drama for its irresolution of the Blackmore-Lizzie affair miss the point of the drama. The central conflict--that between Lizzie and Holroyd--is certainly "concluded" with the miner's death. What Lizzie decides to do with Blackmore is both irrelevant to this conflict and to her anagnorisis. Understanding the play better

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[13]H. E. Woodbridge, "Plays of Today and Yesterday," The Dial, 58 (16 Jan. 1914), 48.

[14]Brown, "The Theatre," p. 727.

than the others, Desmond McCarthy, in his review of the 1926 production, felt that the play's unresolved ending was due to Lawrence's desire to "focus on the relationship between man and woman, not upon what would happen."[15] McCarthy was right. Lawrence detested art he could "walk around"; he destested any play that was "rounded off." He would not then, resolve the Blackmore-Lizzie alliance. It has nothing to do with the central conflict, which he most certainly did resolve.

To judge the play "inconclusive," therefore, is to miss the main point of what happens. To judge The Widowing inferior to "Odour" because of Blackmore's addition to it is specious. Blackmore's inclusion in the play is one reason the drama is a drama. Although all of the critics cited made their judgments in very brief reviews, Raymond Williams has examined The Widowing and "Odour" at greater length and conceded superiority as a work of art to "Odour of Chrysanthemums." Williams' opinion is that the story is a greater artistic success because it contains the description of the landscape, which is in "Odour," at the same time a description of "the relations between men and things in this place."[16] Although Williams does not mention it, Lawrence's description of their surroundings, in addition, mirrors the emotional

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[15]Desmond McCarthy, "A Poet's Realism," New Statesman, 28 (18 Dec 1926), 310.

[16]Raymond Williams, The Drama From Ibsen to Brecht (New York: Oxford U. Press, 1969), p. 258.

states of his characters. Elizabeth is described as "insignificantly trapped between the jolting black wagons and the hedge" (p. 283) just as she feels "trapped" in her marriage. Also the description symbolizes all men at this time in this place, trapped between the world of nature and the world of the machine. Moreover, Elizabeth's entrapment between the machine world and nature is an ironic foreshadowing of the pit accident that "traps" the collier in the mine.

There is, however, in The Widowing, some compensation for this loss, which Professor Williams does not note. Lawrence's use of description of the landscape as a mirror of emotions, and as a description at the same time of "relations between men and things" is replaced in The Widowing by the use of ritual, which serves the same function.[17] The ritual of "washing" is emphasized throughout the play. The first act begins with Lizzie bringing in her wash, and a lengthy discussion ensues over Blackmore's washing his hands and

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[17]In her discussion of The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd, Sylvia Sklar mentions that description in "Odour of Chrysanthemums" is replaced in the play by "an equally accurate and sensitive account, given in the form of stage action." She lists "the incident with the rat, the intrusions of the children in Act I, the fight between Blackmore and Holroyd in Act II, and the reverent washing of the body in Act III" as the "major elements" giving the reader the "underlying stresses of a complex situation" (The Plays of D. H. Lawrence (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1975), p. 84). It seems to me that more than these actions, ritual in the drama is responsible for the reader's awareness of "underlying stress."

drying them on a clean towel, rather than on a soiled one. In the second scene of that act, Lizzie is still folding clothes and stacking them as it begins. In the second act, much is made over Blackmore's tenderness while he washes the face of the unconscious Holroyd. Then, the play ends with the ritualistic washing of Holroyd's body. This constant reminder of the effort to "cleanse" externally lends emotional impact to the knowledge that this is a "dirty" world, that it is begrimed and dark and that the pit grime covering men's bodies extends to their souls. In this world, that grime can never be "washed" off. Also, although Lawrence does not make such use of a set in his other plays, in this drama the set mirrors the darkness of the emotional world of Lizzie and Charles Holroyd. Dark, it is lighted only by a "deep, full red fire" so that the room not only mirrors the darkness of the Holroyd's lives, but it resembles the pit itself with its smoldering fires.

Both the set and the sophisticated use of ritual in The Widowing lend power to the drama, and even though Lawrence's use of description of the surroundings in "Odour" may lend more power to the story, it is almost impossible to concede superiority to either story or drama. The "Odour of Chrysanthemums" is a fine story and The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd is a fine drama. Perhaps, however, Elizabeth Bates' insight into her marriage is the profounder truth. When her husband dies, she discovers that "she had denied him what he was--she saw

it now. She had refused him as himself." Lizzie, on the other hand says, "I never loved you enough--I never did. . . .But you didn't try--you didn't try." Elizabeth's insight is closer to the actual truth of what went wrong in the Holroyd's marriage and closer to the unfortunate truth of men's and women's relationships in marriage.

Certainly when Lawrence said that "Odour" was "full of his childhood's atmosphere," a large part of that "atmosphere" was his own parents' unfortunate marriage. Elizabeth Bates discovers what apparently Lawrence perceived: that his mismatched mother and father had denied each other life in their marriage. Like Lizzie Holroyd and Elizabeth Bates, Lawrence's mother was more refined and intellectual than his coal-miner father. Ada Lawrence's description of their mother suggests both of Lawrence's heroines: "She had a curious receptive mind. . . .She loved ideas and was considered very intellectual."[18] Lawrence himself described her later in life as "militantly self-righteous."[19] In contrast to her, Lawrence's unintellectual father was full of the "fire and physical splendor" Rolf Gardiner missed in the actor playing Holroyd in the 1926 production. Ada's description of her father suggests Holroyd's and Bates' (and Morel's) physical

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[18]Ada Lawrence and Stuart Gelder, Early Life of D. H. Lawrence (London: Martin Secker, 1932), p. 14.

[19]Moore, Heart, p. 8.

attractiveness: "His cheeks were ruddy, and his red, moist mouth was noticeable because he laughed so often and so heartily. He was full of color and animation."[20] A handsome man, the coarse but "animated" Arthur Lawrence attracted the intellectual and "self-righteous" Lydia Beardsall,[21] and like her, Lizzie Holroyd is attracted to the physically handsome Holroyd. Unfortunately in both cases the union resulting from this attraction was a disaster.

Drawing upon his parents' destructive marriage, Lawrence wrote one of his first short stories, "Odour of Chrysanthemums" and his first drama, The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd. Over and over Lawrence drew upon his experiences in later works, among them A Collier's Friday Night, his second play, and Sons and Lovers, his great autobiographical novel.

Although both The Widowing and "Odour" reflect the parental conflict Lawrence knew as a child, that conflict produces significant differences in characterization and effect because of the added action and dialogue in the drama and because of an omniscient point of view limited to Elizabeth in the story. Lawrence knew what he was about when he made the changes between story and drama. He wrote a drama in which what happens is his primary means of revealing both his characters and a tragic human situation. The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd may be

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[20]Ada Lawrence, Early Life , p. 14.

[21]Moore, Heart, p. 31.

the greatest of Lawrence's plays; certainly it is the most powerful. Lawrence was right when he wrote Garnett at the time he was revising The Widowing: "What a jolly fine play it is. . . .[22]

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[22] Letters, I, 218.

CHAPTER III

A COLLIER'S FRIDAY NIGHT: A DRAMA OF CONTRASTS

Although A Collier's Friday Night might not be as "jolly fine" a drama as The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd, Anais Nin in her review of The Complete Plays thought A Collier's Friday Night "Lawrence's most moving play,"[1] while Sean O'Casey earlier had pronounced the drama "hard, even brutal."[2] Both are right. Of his three naturalistic dramas, this play contains the most tension and the most emotion. A rehearsal of the climactic eighth chapter of Sons and Lovers, A Collier's Friday Night is, like the novel, semi-autobiographical. When Lawrence showed her the play in November 1909, Jessie Chambers, Lawrence's sweetheart from adolescent years and the model for Maggie Pearson in the drama, noted it was "about Lawrence's home on a Friday night."[3] Written several years before Sons and Lovers, much of A Collier's Friday Night is recapitulated in the novel with certain important changes in characterization and dialogue and significant omissions of action found in the

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[1]Anais Nin, "Novelist on Stage," New York Times Book Review, 10 April 1966, p. 33.

[2]Sean O'Casey, rev. of A Collier's Friday Night, New Statesman, 8 (28 July 1934), 124.

[3]J. D. Chambers, D. H. Lawrence: A Personal Record (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1965), p. 166.

drama. These differences like those between The Widowing and "Odour," produce profoundly different effects in each work and, consequently, profoundly different responses from the reader. As he did in "Odour" and The Widowing, Lawrence concentrates in his fiction on what is and in his drama on what happens.

Although in "Odour of Chrysanthemums" little happens except within the mind of Elizabeth Bates, the eighth chapter of Sons and Lovers[4] is the novel's most dramatic chapter, containing the bread-burning scene and the climactic scene between the son, Paul Morel, and his mother in which she vies with his girlfriend Miriam Leivers for his affection and wins, claiming him as her "lover." This section of the novel begins: "Still on Friday night Miriam often came down for her French lesson" (p. 195). On this Friday night, as on all others, Walter Morel washes after dinner in preparation for the "reckoning" of wages with his butties. Mrs. Morel, in a rare moment of warmth between them, helps wash his back. The butties, Barker and Wesson, arrive, and after they have finished their reckoning, all three leave for the pub. Mrs. Morel comes downstairs, cautions Paul to remember to watch the baking bread, and leaves for her Friday night marketing. Soon after Mrs. Morel has gone, Miriam Leivers arrives. She and Paul

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[4]D. H. Lawrence, Sons and Lovers (New York: Viking Press, 1958), pp. 195-215. Future references will be documented within the text.

have just begun discussing a few sketches of his when Beatrice, a friend of Paul's and Annie's comes in. She teases Miriam, embarrassing her, and flirts with Paul who reciprocates. Because of Beatrice's distraction of him, Paul lets the bread burn. Annie returns with her boyfriend, Leonard, and scolds Paul for burning the bread. Soon she, Leonard, and Beatrice leave together. After they go, Paul and Miriam correct her diary, written in French for practice. Paul then takes Miriam home after she copies one of Baudelaire's poems.

When Paul returns, Annie and his mother are waiting for him. His mother is pale and blue-lipped from having over-exerted herself carrying her purchases, and Annie, angry with Paul for not being there to help his mother, goes to bed. After Annie leaves Mrs. Morel accuses Paul of loving no one but Miriam. In defense Paul tells his mother that he does not "love" Miriam, and that she, his mother, is his only love. As the two are embracing, Mr. Morel returns home inebriated and flings a piece of pork pie into the fire when Mrs. Morel tells him it is not for him. He and Paul challenge each other to a fight over the incident, and they are about to come to blows when Mrs. Morel almost faints. Paul attends to his mother while his father goes off to bed. After she has re-covered, Paul asks his mother not to go to her own bed, but to sleep instead with Annie. She refuses; then they kiss each other good-night and Paul feels "at peace, because he still loved his mother best" (p. 215).

Evident even in this brief synopsis is that this section of Sons and Lovers is extremely dramatic. Yet, the omissions here of certain actions and dialogue found in A Collier's Friday Night are significant. These omissions amount to most of the first act, the beginning and end of the second act, and the beginning of the third act of the drama. In addition the third act, containing the climactic struggle between mother and son, varies considerably from its parallel in the novel because of the differences between novel and play up to this point. Also significant is that one of the characters in A Collier's, Gertie Coomber, is omitted in the novel.

All three acts of A Collier's Friday Night[5] take place in the kitchen-living room of the Lamberts' home in a Midland mining village. In the first act Nellie Lambert, a young schoolteacher arrives home to find her mother preparing the evening meal. Soon after a neighbor friend, Gertie Coomber, comes in followed shortly by the head of the household, George Lambert, a collier. After Nellie and Gertie leave, Ernest Lambert, the son, arrives from college for the weekend. Lambert prepares for the "reckoning" of wages with his fellow butties, Carlin and Barker, who arrive as the act ends.

The second act begins as the men finish their reckoning and leave for the pub. Shortly afterwards, Nellie and Gertie

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[5]D. H. Lawrence, The Complete Plays (New York: Viking Press, 1966), pp. 473-530. Future references will be documented within the text.

leave, followed by the arrival of Maggie Pearson, Ernest's girlfriend. After cautioning Paul not to forget the baking bread, Mrs. Lambert then leaves for her marketing. While Ernest and Maggie are talking, Beatrice Wyld, a friend of Ernest's and Nellie's, arrives and because of her distracting conversation Paul burns the bread. The act ends after Nellie and Gertie return, and Ernest leaves with Maggie to escort her home.

The third act begins as Nellie, Gertie, and Beatrice gossip and Mrs. Lambert returns from marketing. After all three girls depart, the inebriated Lambert returns. While he and Mrs. Lambert are arguing, Ernest arrives and a fight almost develops between him and his father. After her husband goes off to bed, Mrs. Lambert accuses Ernest of caring for no one but Maggie, of whom the possessive mother is jealous. The play ends as Ernest reassures his mother of his love for her and they bid each other good-night.

In the first act the action and dialogue in the play, absent from the novel, are the disagreeable exchanges between Lambert and his daughter, similar exchanges between Lambert and his wife, and the appearance of Gertie Coomber who sides with the collier in his battle with his wife and daughter. The effect of these additions is that unlike Walter Morel in the novel, George Lambert becomes a sympathetic character.

Soon after Nellie Lambert arrives home it is apparent from her dialogue with her mother that she is selfish and

that there is no love lost between her and her father--at least she feels none for him. When her mother says Lambert will be home soon, Nellie replies, "Goodness!--I hope he'll let us get our tea first. . . .I don't care when he comes, so long as he doesn't come yet" (I. 476). But this abuse is nothing compared to the verbal and psychological battle that ensues between father and daughter when he comes home. Although Nellie and her mother are later quite vociferous in their attacks against Lambert, on his entrance he is met with absolute silence: "The door opens and he enters. . . . He hangs up his coat and cap in the passage and comes back into the living-room. No one speaks" (I. 477). Since no one acknowledges him, Lambert must do something to attract attention. To do so, he acts childishly in a way he knows will get a rise from Nellie:

> The man gets hold of the table and pulls it nearer the fire, away from his daughter.
>
> Nellie: Why can't you leave the table where it was! We don't want it stuck on top of the fire (I. 477).

This is Lambert's welcome--a selfish reponse to an equally selfish act. Because he does not get the attention he really wants, Lambert acts perversely in order to get any attention at all. It has worked before; it will work again. The stimulus-response pattern is repeated a few minutes later: ". . .The father pours out his tea into his saucer, blows it and sucks it up. Nellie looks up from her book and glowers at

him with ferocity (I. 478).

Lambert's retaliation to this--his daughter's silent chastisement of him and her earlier ordering of him--is perhaps not surprising. His ego doubly wounded (or triply, since to begin with Nellie ignored him) Lambert tries to reestablish himself as head of the household: "in a tone of brutal authority" he says, "Fetch my breeches an' wa's' coat down, Nellie" (I, 478). But this doesn't work. Nellie remains contemptuous of her father, impervious to him, and in absolute control:

> Nellie (continuing to read, her hands pushed in among her hair): You can ask me properly.
>
> . . .
>
> Father: You lazy, idle bitch, you let your mother go!
>
> Nellie (shrugging her shoulders): You can shut up. (She speaks with cold contempt.) (I. 478).

Here and throughout this act Nellie displays complete disdain of her father. She thinks herself above him-- "You can ask properly," she says. Lambert is aware that she considers him crude, as she did above when he began drinking his tea slurping it from his saucer. It is evident the collier reacts to her superior attitude by becoming cruder, which he does one more time before she leaves:

> He sits down and recommences eating. The sound further irritates his daughter, who again pushes her fingers into her hair, covering her ears with her palms. Her father notices, and his manners become coarser.

Nellie: Come on Gert! (She speaks with contemptuous impatience.)

The Father watches them go out. He lays his arm along the newspaper wearily.

Father: I'm too tired ter h'eat (I. 480).

It's no wonder Lambert is depressed. He wants and needs sympathetic attention and love from his daughter, but rather than getting none at all, he settles pitiably for the abusive kind. Nellie's constant contempt and criticism, verbal or silent, result in his acting in ways to elicit still more. Later while washing off his pit-grime, Lambert suffers further indignity at his daughter's hands. The collier asks her to help him wash his back, and Nellie, a wily and seasoned veteran in the battle with her father, capitalizes on his sensitivity to cold water, giving him not at all the help he had in mind: "She goes out and comes immediately with flannel and soap. She claps the flannel on his back" (I. 486). Of course the cloth is cold, and Nellie makes sure he feels it. Both hers and her mother's response is to laugh: "Nellie bubbles with laughter. The Mother turns aside to laugh" (I. 486).

There is no doubt that mother and daughter are allies in the constant war against Lambert. If Nellie shows contempt for her father, Mrs. Lambert is at least as disdainful as her daughter. She cuts her husband down at every opportunity, and the drama, like Lambert, is riddled with verbal bullets from an arsenal she keeps loaded. When Lambert unwisely complains

that he doesn't get the help from her in washing himself that other colliers get from their wives, her reply is, "Other men's wives may do; more fools them: you won't catch me." After her husband asks what she would do if she "had to," she asks who would make her, and he replies, "Me." To this she laughs, "not half a dozen such." Lambert responds with a "grunt" (I. 486). Making a pathetic attempt to assert his authority, at least verbally, the collier is ridiculed. Nellie has earlier refused to get his pants, telling him to "shut up." And evident here in his wife's response to him is that she also considers herself superior, above doing for Lambert what other collier's wives do for their husbands. Completely defeated in this skirmish, all Lambert can do is "grunt."

Earlier, after Nellie has left, Lambert accuses his wife of turning the children against him:

> Father: . . .It's you as eggs 'em on against me, both on 'em.
>
> Mother (scornfully): You set them against yourself. You do your best for it, every time they come in.
>
> Father: Do I, do I! I set 'em against me, do I? . . . An' it's you as 'as made 'em like it, the pair on 'em. There's neither of 'em but what treats me like a dog. . . .You niver hear me say a word to 'em til they've snapped at me as if I was a--as if I was a --No, it's you as puts 'em on it (I. 489-81).

Evidence supporting the truth of Lambert's accusation is that Nellie treats him as her mother does. She has evidently learned her contempt for and disrespect of her father from Mrs. Lambert. Also it is apparent someone told Gertie that

Lambert was a real bug-a-bear, because when she looks out the window and spies him coming, she exlaims, "Oh, glory! there's Mr. Lambert. I'm off" (I. 477). But she does not get away in time, and it is obvious that Gertie later likes Lambert, reflecting the reader's sympathy for the annihilated collier. Rather than wishing to escape him, Gertie becomes his ally. Attempting to make polite conversation, Gertie shows concern for him, although the good she tries to do for Lambert is mitigated by disdainful remarks from both Nellie and her mother:

> Gertie: Are they cold, Mr. Lambert?
>
> Father: They are that!
>
> Mother: Get away, man! The driest thing in the house would smoke if you held it in front of the fire like that.
>
> Father (shortly): Ah, I know I'm a liar. I knowed it to begin wi'.
>
> Nellie (much irritated): Isn't he a nasty-tempered kid!
>
> Gertie: But those front bedrooms are clammy.
>
> Father (gratified): They h'are Gertie, they h'are.
>
> Gertie (turning to avoid Nellie's contempt, and pottering the fire): I know the things I bring down from ours, they fair damp in a day (I. 479).

Gertie, evidently brainwashed into believing George Lambert an ogre, has seen for herself that he may have reasons to act like one. By the time she sides with him here, Nellie has been after him constantly, so that Gertie is moved to show him pity, and her sympathy is evidently appreciated by Lambert

who answers her "gratified." At the end of the conversation, the collier says about Nellie, "I wonder how 'er'd like to clap her arse into wet breeches" (I. 479). Gertie, now in alliance with the collier, laughs at his bawdiness to Nellie's chagrin.

When he arrives Ernest provides an excellent foil for his sister. He is a likeable person and respectful of his father in contrast to Nellie, who to say the least, is decidedly unattractive because of her selfishness and constant complaints about the children she teaches and the food she eats (I, 474, 475). In contrast to Nellie's silent snub of her father, Ernest speaks pleasantly to him when he comes in and shows consideration when he asks for a section of the newspaper. Ernest takes out what he wants and "hands the rest back" (I. 483). Later, when Nellie slaps the cold cloth on Lambert's back, it is significant that Ernest, a witness to the scene, is left out of the expository passage explaining that mother and daughter laugh. It is revelatory of his regard for his father that Ernest does not find laughable the indignity his father suffers.

