

‘An Ambivalent Beast’
The Literary Relationship Between A.S. Byatt and D.H.
Lawrence

Renata Janktova

Thesis submitted for the qualification of Doctor of Philosophy
University of East Anglia
School of Literature, Drama and Creative Writing
August 2020

This copy of the thesis has been supplied on condition that anyone who consults it is understood to recognise that its copyright rests with the author and that use of any information derived therefrom must be in accordance with current UK Copyright Law. In addition, any quotation or extract must include full attribution.

Abstract

This thesis provides a critical reevaluation of the work of A.S. Byatt by exposing the nature and complexity of her long-term negotiation of the legacy of D.H. Lawrence in her fiction. It endorses ambivalence as the principal driving force of the relationship and traces its roots back to Byatt's encounter with Leavisite criticism in the 1950s. Focusing on her novels as the main stages for her dialogue with Lawrence, the thesis identifies two key areas of interchange. The first one is Byatt's intertextual engagement with Lawrence's writing, motivated by her admiration for Lawrence's novelistic bravura, most particularly his visual writing and striving for immediacy and intensity in the verbal rendering of a lived experience. The thesis analyses multiple ways in which Byatt transcribes Lawrence's texts, such as mimicking his style and parodying his texts. The second area is her negotiation of the changes in Lawrence's literary status, partly attributed by Byatt to critical and ideological misrepresentations of his work, and of the popular obfuscation of his literary achievements following the *Lady Chatterley's Lover* trial in 1960. The analysis of Byatt's representations of Lawrence in her fiction reveals that her portrayal of Lawrence has a specific shape and dynamic, aimed at disentangling Lawrence from political and ideological debates and rehabilitating him as a significant writer of European modernism.

Access Condition and Agreement

Each deposit in UEA Digital Repository is protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights, and duplication or sale of all or part of any of the Data Collections is not permitted, except that material may be duplicated by you for your research use or for educational purposes in electronic or print form. You must obtain permission from the copyright holder, usually the author, for any other use. Exceptions only apply where a deposit may be explicitly provided under a stated licence, such as a Creative Commons licence or Open Government licence.

Electronic or print copies may not be offered, whether for sale or otherwise to anyone, unless explicitly stated under a Creative Commons or Open Government license. Unauthorised reproduction, editing or reformatting for resale purposes is explicitly prohibited (except where approved by the copyright holder themselves) and UEA reserves the right to take immediate 'take down' action on behalf of the copyright and/or rights holder if this Access condition of the UEA Digital Repository is breached. Any material in this database has been supplied on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the material may be published without proper acknowledgement.

List of Contents

Abstract	2
List of Contents	3
List of Illustrations	4
Acknowledgements	5
Abbreviations	6
Introduction	7
Chapter 1: A Moving Target	38
Chapter 2: Byatt and Leavis	94
Chapter 3: Byatt and Literary Theory	134
Chapter 4: Language and Vision	168
Chapter 5: Rewriting Lawrence	211
Chapter 6: <i>Women in Love</i> in <i>Babel Tower</i>	250
Conclusion	286
Reference List	304

List of Illustrations

Figure

1. Vincent Van Gogh, *The Starry Night* (1889)
2. Edvard Munch, *White Night* (1901)
3. Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, *Winter Landscape in Moonlight* (1919)
4. Paul Cézanne, *The Bay of Marseilles, Seen from L'Estaque* (c. 1885)
5. Samuel Palmer, *Cornfield by Moonlight, with the Evening Star* (c.1830)

Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisors Prof Rachel Potter and Dr Bharat Tandon for their invaluable guidance and support.

I would have never travelled this far without the friendship and support of Barbara Peacock, who has been a dear friend and fantastic colleague. Many thanks to Barbara and Francis Terry for reading the draft and providing useful advice.

Finally, I would like to thank my family: my parents, my husband Daniel, Klara and Matyas for their love, support and patience.

Abbreviations

References to the following texts by A.S. Byatt and D.H. Lawrence appear in parentheses with the following abbreviations:

Works by A.S. Byatt:

- BT 1997. *Babel Tower*. London: Vintage.
- ChB 2010. *The Children's Book*. London: Vintage.
- G 1992. *The Game*. London: Vintage.
- OHAS 2001. *On Histories and Stories: Selected Essays*. London: Vintage.
- P 1991. *Possession: A Romance*. London: Vintage.
- PM 1993. *Passions of the Mind: Selected Writings*. London: Vintage.
- SL 1995. *Still Life*. London: Vintage.
- SOS 1995. *Sugar and Other Stories*. London: Vintage.
- SS 1991. *The Shadow of the Sun*. London: Vintage.
- TBT 2001. *The Biographer's Tale*. London: Chatto & Windus.
- VG 1994. *The Virgin in the Garden*. London: Vintage.
- WW 2002. *The Whistling Woman*. London: QPD

Works by D.H. Lawrence:

- LChL 1993. *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- LG 1981. *The Lost Girl*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- R 1989. *The Rainbow*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- SM 1983. *St Mawr and Other Stories*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- WL 1989. *Women in Love*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Introduction

Lady Chatterley's Lover is '– like the rest of Lawrence's novels – an ambivalent beast', Byatt once told her students (Byatt, 2002b, p.110). With no less aptitude, the phrase applies to Byatt's very relationship to D.H. Lawrence. Her feelings about him are strong, personal and deeply ambivalent. Foregrounding ambivalence as the defining dimension of the relationship, Byatt acknowledges Lawrence's crucial influence on her writing:

There is also Lawrence, whom I cannot escape and cannot love. His background is something I know, better than Leavis did, having been brought up in the north midlands as he was, of mixed working-class and intellectual lower middle-class stock, with low church Christianity for myth and morality, with a terrible desire for something more. [...] altogether Proust has more to teach on every page, but is not so close to my blood, as Lawrence is. (Byatt, SS, p.xii)

The aim of this thesis is to capture and expose the 'beast' that Byatt felt she could not escape but could not love. It suggests that Byatt's relationship to Lawrence has not been given enough critical attention, and thereby introduces a new perspective on Byatt's work.

Antonia Susan Byatt was born into a middle-class Quaker family in Sheffield in 1936. She grew up in a book-loving household: her mother had read English at Cambridge; her sister is the novelist Margaret Drabble. As a child bedridden due to asthma, young Byatt discovered the world of myths, stories and legends and the pleasure of reading (Byatt, 1992b, p.131). In the 1950s, she studied English at Newnham College, Cambridge, where she was taught by the literary critic F.R. Leavis. Marrying in 1959, she had to abandon her subsequent PhD studies in English literature due to discriminatory funding conditions for married female students. Instead, she revived her early literary ambitions by publishing a novel written during her Cambridge

years called *The Shadow of the Sun* (1964). Since then she has published nine novels and six collections of short stories. Her latest work of fiction is a re-telling of the old Norse myth *Ragnarök* (2011). Her critical work includes, most importantly, a study of Iris Murdoch's novels *Degrees of Freedom* (1965) and two collections of essays: *Passions of the Mind* (1991) and *On Histories and Stories* (2000). The novel *Possession: A Romance* (1990) was awarded the Booker Prize in 1990. Before becoming a full-time writer in 1983, she was a senior lecturer in English literature at University College London. In addition to her fiction and critical writing, her newspaper and journal contributions, involvement in numerous committees and advisory panels, and talks at conferences, symposiums and festivals have made Byatt a distinct presence on the cultural scene for over five decades.

Byatt's fiction is well known for its density of literary themes, allusions and references. Rather than the product of a self-serving recycling of literary material, this self-conscious literariness is the outcome of her constant dialogue with the literary tradition as well as the surrounding world of literary production and literary criticism. Amongst the abundant literary influences that Byatt acknowledges, including George Eliot and Marcel Proust, D.H. Lawrence occupies the most prominent place due to his formative impact on Byatt. By exposing Lawrence's robust presence in Byatt's *oeuvre* in combination with an analysis of the relevant historical and cultural circumstances, this thesis argues that Lawrence has been crucial to Byatt's understanding of literary value and the characteristics of a good novel. Lawrence, and George Eliot showed her how it was possible to ask questions about human existence and experience, and the state of society, which, in her belief, good novels ought to do. In Lawrence's case, this includes the challenge of finding a new language. This understanding began to form for Byatt when she was taught by F.R. Leavis at Cambridge in the 1950s and evolved in

very different directions in the following decades when Byatt used her relationship to Lawrence to negotiate her own understanding of patriarchy, feminism, literary censorship, and countercultural liberalisation.