The result of Ernest's and Gertie's sympathy for Lambert is that the collier becomes a sympathetic character. The parallel section of the novel, however, does not result in Walter Morel's becoming a more sympathetic character than any other, since the only actions novel and play share up to this point are the washing scene and the arrival afterwards

of the butties for the reckoning. In contrast to the washing scene in the drama, which exhibits both mother's and daughter's derision of Lambert, the scene in the novel exhibits the passion between husband and wife that smolders below the surface, only occasionally flaring up as it does here:

> He saw again the passion she had for him. It blazed upon her for a moment. He was shy, rather scared and humble. Yet again, he felt his old glow. . . . "Gi'e my back a bit of wash," he asked her (pp. 197-98).

The extreme difference in the effect of the parallel scenes is apparent. In Sons and Lovers there are potential warmth and love; in A Collier's Friday Night there are coldness and disdain.

Although the washing scenes in novel and play differ in effect, they point up one important similarity between Morel and Lambert. Both men are extremely sensitive to "cold." In Sons and Lovers, Morel complains of Annie's letting in a draft while he is washing in addition to complaining of the frigid water, which elicits Mrs. Morel's response that he should have been a salamander. These references to Morel's sensitivity to cold appear in three consecutive pages (pp. 196-98). On the other hand, in the drama allusions to Lambert's identical sensitivity is repeated four times at varying intervals so that his need for warmth is emphasized more than Morel's in the novel. On arriving home, Lambert gets as close as he can to the fire: "The man gets hold of the table and pulls it nearer the fire" (I. 477). Then he warms his trousers (I. 479). Later, Ernest notes the warmth of the room, to

which Mrs. Lambert responds like Mrs. Morel that her husband should have been a salamander:

> Ernest: Phew! It is hot in here!
>
> Father (bluntly, but amiably): Hot! It's non hot! I could do wi' it ten times hotter.
>
> Mother: Oh you! . . .You ought to have been a salamander (I, 482).

Later while washing, Lambert can't stand the cold and gets as close as possible to the fire: "[He] rubs his head, sitting on his heels very close to the fire" (I. 486). Because attention is drawn again and again to Lambert's need for heat, the reader is made acutely aware of the "cold" treatment he receives from his family particularly Nellie and Mrs. Lambert. His extraordinary need for external heat is no doubt a sign of his need for inner warmth. Lambert can never get warm enough physically because the emotional warmth he really needs and wants--that supplied only by love--is denied him. As before, here too, there is a profound difference in the response of the reader to another similarity between Lambert and Morel. When Morel's sensitivity to cold is revealed, he is not simultaneously treated coldly by Annie and Mrs. Morel, so that his sensitivity to physical coldness is not lent particular significance. In the drama, however, because of the repetition of his need for warmth in juxtaposition with ample evidence that he is treated "coolly" by his wife and daughter, particular significance is lent to Lambert's sensitivity to "cold." The result is

that sympathy for him is strengthened.

Although this first act of A Collier's Friday Night and its corresponding section of Sons and Lovers reveal some important differences between members of the Lambert and Morel families, especially the fathers, the second act and its parallel section of the novel reveal primarily the important differences between the sons Paul Morel and Ernest Lambert, and secondarily, the differences between their girl-friends, Miriam Leivers and Maggie Pearson.

At the beginning of the second act of A Collier's both Nellie and Mrs. Lambert criticize Maggie insinuating her forwardness:

> Nellie (as if casually, yet at once putting tension into the atmosphere): Is Mag coming down?
>
> He does not answer immediately.
>
> Mother: I should think not a night like this, and all the mud there is. . . .You'd never think she'd traipse through all this mud. . . .
>
> Nellie: Don't bother--She'd come if she had to have water-wings to flop through (II. 492-93).

With this remark, Ernest strikes back at Nellie, noting "satirically" to his sister "Just as you'd flounder to your Eddie" (II. 493). Mrs. Lambert stops the conversation at this point because "she fears her son is angry with her" (II. 493). Nevertheless, a few minutes later when Maggie arrives, she cannot refrain from making one more remark implying Maggie's over-eagerness: "Oh, is it you, Maggie, come in. However have you got down, a night like this?

Didn't you get over the ankles in mud?" (II. 494). When Maggie answers that she came by the road, Mrs. Lambert again makes a snide remark: "I should think you're tired after school" (II. 494). After this Mrs. Lambert leaves, unhappy because she is leaving Maggie there with her son whom she wants for herself alone. Significant in this section of the play is that Ernest unlike Paul shows his displeasure over criticism of his girlfriend.

After Beatrice arrives Ernest continues to show his commitment to Maggie by putting a stop to Beatrice's teasing when she aims her remarks specifically at Maggie. When Beatrice says to Maggie, "I'll bet he says there's a girl with great brown eyes," Ernest cuts her off, "Shut up, Beat! You little devil--you don't know when to stop" (II. 505). Ernest's response here shows a maturity lacking in Paul, who in this version of the scene in Sons and Lovers enjoys Beatrice's flirtation with him, and in addition participates in her embarrassment of Miriam:

> ". . .It would ha' taken a lot of men to ha' brought me down here tonight. But love laughs at sludge, doesn't it, 'Postle my duck?"
> "Inter alia," he said. . . .
> "Among other things, 'Postle?" she repeated. "Do you mean love laughs at mothers, and fathers, and sisters, and brothers, and men friends, and even at the b'loved himself?"
> "In fact, it's one big smile," he replied" (p. 203).

In Paul's case, Beatrice's suggestion is correct--Paul does laugh at his love. Even more, he abandons her. Heedless of Miriam, Beatrice and Paul continue volleying witty innuendoes

at Miriam's expense, their flirtation culminating in a kiss:

> . . ."Sweet boy!" said Beatrice, tipping up his chin and giving him a little kiss on the cheek.
> "I s'll kiss thee back, Beat," he said (pp. 204-05).

Evidently Paul enjoys both Beatrice's embarrassment of Miriam and her flirtatiousness. Ernest enjoys neither, nor indeed does he permit Beatrice to embarrass Maggie. Ernest is committed to Maggie while Paul is not committed to Miriam.

If Paul and Ernest are decidely different persons so too are Miriam and Maggie. Miriam, a shy and sensitive girl, reacts to Paul's desertion by withdrawing: "Miriam sat silent withdrawn into herself. Every one of Paul's friends delighted in taking sides against her, and he left her in the lurch--seemed almost to have a sort of revenge upon her then" (p. 203)). When Paul flirts with Beatrice finally kissing her, Miriam is hurt because she realizes his cruel enjoyment of her discomfort. She notes that "his eyes /tremble/ with mischief" and that "as he was now, she had no connection with him; she might as well not have existed" (pp. 204-05). Miriam Leivers is without confidence, while Maggie Pearson on the other hand is more confident, spunkier, and more fun-loving than her parallel in fiction. When Beatrice asks her to translate Ernest's French, "Maggie shakes her head without replying" (II. 505) in contrast to Miriam who readily translates Paul's Latin phrase, inter alia (p. 203). In addition Maggie spars with Beatrice, answering her innuendoes with aplomb. When Beatrice asks Maggie if

she thinks Ernest "such a juicy bone to squabble for," Maggie coolly answers, "I'm sure I don't think anything at all about it, Beatrice" (II, 504). After one of the loaves of bread is burned, Maggie seems not at all shaken when Beatrice says she will be blamed (II, 507). Instead, Maggie says, "Put it on the fire and have done with it. . . .It's no good, and it'll only grieve their poor hearts if they see it" (II. 508). Evidently Maggie is confident unlike the introverted Miriam.

However, the differences between Ernest and Paul are more important since they are consistently manifested in the climactic scenes of novel and play. In the play Ernest, not so tied to his mother, does not wish an oedipal victory over his father. Instead of springing on his raging father, Ernest responds to his father's verbal abuse that at least he is not a "foul-mouthed drunken fool." When his father threatens him physically, Ernest turns away to avoid a fight: "He turns his face aside in contempt from the fist brandished near his mouth" (II, 521).

On the other hand, Paul Morel invites the fight in the parallel scene of Sons and Lovers. There, in slightly varying order from the play, the fight occurs after the confrontation between mother and son. Mr. Morel returns just as Paul and his mother are embracing after their quarrel. When Mr. Morel throws his pork pie into the fire after his wife tells him it is not for him, Paul shouts at his father and instead of turning away from his father's threat, Paul challenges him:

> "Waste your own stuff! [Paul] cried.
> "What--what!" suddenly shouted Morel, jumping up and clenching his fist, "I'll show yer, yer young jockey."
> "All right!" said Paul viciously, putting his head on one side. "Show me!" (p. 214).

The difference exhibited here between Paul's and Ernest's reactions to their fathers reflects the difference between them in their struggles with their mothers. Paul Morel with his oedipal feelings for his mother is all too eager to fight his father, while Ernest, more independent of his mother, does not want to fight his father.

In Sons and Lovers Paul assures his mother that he does not love Miriam, that he only "likes" her, and as before when he readily abandons Miriam to Beatrice's attack, so he does under the barrage of his mother's tears. She cries to him, "I can't bear it. I could let another woman--but not her. She'd leave me no room, not a bit. . . .And she exults so in taking you from me--she's not like ordinary girls" (p. 213). This is too much for Paul. Having never truly left his mother's camp, Paul abandons Miriam and becomes one of the enemy: "And immediately he hated Miriam bitterly" (p. 213). Paul's love for his mother allows room for no one else: ". . .she was the chief thing to him, the only supreme thing" (p. 212); consequently, it is not surprising that Paul Morel surrenders entirely to his mother's demand that there be no one else:

> He had taken off his collar and tie, and rose bare-throated, to go to bed. As he stopped to kiss his mother, she threw her arms round his neck, hid her face on his shoulder, and cried. . .
>
> He stroked his mother's hair, and his mouth was on her throat. . . .
>
> "Well, I don't love her, mother," he murmured. . . . His mother kissed him a long, fervent kiss. (pp. 214-15).

Paul's fate is sealed; he will always be his mother's son and "lover."

In contrast Ernest Lambert does struggle for his right to a separate existence from his mother. Mrs. Lambert like Mr. Morel uses the burnt bread as an excuse to accuse her son of preferring his girlfriend to her. In defense of Maggie Ernest tries to make his mother see that she would not like any girl who cared for him, especially one he cared for in return. When his mother says that she doesn't know why she does not like Maggie, Ernest says, "Because you've made up your mind not to. . . .And you did from the beginning just because <u>she</u> happened to care for me" (III. 524-25). In a further effort to reassure his mother, Ernest argues, "if I like apples, does it mean I don't like--bread?" (II. 524) an ironic metaphor in view of the fact that burnt bread started the furor in the first place, and doubly ironic in that Mrs. Lambert, like the "bread" of Ernest's metaphor, is also "burnt," not by fire, but by Maggie. This climactic scene in contrast to Paul's with his mother is not as charged with sexual feeling, and more important, in keeping with Ernest's valiant struggle for life, it is not a complete

surrender to his mother. He insists on his right to grow up and suggests that he will continue with Maggie, whether or not his mother likes it: "Well, my dear, we shall have to let it be, then, and things will have to go their way. . . .You know, Mater--I don't care for her--really--not half as I care for you. Only, just now--well, I can't help it, I can't help it" (III, 527). Although both mothers exhibit equally suffocating and jealous love for their sons, Paul and Ernest exhibit varying responses to that love. Paul quite willingly succumbs to his mother's demands, while Ernest struggles in the net of his mother's affection and makes a bid for freedom.

Evidently none of the parallel sets of characters in novel and play, although superficially alike, are truly identical, primarily because Lawrence concentrates on what happens in the drama and on what is in the novel. One result is that in the play George Lambert like Charles Holroyd is a more sympathetic figure than his counterpart in fiction, principally because of the treatment he suffers at the hands of Nellie and his wife, and in addition because of Gertie Coomber's sympathetic response to him. The fact that Holroyd and Lambert are more sympathetic figures than Bates and Morel is worth noting since all four men are drawn from Lawrence's father. Because Lawrence's father in Sons and Lovers is treated less sympathetically than his mother, one wonders why the reverse is true in The Widowing and A Collier's Friday Night. I think instead of speculating on any subconscious causes, that the difference is due primarily to the difference in point of view. In

his drama Lawrence could only record what happened. In doing so, the reader feels that both Holroyd and Lambert are mistreated despite their rather unattractive behavior at times. As Sylvia Sklar points out in her study of the plays, Lambert becomes a sympathetic character even though he is not "overtly presented" sympathetically. In addition Miss Sklar implies that the reason the reader perceives Lambert sympathetically is that "drama freed /Lawrence/ from the personal and emotional constraints from which he found it difficult to escape in the writing of his novels."[6] That is, because of the objectivity of the dramatic point of view, Lawrence is freed from his emotional ties to his mother and consequently Lambert becomes a more sympathetic character than his fictional counterpart Walter Morel. In Sons and Lovers, although interaction between Morel and his family is recorded, it is not from a dramatic point of view, but from an omniscience limited most often to Paul or his mother. Also, in the novel Morel's alienation from and unfair treatment by his family is not as apparent as Lambert's or Holroyd's because portions of the novel devoted to Morel's relationship to his family are not consecutive; therefore, awareness of any mistreatment of Morel is mitigated. Even though told generally from the son's or the mother's point of view, there is a passage in the novel that clearly reveals Lawrence's sympathetic awareness

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[6]Sylvia Sklar, The Plays of D. H. Lawrence (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1975), pp. 52 and 54.

of the hurt his father felt:

> He was shut out from all family affairs. No one told him anything. The children, alone with their mother, told her all about the day's happenings, everything. . . .But as soon as the father came in, everything stopped. . . .And he was always aware of this fall of silence on his entry, the shutting off of life, the unwelcome. . . .
>
> He would dearly have liked the children to talk to him, but they could not (p. 62).

Although there is this evidence in the novel of Lawrence's empathetic perception of his father's feelings, ten years after he wrote Sons and Lovers, he told his friends the Brewsters that he felt he had done his father an injustice in the novel and that he felt like rewriting it.[7] He did not, but evidently Holroyd and Lambert are vindications of a kind.

In contrast to the difference in response to Lambert and Morel is the difference in response to their wives. Mrs. Lambert is a less sympathetic character than Mrs. Morel because she is exorbitantly disdainful of her husband and petty in her criticism of Maggie. Unlike Mrs. Morel, she has no true grievances against her son's girlfriend. Mrs. Morel at least has some foundation for her feelings. She sees that Miriam is like herself, that Miriam "would leave no room" for her, an accusation that is supported by Miriam's desire to absorb

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[7]Harry T. Moore, The Intelligent Heart (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Young, 1954), p. 8.

Paul's every thought and every feeling.[8] In addition, Mrs. Lambert lacks the seriousness of Mrs. Morel--she is silly with Gertie, conspiratorial with Beatrice (III. 512-13).

Because of these differences between A Collier's Friday Night and Sons and Lovers, the emotional response to each varies. There is no denying the emotional impact of A Collier's Friday Night. The play ends without concluding and the horror comes from knowing that what occurs here has been repeated over and over and will be repeated again and again. The play presents a psychological insight similar to Whitman's "I find myself on the verge of a usual mistake." What happens on this Friday night is no different essentially from what happens Sunday night through Saturday night. The play is a 'slice of the psychic life' of the Lambert family, and if the stage is not strewn with dead bodies at the end, it is strewn with the debris of demolished egos, with the wreckage of life. The father has left the stage inebriated and defeated by his wife in his attempt to gain membership in the family; the mother, having denied her husband long ago, sucks up the life of her son in a pathetic attempt to make him her lover, while the son struggles in her clutches, but can't break away completely. There is no denying that the telescoping of all life into these three acts is chilling.

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[8]Paul's feeling of being absorbed and suffocated when he is with Miriam occurs frequently (193, 194, 218).

The impact, however, of the drama's recapitulation in Sons and Lovers is decidedly mitigated by what comes after. In addition, the conflict between Mrs. Morel and Paul in this chapter of the novel is definitely resolved in contrast to that between Ernest and Mrs. Lambert. The reader feels sympathy for both Mrs. Morel and Paul in their sicknesses, while in the drama much more sympathy is felt for Ernest than for Mrs. Lambert, because Ernest has persistently struggled with his mother, trying to make her understand that he must have close friends his own age and that he must grow up. Yet, he too is hurt by his mother and partially succumbs to her; there is the same climactic moment here as in the novel where mother and son embrace, even though it lacks the heat and passion of that in Sons and Lovers. The unbearable tension at the end of the drama comes, not only from knowing that his scene will be repeated over and over, but from not knowing finally how it will end, from not knowing who in the end will win.

Tension is felt not only in this last scene of A Collier's, but throughout the play. Through the use of a number of contrasts Lawrence skillfully creates tension. The most pervading contrast, that between expectation and fulfillment, is suggested by the title. A collier's Friday night was ordinarily a joyful one--it was the night wages were paid; it was market night; it was the night young lovers met; all in all, it was a gay evening. Reference to this is made early in the drama by Gertie Coomber who remarks that she likes Friday night

because it is market night and she can go "off up town and wink at the boys" (I. 476). Juxtaposed against the reader's awareness throughout the drama that there is gaiety off-stage is the violent psychodrama of the Lambert family on stage. Although this particular contrast is the strongest and most pervasive in the play, others add to the extreme tension of the drama. Introduced in the first act is the contrast between Lambert's reference to the coldness of the room and the other family members' references to its heat. This contrast in addition to producing tension points up Lambert's alienation from his family. Another important contrast is the hatred between father and daughter as opposed to the love between mother and son. Yet another contrast is provided by four characters acting as foils for each other: Nellie and Ernest who are poised against each other in the first act and Beatrice and Maggie in the second. The last important contrast is found in the structure of the play. The conflicts of the first two acts are opposed to one another: in the first act the conflict between mother and daughter on one side and the father on the other is bitter and serious. In contrast, the conflict between Maggie and Beatrice in the second act is frivolous. In the third act there are two conflicts poised against each other. The first between mother and father results in hurt, anger, and contempt. The second between mother and son results in love. No doubt the incredible tension produced by all these opposing elements

is partly reponsible for O'Casey's feeling that A Collier's Friday Night is "a hard play, even brutal."

Besides Lawrence's skillful use of opposing elements in A Collier's three unifying motifs recur throughout the drama. As noted by Richard Clarke, they are reading, money, and food.[9] Although Clarke mentions that the reading motif points up the class division between Lambert and his wife and children, a division based on education, he does not note that all three motifs emphasize Lambert's exclusion from his family. Ernest's and Nellie's reading becomes a ploy by means of which they exclude their father (I. 478; III. 521-22). The money motif, except for the reckoning, and the food motif are also means by which Lambert's alienation from his family is made apparent. He would not spend money on books as Ernest and his mother would (I. 483), and in the third act Mrs. Lambert calls attention to the fact that her husband is not the only one "bringing money in" (III. 520). She does this in an effort to squelch Lambert's attempt to reestablish his authority based on the fact that he is the breadwinner. Of the three, the food motif is by far the most important since it serves not only to point up Lambert's exclusion from the family, but it is also symbolic of Mrs. Lambert's love. That she equates food with love is apparent in her reaction

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[9]Richard Clarke, "Autobiography, Doctrine, and Genre Comparison in the Plays of D. H. Lawrence," (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Florida State University, 1974), pp. 34-50.

to the burnt bread; it isn't the bread that matters, but that Ernest burned it because he was paying attention to Maggie, not to the bread, that is, not to his mother's love. Lambert, to whom she shows no love, she does not "feed." He complains in the first act that he gets nothing the rest of the family gets (I. 481), and like Charles Holroyd and Walter Morel he complains of being "begrudged ivry morsel" (III. 519). Mrs. Lambert feeds Nellie what she wants in the first act, but when the mother goes marketing, it is for Ernest that she wants to buy something special as it is for him that she has particular love. When Nellie begins eating grapes Mrs. Lambert bought, she admonishes her daughter, "Don't sit there eating every one of those grapes. You know our Ernest likes them" (III. 515). Later she precipitates the fight between herself and her husband when he eats some of the grapes and she stops him: "You needn't eat all those grapes. There's somebody else!" (III. 519). Lambert angrily replies, "'Somebody else'! I know they was not bought for me! I know it! . . . Nothing's got for me. . . .There's nothing for me, but you begrudge me every bit I put in my mouth" (III. 519). Thus the food motif supports one of the play's triangular conflicts because it symbolizes Mrs. Lambert's love. For Ernest whom she loves, there is food; for Lambert there is none.

The use of these three motifs together with Lawrence's skillful handling of tension-creating contrasts in A Collier's accounts in part for the play's dramatic merit. Critics of the publications of A Collier's Friday Night (1934 and 1966)

and of its production in 1968 have called attention to other merits--its characterization, its realistic dialogue, its unforgettable climactic scene[10]; and to its demerits--lack of concentration, the father's ambivalence, and its lack of "drama."[11] This last criticism is quite clearly preposterous. In fact, there is ample evidence to refute the other two charges--the play's lack of concentration and the father's ambivalence.