Byatt Scholarship and Lawrence

Considering the formative impact of Lawrence on Byatt and the consequent prominent presence of his writing in her fiction, it is surprising that until relatively recently Byatt was excluded from the discussions of Lawrence's major literary inheritors. Byatt is, for instance, not mentioned by the contributors to Meyers' *The Legacy of D.H. Lawrence* (1987), Cushman and Jackson's *D.H. Lawrence's Literary Inheritors* (1991), or Carol Siegel's *Lawrence Among the Women* (1991).

Most monographs on Byatt published to date acknowledge yet understate the significance of Lawrence's influence. The first monograph *A.S. Byatt* (1996) by Kathleen Coyne Kelly, which provides a concise critical introduction to the author and her work, explains the 1950s Cambridge background and the role of F.R. Leavis in her education and formation as a critic and artist. Lawrence is mentioned briefly as one of the authors recommended by Leavis as worth reading but he is excluded from her literary influences section. Consequently, whilst reading *The Shadow of the Sun* as an exploration of the Bloomean 'anxiety of influence', Kelly falls short of acknowledging Lawrence's significance as the model for the paternal figure. Neither does Kelly mention Lawrence's presence in her discussion of *The Virgin in the Garden* (1978) and *Still Life* (1985).

Unlike Kelly, Richard Todd in *A.S. Byatt* (1997) does point out the connection between Leavis and Lawrence in his reading of *The Shadow of the Sun*, specifically in relation to the critic Oliver Canning and the writer Henry Severell. He also names

Lawrence among the sources of texts used in the main character's literary pastiche in Byatt's novel *Babel Tower* (1996). Unlike the majority of later studies, Todd chooses to omit discussions of any wider theoretical and biographical background and concentrate on the most characteristic features of Byatt's work. Hence, very little attention is paid, for example, to the element of gender difference, which not only heavily informs Byatt's writing but also plays a significant role in Byatt's attitude to Lawrence. According to Todd, Byatt's most important engagements are those with myth in *Possession*, and narrative and interpretation, art and language and their relation to reality in *Babel Tower*.

In *A.S. Byatt: Critical Storytelling* (2010), Alexa Alfer and Amy J. Edwards de Campos deliver a detailed study of Byatt's fiction to date supported by references to Byatt's criticism and the critical reception of her work, which is viewed as oscillating between realism and postmodernism, tradition and experiment. Following Byatt's own clues in her retrospective introduction to *The Shadow of the Sun* (1991), the authors acknowledge Lawrence's (and Leavis's) presence in the novel, which they read as a gendered negotiation of the Bloomean 'anxiety of influence' trope. Lawrentian imagery is discussed in relation to Henry Severell's visionary states, with an emphasis on their deliberately imitative nature and the implicit degradation of Lawrence's language into 'a dead metaphor, a stale pastiche of a pastiche' (Alfer and Edwards de Campos, p.22). The authors detect 'an uneasy nostalgia for both Lawrence and Leavis, George Eliot and T.S. Eliot that accompanies the portrayal of Henry's failure in the 'quest for authenticity' (Alfer and Edwards de Campos, p.20). They also mention Byatt's employment of Lawrentian connotations in the snake imagery in *The Game* (1967). While the significance of Byatt's preoccupation with Lawrence is acknowledged in her first novel, Lawrence's part in the so-called 'Frederica' novels is not included in their

discussion. These novels, also referred to as the *Quartet*, or ‘Frederica’ quartet, are called after their chief protagonist Frederica Potter and include *The Virgin in the Garden*, *Still Life*, *Babel Tower* and *A Whistling Woman* (2002). Their analysis concentrates on what they regard as their key themes, namely language and its adequacy in the first two novels *The Virgin in the Garden* and *Still Life*, and the role of language in relation to culture and society in *Babel Tower* and *A Whistling Woman*. A major contribution to the debate on Byatt’s fiction is their recognition of the hybrid, critical-creative nature of Byatt’s writing, which they label as ‘critical storytelling’. The category is defined as a method of storytelling aimed at ‘a thoughtful and deliberate commingling’ (Alfer and Edwards de Campos, 2010, p.3) of the literary and critical imaginations, which they see as the principal element of Byatt’s literary endeavour.

Christien Franken (2001) discusses the significance of art, authorship and creativity in Byatt’s fiction and criticism whilst recognizing considerable tension between the three. The source of the tension lies, according to Franken, in the ‘polyvocal nature’ of Byatt’s criticism, which also resonates in her fiction as illustrated in *The Shadow of the Sun*, *The Game*, and *Possession*. Nevertheless, Franken devotes a separate chapter to a comprehensive and well-informed discussion of Byatt’s position within literary criticism. Byatt is basically identified as a Leavisite thinker. Nonetheless, this position is complicated by the prominence of eclecticism and insistent resistance to simplified labelling, which could be described as defining features of both her critical and creative writing. Even more significantly, it is further problematized by the gender factor, which causes, as Franken puts it, ‘a structural ambivalence in her critical work’ (Franken, 2001, p.9). The fact that Byatt is both a critic and a writer is, nevertheless, considered to be a liberating element rather than a disadvantage. Franken (2001, p.16) argues that Byatt ‘constructs a double-speaking position’, and praises her for the

effectiveness of her separation between the philosopher and the writer in herself (p.17). While Franken dedicates considerable space to the discussion of the impact of Leavis's teaching on Byatt's relationship to George Eliot, with gender playing the prime role, Lawrence is mentioned only briefly as a major literary influence based on Byatt's disclosure in the introduction to *The Shadow of the Sun*. Neither Lawrence's presence in Byatt's fiction nor Leavis's influence on the Byatt-Lawrence relationship are examined.

The most extensive monograph on Byatt's fiction so far is Jane Campbell's book *A.S. Byatt and the Heliotropic Imagination* (2004). It is based on detailed and careful readings of Byatt's works supported by extensive quotation, profound knowledge of Byatt's fiction and criticism as well as critical writings on Byatt. Campbell's term 'heliotropic imagination' follows from Byatt's own reference to her work as 'heliotropic' (SS, p.xiv). The implication is the sun sustains creativity as it sustains life. In Byatt's case, as Campbell (2004, p.2) explains, the need of sun light is magnified by the fact that Byatt suffers from SAD (seasonal affective disorder). The influences of F.R. Leavis and D.H. Lawrence are mentioned, additionally, in relation to the formation of what Campbell calls her 'female' imagination (Campbell, 2004, pp.28, 78). Lawrence, the writer, and particularly *Women in Love* (1920) are referred to as important formative elements in Byatt's construction of the character of Frederica.

The most recent book on Byatt, by Marielle Boccardi (2013) offers a compact and mainly descriptive account of Byatt's fiction and criticism whilst trying to re-evaluate her position within British fiction. It is based, first and foremost, on the length of Byatt's career, cast against a timeline of major events, starting with 1960, and the consequent depth and richness of the author's experience, supported by her wide interests and keen engagement with both past and present. The three groups, within which Byatt's novels are discussed, are established on what the author recognizes as

their main characterisations. They correspond to the usual thematic grouping of her *oeuvre*: questions of influence in Byatt's early novels; the portrayal of post-war England in the *Quartet*; and the idea of England, and the Victorian world, in the remaining novels and novellas up to *The Children's Book* (2010), which is given a separate chapter. Boccardi foregrounds the historiographical vein in Byatt's fiction (among other things by including a historical timeline at the beginning of her book), which allows her to read the Frederica novels as 'state of England novels' (Boccardi, 2013, p.41). Unlike Leavis, Lawrence is, nevertheless, left out of the discussion.

Louisa Hadley's reader's guide to A.S. Byatt's fiction (2008) is a useful source of information about the critical responses to Byatt's fiction. It also draws Byatt's lesser known criticism into the discussion, especially that which has been published in non-literary books and periodicals. Byatt's connection with D.H. Lawrence is given a short individual section, which summarises Peter Preston's essay 'I Am in a Novel: D.H. Lawrence in Recent British Fiction' (2003).

The discussion of Byatt's intertextual literary imagination and engagement with literary history changed significantly following the publication of *Possession: A Romance*, which won the Booker Prize in 1990. The book represented a major shift in the way that Byatt wrote about both history and her literary predecessors. The critical debate, accordingly, also shifted ground. Critics focused on the postmodern qualities of the novel and Byatt's departure from her hitherto prevailing mode of what she called 'self-conscious realism' (PM, p.xv). Byatt's use of postmodern techniques in *Possession*, such as linguistic play, narrative multivalence, and amalgamation of multiple discourse types, genres and subgenres, its self-reflexivity and self-conscious reappraisal of the past, also changed the nature of her novelistic engagement with

previous literary texts (Campbell, 1991; Cuder-Domínguez, 1995; Walsh, 2000; Rudaitytė, 2007; Buxton, 2019).

Gillian M.E. Alban (2010), for example, highlights the gendered nature of generic and metaphorical intertextuality in Byatt's novels, most particularly in *Possession*, where she focuses on Byatt's treatment of the story and imagery of Melusina as a personification of female power. According to Regina Rudaitytė (2007), intertextuality in *Possession* is, among other things, a way of paying tribute to the poets and poetry of the past but it also helps resurrect the authority of the writer. Kate Mitchell (2010) acknowledges the function of intertextuality as 'a mnemonic space' where past texts are remembered (Mitchell, 2010, p.104) and where British cultural memory is revived, revised and simultaneously constructed. According to Chris Walsh (2000), *Possession* is not only an 'intertextual' novel, but it is also 'intratextual' due to its preoccupation with the networks of interconnected texts, and 'transtextual' as it addresses general problems of textuality and intertextuality (Walsh, 2000, p.185). Its qualification as a postmodernist novel is, according to Walsh, further sustained by its blending of genres and discourse types, its dialogic nature as well as self-reflexive preoccupation with history.

Numerous critics, such as Hennelly (2003), Mitchell (2009) and Rudaitytė (2007) examine the novel's preoccupation with the nature and ways of reading, including the juxtaposition of poststructuralist scholarly approach to texts and textual criticism based on close reading. According to Mitchell (2009, p.268), the novel satirises poststructuralist reading practices, whose 'categorical and methodological imperatives' create interpretative and epistemological barriers to a proper understanding and interpretation of texts. Consequently, she argues that Byatt endorses curiosity-driven, sensuous reading, propelled by 'a desire for the text' (Mitchell, 2009, p.269).

Similarly, Mark M. Hennelly (2003) reads *Possession* as a site of ‘textual pleasures’ (p.456) sustained by the repetition of simple and complex patterns of motifs. He points out that the novel’s postmodern readers need not only to abandon sterile theory-informed reading but also to step beyond mere cognitive, intelligent reading and open themselves to the visceral pleasures of the text.

In contrast, Celia Wallhead (2018) argues, on the other hand, that Byatt is critical not as much of modern critical theories *per se* as of the impact they have on the critics’ and theorists’ interpretations of writers and their work. Katrina Sanders (2000, p.6) offers a synthesizing vision of *Possession* and sees it as advocating humanist values ‘from within a position of postmodern awareness’. She argues that by acknowledging intertextuality as a platform for a dialogue between the past and present rather than treating it as a symptom of postmodern fragmentation, Byatt restores the possibility of continuity of literary tradition. The same effect is achieved, according to Sanders, by the *mise-en-abîme* technique used in *Possession* through the repetition of patterns and events in the novel’s parallel narratives. Instead of treating liberal humanism and postmodernism as antithetical forces, Sanders (2000, pp.10, 16) argues that *Possession* ‘reconfigures the humanist project of enlightenment within the parameters of postmodernism’ and thus becomes a work of ‘a postmodernist humanism’.

Byatt’s changed, postmodern writing of literary history, inaugurated in *Possession*, provides a framework for understanding her writing strategies in *Babel Tower*, as well as for her writing, or re-writing of Lawrence. Literary history is reimagined as a movable construct where past and present texts mingle and interact as opposed to the more static and linear conception of the traditional literary canon. It is understood as a continuous dialogue, the refracting and rewriting of texts, themes and motifs. Her focus on the cutting up and re-moulding of Lawrence’s sentences in *Babel*

Tower, analysed in this thesis, is an example of such an interchange. It also demonstrates the significance of parody in Byatt's rewriting of Lawrence's texts. According to Catherine Bernard (1999, p.167), parody is the central mode of intertextuality in *Possession* and other contemporary English novels as it brings 'a re-historicized assessment of the dialogue between present and palimpsest past' and a self-reflexive re-appraisal of the issues of authority and originality. In addition to *Possession*, the functions of ventriloquism and intertextuality are addressed particularly in relation to Byatt's other 'Victorian' fiction by Campbell (1991), Bernard (2003), Adams (2003; 2008a), Sturrock (2009) and others.

The Biographer's Tale (2000) is often placed alongside *Possession* as a postmodern, self-reflexive academic novel with a similar strategy of juxtaposing postmodern reading strategies with biographical reading (e.g. O'Connor, 2002; Wallhead, 2003; Campbell, 2004; Rodríguez Gonzáles, 2008). Rodríguez Gonzáles (2008), for example, points out the tension between the main character's criticism of poststructuralist reading and his deliberate departure from theory, on the one hand, and his inability to escape the postmodern awareness of linguistic instability and its epistemological implications, on the other. As in *Possession*, the main epistemological questions raised in the novel concern the accessibility of the past and the constructedness of historical narrative, which is embedded in the mosaic-like shape of the novel. *The Biographer's Tale* also problematizes biography as a genre. Erin O'Connor (2002) argues that poststructuralist critical theories tend to question authorial agency and are thereby antithetical to biographical writing. Celia Wallhead (2003, p.306) also claims that postmodern concepts of the self, presented as fragmented, conflict with the generic constraints of biography: Byatt contemplates 'a new type of

‘imaginative biography’ that organizes fragmented ‘selves’ into ‘a comprehensive pattern’.

The representation and fictionalization of history is a robust topic in Byatt scholarship. *Possession* has been recognized by a number of critics, such as Walsh (2000), Boccardi (2004), and Mitchell (2009), as a work of ‘historiographic metafiction’ for its critical reassessment of the past and is placed alongside the most acclaimed works of the genre, John Fowles’s *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* and Umberto Eco’s *The Name of the Rose*. According to Mitchell, it revives literature as ‘a privileged medium of historical knowledge’ (Mitchell, 2009, p.267).

In ‘History in A.S. Byatt, Novelist and Critic’, Celia Wallhead (2018, p.21) identifies Byatt’s method as one of ‘layered re-writing’, a re-writing which juxtaposes the past and the present – a technique reportedly learned from George Eliot, and exemplified in Byatt’s multi-levelled analogizing between post-war England and the Elizabethan Age. Repetition and parallelism in *Possession* are also addressed by Lynn Wells (2002), who reads the novel as a reworking of Giambattista Vico’s progressively repetitive model of history. Wallhead makes a link between Byatt’s eclecticism and the hermeneutic and creative freedom which she claims for writers of (historical) fiction, including herself. Wallhead also defends Byatt’s deployment of abundant historical detail in *The Children’s Book* as vital for the imagining of the character’s experiences. Historical accuracy is legitimately subordinated to imaginative appeal and power.