To answer these criticisms, however, would not prove or disprove Sons and Lovers' superiority to A Collier's Friday Night. Two critics have compared novel and play, both conceding the novel's superiority in reviews of The Complete Plays (1966). The first, an anonymous reviewer for The Times Literary Supplement, merely states that while the bread-burning scene in A Collier's is "vivid and realistic," it adds nothing really important to what is done better in the novel."[12] The other, Tony Tanner, comes closer to getting at a valid basis for his judgment. In noting the similarity of the struggle between mother and son in the play and the one in Sons and Lovers, he

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[10]In the order of the praise given: D. H. Lawrence, A Collier's Friday Night, intro. by Edward Garnett (London: Martin Secker, 1934), p.v.; Osbert Burdett, London Mercury, 30 (August 1934), 376; Phillip French, "The Major Miner Dramatist," New Statesman, 75 (22 March 1968), 390.

[11]In order of the criticism given: Garnett, Collier's, p.v.; Simon Gray, "Lawrence the Dramatist," New Society: The Social Science Weekly, 21 (March 1968), 424.

[12]Rev., A Collier's Friday Night, "Writing the Play," London Times Literary Supplement, 17 November 1966, p. 1041.

thinks the struggle in the novel superior in its depth.[13] Reviews are not the place for thorough analyses so that Mr. Tanner does not explain or elaborate what he means by the "depth" of the struggle. Still, he does hit on what appears ironically to be the major flaw in the drama--the climactic scene. What Mr. Tanner hints, but does not clarify, is not so much that the struggle lacks "depth" in A Collier's, because it is quite clearly the same as that in the novel, but simply that it is not adequately prepared for. Frankly, the reader is surprised at the seriousness of Mrs. Lambert at this moment in the drama, and also at the seriousness (or perversity) of her relationship with Ernest. She has been shown up to this point as being quite petty and silly. She herself lacks "depth" of character. Support for the second reason--that the seriousness of her relationship with Ernest is unprepared for--is that the only hints of her neurotic closeness to him occur in the second act when she is clearly jealous of Maggie and when she forbids Nellie and her husband the grapes Ernest likes. These slight hints that Ernest is her "favorite" are inadequate preparation for the climactic scene between them in which it is clear that he is more to her than just her "favorite." In addition it is evident particularly in this scene of the play that Lawrence, always more interested in the "happenings within" than in external action,

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[13]Tony Tanner, "Into the Fire," Spectator, 7 January 1966, p. 16.

had great difficulty writing it. Many of his directional passages explain emotional responses that could only with great difficulty, or not at all, be shown on stage. How, for example could this be shown: "Mother (with great gentleness, having decided not to torment him)" (III. 527). Or this: "each reassures the other that the moment of abnormal emotion has passed, and the usual position of careless intimacy is reassumed)" (III. 527). Or this last, when they bid each other goodnight, ending the play: "There is in their tones a dangerous gentleness--so much gentleness that the safe reserve of their souls is broken)" (III. 530). It might be possible for an actor to reveal through tone of voice, facial expressions, and gestures that the mother "turns to him with the anger of love" (III. 527), but certainly to show through tone of voice "that the safe reserve of their souls is broken" would be impossible. There are examples like these, too, in the second act (491, 493, 495), but the ones in the last act are more noticeable because more prevalent in this one scene between Mrs. Lambert and Ernest. The reason? Like that of the novel, the true climax of A Collier's Friday Night is "what happens" inside mother and son.

Calling attention to the weakness of the scene in comparison to its handling in the novel is Simon Gray, critic of its 1968 production, although none of the other reviewers or critics of the production mentions the scene specifically. Gray, obviously writing about the scene, mistakenly refers to

its concurrence between Ernest and Nellie: ". . .the scene between Ernest and Nellie /sic/ in A Collier's Friday Night strains for a significant complexity of feeling that requires, for proper clarification, the imaginative analysis of Lawrence the novelist. . . .The failure of A Collier's Friday Night . . .comes at least in part, then, from the constricting form in which Lawrence is working. Sons and Lovers is not the whole truth of the matter, but it contains more of it than /A Collier's Friday Night/ does."[14]

Although a "stark" and powerful drama, A Collier's Friday Night is not the work of art that Sons and Lovers is. Its greatest claim to fame may be that writing the play gave Lawrence the idea to write the novel. Quite possibly, he himself realized after completing the play, that the climax needed quite a bit of explanation beforehand, and that indeed what he had written would be a better novel than a drama. This seems a likely speculation since only eleven months after Lawrence showed the play to Jessie Chambers, he told Sydney Pawling in October 1910 that he had completed one-eighth of his novel, Paul Morel.[15]

No doubt the conflict of A Collier's Friday Night is more successfully rendered by Lawrence in his great autobiographical

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[14]Gray, "The Dramatist," p. 424.

[15]Emile Delavenay, D. H. Lawrence: The Man and His Work (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1972), p. 116.

novel. Yet, despite its flaws this drama of violent emotion and familial conflict reveals a rather sophisticated handling of material. Using contrast to produce extreme tension and three motifs to achieve unity, to reinforce Lambert's alienation from his family, and to support the triangular conflict between mother, son, and father, Lawrence made a successful, if not great, drama out of material more suited to fiction. But it was material that he nevertheless rendered dramatically to reveal the twisted and intermeshed love and hate in a colliery family much like his own.

CHAPTER IV

THE DAUGHTER-IN-LAW: THE FLOWER OF LAWRENCE'S DRAMATIC ART

If A Collier's Friday Night reveals the conflict in a family much like Lawrence's own, so too, does the last of Lawrence's naturalistic plays The Daughter-In-Law. Written in 1913, the year Lawrence finished his revision of Sons and Lovers, the play recapitulates the major conflict of the novel and of A Collier's Friday Night--that between mother, son and son's beloved--in this case his bride. Lawrence's sixth play, The Daughter-In-Law, reveals that Lawrence had matured as a dramatist, despite the insignificance of the three comedies written the year before. In fact, in his introduction to the 1968 publication of The Daughter-In-Law in a volume with The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd, Michael Marland wrote that the play was a major work of Lawrence's,[1] while a reviewer of that publication thought the drama ought to be as well-known as Sons and Lovers.[2] Lawrence's handling of dialogue, humor, and characterization, especially that of Mrs. Gascoigne, are superb. In addition, The Daughter-In-Law contains

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[1]D. H. Lawrence, The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd and The Daughter-In-Law, intro. Michael Marland (London: William Heinemann, 1968), p. xxvi.

[2]Rev., The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd and The Daughter-In-Law, London Times Literary Supplement, 3 June 1969, p. 253.

a sub-plot expertly united to the main plot of the play. Even though this main plot grows out of the same conflict found in A Collier's and Sons and Lovers, the conflict is resolved happily in The Daughter-In-Law as it is in "Fanny and Annie," a short story Lawrence wrote in 1918,[3] five years after the play. "Fanny and Annie" is very similar in its plot and characters to the drama, but like the differences between "Odour" and The Widowing, A Collier's and Sons and Lovers, the differences between "Fanny and Annie" and The Daughter-In-Law are significant. As before, when he concentrates on what happens in the drama and what is in the story, Lawrence adds action to the drama not found in the story. The action in the case of The Daughter-In-Law dramatizes three statements related by the omniscient narrator of "Fanny and Annie."[4]

In the story Fanny, a thirty-year-old "lady's maid," returns to the mining village of her youth to marry Harry Goodall, a collier whom she considers inferior. After having kept Harry "dangling" for years, Fanny has written him proposing marriage. For years in love with her cousin, who jilted her and who is now dead, Fanny considers her return

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[3] Emile Delavenay, D. H. Lawrence: The Man and His Work (Carbondale: Southern Ill. Univ. Press, 1972), p. 442.

[4] D. H. Lawrence, "Fanny and Annie" in The Complete Short Stories (New York: Viking Press, 1967), II, 458-72. Future references will be documented in the text. The following reviews noted the similarity of The Daughter-In-Law to both Sons and Lovers and to "Fanny and Annie": Phillip French, "The Major Miner Dramatist," New Statesman, 75 (22 March 1968), 390; "Writing the Play," London Times Literary Supplement, 17 Nov. 1966, p. 1041.

and her forthcoming marriage her "doom." Her aunt, who has also married beneath herself, is sympathetic with her niece's plight, because Fanny is regal, beautiful, and intelligent. Harry, a thirty-two year old "mother's boy," although handsome, is "common" and lacks ambition in Fanny's estimation. Nevertheless, in addition to his good looks, Harry has one other redeeming quality--a lovely tenor voice, a gift he has put to use since childhood by singing in the choir at Morley's Chapel. It was there he and Fanny first met, and he takes her with him to chapel the Sunday following her return. Just as Harry finishes his solo, a woman in the congregation, a Mrs. Nixon, rises, points her finger at Harry, and shouts out that he is a scamp who will not take blame for his sins. After the service, Harry tells Fanny that Mrs. Nixon accuses him of impregnating her daughter Annie. At the corner of Harry's street, Fanny hesitates a moment, knowing that she now has another chance to escape her "doom." Because of Harry's indiscretion, Fanny can decide to go home to her aunt's or to go on with Harry, as planned, to the Goodalls': "Some obstinacy made her turn with him along the road to his own home" (p. 470). While Fanny is upstairs rearranging her hair, Harry tell his family that she has said nothing to him about the matter of Annie's pregnancy. Mrs. Goodall, jealous and suspicious of Fanny's motives for proposing marriage to her son, is nevertheless pleased that Fanny has not dropped her son. During tea and afterwards the Goodalls gossip about

the Nixons. When it is time to leave again for the evening service at Morley Chapel, Fanny declares she is not going, that instead she intends to remain there with Mrs. Goodall. Because of this Fanny wins over Mrs. Goodall who is "flattered and assured" when the story ends.

Like Fanny, Minnie Gascoigne of The Daughter-In-Law[5] is a thirty-year-old woman. She has been married to Luther for six weeks, like Fanny having proposed marriage by mail, and also like Fanny, having done so after years of turning down the collier's proposals to her. Soon after the play begins Mrs. Purdy, wife of an elderly collier, visits the home of Minnie's mother-in-law, Mrs. Gascoigne, and demands forty pounds for her daughter Bertha whom she claims is pregnant by Luther. In the second act when Minnie finds out about the pregnancy, she offers Luther the forty pounds from her inheritance, because Mrs. Gascoigne will neither lend him her money nor his brother Joe's who offered it to him. In the third act Minnie returns from Manchester where she has spent all her inheritance, hoping to force Luther to grow up and to support her. When she returns, Minnie accuses her mother-in-law of "ruining" her sons with her possessive love. In the fourth act Mrs. Gascoigne admits her mistake, promises that Luther will be Minnie's, and the drama ends with Minnie and Luther reconciled.

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[5]D. H. Lawrence, The Complete Plays (New York: Viking Press, 1966), pp. 205-67. Future reference will be documented in the text.

In The Daughter-In-Law the conflict is between Mrs. Gascoigne, Minnie, and Luther, while the conflict in "Fanny and Annie" is within Fanny. Besides a shift in the conflict, Lawrence uses an omniscient point of view in the story, relating three statements about his characters--Harry is a "mother's lad," he lacks ambition, and there is no love lost between Fanny and Mrs. Goodall. In the drama, Luther lacks ambition, he is a mother's lad, and there is definite enmity between Minnie and Mrs. Gascoigne. The principal differences between story and drama are a result of action and dialogue in the drama that demonstrate these statements made by the narrator of "Fanny and Annie."

The drama begins with action and dialogue revealing Mrs. Gascoigne's antipathy for her new daughter-in-law, Minnie Hetherington. In the first scene of the play Mrs. Gascoigne tells Mrs. Purdy the circumstances of Luther's marriage to Minnie, and in so doing, she reveals her exorbitant jealousy of Minnie's refinement and money, in addition to revealing her jealousy of Minnie because she took her son away:

> He courted Minnie Hetherington when she wor at her uncle's at th' "Bell O' Brass," an' he wor gone on 'er right enow. . . .Then our Luther says to me, "I s'll ax 'er to marry me, Mother." . . . An' so, missis, he did ax 'er, as e'd said 'e should. But hoity-hoity an' no thank yer; she wasna for havin' him, but mun go an' be a nursery governess up i' Manchester. . . .That wor four years ago, an' she's nobbut seen him three times sin' that. If she could but ha' snapped up somebody else, it 'ud bin good-buy to Luther--. . .Then all of a suddin, three months back, come a letter: "Dear Luther, I have been thinkin it over, an' have come to the opinion that we'd better get married now." . . .

> He gen me that letter, an' says: "What's think of that, Mother?" Well, you could ha' knocked me down wi' a feather when I'd read it. I says: "I think it's tidy cheek, my lad." . . . On th' Monday after, she wor here livin' at 'er A'nt's an' th' notice was in at th' registrar. . . (I, i. 215-17

Later, Mrs. Gascoigne's vindictiveness emerges. If Minnie took her son, then she is going to pay for it: "No--you mun go to him hisself--go an' tell him i' front of her--tha's the best thing you can do. Then iverything's straight" (I. i. 218-19). Only by hurting Minnie will "iverything be straight" for Mrs. Gascoigne. Because Minnie hurt her by taking her son, Mrs. Gascoigne wants revenge.

Ironically, it is Minnie's contention that she has <u>not</u> taken Luther away, that he still belongs to his mother, and this is what rankles Minnie the most. If the first scene of the drama is filled with Mrs. Gascoigne's rage against Minnie, the second is filled with Minnie's rage against her mother-in-law. When Luther mentions an upcoming strike, Minnie raises her head like a cobra and pours out venom she has stored up for his mother: "You'll be satisfied so long as you can shilly-shally through--That's what your mother did for you mardin' you up till you were all mard-soft. . . .You've been dragged round at your mother's apronstrings, all the lot of you till there isn't half a man among you" (I, ii. 226). Later, in the second act Minnie tells Luther that the result of his mother's "smothering" love is that he doesn't need a wife at all: "Pah! You're not fit to have a wife. You only want your mother to rock you to sleep" (II, 241).

Minnie in these first two acts has had as her target, not the true object of her venom, but instead, her object's son. However, in the third act, she is face to face with Mrs. Gascoigne herself. The drama climaxes as Minnie returns from Manchester, having made her final bid for her husband. To wean him away from his mother and his dependency on any woman, she has spent all her money in order to force Luther to grow up. Her mother-in-law is there when Minnie returns, and in answer to Minnie's question if she has seen Luther, Mrs. Gascoigne ironically replies, "'My son's my son til he ta'es him a wife, But my daughter's my daughter the whole of her life'" (III. 250). From Minnie's point of view, Mrs. Gascoigne's sons <u>are</u> her sons all their lives, as Minnie is quick to point out when Luther and Joe arrive:

> You held him, and persuaded him that what he wanted was <u>you</u>. You kept him, like a child, you even gave him what money he wanted, like a child. He never roughed it--he never faced out anything. You did all that for him. . . .You didn't care what women your sons went with, so long as they didn't love them. . . .All you cared about was to keep your sons for yourself. You kept the solid meal, and the orts and slarts, any other woman could have. But I tell you, I'm <u>not</u> not having the orts and slarts, and your leavings from your sons, I'll have a man, or nothing, I will. . . .He'd do what I told him, but his <u>feel</u> would be for you. he's got no <u>feeling</u> for me. You keep all that (III. 257).

Luther leaves Minnie emotionally alone, with the "orts and slarts" (Midland dialect: orts means leavings, scraps, fragments; slarts means a splash of rain or mud) of his love, not the "meal," which belongs only to his mother. After Minnie's accusation Mrs. Gascoigne responds, "You

talk like a jealous woman" (III. 257). Of course, that is the point. Minnie is jealous because she has reason to be. She answers that indeed she does sound jealous, and she continues her charges against her mother-in-law, by pointing out that Joe has never married because of his mother and that if he did he would break his wife's heart: "Your elder sons you let go, and they are husbands. But your young sons you've kept. And Luther is your son, and the man that lives with me. But first, he's your son. And Joe ought never to marry, for he'd break a woman's heart" (III. 257). If this were not enough to vanquish her mother-in-law, Joe's support of Minnie definitely is. Mrs. Gascoigne turns to him and says, "Tha hears lad! We're being told off" (III. 257). She is obviously affected by Minnie's accusations, and unprepared for what she hears from Joe: "Ah, I hear. An' what's more, it's true, Mother. . . .Tha knows tha's got me--an'll ha'e me til her dies--an' after that. . . .And sometimes, Mother, I wish I wor dead, I do. . . .I wish, yi, often, as I wor dead. . . . I'm allers a husk of a man, Mother, there's nowt solid about me. The' isna. . . .There's not much of a man about me" (III. 258). Joe is pathetic here; in fact, the truth of what Minnie says is pathetic. But she does win her husband; the battle between Minnie and Mrs. Gascoigne for Luther's affection is ended with Minnie the victor. In the next act, Mrs. Gascoigne attempts to justify her actions using words that belie her guilt: "I've allers tried to do my

best, i' spite o' what tha said against me this afternoon" (IV 265). After this admission, Mrs. Gasocigne makes another. This time she admits, ironically, that Minnie is like her--that Minnie, too, places her all on men: "There's only the men for me. An' tha'rt similar" (IV, 265). Later she assures Minnie that she has won Luther, that there will be no more contest between them for Luther's love: "An' tha can ha'e Luther. Tha'lt get him, an' tha can ha'e him. . . .He'll come to thee-an' he'll think no more o' me as is his mother than he will o' that poker" (IV, 266). Mrs. Gascoigne "gives" Luther willingly to the woman who is "similar" to her. If Mrs. Gascoigne has lost her son, she has apparently gained a daughter to be hers "all her life." Thus the conflict of The Daughter-In-Law is resolved. Evidently information merely told the reader by the omniscient narrator of "Fanny and Annie" is shown throughout The Daughter-In-Law as the major conflict of the play. There was no need in "Fanny and Annie" to show that there was "no love lost" between Fanny and Mrs. Goodall, since that circumstance had little to do with the major conlict in the story, that within Fanny. Likewise there was no need in "Fanny and Annie" to show that Harry lacked ambition and that he was a mother's lad. This, however, becomes a major part of the action and dialogue in The Daughter-In-Law, where showing the truth of Minnie's accusation that Luther has been "molly-coddled" and lacks "go" is largely responsible for making Minnie the victor in her contest with her mother-in-law.

In the first scene of The Daughter-In-Law Joe provides support of Minnie's later accusation that Luther lacks "passion." When Mrs. Gascoigne relates to Mrs. Purdy the story of Minnie's and Luther's prolonged courtship, blaming Minnie for it, Joe objects, laying the blame, not on Minnie, but on Luther's passiveness: "Nay--I reckon he niver showed the spunk of sprat-herring to 'er. . . .If I'd ha' bin for marryin' 'er, I'd ha' gone wholesale, not ha' fudged and haffled" (I. i. 215). Joe's feeling that Luther "fudged and haffled" is apparently true, for in the next scene when Minnie complains of his rather lukewarm courtship, Luther admits that asking her to marry him was like "having a tooth pulled" (I. ii. 227). After he says this Minnie replies, "Oh shilly-shally and crawl, that's all you can do. You ought to have stopped with your mother," and Luther admits, "I should ha' done, if tha hadna hawksed me out" (I. ii. 227).

Later, in the third act when Mrs. Gascoigne attempts to defend herself against Minnie's accusations, she tells Minnie that Minnie herself put Luther off, but Minnie vows that Luther came to her "no faster than a snail" and that when he asked her to marry him he was like "a gramaphone in breeches" (III. 225). Minnie's objections to Luther's lack of passion are clear. Obviously he was no Don Juan--it took him years to ask Minnie to marry him, and then apparently he displayed no more ardor than a machine, a phonograph playing recorded words. If Joe provides support for the

truth of Minnie's complaint, Luther himself does also when in the second act he refuses to say he cares for Minnie or that he wants her to stay. After telling Minnie about Bertha he says she may go if she likes. When Minnie asks him what he'd like her to do, he replies: "An' so I non care what ter does. If ter leaves me--" (II. 244). Minnie then asks, "Did you never care for me?" and Luther does not answer her this time nor twice after when she repeats, "Didn't you?" (II. 245).

Certainly there is ample evidence to support Minnie's charge that Luther is a "mother's lad" who found it difficult to court her with much feeling. In addition, there is support for her second charge that Luther lacks ambition. Apparently even his fellow workers have noted Luther's lack of "go," as Minnie reveals when she answers his statement that he "holes a stint as well as any man." Her reply is, "Then I back it takes you twice as long. . . .I <u>know</u> you're not much of a workman--I've heard it from other butties, that you never put your heart into anything. . . .And I could ha' told <u>them</u>, for I know you. You'll be a day-man at seven shillings a day till the end of your life--and you'll be satisfied, so long as you can shilly-shally through" (I. ii. 226). Minnie contends she could have told anyone that Luther never "puts his heart" into anything. This is what has irritated her most about Luther's passiveness. He has never put his heart into <u>her</u>--being his mother's son resulted in a lack of initiative in his work <u>and</u> a lack of initiative in his lovemaking.