A substantial number of articles that address Byatt’s re-imagining of the past focus on her depictions of the Victorian era in the context of Neo-Victorian studies. Patricia Duncker (2014) views *Possession*, and *The French Lieutenant Woman*, as pioneering works of Neo-Victorian writing. In her opinion, where Fowles’ novel focuses on a neo-Victorian political and social sphere, Byatt’s novel attends to the

personal sphere. By so doing, Byatt reportedly outlined the main direction of what became a new, expanding subgenre of Neo-Victorian fiction. In addition to *Possession*, *The Biographer's Tale*, the novellas 'Morpho Eugenia' and 'The Conjugal Angel', published in *Angels and Insects* (1992), and Byatt's most recent novel, *The Children's Book* (2009) are frequently read as Neo-Victorian texts. Joseph Bristow (2012), for example, contemplates the painstaking accuracy of and saturation with historical detail in *The Children's Book* and sees this as the source of the text's dramatic irony, which follows the novel's characters on their life journeys towards the carnage of World War One. According to Bristow, the historical precision is a means of control over the narrative and also a symbol of the inevitability of 'big' history to which individual lives are subordinate. and the subordination of individual lives to it. Diana Maltz (2012) discusses Byatt's depiction of the late nineteenth-century socialist subculture in *The Children's Book* in comparison with that by Edith Nesbit, a loose model for Byatt's writer character Olive Wellwood. Maltz argues that Byatt recaptures the variety of attitudes to and expectations from a new form of society envisioned by the progressively minded Victorians in a more complex way than Nesbit. According to Maltz (2012, p.82), Byatt's use of satire is scarcer than Nesbit's, and the most satirical moment in Byatt's novel is the characterisation of the extravagant writer Herbert Methley, whose imagery is described as 'redolent of D.H. Lawrence'.

The primarily personal themes of sexuality, incest, or adultery, recurrent in Neo-Victorian writing, are discussed especially in the novellas 'Morpho Eugenia' and 'The Conjugal Angel' and in *The Children's Book*. Mark Lewellyn (2010), for example, regards the incest trope as a significant part of Neo-Victorian aesthetics and explores Byatt's treatment of it in *The Children's Book* and 'Morpho Eugenia'. In her reading of 'Morpho Eugenia', Alexandra Cheira (2017), analyses Byatt's enquiry into Victorian

sexual politics and her use of postmodern and Freudian discourse, which enables Byatt to articulate things about the unconscious that would have been inaccessible to her Victorian predecessors. She identifies a number of narrative strategies that sustain Byatt's critique of the double standards in Victorian treatment of sexuality and the polarizing conceptualization of female sexual agency (Cheira, 2017, p.137), most notably the double construction of Eugenia and the inversion of sex roles (Eugenia and William). Other critics who discuss Byatt's rendering of the existential, religious or sexual dilemmas faced by her Victorian characters include Michael Lackey (2008), Katherine Uhsadel (2012) and J.A. Johnson (2012).

Mary Jean Corbett (2014) re-reads Tennyson's 'In Memoriam' in 'The Conjugal Angel' as part of an implicit critique of patriarchal society and explores the link between heterosexual marriage and homosocial bonds between siblings-in-law as naturalized parts of Victorian familial practices and conventions. Corbett quotes abundantly from 'In Memoriam' to show how marital discourse is used to articulate a close male homosocial relationship between men as a deep spiritual rather than sexual bond. She notes, at the same time, the different norms applied to women, which allows her to read 'The Conjugal Angel' as an 'alternative version of history' (Corbett, 2014, p.299) which enables her fictionalized Emily Jesse and the fictional character Liliás Papagay, in particular, to subvert these norms and double standards. LuAnn McCracken Fletcher (2016) examines Byatt's negotiation of Lord Tennyson's legacy on a metafictional level by analysing Byatt's response to the allusive quality of Tennyson's art, exemplified by his poem 'Lady of Shallot'. Using examples from *The Children's Book*, Fletcher argues that Byatt imagines art as a mirror, partly in order to negotiate the artistic problems of subjectivity and authorial presence in art (Fletcher, 2016, p.339).

Her use of the mirror trope is manifested in the creative endeavours of her fictional artists, such as Olive Wellwood, Philip Warren and Benedict Fludd.

More recent criticism has discussed the relationship between Byatt's Neo-Victorian writing and trauma theory. In 'Postmodernism Revisited: The Ethical Drive of Postmodern Trauma in Neo-Victorian Fiction' (2010), Gutleben and Wolfreys consider a range of Neo-Victorian writers and their strategies for representing post-Darwinian nineteenth-century trauma, particularly with reference to the loss of grand religious explanatory narratives. They argue that there are similarities between the late Victorian experience of the trauma of 'loss-of-faith' and postmodern epistemological and ontological crises. The postmodern turn to the early Victorian period is seen as a turn to the last 'imagined model of stability' (Gutleben and Wolfreys, 2010, p.55).

Byatt's position in relation to this critical debate is complex, however. She has been charged with 'historical and generic chauvinism' (Gutleben and Wolfreys, 2010, p.38) for ignoring the hybridity, heterogeneity and self-referentiality of the Victorian novel. Gutleben and Wolfreys (2010, p.41) criticize Byatt for stereotyping postmodernism itself by restricting the postmodern experience of trauma to the loss of the self, exemplified by the characters Roland and Maud. They are also critical of her representations of postmodern, particularly considering deconstructionist critical approaches as futile or destructive in *The Biographer's Tale* and *Possession* (Gutleben and Wolfreys, 2010, p.50). In their opinion, these are due to the misinterpretation of Derrida's theory of deconstruction. Gutleben and Wolfreys also point out a conceptual ambiguity in relation to the Victorian era. On the one hand, it is seen as the last stable period before the advent of modern subjectivity, with its focus on fragmentation and alienation (Gutleben and Wolfreys, 2010, p.55). On the other hand, it is viewed as a period of crises similar to modern and postmodern experiences of trauma. According to

Gutleben and Wolfreys, the former approach tends to ignore the epistemological and ontological crises of the nineteenth century as well as the heterogenous and self-referential nature of the Victorian novel and reveals an element of escapism in the postmodern turn to the Victorian past. The latter approach, on the other hand, foregrounds the parallels between Victorian and postmodern traumatic experiences of loss and anxiety.

Byatt's novels as representations of cultural memory have been importantly discussed by Lena Steveker in *Identity and Cultural Memory in the fiction of A.S. Byatt* (2009). Surveying Byatt's use of other literary texts as 'cultural texts' in relation to her characters' identities, Steveker claims that Byatt's *Quartet* 'conceptualizes the "high" canon of (predominantly) British literature as a canon of cultural texts' (Steveker, 2009, p.48). According to Steveker, Byatt's approach is, therefore, compromised by her privileging of the 'high' canon of Western literature, which can be characterised as predominantly 'white, male and European'. This leads to a paradox in Byatt's fiction. She actually serves to re-invigorate the gender bias whilst pursuing a feminist agenda. According to Steveker, the same applies to Byatt's differentiation between male and female identities in respect to autonomy. Steveker notes that while male identity is established in terms of separation or differentiation, female identity is established through relationships or merging with the other. Steveker argues that the dominant frames of cultural reference in Byatt's fiction are the English Renaissance, represented by Shakespeare and Elizabeth I, and the Victorian age in *Possession* and *The Biographer's Tale*. Theoretical debate prevents Steveker from delving deeper into other texts, and hence Lawrence is listed only as one of the authors of privileged Western cultural memory presented in the novels. Most importantly, Steveker concludes that

Byatt's novels not only mediate British cultural memory but also participate in it by evoking and revising it.

Byatt's work has also been read importantly in relation to gender difference and her engagement with a history of women writers. Mary Eagleton (2014), discusses the shared parameters of gender identity formation in young intellectual female characters in the novels by A.S. Byatt, Margaret Drabble and Hilary Mantel. She argues that these novelists present an anxious conflict between 'feminine' and intellectual identities that traps the novelists' female characters in an undefined space between the past defined by their mothers' experiences and an unknown future. As a consequence, Eagleton claims, 'the narrative perspective, whether retrospective or prospective, is anxious' and the pattern of entrapment is woven into the narratives (Eagleton, 2004, p.108). Mara Cambiaghi (2006) claims that Byatt's criticism of feminist discourse evolves from her satires of 1980s post-structuralism in *Possession* to a revisioning of the past via different types of discourse in *A Whistling Woman*. Cambiaghi also claims that while Byatt seeks to include women in the world of intellect and knowledge, she fails to forsake the phallogocentric discourse that accompanies that world. By tracing intertextual links between *The Children's Book* and Iris Murdoch's *The Good Apprentice*, Jane Sturrock (2010/11) not only presents Byatt as Murdoch's successor but she also argues that *The Children's Book* is a result of Byatt's re-imagining the artist-as-parent predicament in *The Good Apprentice*. This is challenged by Nick Turner (2012/13), who disputes, with a reference to Byatt's personal statement, that any such retelling was a conscious act on Byatt's part. Hadley (2012), on the other hand, praises Sturrock for taking attention away from the World War One aspect of the novel, which had dominated the critical debate. The key focus of her own inquiry is the issue of split identity in female writers caused by their double roles as artists and mothers. Hadley

had addressed the same problem earlier, in her analysis of *Possession* and Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman* in 'Feminine Endings: Neo-Victorian Transformations of the Victorian' (2011), focusing on how the indicated endings represent changing life opportunities for women. The perceived conflict between motherhood and artistic creativity is a major point also in Nancy Chinn's interpretation of the character of Christabel La Motte in *Possession*. Analysing the parallels between La Motte and her literary models, Chinn (2001) identifies motherhood as the key resemblance between Christabel and Melusina and an enabling factor of their creativity. Relations between myth, art and gender are the focus of the feminist reading of Byatt's short stories 'Medusa's Ankles' and 'Art Work' by A.K. Pokhrel (2015). As in the case of Melusina, the rewriting of the myth challenges prevailing gender stereotypes, including idealisation and/or demonization of the female body.

With the rising critical interest in fantasy literature (cf. Allen et al., 2006), Byatt's retelling of myth and fairy tale, which are seen as its precursors, is the subject of numerous essays, for example by Ashworth (1994), Flegel (1998), Tiffin (2006), Harries (2008) and others.

The prominence of visual writing in Byatt's fiction has attracted the attention of numerous scholars. Most attention is paid to Byatt's works where the titles indicate inspiration by visual arts, most particularly *Still Life* (1985) and *The Matisse Stories* (1993). This includes most notably, studies of ekphrasis by Gabrielle Rippl (2000), Sarah Fishwick (2004), Paola Spinozzi (2006), Laurence Petit (2008), Emilie Bourdarot (2013), and Jada Schumacher (2016).

Based on her examination of Byatt's *Portraits in Fiction* (2001), Paola Spinozzi (2006) argues, for instance, that Byatt's use of ekphrasis is informed by a logocentric view of verbal portraiture as equal, and in some aspects, even superior to visual

expression, as it can reach moral and intellectual depths unattainable by visual art. Emilie Bourdarot (2013) explains the major paradoxes in Byatt's project of writing a plain, non-metaphorical text in *Still Life* but refuses Byatt's idea of the project as failure. Instead she credits her with developing a special kind of ekphrastic writing which encourages its readers to read with greater attention to the language and visualize what they read. In Sylvia Karastathi's discussion of the role of ekphrasis in narrative fiction (2015), examples from Byatt's *Quartet* are used to illustrate some of its functions, particularly its use as a thematic framing device, a tool to convey the characters' aesthetic preferences and levels of visual literacy, and a platform for a debate on the general problems of description and representation. Karastathi also addresses the self-reflexive didactic element of ekphrasis in Byatt's fiction that teaches the reader how to look or read. She points out that Byatt also problematizes the process by drawing attention to the issue of control over the act of looking, or imagining, by the author of an ekphrastic description.

Sarah Gardam (2013) delivers a feminist reading of *The Matisse Stories* as Byatt's critiques of Matisse's representations of women by inverting Matisse's male gaze at female models into a female view of his paintings and subjecting them to ekphrastic revision. She identifies three main techniques used by Byatt, including the analogizing of Matisse's misrepresentations of female bodies with the male characters' misrepresentations of their female counterparts. The relationship and interaction between Byatt's text and the reproductions of Matisse's paintings in her book are investigated by Isabel Fernandes in 'Matisse and Women: Portraits by A.S. Byatt' (2006) and by Michael Meyer in 'A.S. Byatt's *Matisse Stories* (1993): Re-framing Pictorial Hypotexts' (2015).

From the perspective of my investigation, the most important research in the area of visual writing has been done by Jack Stewart, whose extensive work on visual writing and ekphrasis ranges from the studies of Virginia Woolf's fiction and Andrew Parkin's poetry to Lawrence's and Byatt's writing. In Stewart's *Color, Space, and Creativity: Art and Ontology in Five British Authors* (2008), Byatt and Lawrence appear side by side in a selection of authors, whose fiction is marked with a distinctly painterly style. In Lawrence's case, Stewart studies his pictorial style of writing in his letters, particularly in the depictions of the natural world. According to Stewart, Lawrence excels at recreating vivid images of landscapes and places, using the effects of light and shadow, colour and spatial differentiation rendered in rich visual and symbolic language. The analyses of Byatt's writing – the novels *The Shadow of the Sun*, *The Virgin in the Garden*, *Still Life*, and *The Matisse Stories* – demonstrate a close affinity with Lawrence's visual writing. Stewart (2008, p.183) suggests that Byatt's painterly style is achieved in a way similar to Lawrence's use of the painterly techniques of 'mixing and matching' to recreate the effects of light, colour, shape and texture. Stewart argues that there are intertextual, stylistic and methodological parallels between Lawrence's and Byatt's writing. These include Byatt's 'heliotropism' in *The Shadow of the Sun*, which is reportedly stimulated by Lawrence's representations and thematizations of sunlight and solar energy and Van Gogh's paintings containing the solar element. He draws an analogy between the rendering of Byatt's character Henry Severell's apocalyptic visions and Lawrence's 'The Prussian Officer'; as well as Van Gogh's visual representations of sunlight. Stewart claims that by representing Henry's creative practices reflexively and metafictionally, Byatt explores and formulates aspects of her own creativity. He emphasises the affinity between Byatt and Lawrence in the visualisation of the creative energy through light, movement and colour. As an example,

he quotes from Byatt's description of one of Henry's visions: 'Then there were flames rising, beginning stiffly, erect, cone within cone, and then reaching a point, flickering and wavering wildly, dipping, dissolving, running down, it seems, to rise again. Blue and green and peacock, gold and silver and scarlet and crimson, climbing and striving onto the thick, soft, powdered dark' (Stewart, 2008, pp.186-187). Here, he explains, 'movement and rhythm modulate into a surreal range of colour, suggesting the creative energy of [Byatt's] imagination' (Stewart, 2008, p.187). But he also argues that '[t]his kind of 'erotic/aesthetic vision' recalls Lawrence's prophetic declaration: 'In every great novel, who is the hero all the time? Not any of the characters, but some unnamed and nameless flame behind them all [...]' (Stewart, 2008, p.187). Further examples of Byatt's painterly style are demonstrated in other versions of visionary experience, most notably geometrical visions of Marcus Potter in *The Virgin in the Garden*, who tries to control his thoughts and emotions by geometrising his visual experience, and the creative visions of the playwright Alexander Wedderburn, centred on colour and texture in *Still Life*.

In his 2013 essay 'Lawrence Through the Lens of A.S. Byatt: *The Shadow of the Sun* and *The Virgin in the Garden*' Stewart expands on his earlier discussion of Lawrence's visual influence on Byatt and identifies further intersections between their work. He traces the historical background of the Lawrence-Byatt relationship back to its roots in the 1950s, and then continues to demonstrate Byatt's fascination with Lawrence in a careful analysis of intertextual links between her early novels and Lawrence's work. His chart of the pivot points of comparison captures the range and complexity of Byatt's engagement with Lawrence. They include: 'gendered uses of myth, as in symbolic oppositions of sun and moon; uses of the Persephone myth; women's experience and feminist responses; philosophies of language and being; rhetoric, satire,

and parody; primitive ritual in literature and life; blood-rhythms in creativity; and blood-consciousness versus mental consciousness' (Stewart, 2013, p.21). He argues that Lawrence's gendered dichotomy of the sun and moon, employed in *The Rainbow* (1915), *Women in Love*, 'The Woman who Rode Away' (1928), and the short story 'Sun' (1928), where the moon represents the female element and determines the nature of female creativity, is significantly replayed in Byatt's *The Shadow of the Sun* and *The Virgin in the Garden*. Stewart (2013, p.31) adds Byatt to the female authors who respond to Lawrence's incursion into the territory of female experience and argues that Lawrence's 'invasive closeness provokes dialogic reactions that Byatt's female characters exaggerate or oversimplify'. Stewart particularly focuses on the several scenes from *The Virgin in the Garden* in which Byatt directly rewrites scenes from Lawrence's *Women in Love*. They include Byatt's chapter 'Women in Love', modelled on the intimate conversation between the Bragwen sisters at the beginning of *Women in Love*, the ritualistic dance of Marcus and Lucas Simmonds in the chapter 'Owger's Hove' as a rewriting of Lawrence's famous wrestling scene in 'Gladiatorial' in *Women in Love*, and the parody of the moon-stoning episode in 'Moony' in the chapter 'The Bilge Pond'.