Clearly, the conflict in The Daughter-In-Law necessitated demonstrating statements merely related by the narrator of "Fanny and Annie," where they are not demonstrated. Although their conflicts vary, the precipitating factor in both story and drama is the sons' impregnation of other women. Annie Nixon's pregnancy gives Fanny a chance to escape her "doom": she may go or remain with Harry and marry him. Similarly, Bertha Purdy's pregnancy gives Minnie a choice: she may go or remain with Luther. Both women decide to stay. The result of their "obstinacy" in remaining with the sons of domineering women is that both Mrs. Goodall and Mrs. Gascoigne recognize in Fanny and Minnie women like themselves and so are reconciled with them. Mrs. Goodall, also described as "obstinate," is "impressed by Fanny, a woman of her own match" (p. 463). Similarly, after Minnie's confrontation with her mother-in-law and after she has disclosed what she did in Manchester, Mrs. Gascoigne admits that Minnie is "similar" to her (IV. 265).

But despite their similarities, like The Widowing and "Odour," A Collier's and Sons and Lovers, The Daughter-In-Law is a somewhat different tale from its rendition in fiction. Although it is not difficult to ascribe superiority to Lawrence's fictional version of A Collier's Friday Night, it was difficult in the case of The Widowing and "Odour." Likewise it is difficult to ascribe superiority to either The Daughter-In-Law or "Fanny and Annie." One reason for this

is that there are no prosaic passages in The Daughter-In-Law like those that mar A Collier's, so that Lawrence successfully adheres to his idea that drama is primarily action. Another reason is that The Daughter-In-Law reveals a technical sophistication greater than that revealed in either of the two earlier dramas. Like A Collier's, The Daughter-In-Law contains action off-stage, but unlike the off-stage action in that play which serves to create tension the off-stage action in The Daughter-In-Law is a subplot expertly united to the main one.

While domestic conflict rages on-stage, social conflict between miners and mine-owners rages off-stage. The strike siutation, introduced at the beginning of the drama, parallels the course of the conflict between Minnie, Luther, and his mother, reaching its climax and its resolution simultaneously with theirs.

The two conflicts are paralleled not only in course and resolution, but in their cause as well. Like Minnie, who is dissatisfied with Luther's earnings and with his treatment of her as a wife, the colliers are disgruntled also about their wages and about their treatment as men. When Joe complains of being kept over an hour and denied compensation for his broken arm, Mrs. Gascoigne says, "Gen thee nowt! . . . It's a wik sin' tha got hurt, an' if a man wi' a broken arm canna ha' his fourteen shillin' a week accident pay, who can, I'd like to know?" (I. i. 207). Like Minnie, who did not like the "leavings" of Luther's affection and wanted the love

due her as his wife, so the colliers want treatment from the owners due them as men, not lesser beings. Joe complains that the pits are full of rats and that the company is so cheap the owners would like "to scrape yer tabs afore you went home, for fear you took a grain of coal" (I. i. 210). To Joe's complaint of the owners' treatment of their workmen as lesser beings is added Mrs. Purdy's observation of their inhuman treatment of her aging husband: "It's somethink awful. They've gave my mester a dirty job o' nights, at a guinea a week, an' he's worked fifty years for th' company, an' isn't but sixty-two now--said he wasn't equal to stall workin', whereas he has to slave on th' roads, an' comes whoam that tired he can't put's food in 's mouth" (I. i. 211).

In the third act when the domestic conflict reaches its climax on Minnie's return from Manchester, the social one is coming to a climax as well. Here the two conflicts are explicitly drawn together when Joe and Luther make an analogy between Luther and Minnie's situation and that of the strikers. Joe remarks, "You put it like our Luther says, then. He stands for t' mesters, an' Minnie stands for t' men--cos 'er's gone on strike. Now becos she's went ter Manchester, had he got any right ter ha'e Lizzie Charley in for a couple o' nights an' days?" (III. 254).

The two conflicts are joined and resolved simultaneously at the end of the play. Luther returns home and reports that his being gone all night was not because of anger at Minnie,

but because of strike business. As Minnie has won Luther from his mother, resolving the marriage conflict, so the miners have won at least one of their battles: Luther says, "We stopped them blacklegs--leastways" (IV. 266).

In addition to his skillful handling of a subplot, Lawrence successfully blends the comic and the serious in the play. Providing a large part of the comic element in the drama, Mrs. Gascoigne's idiomatic dialect is flavored with adages full of humorous metaphors. Especially flavorful is her metaphor for marriage: "Marriage is like a mouse-trap, for either man or woman. You've soon come to th' end o' th' cheese" (I. i. 210). When she says it is Minnie's fault that she must suffer from the knowledge of Bertha's pregnancy, Mrs. Gascoigne puts it again in a humorous metaphor: "She made the bargain, she maun stick by it. It was her dip i' th' bran-tub--if there's a mouse nips hold of her finger, she maun suck it better, for nobody axed her to dip" (I. i. 219). These are but two examples of the humorous speech that temper the acidity of Mrs. Gasocigne's remarks about Minnie. However, Mrs. Gascoigne's use of metaphor is rivaled in the first act by Mrs. Purdy. When Joe says that after all, Luther is not to be blamed, since he was ignorant of Bertha's pregnancy when he married, Mrs. Purdy answers him with an adage as humorous and pungent as those Mrs. Gascoigne uses: "He'd seen th' blossom i' th' flower, if he hadna spotted the fruit a-comin' " (I. i. 214). In this act, also, Joe's

account of why he was turned down by the company manager for compensation lends more humor (I. i. 209).

In the second scene of the first act, Luther's sense of humor provides a light touch before the storm. When Minnie complains of his coal-begrimed face, he replies: "A bit o' dirt's like a veil on my face--I shine through th' 'andsomer" (I. ii. 223). In the third act, levity is provided by Joe, who delights in teasing Minnie. He leaves to engage Lizzie Charley as a housemaid for Luther, since Minnie has gone "on strike" (III. 256-57).

Clearly the skillful use of a parallel subplot and the equally skillful blending of comic and serious elements adequately support the contention that The Daughter-In-Law is technically superior to either The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd or A Collier's Friday Night. Yet, despite this evidence of The Daughter-In-Law's technical sophistication, Simon Gray, in his review of the 1968 production of the drama, objected to the end of The Daughter-In-Law, which he thought "un-Lawrentian in its simplicity and in its complacent finality."[6] In disagreement with Gray in this regard was the anonymous reviewer of The Complete Plays quoted earlier, who judged the drama Lawrence's best. He wrote, instead, that The Daughter-In-Law's ending had "a peculiarly Lawrentian sense of triumphant life about it, without being

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[6]Simon Gray, "Lawrence the Dramatist," New Society: The Social Science Weekly, 21 March 1968, p. 424.

in the least sentimentally optimistic.[7] This opinion would seem to be more nearly correct. Lawrence said he could not abide art that was "rounded off," and as noted in the previous two chapters, The Widowing resolves the major conflict without tying up all the strings, while A Collier's ends without truly concluding. Perhaps the production, in Gray's case, made the difference, but it is evident to the reader of The Daughter-In-Law that both Minnie and Luther are extremely insecure about the love of the other. Luther accuses Minnie of thinking him "dirt" and of marrying him because she couldn't get anyone better. Minnie has apparently won Luther away from his mother at the end of the drama, but their lack of trust in the other is apparent, and although they have made a start, the "end" is by no means "complacently final." The final outcome of Luther's and Minnie's marriage is neither predictable, nor "optimistic," because of the insecurity evident here in their concluding dialogue:

Minnie: It's you I want. It's you.

Luther: But tha's allers had me.

Minnie: No, never--and it hurt so.

Luther: I thought tha despised me. . .Dunna say I'm mean, to me--an' got no go.

Minnie: I only said it because you wouldn't let me love you.

Luther: Tha didna love me.

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[7]"Writing the Play," p. 1041.

Minnie: Ha!--it was you.

Luther: Dost want me? (IV. 267).

The drama ends with a question, and one that is quite indicative, as is the entire exchange between Minnie and Luther, of the shaky ground their marriage is on. The true "ending" of The Daughter-In-Law remains "unfinished," "unrounded-off."

Evident in this chapter and in the previous two is that all three dramas utilize Lawrence's experiences as he was growing up in Eastwood, the Midland mining village he lived in until his early twenties. The conflicts of The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd, A Collier's Friday Night, and The Daughter-In-Law are those Lawrence experienced in his own home--the conflict between his drunken collier-father and his more refined and intellectual mother, and most poignant, the conflict between Lawrence and his mother that arose when he became interested in a girl--Jessie Chambers. In both The Widowing and A Collier's Friday Night, the characters based on Lawrence's father--Charles Holroyd and George Lambert--are more sympathetic characters than their counterparts in fiction and more sympathetic than their wives--Lizzie Holroyd and Mrs. Lambert--both based on Lawrence's mother.

I suggested in the last chapter that rather than assuming any subconscious feelings of sympathy for his father and unsympathetic feelings toward his mother at the time he wrote the plays (1908-09) that Lawrence merely recorded what happened in The Widowing and A Collier's. In doing so,

the colliers drawn from his father were clearly only partly to blame for the strife in their families. Although there is no father in The Daughter-In-Law, Minnie's proof of her accusations that Mrs. Gascoigne has "ruined" her sons through her possessive love is substantial evidence that by this time, approximately three years after his mother's death, Lawrence was aware of her destructiveness. In Minnie, Lawrence vicariously faces his own mother, so like Mrs. Gascoigne in her domination of her sons.

But if Lawrence was not consciously sympathetic toward his father in The Widowing and A Collier's, later in life both he and his sister Ada[8] regretted the treatment their father had received. In the last chapter I mentioned Lawrence's confession to his friends the Brewsters in 1922 that he felt he'd done his father an injustice in Sons and Lovers. In addition the year before, Lawrence openly denounced a parent like his mother in Fantasia of the Unconscious (1921). There he wrote:

> It is despicable for any one parent to accept a child's sympathy against the other parent. And the one who received the sympathy is always more contemptible than the one who is hated.[9]

There can be no doubt that Lawrence had his mother and father in mind, and there is also no doubt that Mrs. Holroyd is

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[8]Ada Lawrence and Stuart Gelder, The Early Life of D. H. Lawrence (London: Martin Secker, 1932), p. 14.

[9]D. H. Lawrence, Psychoanalysis and The Unconscious and Fantasia of the Unconscious (New York: Viking Press, 1968), p. 131.

more contemptible than her husband. After reading these words in Fantasia, one hears Jack, only eight years old, denounce his father: "I hate him" (III. 45). Mrs. Lambert, too, is "more comtemptible" than George Lambert, who after reading these words, one hears charging: "They're like you. You teach 'em to hate me. You make me like dirt for 'em: You set 'em against me" (III. 521). Despite his later condemnation of her, Lawrence's mother received his sympathy for a time. Since Lawrence did not begin Sons and Lovers until after he had written A Collier's Friday Night and since that novel is sympathetic toward his mother (Mrs. Morel), it seems most likely that the limited point of view of the dramas accounts for the difference in the sympathy felt for Holroyd and Lambert in contrast to that felt for their wives and for their fictional counterparts. Also, Lawrence wrote The Daughter-In-Law after revising Sons and Lovers, and even though Mrs. Gascoigne is blamed for destroying her sons, she is not an unsympathetic character. The reader of the play feels definite compassion for her when she admits her error and tells Minnie that she only tried to do her best (IV 265).

Regardless of what The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd, A Collier's Friday Night, and The Daughter-In-Law may or may not reveal about Lawrence's psychology all three are, as Lawrence wrote of "Odour," "full of my childhood's atmosphere." Without a doubt they are also Lawrence's most successful dramatic efforts. In all three too, Lawrence concentrates

on action as his primary means of revealing character. On the other hand, in the fiction similar to these plays Lawrence concentrates on revealing "essential human character," not through action, but through an omniscient point of view that allows him to show what his characters are "inside themselves." The result in all cases is that fiction and drama become entirely different works, despite their similarities.

In following his idea of the distinction between the emphasis of drama and that of fiction, Lawrence is successful in rendering similar material in both genres, although he is less successful in A Collier's Friday Night, because the climactic scene needs more preparation and because its true climax takes place within his characters. Still, all three dramas reveal sophisticated awareness of dramatic technique. In The Widowing, the set mirrors the emotional and physical world of Lizzie and Charles Holroyd and in this play ritual emphasizes the dirtiness of that world, a dirtiness extending to men's souls. Also in A Collier's Friday Night, Lawrence skillfully uses contrast to create tension while three motifs help to unify the drama. The last of his naturalistic plays, The Daughter-In-Law, displays Lawrence's skill in handling a subplot and in blending the comic and the serious. Also like The Widowing, The Daughter-In-Law relies exclusively on action and dialogue to reveal character, unlike A Collier's where in the last act particularly, many expository passages explaining his characters' feelings indicate the difficulty Lawrence had handling his material dramatically.

Despite this flaw, A Collier's Friday Night is full of emotional impact, but The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd is a more successful and a more powerful drama. A naturalistic tragedy, it may indeed deserve its comparison to Synge's Riders to the Sea. If The Widowing is a more powerful drama than either of the other two, The Daughter-In-Law is Lawrence's best play technically. Certainly it shows the maturation of Lawrence as a dramatist. Perhaps the reviewer of its 1968 publication was right when he said that The Daughter-In-Law "ought to be as well known as Sons and Lovers."[10] If this statement seems an exaggeration, there is little doubt that The Daughter-In-Law is the flower of Lawrence's dramatic art.

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[10]Rev., The Widowing and The Daughter-In-Law, p. 253.

CHAPTER V

THE COMEDIES: SEX, MARRIAGE, AND ADULTERY

Although The Daughter-In-Law (1913) reveals Lawrence's progress as a dramatist, the three comedies of manners he wrote the year before are his most dismal failures. Most likely the first of the three was The Merry-Go-Round, probably the play Lawrence referred to as a "middling good" comedy in a letter he wrote Edward Garnett the last of April 1912.[1] Sometime between then and the end of October Lawrence wrote the least successful of the three, The Married Man, as The Fight for Barbara was written in three days near the end of October that year.[2] In desperate financial straits in 1912 Lawrence indicated in a letter to Garnett that he hoped to make money from his dramatic efforts[3], and in an earlier letter he had asked Garnett to criticize The Fight for Barbara, admitting that all three needed revising and that The Merry-Go-Round and The Married Man were "impromptus."[4] Evidently Lawrence wrote the comedies, a genre foreign to his genius,

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[1]Harry T. Moore, ed. The Collected Letters (New York: Viking Press, 1962), I, 109.

[2]Moore, Letters, I, 152.

[3]Moore, Letters, I, 175. Letter dated January 1913.

[4]Letters, I, 161.

because he was serious about making money and London audiences consistently appreciated comedy. Plays like Henry A. Jones' comedies of manners Dolly Reforming Herself (1908) and Mary Goes First (1913), Shaw's witty brand of Ibsenism in such a play as Pygmalion (1913), and Barrie's drawing-room comedy, What Every Woman Knows (1908) drew the London crowds. But, even though Lawrence knew what kind of drama would be popular he was not successful at writing it.

In The Merry-Go-Round, Lawrence's attempt at a comedy like The Rivals, there is too much contrived action, too many conflicts, and too many characters. Taking place outside the midland mining village of Grunston, the five-act drama[5] presents approximately six conflicts among eight characters: there is a conflict between Mrs. Hemstock, a dying old woman and her thirty-year-old son Harry because he has not married; between Harry and Rachel Wilcox because he ignores her despite her pursuit of him; between the Baron Von Ruge and the Hemstocks because they will not permit him to attend their dying mother; between the baker Job Arthur Bowers and Susy Smalley, the Hemstock's widowed daughter, because Susy will not marry him; between Harry and Susy because of her avaricious interest in her dying mother's money and because of her unruly children who bother Harry's pet fowls; and last there is a conflict between Dr.

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[5]D. H. Lawrence, The Complete Plays (New York: Viking Press, 1966), pp. 391-467. Future references will be documented in the text.

Foules and Nurse Broadbanks because his mother broke up their love affair eight years before.

In addition to its discursiveness as a result of its many conflicts, the play is confusing because action is disconnected and some of its many scenes are rather short. There are eleven scene changes in the play, and only once does the set remain the same between them. This occurs between the last scene of the first act and the first of the second, where both take place in the Hemstocks' kitchen.

Besides too many scenes the drama requires too many sets, seven in all: the front room of the Hemstock cottage, the kitchen of the cottage, the road outside the cottage, the dining room of the vicarage, the nurse's room in a miner's cottage, the porch of the Grunston church, and the garden walk beside the vicarage. Only three of these sets could use similar backdrops or props--the parlor of the Hemstock's cottage, the dining room of the vicarage, and the nurse's room. Quite obviously, production would be costly and awkward.

Although disconnected action resulting from too many characters and conflicts is a problem in The Merry-Go-Round, one other flaw is that Harry Hemstock does not belong in a comedy; as Gerald Coniff has noted, Harry is in no way a "comic" figure.[6] Still tied to his mother at thirty, Harry's

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[6]Gerald Coniff, "The Plays of D. H. Lawrence," (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Penn. State Univ., 1973), p. 135.

favorite companion is his pet goose Patty. In the third scene of the second act Harry, wounded while trying to aid the Baron, is tended by the nurse to whom Harry hints marriage because she is even better at "mothering" than his mother: "Tha'rt good as a mother to me, Nurse. . . .An' if I could get some work--dost think I ought to get married, Nurse?. . .I want motherin', Nurse. I feel as if I could scraight" [cry] (II. iii. 462). The same age as the nurse, Harry asks her if she thinks him a "kid," and indeed, Harry is more a child than a man. Also, his hostility toward Rachel Wilcox, the girl who loves him, is clearly indicative of a serious neurosis. When Harry first appears, he is described as having "dangerous-looking brown eyes" (I. i. 397), and when he gets a little tipsy and ties Rachel to a chair, he acts "dangerous." Before Harry ties her up Rachel says to him, "I feel frightened, for you seem so funny nowadays," and Harry replies, " 'As ter on'y just foun' it out?" (II. ii. 417). Harry admits he is strange; "funny" as Rachel puts it, a mild word for Harry's neurotic behavior which expresses itself in his misogyny in this scene with Rachel. Shortly after Rachel expresses her fear of him, Harry "springs up," seizes her by the shoulders and "binds her in her large shawl" (II. ii. 417). Then, "he seats her in the big armchair, strapping her with a leather belt he takes from his waist" (II. ii. 417). The inquisition that follows is terminated by Harry's command that Rachel leave him absolutely alone: ". . .dunna touch me till

tha'rt axed. Not as much as wi' thy frock. Dost hear?. . . I hate thee now enough to strangle thee" (II. ii. 418-19). Harry, sufficiently sick and "dangerous" enough to have strangled Rachel, again repeats in the fourth act his aversion to being "touched." There Rachel, after comforting Harry in his grief over his mother, begins kissing him after she has vowed her love for him, but Harry commands her, "Dunna kiss me yet" (IV. 452).

Besides being a serious, not a comic character, Harry's actions in the last act are inconsistent with his personality. Suddenly, in the second scene of the act after the memorial service for his mother, Harry is beneath the vicarage garden wall, pleading with Rachel not to leave him. He discloses that he goes down to his mother's grave groveling in the dirt to look at the coffin: "It seems that quiet-like -- dunna go an' leave me. I go rummagin' down i' the loose ground, to look at th' coffin" (V. ii. 462). Harry may not be exactly a necrophiliac, but he has problems, and his proposal to Rachel, "I canna be by myself. . . .Let us be married afore the week's out. . . .Dunna leave me by mysen" (V. ii. 462-63) is perhaps not so unbelievable after all, because Harry needs another mother. Yet, it is evident that Rachel is <u>not</u> the "mother" type, and that Harry for that reason is afraid of her. His reactions to her when he tied her up were psychologically consistent with his oedipal complex--with his love/hatred of his mother and with his fear

of women, especially the siren type like Rachel. His proposal of marriage to Rachel is definitely inconsistent with Harry's psychology. It is contrived merely for the sake of the ending in which Dr. Foules proposes to Nurse Broadbanks, the baker to Susy Smalley, and Harry to Rachel.