In 'Mixing Colors, Making Designs: A.S. Byatt's "Racine and the Tablecloth," "Rose-Coloured Teacups," and "Sugar"', Stewart (2017, p.243) analyses the ways in which Byatt's 'visual-verbal imagination', which seeks to unite visual and verbal forms of expressions, informs and shapes her writing. He reads the selected short stories as 'fictionalized autobiography' (a term borrowed from Campbell, 2004, p.181) that 'reveal important aspects of Byatt's fictional art and aesthetic values' (Stewart, 2017, p.237). The creative, or manufacturing processes such as embroidery or confectionery-making are analysed as metaphors of literary creativity and demonstrate how Byatt

articulates visualised experiences and memories using similar techniques of mixing colours and creating patterns in her language. Byatt's creative aim in these fictions is, according to Stewart (2017, p.237), to achieve a balanced unity of 'aesthetic pleasure and intellectual understanding'.

Stewart's work is an invaluable resource for my own research. However, there are various aspects of Byatt's relationship to Lawrence that he does not discuss, and that will feature in this thesis. First, he does not discuss Byatt's historicising portrayal of Lawrence himself as a cultural symbol. I argue that, in addition to the intertextual parallels and engagements, Byatt also represents Lawrence himself, as an authorial or artistic figure in history, in her fiction.

Peter Preston was the first critic to acknowledge the significance of the 'Lawrence element' in Byatt's fiction. Preston's 'I Am in a Novel: D.H. Lawrence in Recent British Fiction' (2003) identifies seventy-five full-length novels in which Lawrence appears in one way or another, from fictionalized versions of the author to more or less explicit references and allusions. According to Preston, Lawrence's tumultuous literary career and changes in his reception are the main reasons why he continues to provoke writers half a century after his death. Preston's premise is that various aspects of Lawrence's writing have been important for subsequent writers: they can, as he puts it, be used as 'paradigms of class and educational mobility, of the exiled artist, of sexual freedom, or the healing of the division between mind and body'; they can also be used as works 'of proto-Fascism, misogyny, and male supremacism' (Preston, 2003, p.29). Preston argues that these different ideas produce 'Lawrence' as a contradictory 'signifier' (Preston, 2003, p.30) in the work of three female novelists, namely Pat Barker, Helen Dunmore, and A.S. Byatt. His choice of female rather than male writers is motivated by his curiosity concerning women novelists' ongoing

fascination with Lawrence's work, despite Lawrence's complex relationship to feminism. Moreover, Preston argues that women writers tend to show 'a much more sustained engagement with [Lawrence's] work' compared with the predominantly less significant 'passing allusions' (Preston, 2003, pp.30-31) of male writers. Preston (2003, p.31) rightly identifies Lawrence as Byatt's 'constant narrative antagonist, alternately admired and rejected'. Preston's survey indicates how Byatt's employment of Lawrence surpasses Barker's and Dunmore's in terms of range and complexity. He summarizes the primary aspects of Lawrence's presence in relation to the formation of Byatt's main protagonist Frederica Potter's identity and her subsequent marriage. He points out the interconnectedness between Frederica's problems with identity and with verbal articulation of personal experience, in which Lawrence plays an important role. Preston also mentions briefly the historicising element in Byatt's treatment of Lawrence, in particular the 'echoes of the 1960 English trial of *Lady Chatterley in Babel Tower*' (Preston, 2003, p.41). Nevertheless, he stops short of exploring this important aspect of Lawrence's portrayal in more detail.

In another essay 'Myths of Desire: D.H. Lawrence, Language and Ethics in A.S. Byatt's Fiction' (2011), Preston focuses closely on the Byatt-Lawrence relationship. He emphasises Byatt's ambivalence towards Lawrence caused by her:

strongly polarised responses to Lawrence, moving between her sense of the affinities of blood and appreciation of Lawrence's technical achievement and her powerful resistance to the linguistic, emotional and ethical implications of her forerunner's work. (Preston, 2011, p.88)

As in his previous essay, he highlights Byatt's rare position in terms of her knowledge and insight in relation to Lawrence's work. Further developing his previous points about Lawrence's role in Byatt's construction of Frederica Potter, and the writing of her sense of identity, place in the world and sexual relationships, Preston explains that the process, shaped as a conflict between connectedness and separatedness, is, to a

significant extent, a linguistic problem, distinctly influenced by Lawrence's representations of sexual experience. Lastly, Preston also acknowledges a specific dynamic in the 'history' (Preston, 2011, p.200) of the Byatt-Lawrence relationship which is detectable in her novels. His interpretation of Lawrence's considerably reduced presence in *A Whistling Woman* and, significantly, its different nature, attributes the change to a shift from a 'direct confrontation' with Lawrence to Byatt's presentation of him as 'an exemplary victim of the development of literary studies in the contemporary academy' (Preston, 2011, p.200). Preston's work is a significant starting point for this thesis. While I agree with Preston's observation, I see it, also, as a part of a more strategic pattern that structures Byatt's historicizing exploration of Lawrence's cultural standing. It is this proposition that my thesis seeks to demonstrate.

The 'Lawrence Project'

As the above literature review demonstrates, the prominent role of Lawrence's legacy in A.S. Byatt's fiction has been by now acknowledged and outlined by several major scholars. Nevertheless, their inquiries have been restricted by their close focus on corresponding areas of interest, such as the intertextual dialogue between texts in Stewart's essays. Preston's argument, meanwhile, is limited by the time frame of a book chapter. Hence, a considerable gap in our knowledge remains about how Byatt's negotiation of Lawrence's legacy has developed and penetrated into her fiction and why it is shaped in its particular way.

The aim of this thesis is to fill this gap by providing a complex reassessment of the Byatt-Lawrence relationship that synthesizes and complements the existing fractional and scattered knowledge. The opening question concerns the main factors that

induced and shaped Byatt's relationship with Lawrence and made such a powerful imprint on her work. My proposition is that her encounter with F.R. Leavis and his critical approaches in the 1950s was crucial in Byatt's early reception of Lawrence, and that her disagreement with certain aspects of Leavis's valuation of his work, most particularly his emphasis on moral values, informs her attempt to dissociate Lawrence from Leavisite criticism. This is, nonetheless, only a part of a larger scheme. Namely, her negotiation of Lawrence's work changed in light of poststructuralist theories and, particularly, feminist criticism. As her testimonies demonstrate, recorded by Gary Adelman in *Reclaiming D.H. Lawrence: Contemporary Writers Speak Out* (2002), she believes, like a number of other respondents, that Lawrence has been widely misinterpreted and misunderstood, and for this she mainly blames the prevalence of what she calls theoretical and/or 'ideological preoccupations' in criticism over close attention to literary texts (Byatt, cited in Adelman, 2002, p.33).

My argument is that Byatt's notion of Lawrence's work being critically distorted prompts her to embark on a revisionary project that seeks to disentangle Lawrence from theoretical and political debates and recover him as a writer. I argue that in addition to her own creative and critical engagement with Lawrence's writing, her fictionalized reassessment of Lawrence's legacy seeks to redefine the image(s) of Lawrence generated by the problematic theoretical interpretations, as well as the popular obfuscation of his literary achievements in response to the trial of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in 1960. This 'rehabilitation' has a critical impact on Byatt's narrative strategies in several of her major novels, which combine intertextual engagement with Lawrence's writing with a complex fictionalized renegotiation of his standing as an artist and as a public figure.

The evidence for my claims comes from linguistic and intertextual analyses of relevant texts by Lawrence and Byatt and the evaluation of Byatt's portrayal of Lawrence in her fiction. Byatt's novels, particularly *The Shadow of the Sun* and the *Quartet*, are the main texts where Byatt's dialogue with Lawrence unfolds and are therefore analysed in depth in this thesis. Further evidence is provided by the assessment of Byatt's attitude to Leavisite criticism and modern critical approaches, their impact on Lawrence's reputation and their influence on Byatt's reading of Lawrence. My original research into the popular response to the 'Lady Chatterley' trial and its impact on Lawrence's popular image in the 1960s provides the historical information needed for the assessment of Byatt's work with historical contexts in her discussion of Lawrence as a cultural icon. Her historicising approach enables her not only to address some of the paradoxical realities of Lawrence's afterlife but also to draw a less usual picture of the 1960s as 'a very exciting and very pointless' (Byatt, 1996, no page) historical interlude. In her opinion, the counterculture, dominated by what she saw as a childish mentality, was destructive rather than truly subversive.

To Byatt, Lawrence's writing provides a form and language for her own negotiation of gender difference and ultimately feminist critique of Lawrence's assumptions. As Peter Preston (2011) has already declared, the interrelation between gender and language is a key element of the gender debate between Byatt and Lawrence. Nevertheless, his examination of gender identity and autonomy in terms of linguistic and ethical categories leaves a number of things unsaid. Most importantly, he pays very limited attention to Byatt's rewriting of a passage of Lawrence's *Women in Love* in *Babel Tower*, which is, in my opinion, a key moment of the dialogue. My analysis of Byatt's transformation of Lawrence's text is designed to show that this fairly inconspicuous episode, in the context of the whole novel, lays bare most of the main

areas that Byatt particularly responds to in Lawrence. This includes, most significantly, Lawrence's attempt to reconceive our notions of individual identity and male-female relationships and to create a new language to express love and sexual fulfilment as central elements of human experience. This also means exploring the limits of language in its ability to articulate human thought and experience, which, consequently, impacts the perception and conceptualization of the self. Byatt adopts the challenge posed by Lawrence in a playful manner. She parodies Lawrence's quest, but she also uses it to develop her own ideas. Most importantly, Byatt's version contains an enactment in the language of Lawrence's metaphysical theory of oneness, to which Byatt responds 'in kind', as it were, and performs a physical, linguistic and gendered transfiguration of the original text. I intend to show how this double subversion, in which Byatt's character Frederica subverts Lawrence-*cum*-Birkin's original subversive statement, outperforms the original text by putting its theory into practice and, by doing so, produces a certain proclamation of independence on the author's part.

'Modernism Now'

Aware of the gradual growth of Byatt scholarship as well as the intensifying present debates about the necessary reassessment of modernist legacies, I also seek to contextualize the Byatt-Lawrence dialogue within the 'Modernism Now' landscape (Perloff, 2006, p.571).

The notion that modernism is not a dead project but, on the contrary, part of a self-consciously revived and re-energized writing practice in the works of contemporary writers has incited wide-ranging debates in recent criticism. Critics have considered why and how the modernist agenda has resurfaced with such vigour in contemporary writing, a resurfacing that has provoked calls for a reassessment of how we understand

modernism itself. The *PMLA* survey by Douglas Mao and Rebecca Walkowitz called ‘The New Modernist Studies’ (2008) emphasised the temporal, geographical and vertical¹ expansion of the field and the demand for replacing the gendered Eurocentric method of approach with modes of enquiry that would acknowledge the transnational character of the movement(s) and include hitherto marginalised groups and individuals (p.737). As Charles Altieri (2012) points out in reply, such expansion of the research field, however, poses considerable risks, most particularly excessive reliance on analogising at the expense of adequate attention to formal and aesthetic qualities of the works in question. In his opinion, their prevalent historical approach also wrongly elevates social values above literary values.

Attention to form is, on the contrary, at the centre of David James’s approach to modernism, viewed as an unfinished project that re-emerges with new energy in contemporary fiction (James, 2012). With an emphasis on continuity, he sees the contemporary writers’ ‘recuperation’ (James, 2012, p.2) of modernist creative practices as a response to postmodernism’s escalated self-reflexiveness and parodic relativisation. His methodology that ‘combine[s] late-twentieth-century literary history with the commitments of close reading’ is designed to allow him to establish how modernist innovation helps contemporary writers pursue their ‘formal and political aims’ (James, 2012, pp.5, 35). With regard to latecomers’ wrestling with literary inheritance, James (2012, p.26) voices the demand for overcoming the dichotomy of the ‘melodramatic battle of artistic egos’ accompanied by the constraining Bloomean anxieties, and the routine of approaching all texts as palimpsests, including the consequent delay in critical assessment waiting for influences to emerge, as suggested by Paul Fry (cited in

¹ The term ‘vertical’ refers to the releasing of the boundary between ‘high’ and popular culture (Mao and Walkowitz, 2008, p.737-38).

James, 2012, p.27). Instead, James (2012, p.29) sympathises with J.M. Coetzee's idea of writers' 'passing by', that is a process in which the affinities between authors' techniques become so close and obvious that any explicit acknowledgement is deemed unnecessary. Based on the principle of 'conviviality' (James, 2012, p.34), the dialogue between ancestor and heir can potentially become a movement towards the completion of a previously unfinished enterprise. Modernist legacies are thus to be viewed as 'catalysts' for new creative work and innovation rather than 'a heritage to which writers simply allude' (James, 2012, p.40).

Having multiple contributors as it does, *The Legacies of Modernism: Historicising Postwar and Contemporary Fiction* (2011), also edited by James, 'charts' the proposed modernist continuities from a greater variety of angles while combining 'historical and stylistic levels of analysis (James, 2011, pp.1,8). Four thematically specialised sections contain essays dealing with, for example, provincial fiction, transnationalism, the problem of consciousness, or ethical issues.² Peter Preston's contribution 'Myths of Desire: D.H. Lawrence, Language and Ethics in A.S. Byatt's Fiction' belongs to the last. As Preston clearly demonstrates and the present thesis further endorses, Lawrence's work indeed acts as a 'catalyst' for Byatt's creative ambition and its critical negotiation, and her preoccupation with Lawrence's writing ought to be approached as an ongoing 'dialogue' rather than a 'departure [...] from the 'modernist past' (James, 2011, p.8). Similarly to Preston and other contributors to *The Legacies*, my approach combines formal and historical analysis in order to grasp the complexity of the Lawrence-Byatt relationship, but also to stay in tune with the two

² The enlarged field of modernist research opens numerous other ways and subjects for the reassessment of modernist legacy, such as critical cosmopolitanism or literary interpretation in relation to politics law, the outline of which I leave out due to its irrelevance to my argument.

main levels of Byatt's engagement with Lawrence, that is the level of creative vision and formal ambition, on one hand, and the political level on the other. As we will see, the interaction between the two planes plays out as a conflict between the 'internal' authority of a text and the 'external' authority conferred by canonisation or another external agency. Using the method of close reading, my formal analysis concentrates on the main intersections of Byatt's and Lawrence's writing, particularly language of vision, visceral writing and metaphoricity. The aim is to demonstrate how Byatt tests and modifies Lawrence's stylistic methods, especially those aimed at enabling language to capture the immediacy and energy of the communicated experience.

The dialogue between these two writers of course transcends formal properties and is also thematic. Byatt responds powerfully to Lawrence's writing of political issues, especially their ontological and ethical implications. The most significant of them, for Byatt, are those that concern identity and autonomy as they are linked to gender assumptions. For Byatt, these questions are central to her understanding of inheritance and emancipation. The thematic discussion involves, among other things, an analysis of both authors' critical backgrounds and frames of thought, as well as an analysis of Byatt's historicizing portrayal of Lawrence as an artist as well as a public figure and, in Preston's terminology, a cultural 'signifier' (Preston, 2003, p.30).