Although Harry, a pathetic figure, does not belong in The Merry-Go-Round, the play could also do without Mr. Hemstock who adds nothing to the drama. In addition, there is one other flaw in characterization apparent in the play. Dr. Foules is not developed adequately, remaining a shawdowy stick figure. Suffering like Harry from domination by his mother, the one side of his character shown is that he likes to use Latin aphorisms. In his first conversation with Nurse Broadbanks, she asks if his mother is still alive and he replies, "Rem acu tetigisti. 'You have pricked the point with your needle.' " (I. ii. 407). He is on stage only one more time in the third act before asking the nurse to marry him in the last scene of the play. In their second conversation the nurse makes several caustic remarks. Evidently bitter over the past, she tells him, "Look here Arthur, you have lived like a smug little candle in a corner, with your mother to shelter you from every draught. Now you can get blown a bit. I do not feel inclined to shelter you for the rest of your life" (III. ii. 442). Foules leaves shortly after this so that with only two brief appearances on stage his character remains unsubstantial. His proposal to the nurse, however,

is believable since it is evident the nurse loves him and he admits his love for her during the above conversation in the third act (p. 442).

If discursiveness, the inclusion of the serious Harry and the unnecessary Mr. Hemstock, together with the inadequate characterization of Dr. Foules, comprise the major faults of The Merry-Go-Round—characterization of the remaining characters and the dialogue comprise the play's major strengths. Particularly vivid are the characters of Mrs. Hemstock and the Vicar, Baron von Ruge. Clearly a model for Mrs. Gascoigne's language in The Daughter-In-Law, Mrs. Hemstock's speech is sprinkled with spicy metaphors. She tells the nurse in the first scene that something has given Harry the "mulligurles" and that he'll not live long, because he has a "leech" inside. After the nurse asks if Harry swallowed it, Mrs. Hemstock replies, " 'E didna. 'E bred it like a mackerel's head breeds maggots" (I. i, 393). Later Mrs. Hemstock complains of Rachel Wilcox, even though she has encouraged Harry's courtship of her because she wants him to marry. Mrs. Hemstock complains that Rachel "rubs herself up against a man like a cat" and that "she makes a man feel like a pearl button swimmin' away in hot vinegar" (I. i, 398). On the subject of men, Mrs. Hemstock cautions the nurse that "a man's knee's a chair as is soon worn out" (I. i. 399). Quite strong-willed, sharp-tongued, and witty, Mrs. Hemstock is a memorable character despite her one-time appearance.

So, too, is the Baron Rudolf von Ruge, Vicar of Grunston.[7] A marvelous satiric character, the vicar, proud of his "military" bearing and of his duty as one of God's soldiers beats the bushes of Grunston every Monday night for "sinning lovers." Full of evident self-importance when he attempts to see Mrs. Hemstock he declares to Harry: "I am the vicar of this parish. I am the Baron von Ruge. I will do my duty" (I. ii. 401). In an hilarious scene in the second act on their regular Monday night excursion, the near-sighted vicar and his wife mistake Susy Smalley and Rachel for lovers. As the vicar and his wife approach the two who are talking behind some bushes, the Baroness remarks that they have broken up seven sinning couples in only an hour, and the Baron replies, "Defiant in sin they are! But I will overthrow them. I will drive them before me into the pit" (II. ii. 421). Then the baroness spies Rachel's white apron. In the melee that follows, the Baron, convinced that he has been attacked by a band of "ruffians," loses his lantern, his glasses, and his galoshes. The next day in a very humorous scene beginning the third act, the vicar vows to his wife: "I have heard

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[7] According to Harry Moore, the baron's portrait is based on a Polish clergyman Lawrence knew, Rudolph Von Hube, the vicar of Greasley. Lawrence did not like him nor believe him when he said "I was a baron in my country!" An imbiber, he became drunk one night at Lamb Close and walked into Moorgreen Reservoir up to his knees. According to the story, two passing miners heard him shouting "Lost! Lost!" but turned away saying that the vicar was not needed until Sunday [The Intelligent Heart (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Young, 1954), pp. 59-69].

the clash of battle. . . .I shall receive the thrust when I am in the pulpit. I shall hear the cry, 'Rudolf von Ruge'! I fling up my hand, and my spirit stands at attention before the Commander. . . .Ah, when it comes, what glory!. . . .I have fought the small, inconspicuous fight wounded with many little wounds of ignominy. But then--what glory!" (III. i. 428). Here the Baron reveals his vain-gloriousness and his hypocrisy as "a soldier of the Lord." The Baron cares more for his "honor" than for anything else. Yet, he is a successfully satiric and comic character, despite V. S. Pritchett's opinion that the "grotesque vicar and his ridiculous wife" ruin the play.[8] Without the Baron and Baroness in the drama, it would lose its funniest scene and one of its best-drawn characters.

Evidently The Merry-Go-Round has its strengths as well as its weaknesses; in fact, if Lawrence had gotten around to revising it, the comedy could have been much better than "middling good."

Unfortunately, it would take more than a little revision to make The Married Man even passable drama. The second of the 1912 comedies, the play lacks concentration, depth of characterization, and realistic dialogue.

At the beginning of the first act the reader of the play is led to believe that the drama's major conflict is between

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[8]V. S. Prtichett, "Lawrence's Laughter," New Statesman, 72 (1 July 1966), 18.

George Grainger, the "married man," and his wife Ethel whom he was forced to marry because of her pregnancy and from whom he has been separated several months. However, soon it becomes apparent that Grainger's friend William Brentnall, a clever young banker, is the true protagonist of the play and that the play's raison d'etre is to reveal Lawrence's ideas about the relationship of men and women in marriage through Brentnall and Elsa, Brentnall's liberal fiancee.

Grainger, a young doctor, rooms with Brentnall who at the beginning of the play questions Grainger about where he intends to go after Saturday when he loses his job. Their exchange here is typical of the insipid dialogue throughout the comedy:

> Brentnall: How much money have you got?
>
> Grainger: Four damn quid.
>
> Brentnall: . . .But what do you think of doing?
>
> Grainger: I don't know.
>
> Brentnall: Where do you think of going Saturday?
>
> Grainger: Hell
>
> Brentnall: Too expensive, my boy--four quid won't carry you there (I. 159).

The ensuing conversation between the two reveals that Grainger has impregnated a young farm girl, Sally Magneer, and courted at the same time a thirty-two-year-old spinster, Annie Calladine, who is also in love with him. The act ends as Grainger,

Brentnall, and Jack Magneer, Sally's brother, leave for the Calladine sisters' home.

From the beginning of the second act, the focus on Grainger shifts to Brentnall who initiates the action and who does most of the "wooing," while Grainger, reputed to be a Don Juan in the first act, displays coldness toward Annie in the second act and indifference toward Sally in the third. Grainger kisses Annie "hastily, as if unwillingly" (II. 163) when he arrives at the Calladines'. An inane scene follows shortly during which Jack kisses Emily Calladine and Brentnall kisses Ada Calladine behind newspapers while Grainger sits "coldly" beside Annie, finally breaking up the kissing session by throwing a pillow at Brentnall. Ada, Grainger, Jack, and Emily leave to go downstairs while Annie and Brentnall remain on stage. After the others leave, Brentnall tells Annie that Grainger is married. While sympathizing with her distress and desperate love for Grainger, Brentnall "puts his arms around her and kisses her" (II. 171). Then, he begins philosophizing over her situation, giving her some Lawrentian advice. Brentnall tells Annie that like him she must have love:

> Brentnall: If you want love from men like Grainger, take it for what it's worth--because we're made so that either we must have love, or go slightly mad.
>
> Annie: But I don't want that kind of love.
>
> Brentnall: But do be honest with yourself. Don't cause a split between your conscious and unconscious--that is insanity. You <u>do</u> want love, almost any sort. Make up your mind what you'll accept, or what you won't, but keep your ideal intact; let your soul wait whether your body does or not. But don't drag the first down to the second (II. 171).

Lawrence abhorred that men and women should have "ideas" of each other. That, according to Lawrence was the problem between men and women in the modern age. They loved with their consciousnesses and wills, not with their feelings. Also, Lawrence was puritanical, even metaphysical about sex. This is especially clear in Lady Chatterley's Lover when Mellors and Connie, Lawrence's Adam and Eve before the fall, have intercourse and "as Mellor's seed sprang in her, his soul sprang towards her too, in the creative act that is far more than procreative."[9] It is clear from this passage that Lawrence would not advocate sex for sex's sake as Brentnall does in The Married Man. Sex, according to Lawrence mythology, is the way of unifying body and soul, and the way also, of unifying the single being with the mystic and creative force of the universe. Yet, Brentnall contradicts not only Lawrence ideology, but himself. Nothing is more purely Lawrentian than Brentnall's admonition to Annie that she not cause a split between her conscious and unconscious. This axiom of Lawrence's is indeed precisely what Connie Chatterley and Mellors exemplify. It is also, unfortunately, quite clearly contradicted by Brentnall's subsequent advice that Annie maintain her "ideal of man" and that she withhold her soul even though she not withhold her body.

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[9]D. H. Lawrence, Lady Chatterley's Lover (New York: Bantam Books, 1968), p. 261.

Brentnall's contradiction of himself[10] in his advice to Annie is a disturbing flaw in a play full of flaws. However, his advice and warmth win Annie completely as she says "I could love you" (II. 171), and when he leaves at the end of the act she asks if she will see him again. He replies that he will try to come again and "kisses her rather sorrowfully" (II. 174).

In the next act taking place at the Magneer farm, Brentnall continues to be the Don Juan. At a party there while dancing with Sally, Brentnall tells her the truth about Grainger and offers her the consolation he did to Annie. Sally registers disbelief at the news about Grainger "and when they come together for the waltz, /Brentnall/ kisses her." Kissing her again, he says, "Poor Sally" (III. 183).

Although Brentnall has had charge of the drama up to this point, he relinquishes the reins to his fiancée Elsa who suddenly appears at the party while Brentnall is consoling Sally. When Brentnall asks Elsa if she is cross, she replies "Not in the least. Go and kiss Sally if you will" (II. 184). Elsa then asks Jack Magneer to dance as the act ends.

In the last act of the drama Elsa is in the spotlight after Ethel Grainger appears on the scene weeping. Having

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[10]Brentnall's contradiction of one of Lawrence's basic tenets is puzzling in view of the fact that Lawrence revised The Married Man in 1926, the year he began Lady Chatterley's Lover. The only explanation for the contradiction is that Lawrence simply overlooked it.

received a letter from Ada Calladine about her husband's activities, she has come to try to win him back. Brentnall, Grainger, Annie, and Sally are all in Brentnall's and Grainger's room when Elsa arrives. Ethel Grainger is on the bed crying. After Brentnall greets Elsa he uses a curse word and apologizes, but Elsa's feminist reponse is, "Promise me you won't have one philosophy when you are with men. . .and another when you are with me. . ." (IV. 198). Then in an attempt to comfort Mrs. Grainger, Elsa says that she understands how men can love other women, especially if their wives are not with them: "Even if he loves me, if I am not there, how can he help loving them? (IV. 198). Before she leaves, Elsa gives one last bit of advice to Mrs. Grainger: "No one should be driven like a horse between the shafts. Each should live his own life; you are there to help your husband, not to drive him"[11] (IV. 199).

After Elsa leaves, Grainger and Ethel are reconciled in a scene in which the dialogue is insipid and in which the characters are unbelievable as flesh and blood:

> Grainger: You please yourself. I'm not coming to Wolverhampton.

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[11]Birkin believed that the ideal union between man and woman was silimar to "two balanced stars" /Women In Love (New York: Random House, 1949), p. 228/. Gilbert Noon says he wants a woman "who could stand on her own two feet" and that if she liked another man, all right, "that they would be good pals" /"Mr. Noon," A Modern Lover (Freeport: Books for Libraries Press, 1972), p. 214/. Lilly, like Birkin, expresses his position more eloquently than either Noon or Elsa: "I do believe that every man must fulfill his soul, every woman must be herself, herself only, not some man's instrument or some embodied theory" /Aaron's Rod (New York: Thomas Seltzer, 1922), p. 347/.

Ethel (trying not to cry): Well, we'll go to London.

Grainger: It's a damned mess.

. . . They all make me look as black as I can--

Ethel: Well, I don't know.

Grainger: Yes they do--and they always have done. I never have had anybody to stick up for me (Weeps a few tears.) I've had a rotten time, a rotten time.

. . .

Ethel: I know what it is to be your wife.

Grainger: Are you going to sling it in my teeth for ever?

Ethel: No. I'm not. But what did you marry me for? (Cries.)

Grainger (embracing her): You're the only girl I could have married, Ethel. I've been a rotter to you, I have (IV. 201).

Besides being inane, this scene is also anti-climactic since very early in the drama the focus shifts from Grainger's conflict with his wife to Brentnall's ideology and then to Elsa's. The true climax is Elsa's final speech.

Evidently The Married Man's major faults--its lack of focus and incredibly poor dialogue--are partly responsible for yet another flaw--its pasteboard characters. Also responsible for the poor characterization is another basic flaw, the sketchiness of the drama. Even though the play is a failure, Lawrence's feminist heroine was a popular choice of many contemporary dramatists, especially Barrie whose What Every Woman Knows has as its heroine a sage and independent woman. Also both Galsworthy in The Elder Son (1912) and Stanley Houghton in Hindle Wakes (1912) present

feminist heroines who refuse marriage to men who offer to make them "honest women." A similar situation is the subject matter of Allan Monkhouse's Mary Broome (1911). If Lawrence wanted to make money he was on the right track as far as the subject matter of The Married Man goes, even though his handling of it went awry. Yet, in the face of its evident problems, Sylvia Sklar gives Lawrence dramaturgical credit for The Married Man. The only critic to do so, she writes that if the play were perfomed, "the philosophical content" of The Married Man placed against its "genuinely farcical background could well reveal a comedy of considerable subtlety."[12] One feels that Miss Sklar has gone far afield and read into the drama what is not there. Also she overlooks the fact that the philosophy in the play is contradictory and apparently she forgives it its unbelievable characters. Despite Miss Sklar's efforts to redeem The Married Man, the play for most readers remains one of Lawrence's dramatic failures.

The Married Man's primary flaws--its thinness of characterization and poor dialogue--and The Merry-Go-Round's primary flaws--too many characters and conflicts--are corrected in the last and the best of Lawrence's comedies--The Fight for Barbara. In this drama Lawrence concentrates on the conflict between Jimmy Wesson and Barbara Tressider, thin

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[12]Sylvia Sklar, The Plays of D. H. Lawrence (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1975), p. 155.

disguises of himself and Frieda Weekley. The play is an artistic transcript of Lawrence's and Frieda's elopement to Italy and the trials they underwent because of it. Writing the play may have allowed Lawrence to get rid of some of the frustrations caused by the Richthofens' intervention in his and Frieda's decision to live together and by Ernest Weekley's persistent attempts to get Frieda back. Lawrence wrote Edward Garnett that he did The Fight in three days as an "interlude" to his revision of Paul Morel and that much of the play was "word for word" true:

> This comedy will amuse you fearfully--much of it is word for word true--it will interest you. I think it's good. Frieda makes me send it you straight away. She says I have gilded myself beyond recognition, and put her in rags. I leave it to the world and to you to judge.[13]

That Frieda accused Lawrence of "gilding himself" is quite ironic, for it is the sort of accusation that Barbara makes in the play against Wesson. There Barbara accuses Wesson of wanting to be worshipped like a god.[14] Frieda continued her objections to the play in a letter to David Garnett, Edward's son and a friend of the Lawrences. Written approximately a month after Lawrence's letter, Frieda's letter complained that Lawrence had written the play when he was angry

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[13]Moore, Letters, I, 152. Letter dated October 30, 1912.

[14]Lawrence, The Complete Plays, pp. 272-319. Barbara's accusation appears in the second act, p. 295. Future references will be documented in the text.

with her and that because of his anger he had completely distorted the "truth," especially the truth about her: "I was cross with Lawrence about the play; he makes himself the strong, silent man, the wretch: he did hang on to me, but not quite so unflinchingly, and I did not wobble so: he wrote the play when he was in a rage with me."[15] If the drama is a true reflection of Frieda and Lawrence, one wonders after reading it when either of them was not in a "rage" with the other. Unwittingly, perhaps, both these "quarrelsome" letters indicate that the "quarrelsome" Fight for Barbara is the truth, as Lawrence said.[16]

The continual squabbling in The Fight for Barbara results in its being rather tedious. Barbara's frequent question "Do you love me?" reverberates throughout the drama, while Wesson's repeated accusation "you love only yourself" provides a petulant chorus.

Taking place in an Italian villa, the four-act comedy begins with Wesson's attempt to converse with their pretty Italian maid, Francesca. When he begins whistling "Put me

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[15]Frieda Lawrence, The Memoirs and Correspondence, ed. E. W. Tedlock, Jr. (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1964), p. 173. Letter written in November 1912.

[16]One change Lawrence made between life and art in the drama is that Barbara is English, not German, so that instead of being a German Baron and Baroness as Frieda's parents were Barbara's are English--Sir William and Lady Charlcote. Another minor change is that Barbara's husband is a medical doctor, whereas Ernest Weekley was a professor, head of the department of Modern Languages at Nottingham University where Lawrence matriculated.

among the girls," Barbara overhears him and expresses her jealousy:

> Barbara: Yes, you may well whistle that! I heard you, Giacometti. . . .I heard your dulcet tones.
>
> Wesson: They were no dulcetter than usual.
>
> Barbara: And, pray, what right had they to be as dulcet!--(draws herself up)--to a little servant-maid, indeed! (I. 274).

It is evident that both Barbara and Wesson flirt deliberately as a means of "testing" the other's love. Soon after, when Frieda flirts with the butcher-boy, "a handsome young fellow about twenty" (I. 281), Wesson expresses his jealousy: ". . . You flirt with him. . . .I know it's a great insult to say so. But he is good-looking--and see the way you stretch out your arm, and show your throat" (I. 281). This petty game in which each tries to make the other jealous is apparently based squarely on fact, at least in Frieda's case. In a letter of December 1912 she wrote David Garnett: "It's jolly to know the sailor who brings the parcels (Lawrence is jealous of him, I do love him the sailor)."[17]

If Wesson's and Barbara's insecurity is reflected in their need to make the other jealous, it is likewise reflected in the major cause of the conflict between them. Barbara's unwillingness to commit herself wholly leaves Wesson insecure, and she is afraid if she does, he will "swallow" her, that he

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[17]Frieda Lawrence, Memoirs, p. 175.

will control her completely. The fight is actually over power--who is to control whom.. Each denies wanting that power, while at the same time accusing the other of desiring it. Wesson is the first to demand that Barbara "belong" to him, and she replies that she cannot be bound entirely:

> Wesson: You only don't want to belong to me.
>
> Barbara: But I do belong to you.
>
> Wesson: You don't--you tamper with the idea of Frederick.
>
> Barbara: He'd never do to me what you do.
>
> Wesson: What?
>
> Barbara: Humble me and make me nothing--and then swallow me. And it's wrong. It's wrong for you to want to swallow me. I am myself--and you ought to leave me free (I. 280).

If Barbara accuses Wesson of wanting to absorb her, he accuses her, too, of wanting to control him, of wanting the "upper hand":

> Wesson:. . .it makes me sick, the way you're always bleeding my self-respect.
>
> Barbara: I! I! Why it's I who've given you your self-respect.
>
> Wesson: But you won't love me--you want to keep upper hand (I. 280-81).

Later after Barbara has left to be with her mother, Wesson in soliloquy reveals that it is not only Barbara's failure to commit herself to him, but her insistence on independence that rankles him: "She doesn't want to stick to me--she

doesn't want to love me--she won't let herself love me. She wants to save some rotten rag of independence--she's afraid to let herself go and to belong to me" (III. i. 298). If Barbara is justifiably afraid she will be swallowed, it is equally true that her insatiable need for love will completely absorb Wesson. Both her question "Do you love me?" and her demand "kiss me" echo throughout the drama. In the third act Barbara asks, "Oh, do you love me enough, Giacomo?" (III. 302). Her need for love seems exorbitant, and her "enough" may be impossible to fulfill. Indeed, she needs to be loved "a fearful lot," a demand that she makes ending the play:

> Barbara: Kiss me--kiss me--and love me--love me a fearful lot--love me a fearful lot.
>
> Wesson: I do.
>
> . . .
>
> Barbara: . . .But you'll love me--love me a lot. (She clings to him wildly.)
>
> Wesson: I do--and I will.
>
> Barbara: Love me a fearful lot! (IV. 319).

This, the basic conflict between Barbara and Wesson--her desire and his to completely possess the other, while at the same time resisting that submersion by the other--is more successfully worked out by Lawrence in fiction, particularly in the short story "New Eve and Old Adam," written also sometime during 1912-13, the first year Lawrence and Frieda lived together. The couple in the story, Paula and

Peter Moest, have been married a year when their marriage "based on love" falls apart. As Emile Delavenay has written, "'New Eve and Old Adam' was almost certainly written during the first year of the Lawrence's alliance. The plot is of no importance; it merely serves to disguise thinly Lawrence and Frieda."[18] The conflict in "New Eve and Old Adam" is the same as that in the drama. Like Barbara who feels that Wesson wants to "swallow" her, Paula Moest feels as if Peter is "sucking her blood":

> It was as if she were sucked out of herself by some non-human force. Sometimes she thought he was a big fountain-pen which was always sucking at her blood for ink /The Complete Short Stories (New York: Viking, 1961), I, 80/

And, like Barbara, who demands a "fearful" amount of love and absolute devotion from Wesson, Paula demands Peter's entire self: "Why don't you let yourself love me?. . . . /You have/ carefully saved yourself from giving all to me, for fear you might lose something" (p. 76). Similarly, like Wesson's complaint of Barbara, Peter's complaint of Paula is ironically that she will not submit herself solely to him:

> She did not want to have the deeper part of herself in direct contact with or under the influence of any other intrinsic being. She wanted, in the deepest sense, to be free of him. She could not bear the close, basic intimacy into which she had been drawn. She wanted her life for herself (p. 82).

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[18]Emile Delavenay, D. H. Lawrence: The Man and His Work (Carbondale: Univ. of Southern Ill. Press, 1972), p. 151.

This conflict between man and woman for dominance became one of Lawrence's primary concerns and the resolution of it led to one of the basic tenets of his "religion" of love between men and women. Lydia and Tom Brangwen of The Rainbow (1915) were one of the first of Lawrence's couples to resolve the conflict. After having had an unhappy marriage because each desired to absorb every fiber of the other's being, they managed to love, yet remain separate beings. This resolution was later expressed by Rupert Birkin in Women In Love (1920). In the novel, Birkin envisions the ideal union as one in which the man and woman are like two "balanced stars." Both novels began as The Sisters, a novel Lawrence began writing early in 1913, when this conflict was the very one he was living through with Frieda. Barbara's remonstrance to Wesson in The Fight adumbrates Birkin's and the Brangwens' acceptance of the loved one as a separate being. Barbara tells Wesson: "I want there to be no upper hand. I only want both of us to be free to be ourselves--and you seem as if you can't have it--you want to bully me, you want to bully me inside" (I. 280).

Certainly The Fight for Barbara dramatizes the conflict between Lawrence and Frieda and apparently it does so honestly as the dialogue between Barbara and Wesson does not "gild" either party, despite Frieda's opinion to the contrary. Both Barbara and Wesson reveal themselves as willful, rather selfish and insecure people. Though the dialogue does delineate character, the play's major fault is that it depends too much

on dialogue and not enough on action. The first and fourth acts consist entirely of dialogue between Barbara and Wesson; the only action in the drama is provided by the appearances of Sir William, Lady Charlcote, and Frederick Tressider in the second and third acts. In the very brief second act Lady Charlcote, Barbara's mother, arrives and in the first scene of the third, Sir William arrives to talk to Wesson. In the next scene of the act Dr. Tressider, Barbara's husband, arrives to see Barbara.

Both Sir William and Lady Charlcote ring true; Sir William, a nobleman interested in protecting his name and yet one who has had a mistress most of his married life, hypocritically denounces Wesson for "tearing the fabric of society" by running off with a married woman (III. i. 299). Lady Charlcote on the other hand, is a mother first, despite her upperclass position, and like a mother, she sticks by her daughter, even though she does not approve of Barbara's actions. Her last advice to Barbara reveals that she cares more for Barbara's happiness than for appearances. Before leaving with Frederick Tressider she says, "You'll have to stick to one or the other now, so you'd better stick to the one you can live with, and not to the one you can do without--for if you get the wrong one, you might as well drown two people then instead of one" (III. ii. 313).

Even though the Charlcotes are fairly believable characters, Dr. Tressider is not, although the scene in which he appears is the funniest in the play. He seems almost mad

and quite melodramatic as he spouts the familiar cliches of the "wronged lover": "I understood you wanted a decent life, and I worked hard for you. . . .You had everything I had--and had your own way. I was faithful to you from the day I saw you. . . .I have done everything. . . .Why have you deceived me all this while, letting me think you loved me?" (III. ii. 307-9). Like the injured husband of a melodrama or like any melodramatic hero whose anguish is insufferable, Dr. Tressider threatens suicide, and in a most fitting, "melodramatic" way:

> I am done for--as a man you see me in ruin. Some nights I sleep, some nights I never close my eyes. I force myself to keep sane. But in the end my brain will go--and then I shall make an end--. . . Then I shall go to Wood Norton--do you remember, where I saw you first--a girl of eighteen with a sash? I shall go to that pine wood where the little grove of larches is, and I shall make an end (III. ii. 309).

After this speech the doctor tells Barbara that he has "spilt" his "blood on every paving stone in Bromley" for her (III. ii. 310). When Barbara says she had not wanted him to do that, he "clenches his fist, shudders" and shouts, "I could strangle you!" (III. ii. 310). The scene between them ends shortly after when Tressider "flings his arms on the table and sobs, 'Oh, God--I can't bear it'" (III. ii. 312). One reviewer of the publication of The Complete Plays wrote that in the play it seemed that Lawrence was "sticking pins into those who [stood] in his way by reducing them fictionally to goblins

or moral pygimies."[19] No doubt Lawrence's exaggeration of Tressider's suffering is intentional although "goblin" does not quite fit the melodramatic doctor.

Even though the doctor's and Sir William's appearances add humor and action to The Fight for Barbara, the drama is not entirely successful because the extensive petulant and repetitious dialogue between Barbara and Wesson would make the comedy wearisome to sit through.[20]

Unfortunately Lawrence's theory of drama did not work for him in The Fight for Barbara, The Married Man, or The Merry-Go-Round. In The Married Man and The Fight for Barbara he really did not follow his idea that action should be the primary means of revealing character, while in The Merry-Go-Round much of the action exists for the sake of the plot and not for the sake of revealing character. Also, an obvious reason for the failure of these plays is that Lawrence's genius did not lend itself to comedy. Still, for the student of Lawrence, these comedies are worth reading. As Richard Clarke notes in his dissertation, The Merry-Go-Round's "zaniness" reveals a side of Lawrence hidden in his other

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[19]"Writing the Play," London Times Literary Supplement, 17 Nov. 1966, p. 1041.

[20]Neither of the two reviewers of the production in 1967 mentioned the tediousness of the play's dialogue, although Helen Dawson mentioned the petulance of Barbara's. See Irving Wardle, "Forgotten Play Shows Power of Genius," London Times, 10 August 1967, p. 5 and Helen Dawson, "Running Off With Lawrence," The Observer, 13 Aug. 1967, p. 18.

works[21] and both The Married Man and The Fight, in addition to the latter's autobiographical revelations, provide an opportunity for the student of Lawrence to study the working out of his theories and ideas concerning the relationship of men and women in love and in marriage. Even if these three comedies never made Lawrence the money he had hoped they would, they are nevertheless "notable" failures.

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[21]Richard Clarke, "Autobiography, Doctrine, and Genre Comparison in D. H. Lawrence's Plays," (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Florida State University, 1974), p. 138.

CHAPTER VI

TOUCH AND GO AND DAVID: DRAMAS OF LAWRENCE'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND RELIGIOUS DOCTRINES

If Lawrence's three comedies are disappointing theatre, so too are his dramas of "ideas" Touch and Go (1918) and David (1925). Although there is a lapse of five years between The Daughter-In-Law and Touch and Go, there is no doubt of Lawrence's seriousness in experimenting with playwriting at the beginning of his career, since he wrote six plays in approximately four years (1909-1913). There is also no doubt that Lawrence was right when he pronounced The Daughter-In-Law a "good" drama.

If Lawrence thought the play good, why did he not make an effort to get it produced and why did he quit writing drama after The Daughter-In-Law? There are several plausible explanations for both queries. First of all, Lawrence was not encouraged by Garnett in his playwriting, and in fact, Garnett called Lawrence's plays a "waste of time." Also, in the same letter in which Lawrence sent The Daughter-In-Law to Garnett, he mentioned having started another novel, The Sisters, which he was very interested in and which he later wrote about in terms indicating that his writing of it was

almost a consuming passion.[1] So in addition to being discouraged in his playwriting by Garnett, Lawrence was captivated by a work of fiction that took much of his time and energy for almost five years. The Sisters became The Rainbow published in 1915 and Women In Love published in 1920. Although Lawrence's revised draft of Women In Love was finished in 1916,[2] the novel was not printed until four years later because Lawrence had a difficult time finding a publisher. No one in England wanted to touch it because of The Rainbow's "licentiousness." Nevertheless, it was finally printed privately in New York for subscribers only in November 1920 and in May 1921 by Martin Secker, a London publisher. Besides Lawrence's interest in the work that eventually became two of his most important novels, in the years between 1913 and 1918 he wrote and published four volumes of poetry, one volume of travel essays, one volume of short stories;[3] and in addition to

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[1]Harry T. Moore, ed. The Collected Letters (New York: Viking Press, 1962), I, 176 and 178. In the letter of January 12, 1913 in which Lawrence enclosed The Daughter-In-Law, he wrote: "I'm simmering a new work that I shall not tell you about, because it may not come off. But the thought of it fills me with a curious pleasure--venomous, almost" (p. 176). Later, to A. W. McLeod he wrote: "I have written 80 pages of a new novel: a most curious work, which gives me great joy to write" (p. 178).

[2]Moore, The Intelligent Heart (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Young, 1954), p. 227.

[3]The poetry volumes were Love Poems and Others (1913), Amores (1916), Look We Have Come Through (1917), and New Poems (1918). The volume of travel essays was Twilight in Italy (1916) and the short stories, The Prussian Officer and Other Stories (1914).

The Rainbow and Women In Love, he had begun another novel in 1918, The Lost Girl and his historical treatise Movements in European History.[4]

It is evident that Lawrence was busy with fiction, poetry, and essays; and in addition to Garnett's lack of enthusiasm, no doubt the coming of the First World War also had something to do with Lawrence's loss of interest in producing The Daughter-In-Law. During the years of the war, between June 1914 and November 1919 Frieda and Lawrence lived in England. Near the end of the war Lawrence, apparently having given up his dramatic art, was approached by Douglas Goldring who asked him to write a play for The People's Theatre Society, a group Goldring had founded largely for the purpose of popularizing socialistic doctrine. Lawrence agreed to write for Goldring, and the result was Touch and Go, written in 1918 with a preface added in 1919.[5] Though written expressly for production, the play was never produced. Goldring, somewhat embarrassed by his committee's rejection of Touch and Go, wrote:

The committee, although agreed upon the policy of

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[4]The Lost Girl was published in 1920 and Movements in 1921.

[5]Emile Delavenay, D. H. Lawrence: The Man and His Work (Carbondale: Southern Ill. Univ. Press, 1972), p. 443.

> producing a play by Lawrence, a policy which had been publicly announced, raised objections. The theatrical experts. . .pronounced it impossible of production.[6]

Even though the drama suffers from several flaws one wonders if rejection of the play was based entirely on its "theatrical" deficiencies; for instead of practical socialistic ideas, Touch and Go reveals Lawrence's own idealistic doctrine, more akin to Utopian socialism than to the socialism Goldring promoted. After reading the play and after meeting Lawrence, Goldring stated: "Lawrence detested propaganda and . . .was completely out of sympathy with my earnest and rather naive political preoccupations."[7] Lawrence's aversion to politics (except his own) is also reported by William Hopkin, the model for the socialist-leader Lewis Goddard of the novelette Mr. Noon and for Willie Houghton of Touch and Go whom Lawrence makes a representative of his own apolitical position at the end of the play. Hopkin, a socialist leader in Eastwood, wrote that in his teens Lawrence had "toyed" with the idea of joining them, but that he" had not taken

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[6]Edward Nehls, D. H. Lawrence: A Composite Biography, I (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1957), 495. Although The People's Theatre Society rejected Touch and Go for production, Goldring finally persuaded C. W. Daniel to publish it in May 1920. In February of that year, Goldring saw the amateur production of The Widowing in Altrincham, Cheshire in which ironically his wife Betty played Mrs. Holroyd. He was so impressed by the drama that he tried to get his group to produce it but again his wishes were denied.

[7]Nehls, II, 36-37.

part in politics" and that he had called Hopkin a "damn fool" for doing so.[8] If Lawrence failed to provide in Touch and Go the kind of ideas Goldring expected, he also failed to make his own ideas come alive.

Goldring's committee was no doubt justified in turning down Touch and Go for dramaturgical reasons, but it is hard to agree entirely with one critic's opinion that the characters seem drawn merely to fit ideas,[9] or with the opinion of another that the play is a "monument to Lawrence's intellectual, moral, and political confusion."[10] Although the play contains flaws in characterization and has a serious problem with the handling of a sub-plot, Touch and Go does contain viable characters and to the reader familiar with Lawrence's ideas, the political ideas presented are for the most part clear. Nevertheless they are not entirely without contradiction, for Lawrence was often contradictory. Still, the solution the play presents to the clash between capital and labor is clear, if impractical and idealistic.

Like A Collier's Friday Night, Touch and Go is filled with tension created by contrasts: by characters who are foils for each other personally, by those who represent opposing

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[8]Nehls, I, 542n35 and 73.

[9]T. Moult, "Mr. Lawrence and the People," The Athenaeum, 11 June 1920, p. 777.

[10]Delavenay, p. 446.

ideologies, or by those who are opposed both personally and ideologically. Oliver Turton and Gerald Barlow are examples of this latter category. Both too are Lawrence's major spokesmen in the play. Oliver Turton, Gerald Barlow's friend, is an easy-going artist while Gerald, recently made manager of his aging father's mines, is irascible and temperamental like his mother.

In the play Oliver Turton reiterates the basic tenets of Lawrence's philosophy stated in the preface of the drama. There Lawrence compares the struggle between capital and labor to the struggle between two dogs over a bone: "If Plebs and Bully hang on one to each end of the bone, and pull for grim life, they will at last tear the bone to atoms."[11] Lawrence would like the dogs to drop the bone, his symbol of materialism, but if not that, then at least he wants them to "tear the bone to atoms." Lawrence saw the greed for money or "the Bitch-Goddess Success" as the demogorgon of modern civilization, so that he was out of sympathy with the struggle between capital and labor for money. Lawrence would support their struggle only if it were a struggle to get rid of the bone, to bury it forever, so that men might come alive again, so that they might regenerate their souls: "If it were a

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[11]D. H. Lawrence, Touch and Go (London: C. W. Daniel, 1920), "Preface," p. 11. Future references will be documented within the text taken from the version of the play as it appears in The Complete Plays (New York: Viking Press, 1966), pp. 321-86.

profound struggle for something that was coming to life in us, a struggle that we were convinced would bring us to a new freedom, a new life, then it would be a creative activity . . ." (p. 11). Oliver Turton in Touch and Go expresses both these ideas. Man's struggle for money is evil and deadening to his soul and only if he quits struggling for material possessions and struggles instead for "a better system" will he truly live. Oliver first expresses his ideology in the second act when in conversation with Mr. Barlow he uses a metaphor similar to Lawrence's. Instead of dogs quarreling over a bone, however, Oliver compares the struggle for money between capital and labor to donkeys struggling over a carrot. His metaphor like Lawrence's, reduces men to the level of animals, a level Lawrence believed men reduced themselves to when they concerned themselves with "getting and spending," a concern, as Oliver points out, "that spoils life for everybody": "All our lives would be better, if we hadn't to hang on in the perpetual tug-of-war, like two donkeys pulling at one carrot. The ghastly tension of possession, and struggling for possession, spoils life for everybody" (II. 347). Later, in the third act when Oliver is addressing the mob led by Freer, he uses another but similar analogy and here he makes clear that the struggle for material possessions should be replaced by "a new state of things": "As long as each party hangs on to its own end of the stick, the quarrel will continue till you've killed one another. . . .

We're all human beings, after all. And why can't we try really to leave off struggling against one another and set up a new state of things?" (III. ii. 384). Like Lawrence, Oliver advocates a regeneration of man's soul through a renunciation of materialism: "And as for money, it's life, it's living that matters, not simply having money. . . .Why can't we have the decency to agree simply about money--just agree to dispose of it so that all men could live their own lives. . . . What you want is to take it away from one set and give it to another--or keep it yourselves" (III. ii. 384-85).

Although Oliver may lack flesh-and-blood vitality, the dogma he "preaches"[12] is clear and clearly Lawrentian. In Aaron's Rod (1922), written shortly after Touch and Go, Aaron Sisson laments the struggle between capital and labor, using a metaphor similar to Oliver's carrot and stick: "An' it's money as is between the masters and us. There's a few educated ones got hold of one end of the rope, and all the lot of us hanging on to the other end, an' we s'll go on pulling our guts out, time in, time out--."[13] In addition, Mellors of Lady Chatterley's Lover repeats this basic tenet of Lawrence's

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[12]"Writing the Play," rev. The Complete Plays, London Times Literary Supplement, 17 Nov. 1966, p. 1041. The reviewer called Turton a "mere preaching stick of a man."

[13]D. H. Lawrence, Aaron's Rod (New York: Thomas Seltzer, 1922), p. 24. Future references will be documented within the text.

philosophy. In this novel, regeneration of man's soul, as in Women In Love, is possible through love between a man and a woman, but as Mellors points out man must also rid himself of materialism in order to effect regeneration, and like Oliver, Mellors proposes that men simply forget about money and "get out of the whole mess":

> And again, there was the wage-squabble. . . .There was no solution, short of death. The only thing was not to care about the wages. . . .Anyhow, it was becoming the only thing they did care about. The care about money was like a great cancer eating away the individuals of all classes. . . .The least little bit o' money'll do; just make up your mind to it, an' you've got out o' th' mess.[14]

If like Mellors, Oliver Turton states Lawrence's very idealistic solution to the struggle between capital and labor--to get rid of money--Gerald Barlow represents Lawrence's elitist notions which somewhat contradict the egalitarianism implicit in Turton's position. In the second act Gerald Barlow tells Job Arthur Freer, leader of the strikers, that Labor is an "unwieldly monster without a head": "Labour is a thing that can't have a head. It's a sort of unwieldly monster that's bound to run its skull against the wall sooner or later, and knock out what bit of brain it's got. . . .They've no life intelligence. . . .They're just mechanical little things that can make one or two motions, and they're done. They've no more idea of life than a lawnmower has" (II, 361). Gerald's

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[14]D. H. Lawrence, Lady Chatterley's Lover (New York: Bantam Books, 1968), pp. 151, 237.

aristocratic position here adumbrates Lawrence's similar position in Fantasia of the Unconscious. There he advocates aristocratic rule for the same reasons Gerald does, so that the masses, who are incapable of ruling, can get back their life intelligence, their old "insouciance" and joie de vivre:

> I would like /the working man/ to give me back the responsibility for general affairs, a responsibility which he can't acquit and which saps his life. . . .I would like him to give me back books and newspapers and theories. And I would give him back, in return, his old insouciance, and rich, original spontaneity and fullness of life.[15]

Although representing contrasting ideologies, Oliver and Gerald both represent a part of Lawrentian doctrine. The result is not only tension but pessimism since both sides in effect cancel out each other. This pessimism as a result of the conflicting ideologies of Gerald and Turton supports the major theme of the drama: both sides (capital and labor) have their points, but they cancel out each other as long as they struggle for money instead of a "better system" without money.

Even though Oliver's utopian vision is impractical, both it and Gerald's elitist position are reminiscent of two utopian socialists' positions--Saint-Simon and Louis Blanc. Blanc's theory was "from each according to his ability and to each according to his needs"; Turton would give each man

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[15]D. H. Lawrence, Psychoanalysis and The Unconscious and Fantasia of the Unconscious (New York: Viking Press, 1967), p. 149. Future references will be documented within the text.

his "needs" (however they could be determined and agreed upon); and Gerald Barlow would agree that men have varying "abilities" to give, just as Blanc stated: "All men are not equal in physical force, in intelligence; all have not the same. . . aptitudes."[16] Gerald Barlow would also agree with Saint-Simon's belief in a hierarchy because of men's varying "abilities." Saint-Simon likened the rule of a state to a pyramid in which the upper layer was composed of artists, scientists, and industrialists who should be entrusted with administrative power because they "possess the most eminent, varied, and most positively useful ability for the guidance of men's minds."[17] As Gerald tells Freer, the mass of laborers have no "minds," no life intelligence either; hence, "guidance of men's minds" is best left to those who do have intelligence. Even if both Gerald and Oliver represent Lawrence's beliefs, I do not think it fair to call the drama's ideas "confusing" because of apparent contradiction, since it is possible, as Louis Blanc's theories indicate, to put the two together; give to every man what he needs and take from him according to his ability.

Like Oliver and Gerald, Mr. and Mrs. Barlow in their opposition each represent a part of Lawrence's viewpoint.

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[16]Harry W. Laidler, The History of Socialism (New York: Crowell Co., 1968), p. 63. Laidler quotes from Blanc's Organisation du Travail.

[17]Henri De Saint-Simon, Social Organization, The Science of Man, ed. and tr. Felix Markham (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), p. 78.

Gerald's belief in aristocracy is similar to his mother's whose belief is based on her feeling that the masses are like "mongrels"; they have no intelligence and they should be fought to the end: "Between me and the shameful humble there is war to the end, though they are millions and I am one. I hate the people. Between my race and them there is war--. . . .Never lie down before the mob, Gerald. Fight it and stab it, and die fighting" (I. ii. 341-42). In contrast to his wife's militant aristocracy is Mr. Barlow's benevolent aristocracy. Having decided there was nothing he could do alone to alter the "system" Mr. Barlow gave to each of his men what he "needed": "So I decided at last the best way was to give every private help that lay in my power. I would help my men individually and personally where I could. Not one of them came to me and went away unheard, and there was no distress which could be alleviated that I did not try to alleviate" (II. 347). Besides Mr. Barlow's benevolent paternalism, he voices Lawrence's lament over the loss of a joie de vivre in modern laborers, a loss Barlow implies is the result of mechanization and industrialization, both products of money-greed: "I hardly know my own pits, with great electric plants. . . .But I can't bear to see it. The men of this generation are not like my men. They are worn and gloomy; they have a hollow look I can't bear to see" (II. 349). In contrast to the gloomy hollow look of the modern working man, Mr. Barlow remembers that his men were

"a noisy, lively, careless set who kept the place ringing" (II. 349).

The important word here is "careless" as it supports Gerald's contention that the mass of men do not have the intelligence to run things; they ought to leave control to those who do so they can be "careless" and live. The political ideology that emerges from the positions of these two sets of contrasting characters seems clear enough to me. Men should give up caring about money so that they can live, and those having superior intelligence ought to run things and run them so that everyone gets what he needs. In disagreement with Gerald Coniff I would not call Lawrence in this play a "fuzzy-minded theoretician."[18] Essentially like Blanc's, Lawrence's political theory is clear; that it is impractical and idealistic is also true.

One more set of characters acts as foils both personally and ideologically for each other--Willie Houghton, the socialist leader who begins both the first and last scenes of the play by addressing a crowd of men and Job Arthur Freer, the leader of the striking mine workers. Willie is sincere, unselfish in his concern for men's well-being, and intelligent; Freer is insincere, selfish, and stupid. Neither Freer nor Houghton, however, represents ideas so much as that he proves the truth of what the others stand for. Freer proves

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[18]Gerald Coniff, "The Plays of D. H. Lawrence," Diss. Penn. State Univ. 1973, p. 200.

Gerald's and Mrs. Barlow's idea that the laboring class is stupid and chooses equally stupid leaders. Houghton proves Lawrence's position that to take sides with either of the parties struggling for the "bone" is useless--that it will not effect a "better way" for anyone. In addition he is largely responsible for revealing Freer's inadequacies.

In the first scene of the drama, in addressing a crowd of men, Houghton iterates both Mrs. Barlow's and Gerald's contention that the mass of men are animals, and that they have no "life intelligence" as Gerald phrases it:

> You've got no idea of freedom whatsoever. I've lived in this blessed place for fifty years, and I've never seen the spark of an idea, nor a response to an idea come out of a single one of you, all the time. I don't know what it is with colliers. . .but they never seem to be able to get their thoughts above their bellies. . . (I. i. 325-26).

Shortly after this, Freer calls out from the crowd, defending himself and the men he leads by telling Houghton that they "think of others besides themselves." When Houghton responds by asking, "Did you mean your own importance?" Freer repeats only that "they think of others," proving Houghton's accusation that neither the miners nor Freer has any clear ideas. This becomes even more apparent in the last scene of the play in which Freer clearly has no "plan," no idea of what he wants besides "getting rid of the obstacles," his term for the masters. In this scene before Freer has wrested control of the crowd, Houghton asks him what the masters are "obstacles" to and what the strikers mean to do after they get rid of them.

Because Freer does not know, he evades the questions like a challenged child who does not know the answer, repeating instead, emptily, that he does: "We know what we're going to do. Once we can get our hands free, we know what we're going to do" (III. ii. 378). Houghton's response to Freer supports the desirability of rule by aristocracy over that by the masses when they are represented by men like Freer:

> No, what you'll do, Job Arthur, you'll set up another lot of masters, such a jolly sight worse than what we've got now. I'd rather be mastered by Gerald Barlow, if it comes to mastering, than by Job Arthur Freer--Oh, such a lot! You'll be far less free with Job Arthur for your boss than ever you were with Gerald Barlow. . . .In fact. . .if you're going to start killing the masters to set yourselves up for bosses--why kill me along with the masters. For I'd rather die with somebody who has one tiny spark of decency left. . .than live to triumph with those who have none (III. ii. 378).

After he is mauled by Freer's mob, Houghton's final message is the response Lawrence would make and would want the reader or audience to make at this point. Houghton says, "I'm damned if I'll take sides with anybody against anything, after this. If I'm to die, I'll die by myself. As for living, it seems impossible" (III. ii. 383-84). This is the point Oliver makes and that Lawrence makes in the preface: living is impossible when men care only for the "Bitch-Goddess Success."

Besides the skillful use of contrasts to produce tension, Lawrence provides balance and emphasis by repeating the beginning of the drama at the end. Both the first and last scenes are set in the market-place with Willie Houghton

addressing a crowd. In addition, Lawrence emphasizes rule of an intelligent aristocracy over rule by the dull masses through the use of a symbol. Early in the drama in the second scene of the first act, Oliver gives Winifred, Gerald's young sister, a marble sculpture of a wolf attacking a goat. Winifred, a true aristocrat, says: "Oh thank you, Oliver, for the wolf and the goat. . . .The wolf has sprung on the goat. . .and has her by the throat. . . .I love the wolf-- he pounces so beautifully. His backbone is so terribly fierce. I don't feel a bit sorry for the goat somehow" (I, ii, 339). As the play progresses the image of the sculpture remains and becomes stronger. At the end of the drama when Freer has turned the crowd into a violent mob that attacks Oliver and Gerald, forcing them to the ground, Winifred's sentiment is remembered. Certainly the stupidity of Freer is goatish and he and his men act like inferior animals. The wolf, on the other hand, symbolizes Gerald's belief in an aristocracy based on strength of intelligence.

Although Lawrence's use of symbolism, balance, and contrast lend strength to Touch and Go, the play is ruined by its faults. There are two primary flaws. Gerald's character is inconsistent, but more devastating is the inept handling of the sub-plot, a love affair between Gerald and Anabel Wrath, a young sculptress.

In the last scene of the drama when Oliver gets control of the mob he tells them that if they want a "better way" and not merely money, the owners would agree. He then turns to

Gerald who uncharacteristically agrees: "I want a better way myself. . . .I'm quite as tired of my way of life as you are of yours. If you make me believe you want something better, then I assure you I do: I want what you want. . . . About a new way of life, a better way all round--I tell you I want it and need it as much as ever you do" (III. ii. 385). There has been no indication previously that Gerald wanted to "alter the system." It is obvious that Oliver is merely spoon-feeding Gerald the responses he wants him to make, which makes Gerald's statements even more unbelievable than if he had suddenly pronounced them on his own. However, there is one very small hint earlier in the drama that Gerald may want a "better way." Like Gudrun in Women In Love and Connie Chatterley, Gerald and Anabel look around them in the park and note how "ugly" industrialization has made the world:

> Anabel: I'm sure no age was as ugly as this, since the world began.
>
> Gerald: For pure ugliness, certainly not. And I believe none has been so filthy to live in. . . .
>
> Anabel: I wish we could go right away.
>
> Gerald: So do I--if one could get oneself out of this. But one can't. It's the same wherever you have industrialism--and you have industrialism everywhere, whether its Timbuctoo or Paraguay or Antanarivo (III. i. 365; 373).

Gerald's aversion to industrialism is puzzling since it contradicts the analysis of his character Winifred gives in the second scene of the play when she talks to Anabel about him. There, Winifred indicates that instead of finding industriali-

zation "ugly," Gerald is quite enthusiastic about it and about "managing" things: "He's good at the bottom, but he's very over-bearing and definite. . . .Now he's so managing. It's sickening. . . .You know he's revolutionized the colliers and the whole company. He's made a whole new thing too, so modern. . . .Father says it's against nature--all this electricity and so on. Gerald adores electricity" (I. ii. 334). Here Winifred reports her father's objection to "unnatural" mechanization and in the next act Mr. Barlow himself laments Gerald's modernization of his mines, calling it "inhuman" (II. 349). From one point of view this particular contradiction in Gerald might be explained by the complexity of his character. As he himself points out early in the play, both his mother's and his father's points of view war within him like "wild horses" (I. ii. 343). However, like his mother, Gerald consistently displays his belief in aristocracy; he kicks Job Arthur and considers Labor a "mindless monster." For these reasons, his acquiescence to Oliver Turton's utopian socialistic proposals at the end of the play is entirely inexplicable.

Without doubt, this contradiction in Gerald is a definite flaw in the play, but its most serious flaw, a devastating one, is a poorly handled sub-plot. Even though Lawrence skillfully handled a sub-plot in The Daughter-In-Law, he does not handle it skillfully in this drama despite Amy Lowell's opinion to the contrary. In her review of the play's publication in 1920, Miss Lowell wrote that "In Anabel and Gerald

and their dependent attraction and antagonism, Mr. Lawrence symbolizes the larger situation. It is a lighter tragedy playing over and illuminating the greater."[19] I do not see, for one thing, that capital and labor, represented by Gerald and Freer, exhibit a dependent "attraction" in the play. Furthermore, even if Gerald's and Anabel's love affair were symbolic it nevertheless would fail to be effective drama for several reasons: Anabel is not a believable character--she is very strange; the dialogue between the two is inane, and last, when in the final act Anabel declares herself Mrs. Barlow, the reader is truly taken aback; her marriage to Gerald is inexplicable and unprepared for.

The background of Anabel's and Gerald's acquaintance is given through dialogue between Anabel and Oliver in the first act and between her and Gerald in the second. They lived together several years quite passionately but violently until Anabel ran off with a Norwegian two years before. She has returned now that he is dead, because she "had to." Gerald's initial reaction to her is cool. When they meet by accident in the first scene, she tells Gerald and Oliver that she teaches art to Gerald's sister at Lilley Close. Gerald's response is that she is "thrusting" herself on him (I. i. 336). From all indications, when Gerald and Anabel meet again at Lilley Close after their chance encounter in the market-place, nothing

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[19]Amy Lowell, rev. Touch and Go, New York Times Book Review, 22 Aug. 1920, p. 7.

has changed, even though Gerald suggests that Anabel has. Nevertheless, the "change" Gerald notes in Anabel he does not particularly like, and when she suggests he must change, he makes it clear that he will not:

> Gerald: Change of heart?--Well, it won't be to get softer, Anabel.
>
> Anabel: Then I'd better have stayed away.
>
> Gerald: If you want me to virtue-ize and be smug with you, you had (II. 351-52).

Gerald says further that he is more "indifferent" than different, and there is certainly no mention of love in this meeting. Yet, in the first scene of the next act, which begins as Gerald and Anabel enter a park, Gerald very surprisingly mentions marriage, but Anabel accuses him of not loving her and he replies that is not going to "argue it." Gerald's response launches them into possibly the most inane bit of dialogue in the play. Anabel says she is "not happy" and demands that Gerald make her "happy":

> Anabel: . . .I'm not happy. . . .Because you don't love me--and I can't forget.
>
> Gerald: I do love you--and to-night I've forgotten.
>
> Anabel: Then make me forget, too. Make me happy.
>
> Gerald: I can't make you--and you know it (III. i. 366-67).

The quotation above is less than one third of their conversation about Anabel's "happiness." She keeps repeating "make me happy, make me forget." One assumes Anabel wants to

forget their past together, yet from all indications their present is not much better. In any event, her demands are absurd. The entire exchange is absurd, and the approximately one hundred and fifty lines of it would be difficult to sit through.

In the first scene of the last act, Gerald, apparently fallen prey to Anabel's "psychologizing" and analyzing, tells her he knows "she wants him to want her to be married to him" and charges that she wants him to be in "transports of love" for her, but she counters that he is "self-deceiving" and that he hasn't changed a bit (III. i. 368). One is truly astonished when Anabel climbs out of Gerald's car in the next scene, the last of the drama, and announces, "I am Mrs. Barlow" (III. ii. 379). Clearly the entire business of the love affair is faulty: it gets in the way of the main plot, not being tied to it in any discernible and satisfying way; the outcome is puzzling, and the conversations Anabel has with both Oliver and Gerald are, for the most part, nonsensical. However, out of this unconvincing love affair, one of the central tenets of Lawrence's vision of love between men and women emerges. When Mrs. Barlow discovers that Gerald and Anabel are in love, she gives Anabel advice which is meant for Gerald also: "Keep a solitude in your heart even when you love him best" (II. 355). When Gerald remarks that that isn't love, she replies that none of them knows what would make them worth having. Gerald asks what that is, and Mrs. Barlow says, "What you haven't got--the power to be alone"

(II. 355). Mrs. Barlow's belief that in love each person must remain separate, essentially alone, is also voiced by Birkin in Women In Love, but her expression of this belief is more like Lawrence's in Fantasia, which recapitulates several themes of Touch and Go. There Lawrence said:

> But the central fulfillment for a man, is that he possess his own soul in strength within him, deep and alone. The deep, rich aloneness, reached and perfected through love (p. 156).

Regardless of Mrs. Barlow's pronouncement of Lawrence doctrine, the love theme of Touch and Go is neither a valid inclusion nor a satisfying one.

Although Mrs. Barlow's doctrine of essential aloneness connects Touch and Go with Women In Love ideologically, the play is also connected to the novel in another way. The Barlow family is clearly modelled after the Crich family of the novel. In both families the fathers dote on their daughters, the mothers love and hate their sons, and the sons deny their father's benevolent paternalism in favor of their mother's aristocratic notions. But the similarity between the two families ends there, on a merely superficial level, and to say, as V. S. Pritchett does, that Touch and Go could be a chapter from Women In Love[20] is misleading. In Women In Love Lawrence's main concern is to reveal his vision that regeneration of man's soul is possible though love. In Touch

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[20]V. S. Pritchett, "Lawrence's Laughter," New Statesman, 72 (1 July 1966), 18.

and Go, on the other hand, his primary concern is to reveal his socio-economic vision that regeneration of man's soul is possible only if he rids himself of his materialistic cravings. Still, several critics noting the connection between Women In Love and Touch and Go have mentioned that while the novel is pessimistic the play ends optimistically.[21] This seems to me to be a misreading of the play and possibly of the novel, for Women In Love ends with Birkin and Ursula headed South, symbolic of warmth and regeneration. In contrast there seems little hope at the end of Touch and Go that the two sides will drop the "bone." After Gerald Barlow says that change is impossible as long as one "lot wants what the other has got" a voice in the crowd responds "No, because you've got everything" (III. ii. 386). Gerald then asks for his coat and speaks the play's last line, "Now then, step out of the way" (III. ii. 386). Hardly an optimistic ending.

Besides being pessimistic about the outcome of the struggle between capital and labor and about the future quality of life in a mechanical world, Touch and Go is also another of Lawrence's dramatic failures. Again his idea that drama is what happens does not work for him because action is not always consistent with character in the case of the protagonist Gerald Barlow and because of the unsatisfactory handling of the love affair between Gerald and Anabel.

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[21]See Coniff, "The Plays," p. 197 and Arthur E. Waterman, ""The Plays of D. H. Lawrence" in D. H. Lawrence: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Mark Spilka (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1963), pp. 148-49.

After Touch and Go again there was a lapse in Lawrence's playwriting and when he did write another play seven years later, it too was written at someone else's request. After finishing The Plumed Serpent in February 1925 Lawrence became very ill with malaria in Oaxaca, Mexico.[22] When he was well enough, his doctor advised Lawrence to go to New Mexico in order to recuperate fully before going on to London. He and Frieda had planned to arrive in Questa before the end of March, but did not get there until the first of April. Lawrence though improved was weak, and his physical condition no doubt was aggravated by his worry over The Plumed Serpent. He was not pleased with the novel he had exhausted himself writing.

After arriving at the ranch in Questa, Lawrence was asked by Ida Rauh, an actress friend who was there, to write a play with a role for her. Dissatisfied with The Plumed Serpent, Lawrence recast its vision in dramatic form. The cyclical theory of religion in both novel and play promises a return of "feeling" to man, a return of the "God of the faceless flame," and hence, the visions of both promise a return of Lawrence's personal "religious" belief in the supremacy of feeling over intellect.[23]

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[22]The diagnosis at this time also revealed that Lawrence had tuberculosis. Moore, Letters, II, 832.

[23]Although the entire novel illustrates this theory, see especially The Plumed Serpent (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1951), pp. 221-22 and pp. 225-27 for Quetzalcoatl's prophecy of the return of his religion.

When Lawrence finished David, he was adamant about having it produced. In May 1925 he wrote Curtis Brown, his American literary agent, that he would send him the manuscript when it was typed, but that he did not want it published.[24] Lawrence followed this letter with one on June 23rd in which he wrote: "It is a good play, and for the theatre. Someone ought to do it."[25] Then on July 1st, Lawrence wrote Alfred Knopf telling him that he did not want the play published, unless it was produced. Further he said:

> I am a bit tired of plays that are only literature. If a man is writing "literature," why choose the form of a play? And if he's writing a play, he surely intends it for the theatre.[26]

Lawrence's first sentence above implies that he was perhaps miffed about Touch and Go, which had become only "literature" in 1920, after he had written it expressly for the stage. At this point, Lawrence had written eight dramas, none of which had been produced professionally and two of which were "only literature," The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd (1914) and Touch and Go. There is nothing in Lawrence's letters explicitly stating his anger and disappointment over the failure of Touch and Go to make production, but in addition to his implied bitterness above, Douglas Goldring suggests that Lawrence at least

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[24]Moore, Letters, II, 841.

[25]Letters, II, 845.

[26]Letters, II, 845.

questioned his committee's rejection of the play. Goldring wrote afterwards: "It /Touch and Go/ is one of Lawrence's failures, though naturally, he did not think so himself.[27] Lawrence's evident disappointment over Touch and Go is one possible explanation for his insistence that David be produced. Another is perhaps the result of when he wrote it: he was ill and anxious to have his vision taught, a vision he most likely felt would not reach many in The Plumed Serpent. This is at least implied at the end of the letter he wrote to Knopf:

> Playgoing isn't the same as reading. Reading in itself is highbrow. But give the "populace" in the theatre something with a bit of sincere good feeling in it, and they'll respond.[28]

Evidently Lawrence felt he could reach the "masses" with David while he could not with The Plumed Serpent.

In any event, Lawrence's determination to get David produced paid off, but not before it was published in March 1926. Reviewers tended to praise the language particularly[29] so that they anticipated, ironically, that David might be better "literature" than drama, an opinion Lawrence himself finally

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[27]Nehls, I, 495.

[28]Letters, II, 846.

[29]See the following: Edward Sackville-West, "A Modern Isaiah," New Statesman, 27 (10 July 1926), 360-61; John Cournos, "David and Saul in a Play," The Literary Digest International Book Review, 4 (November 1926), 782; Bonamy Dobree, "Mr. Lawrence's David," Nation and Athenaeum, 39 (24 April 1926), 103-04.

came to approximately six months after the drama's catastrophic production when he wrote Max Mohr that David was "too literary, too many words."[30] Nevertheless, Lawrence did not see this when he wrote the play, and his efforts to get David produced, though finally successful were not without their frustrations.

After many delays, David was produced in London by the Stage Society under the direction of Robert Atkins. It had been planned for September 1926 but did not make the boards until May 1927. Lawrence and Frieda were in England during the summer of 1926, and Lawrence wrote Else, Frieda's sister, a number of letters beginning in August expressing his anxiety over the production.[31] In October Lawrence and Frieda returned to Florence and David finally made the stage on May 22nd. Lawrence did not return to England for its production, perhaps fortunately, because it was a disaster. One reviewer said the play "lacked all dramatic movement" and another that it was like a movie using a series of tableaux and that the characters were "like puppets pulled by the hoary hand of a prophet."[32] Irritated because he thought they missed the point of David, Lawrence called his critics "ball-less."[33]

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[30]Moore, Letters, II, 1016.

[31]Frieda Lawrence, Not I, But the Wind. . .(New York: Viking Press, 1934), pp. 213, 214, 216, 222.

[32]"Omicron," rev., Nation and Athenaeum, 41 (28 May 1927), 261; Richard Jennings, rev., The Spectator, 138 (28 May 1927), 939-40.

[33]Letters, II, 980.

Nevertheless, both reviewers were correct. David has too much disconnected action so that the drama reminds one of a kaleidoscope, or as one critic said, it is no more than a "series of chromolithgraphic views of scriptual scenes and persons."[34] Written in scenes like Greek drama, David numbers sixteen in all requiring thirteen sets and fifteen scene changes. The brevity of many of the scenes results in choppiness and confusion. Also the drama is too long, consuming eighty-seven pages of text, and as one reviewer of the production remarked, the play was "wearisome to the flesh.[35] Although length and discursiveness are problems in David, its most serious flaw is the ambivalent attitude toward Saul. For most of the drama David is clearly the hero, but near the end it becomes evident that Saul, not David, embodies Lawrence's vision of the return of a religion based on feeling. Thus, the play, already a confusing "pastiche on pastiche," becomes even more confusing. Furthermore, Jonathan and Samuel, the

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[34]Jennings, The Spectator, p. 939.

[35]"Omicron," Nation and Athenaeum, p. 261. An interesting comparison can be made between Lawrence's David and O'Neill's Marco Millions, produced in 1928 and written by O'Neill in 1927. The anti-materialistic message of O'Neill's satire is part of the message of David. Also like David, Marco Millions contains numerous sets and scenes. The play follows Marco Polo's gradual disintegration as he moves from place to place. Unlike David, however, the production of the picaresque Marco was much more successful for two reasons: the movement from scene to scene parallels Marco Polo's gradual movement from sanity to insanity and Mr. Simonson, the producer of the Theatre Guild production, used several permanent set pieces which prevented the kaleidoscopic effect that mars David. See O'Neill and His Plays, ed. Oscar Cargill, N.B. Fagin, and W. J. Fisher (New York: New York University Press, 1961), pp. 181-83.

prophet, also switch allegiances and points of view near the end of David so that they too become contradictory and inconsistent characters. Reflecting the problem Lawrence had deciding who his hero was is the problem he had with the play's title. He first titled it David but crossed that out writing in Saul. Then later Lawrence crossed out Saul and reverted to the original title.[36]

When the play begins Saul brings home spoils from his defeat of the Amalekites. Because he disobeys God's command to destroy all Amalekite possessions, Saul exhibits his materialism, a quality that makes him an anti-hero from a Lawrentian point of view. Greedily he gloats to his daughters Merab and Michal: "See the gifts of Agag, King of Amalek, to the daughters of Saul! Tissue from Egypt: headveils from Pharoah's house! And see, red robes from Tyre, and yellow from Sidon. . . .Goldsmith's work for arms and ankles, gold and dropping silver, for the ears."[37] Further indication of Saul's avarice is that when he is told the prophet Samuel is coming, he commands his daughters: "Go to the house and hide your spoil, for if this prophet of prophets finds the treasure of the Amalekite upon you, he will

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[36]Waterman, "The Plays," p. 149; Coniff, "The Plays," p. 245.

[37]D. H. Lawrence, The Complete Plays (New York: Viking Press, 1966), pp. 65-154. Saul's Speech (i, 68-69). Future references will be documented within the text.

tear it away" (i. 69). A witness to his father's actions, Jonathan anticipates that because of his greed, Saul will lose the "flame within"; he will lose life, "the blitheness" that is God within him. Later, having lost life because of his greed and disobedience, Saul confesses to David: ". . . the blitheness of thy body, that is thy Lord in thee. I envy it thee with a sore envy" (vii. 102). After this, Saul becomes more and more insane, attempting several times to kill David or to have him killed. He not only becomes an unsympathetic character, but he clearly represents Lawrence's dogma that modern man has lost his ability to live (feel) because of his greed.

On the other hand David exhibits several characteristics consistent with Lawrentian dogma. When he slays the giant Goliath he goes armored only in his "faith," not in his intellect. When Saul commands, "Uncovered thou canst not go," David replies, "As the Lord liveth, I will go with naught but God upon me" (vii. 99). Five scenes later when David announces his love to Michal, his insistence that the Lord is a "flame" remains consistent with Lawrence's anti-intellectualism. In other words, David knows God through "feeling," not through his intellect: "Oh, the Lord my God is a glowing flame, and He loveth all things that do glow. . . And flame calleth to flame, for flame is the body of God, like flowers of flame. Oh, and God is. . .a pure flame for ever" (xii. 127).

Even though it is clear that David is the hero of the play, suddenly in the next to last scene, it is Saul's God who is the "faceless flame" and both Samuel and Jonathan who have been sympathetic towards David previously, curiously switch their allegiance.

Samuel is the first to turn against Saul in favor of David. Immediately after the prophet discovers Saul's disobedience, he denounces him: ". . .thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee from being King over Israel" (i. 72). Searching for a sign from God concerning the identity of the new king, Samuel visits Jesse's house and recognizes David as God's chosen one: "I shall rise and anoint him. For this is he. . . .The Lord hath chosen this one" (iv. 80). Yet, in the fifteenth scene of the play Samuel renounces his belief in David because he says David knows God through his intellect while Saul knows his "faceless" God through feeling:

> And Saul hath seen a tall and rushing flame. . . .Thou seest thy God in thine own likeness. . . .Saul yearneth for the flame: thou for tomorrow's glory. The God of Saul hath no face" (xv. 145).

Then voicing Lawrence's cyclic theory of religion, Samuel prophesies the return of Saul's God of the faceless flame: "But after many days men shall come again to the faceless flame of my Strength, and of Saul's. . . .Thou art brave, and alone, and by cunning must thou live" (xv. 145).

If Samuel's contradiction is puzzling, so too is Jonathan's. In a familiar Lawrentian Blut-brudderschaft scene

early in the drama Jonathan and David exchange clothes and Jonathan vows his love for David: "My life belongs to my father, but my soul is David's" (viii. 108). Throughout the drama Jonathan remains loyal to David, helping him to escape his father's attempts on David's life. In fact the last scene of the play is set in the desert where Jonathan is to meet David to help him escape from Saul. His speech ending the drama is a complete reversal of his earlier belief in David. Also he, like Samuel, voices Lawrence's belief in a return of a religion of feeling and in addition Jonathan reiterates Samuel's charge that David's is a religion based on the intellect, on "cunning":

> I would not see thy new day, David. For thy wisdom is the widsom of the subtle, and behind thy passion lies prudence. And naked thou wilt not go into the fire. . . .For thy virtue is in thy wit, and thy shrewdness. But in Saul have I known the magnanimity of a man. Yea, thou art a smiter down of giants, with a smart stone! Great men and magnanimous, men of the faceless flame, shall fall from Strength, fall before thee, thou David, shrewd whelp of the lion of Judah! . . . .But thou goest forth, and knowest no depth of yearning. . . .I will wait and watch till the day of David at last shall be finished, and wisdom no more be fox-faced, and the blood gets back its flame (xvi, 153-54).

David is suddenly the intellectual man--shrewd and cunning, like modern man who, according to Lawrence, has lost his ability to <u>feel</u> as David has lost his ability to "yearn" and who furthermore has lost the "flame" in his blood. Yet, for the entire drama David is made a sympathetic character when very abruptly he is indisputably all that Lawrence abhors in modern man. Saul, on the other hand, for whom there has been

little sympathy, suddenly represents the man of feeling and a belief in God based on intuition, a belief that the coming of David kills. This sudden shift in attitude toward the protagonist and antagonist of the drama is both disconcerting and baffling.

Reflecting the confusion it causes are critics' disagreement over who Lawrence's hero is. George Panichas, Gerald Coniff, Murray Roston, and Sylvia Sklar, four recent critics, believe the hero is David, while Edward Sackville-West, John Cournos, and Bonamy Debree, reviewers of the 1926 publication, along with Gerald Weales, a modern critic, believe Lawrence's hero is Saul.[38] To anyone familiar with Lawrence's belief that intuition and feeling are superior to intellect, the "cunning and fox-faced" David at the end of the drama would have to be taken as Lawrence's anti-hero.[39] Yet Murray Roston supports

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[38]George A. Panichas, "David," Modern Drama 6 (September 1963), 165, 170.; Coniff, "The Plays, p. 208; Murray Roston, Biblical Drama in England (Evanston: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1968), pp. 277-78; Sylvia Sklar, The Plays of D. H. Lawrence (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1975), p. 274. Miss Sklar through an intricate, vague, and confusing process equates David with "the artist" and thus sees Lawrence as "pro-David," although she never clearly says that either Saul or David is the hero but instead seems to conclude that both men were wrong and that both were losers (p. 247); Edward Sackville-West, "Modern Isaiah," pp. 360-61; John Cournos, "David and Saul In a Play" p. 782; Bonamy Dobree, "Lawrence's David," pp. 303-04; Gerald Weales, Religion in Modern English Drama (Philiadephia: Univ. of Penn. Press, 1961), p. 34

[39]David's replacement of Saul parallels the coming of Jesus who replaced Quetzalcoatl in The Plumed Serpent, a replacement that "put God in a house," taking him away from his infusion in nature and that also made belief in Him an intellectual, not emotional, response. Also, Jesus is symbolic of God in man, so that David is also analogous to Jesus in this way, since David sees God "in his own image as a brother."

his view that David is the hero by pointing out that Saul cut himself off from the life-giving force through his selfishness in refusing to kill the Amalekite livestock. David, he says, in contrast represents "a passionate reabsorption into the divine forces of nature" (pp. 277-78). Mr. Roston is correct about Saul at the beginning of the play, but of course, he ignores what happens at the end of the drama. Mr. Panichas believes that David is the hero because Lawrence identified himself with David, who stands, he says, for greatness through endurance, and who further represents both pride in life and the fulfilled self. This opinion is hard to understand and in addition it is hard to support. Especially does this seem true of the statements that David stands for "the fulfilled self" and that Lawrence identified himself with David. Certainly David is not the "fulfilled self" at the end of the drama--just the opposite, in fact. The business of Lawrence's identification with David is also difficult to accept, yet Gerald Coniff makes a statement similar to Panichas' in his dissertation. Coniff quotes a passage from Lawrence's essay "David" in which Lawrence wrote that David was the "perfect embodiment of the soul in the trembling union of southern flame and northern waters" ("The Plays," p. 218). But Lawrence wrote another essay in which he talks about that same Michelangelo sculpture from a critical point of view. In "Fireworks in Florence" Lawrence wrote: "Michelangelo's David, in the dry dimness, continued to smirk and trail

his foot self-consciously, the incarnation of the modern self-conscious young man and very objectionable."[40] Here Lawrence is very explicit. His description of David is a description of the response to life Lawrence hated and villified most--self-consciousness. That Lawrence is pro-David, however, Coniff further attempts to support by a quotation from "The Crown." In this essay Lawrence wrote that David (the biblical character, not the sculpture) was the one infinity, himself, the egoistic God, I Am, and that David though cunning was triumphant" ("The Plays," p. 243). Mr. Coniff does not however, quote the paragraph following this one in which it is evident that Lawrence was not sympathetic towards David at all. In fact, in this paragraph Lawrence clearly associates David with what he detested in modern man--his loss of life ("barrenness") and his "feeble-spirited egoism," which of course is "self-consciousness":

> But it was David who really was barren. Michal, when she mocked, mocked the sterility of David. For the spirit in him was blasted with unfertility. . . .David's seed was impure, too feeble in sheer spirit, too egoistic, it bred and begot preponderant egoists.[41]

Besides overlooking this, Mr. Coniff perhaps misinterpreted important words in the paragraph he did quote. There Lawrence said: "Power is sheer flame, and spirit is sheer flame, and

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[40]D. H. Lawrence, Phoenix, ed. Edward McDonald (London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1961), p. 124.

[41]D. H. Lawrence, Phoenix II, ed. Warren Roberts and Harry Moore (New York: Viking Press, 1968), p. 380.

between them is the clue to the Holy Ghost. But David put a false clue between them: the clue of his own ego, cunning and triumphant" (p. 380). To put one's "ego" between power and spirit is to let "self-consciousness" intervene and so lose the sheer flame of life.

Because of this evidence, in addition to that at the end of the drama, Saul, not David would seem to be Lawrence's hero, despite his failure to indicate this throughout the play. Saul is meant to stand for modern man who has lost his feeling through greed, a loss that drives him mad, and Samuel's and Jonathan's prophecies at the end of the play optimistically envision a return of feeling to man. The play would not have been so confusing had Lawrence not indicated that David also believed in a God who was "flame" and if he had not shown David to be loyal and humble instead of shrewd.

Besides its flaw in consistency of characters and in its discursiveness, David relies too much on dialogue; it is, as Lawrence wrote Mohr, "too literary, too many words." Ironically the drama Lawrence thought was truly drama, not "literature," was perhaps of all the others mostly "literature" since its strongest point is its language. Based on the language of the Bible it is nevertheless Lawrence's own, often achieving surpassing poetic beauty and power, as it does in Samuel's prayer for Saul: "Lord, Lord, Ocean and Mover of oceans, lick him into the flood of thyself. Wilt Thou not reach for

him with the arm of a long wave, and catch him back into the deeps of living God?" (ii. 74).

Nevertheless the occasional beauty of the language in David is not enough to save the play from being the failure that it is as a drama. In both David and Touch and Go Lawrence fails to reveal character primarily through what happens. In both plays Lawrence is more interested in revealing doctrine than in revealing character. Ironically Touch and Go and David are the kind of drama Lawrence criticized Shaw, Galsworthy, and Barker for writing in 1913. Perhaps if Lawrence had stuck to writing naturalistic plays, Sean O' Casey would have been correct when he said that England might have had a great dramatist if it had encouraged Lawrence.[42]

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[42]Sean O'Casey, rev. A Collier's Friday Night, New Statesman, 8 (28 July 1934), 124.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Even though one might be surprised at Sean O'Casey's enthusiasm over Lawrence's playwriting, the most surprising aspect of Lawrence's drama is that he wrote it at all. The reaction of most to Lawrence's career as a playwright is "Drama? I didn't know Lawrence wrote drama too." Not only does this response testify to the neglect of Lawrence as a playwright but the emphasis on "too" indicates amazement over his tremendous versatility as a writer. In the short span of approximately twenty-six years as a writer Lawrence wrote many volumes of poetry, short stories, novels, critical and theoretical essays, several volumes of travelogues, eight complete dramas and one historical treatise; these in addition to two volumes of letters which place Lawrence among the world's most prolific letterwriters.

Lawrence's enormous output as a writer is even more amazing in view of the frailty of his health. His mother told William Hopkin that she never expected Lawrence to live past three months of age.[1] Having met Mrs. Lawrence wheeling the one-month old Lawrence shortly after he had nearly died of bronchitis, Hopkin noted that Lawrence looked

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[1]Harry T. Moore, The Life of D. H. Lawrence, rev. ed. of The Intelligent Heart (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1962), p. 33.

like a "skinned rabbit" and others who knew Lawrence in his youth said he was the thinnest little boy they had ever seen.[2] From such a beginning it is perhaps not surprising that Lawrence's health was precarious throughout his short life. At the age of forty-four he died of tuberculosis on March 4, 1930, despite his frailty one of the most prolific and versatile writers in English literary history.

But even more amazing than Lawrence's versatility as a writer is his versatility in other arts. Early in his life Lawrence learned to play the piano and his knowledge of music was such that he himself wrote the score for David.[3] In addition to music, Lawrence took painting lessons in his youth and his interest in painting remained serious throughout his life. The last of June 1929, the year before his death, Lawrence's canvases were exhibited in London at Dorothy Warren's gallery where unfortunately thirteen of the paintings were seized by police on the 5th of July on the grounds of their "obscenity."[4]

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[2]Ibid.

[3]Edward Nehls, D. H. Lawrence: A Composite Biography, II (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1958), 401-02.

[4]Moore, The Life, p. 497. Although the police threatened to burn them, the paintings were returned when Lawrence promised that they would not be shown again (see pp. 498 and 503).

Besides being a musician, painter, and writer, Lawrence showed an early interest in drama. He often attended performances of various theatrical troupes visiting Eastwood[5], and in her biography of Lawrence, Jessie Chambers recalls that many Sunday afternoons she and her family joined Lawrence in reading plays, an activity that excited Lawrence greatly, causing him to become "domineering" in his direction of the reading.[6] In addition, Frieda Lawrence writes in her memoir of her husband that Lawrence was a superb mimic, often entertaining friends and visitors with his talent.[7] Occasionally Lawrence performed for Frieda alone:

> On some evenings he would be so gay and act a whole revival meeting for me, as in the chapel of his home town. There was a revivalist parson. . . a collier's wife in a little straw hat, in a frenzy of repentance. . . .First as the parson, then as the collier's wife Lawrence made me shake with laughter.[8]

Evidently Lawrence was interested in drama as drama since both Miss Chambers and Frieda testify to the "actor" in Lawrence.

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[5]Moore, The Life, p. 37.

[6]Jessie Chambers, D. H. Lawrence: A Personal Record, 2nd ed. (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1965), p. 108. See also pp. 42, 61-62, 109.

[7]Frieda Lawrence, Not I, But the Wind. . .(New York: Viking Press, 1934), pp. 43-44; 90-91.

[8]Frieda Lawrence, Not I, pp. 43-44.

After reading of Lawrence's avid enthusiasm for drama one is no longer surprised that Lawrence "wrote plays too" and that he began writing them when he began his career as a writer. Yet, despite Sean O'Casey's lament over the neglect of Lawrence as a playwright, it is doubtful that Lawrence would have been a great dramatist even if he had been encouraged in his efforts. There is no doubt, however, that Lawrence's three naturalistic dramas show promise. In the chapters devoted to The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd, A Collier's Friday Night, and The Daughter-In-Law, it is evident that Lawrence was more or less successful at revealing character primarily through what happens. Also, it is evident in those chapters that the distinction Lawrence drew between the emphasis of drama and that of fiction is largely responsible for the significant differences between The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd and "Odour of Chrysanthemums," A Collier's Friday Night and Sons and Lovers, and The Daughter-In-Law and "Fanny and Annie." In all these plays too there is evidence of Lawrence's awareness of dramatic technique: The Widowing makes use of ritual and an impressionistic set; A Collier's Friday Night makes use of contrast and three unifying motifs, while The Daughter-In-Law makes skillful use of a sub-plot.

Unfortunately, Lawrence's other drama is not nearly so successful. He admitted he wrote his comedies for the purpose of making money, and even though The Merry-Go-Round shows a surprising light-heartedness, comedy was truly not Lawrence's

forte. Nor was Lawrence successful in his idea dramas Touch and Go and David where he really did not concentrate on revealing character but where instead his aim was principally didactic.

Still, as I tried to show in the chapter devoted to the comedies, Lawrence's drama, successful or not, is worth noting to the student of Lawrence. The Widowing and A Collier's handle material he later put into his first artistic triumph Sons and Lovers. The Daughter-In-Law reveals skillful use of humorous dialect and it also resolves happily the serious Lawrentian conflict between mother, son, and son's beloved. The comedies reveal a side of Lawrence not found elsewhere, and in addition both The Married Man and The Fight For Barbara reveal embryonic statements of Lawrentian doctrine concerning the relationship between men and women in love and marriage. An interesting play though a failure, Touch and Go likewise presents Lawrence dogma expressed later in his fiction and prose; its ideas promoting aristocracy and the desirability of "essential aloneness" in marriage are found later in Fantasia of the Unconscious while its central idea that men should rid themselves of materialistic cravings is found in Lady Chatterley's Lover. David is important because of its optimism. Without doubt Touch and Go is pessimistic about the future of man. On the other hand, both Samuel's and Jonathan's prophecies at the conclusion of David assert that man's "feeling" will return again; once again he will be truly alive.

Evidently there are two generalizations one can make about Lawrence's drama: in its type (except for the comedies) it parallels what Lawrence was doing in his fiction, and the dogma Lawrence came to embrace and express in his fiction and prose was first expressed in his playwriting. After 1913 with The Daughter-In-Law, Lawrence's last naturalistic play, he temporarily gave up writing drama, but he also gave up writing naturalistic fiction about the same time with The Rainbow (1915). It is only in Lawrence's three naturalistic plays that his "theory" of drama works for him, because in his other plays he is not interested in revealing character as much as he is interested in writing what the people want to see (the comedies) or in revealing ideology (Touch and Go and David). Because Lawrence's drama parallels in type what he was doing in his fiction, even if he had been encouraged in those years between 1908 and 1913 when he wrote his naturalistic dramas, he most likely would have given up writing naturalism to preach dogma since that is what he began doing soon after in his fiction.

Although one cannot be certain what Lawrence would have done had he been encouraged in those early years, it is nevertheless a shame that his three fine dramas were neglected when he wrote them. Even so, the belated attention and acclaim given The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd, A Collier's Friday Night and The Daughter-In-Law in 1968 and The Widowing in 1973 are vindications of a kind. Also, the enthusiastic response

to them proves that O'Casey was right in recognizing in A Collier's Friday Night Lawrence's strength as a playwright. Even if Lawrence never became a great dramatist, he left eight plays, all of which are important to an understanding and appreciation of Lawrence the artist.

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