By synthesising my findings, I intend to demonstrate that Lawrence occupies a unique place in Byatt's fiction as a creative and critical stimulus, one where the interaction moulds and frames Byatt's own creative enterprise. The ultimate centre stage for the creative and critical exchange becomes the *Quartet* where Lawrence's presence achieves its maximum complexity and intensity. With respect to the very specific logic and dynamic of Lawrence's deployment throughout the series, my principal claim is that Lawrence was not only an integral part of the tetralogy project

from the very outset but that his legacy was meant to act as a stimulating linking element between the characters' 'inner' and 'outer' worlds. In respect of the latter, Byatt simultaneously fictionalizes and historicizes Lawrence's legacy as a part of British cultural memory, which informs the construction of the fictional world in which her characters are set. Considering the choices Byatt makes, when retrospectively comprising her composite picture of Lawrence against the background of the 1950s-60s whilst being aware of the changes in his reputation that came soon after, I argue that Byatt's representation of Lawrence is shaped by her desire to free Lawrence from ideological labels of the time and reinstate him as a great novelist, worthy of his place in the British, and European, novelistic tradition. Finally, the nature and dynamic of Byatt's representation of Lawrence throughout her *oeuvre* suggests that her critical-creative engagement with Lawrence's legacy within her fiction was in itself a catalytic process that enabled Byatt to build up artistic confidence and shape her own creative ambitions.

As the first complex study of the influence of a single writer on her work, it also casts new light on Byatt's working methods in more general terms. Byatt is known for undertaking scrupulous research before writing a new novel. This thesis shows how an intensive negotiation of and dialogue with another writer informed a long-term project that spanned almost a half of her career.

CHAPTER 1

A Moving Target

D.H. Lawrence as an author and cultural figure is mentioned frequently by name in Byatt's novels. I argue that Lawrence was a planned component of the narrative and semantic structure of the *Quartet* and that his portrayal is shaped in a way that promotes his rehabilitation as a writer against the earlier cultural and ideological representations from the 1950s to the 1970s. This agenda is facilitated by the double play that infiltrates Byatt's historical tetralogy, in particular, with a critique of past assumptions and judgements. In the *Quartet* she captures a particular cultural moment in history and Lawrence is a significant part of it. At the same time, however, she writes of the present moment aware of what has happened since.

Lawrence's Legacy in History

Byatt writes in retrospect about the decades that witnessed the major shifts and paradoxes in Lawrence's reputation, roughly between the 1950s and 1980s, and this plays a significant role in the shaping of her narrative and use of humour. As Peter Preston (2003, p.38) points out, the author and the reader are ahead of Frederica by sharing historical knowledge of which she is unaware. This is significant, especially in regard to her critique of the problematic gender assumptions of the 1950s and 60s with which her characters are directly confronted, but which are interpreted by readers who are aware of the feminist movement unfolding in Britain at the time when Frederica's

story concludes, and which had an immense impact on Lawrence's status as a writer. Nevertheless, it also prompts questions about how Byatt's representation of Lawrence changed during the course of time and the shifts in how he was received, and how accurate the representation is. To what degree does she use a creative licence to adjust her presentation of Lawrence at a particular historical moment?

The 1950s

In the 1930s it was mainly practising writers such as T.S. Eliot, J. M. Murry and E.M. Forster who reviewed and criticised Lawrence's works but in the 1950s Lawrence's work became the subject of substantial critical discussion and debate. The leading figure in the debate about Lawrence's position in the history of English literature, as well as his literary legacy, was F.R. Leavis. Leavis had defended Lawrence soon after the novelist's death and continued to do so in the 1950s. Some of Leavis's views and preferences had changed during that time, as he elevated *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* as masterpieces in his criticism of the 1950s and downgraded his earlier admiration of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Nevertheless, he continued to venerate Lawrence as the major early twentieth-century English novelist. His critical authority and important critical interventions helped create a new Lawrence cult (cf. Mehl and Jansohn, 2014, p.39) and significantly influenced the discourse that upheld Lawrence as an idol of sexual liberation in the 1960s.

While a range of scholars published biographical or critical work on Lawrence, such as Richard Aldington (1950), Harry T. Moore (1951) or Graham Hough (1956), Leavis stood out, due to his fervour as well as his singular, fairly cult-like position at Cambridge University. There were positive as well as critical voices. Nevertheless, compared to the ambivalences of the 1930s, there was, as Chris Baldick (2001, p.261)

describes, a general consensus over the quality of Lawrence's art, which confirmed Lawrence's place in the literary establishment. Most importantly, Baldick (2001, pp.260-61) highlights how Leavis's rhetoric of moral and sexual sickness and health, or cleanliness, became a vital argument in the Lawrence debate as well as in the 'Lady Chatterley' trial in 1960. In one of the reviews of the abundant Lawrence criticism and biography in the national and regional press, Kenneth Young (1955, p.5) singled Lawrence out as the author with the most books published about him and his work within twenty-five years of his death, with the exception of Oscar Wilde. The robust critical attention also granted Lawrence the authority he needed to enter reading lists on school syllabi and on university courses and attract further scholarship.

While numerous critical reviews and articles in the daily press kept Lawrence's name in the spotlight, Lawrence was also a prominent figure in other media, namely on film and in popular paperbacks. Two film adaptations, *The Rocking Horse Winner* (1949) and, especially, the French *L'Amant de Lady Chatterley* (1955) were released in the pre-'Chatterley trial' period. The latter was purposefully advertised in reference to the 'book they banned' (*Aberdeen Evening Express*, 1956), reviving Lawrence's image as a writer about sex and social taboos, which further deepened after the trial. The US acquittal of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in 1959 was widely reported in Britain and raised similar expectations on the British book market. In January 1960, Lawrence's stepdaughter, Barbara Barr, spoke about 'the new Lawrence industry' under the title 'She has just missed a fortune from Lady Chatterley' (Franklin, 1960, p.6), referring to the American publication. Profiting from the publicity and anticipating a British acquittal, Ace Books published six of Lawrence's novels and two collections of his short stories by April 1960 (Allsop, 1960a, p.10). Allsop commented on the 'lurid' covers of the paperbacks, which misplaced Lawrence's writing in order to appeal to a

more popular audience with the effect that some readers could be surprised to find art instead of pornography in the books (p.10). A casual early-1960 reference to Lawrence and his view of alcohol suggests in a short report on drink-driving in the *Daily Mail* that D.H. Lawrence had become a household name, well before the British 'Lady Chatterley' trial (*Daily Mail Reporter*, 1960a, p.1).

The *Lady Chatterley's Lover* Trial and the 1960s

The publication of the unabridged *Lady Chatterley's Lover* by Penguin Books was announced in 1960 to mark the thirtieth anniversary of Lawrence's death. Having struggled with obscenity charges against *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, Lawrence had never attempted to publish his last novel in the UK and had it published privately in Italy in 1928 instead. Consequently, the British audience had only legal access to a heavily abbreviated text published in 1932, two years after Lawrence's death. However, it was commonly known that unexpurgated editions were smuggled into the country from abroad. In addition to the previous US acquittal, Penguin's decision to bring the novel on to the market was motivated by the passing of the new *Obscene Publications Act 1959*, which made fundamental changes to the previous legislation based on the Common Law. It established that a prosecuted item had to be assessed as *a whole*, as opposed to the previous concentration on isolated controversial passages. Even if a tendency to deprave and corrupt was identified, a publication 'for the public good' (Rolph, 1961, p.11) could still be justified, based on the work's literary and other merits, established by the evidence of expert witnesses. Finally, the audience to be considered in order to assess a potential harm was limited from more or less the public of all ages to the actual target audience of the article, i.e. mostly adult readers. The trial

of Lawrence's novel became a test case of the new law and a crucial precedent for future obscenity prosecutions.

The controversial nature of the novel, and of the court hearings themselves, attracted enormous media attention and provoked a significant public response. Byatt's suggestion that the process was 'one of the great comic moments in British culture' (Byatt, 2002b, p.110) formed part of a broader response dominated by mockery and caricature. Bernard Levin (1980, p.16), for example, reported 'much high comedy even before the trial started' and likened the proceedings to a 'circus'. During the trial, daily press reports reproduced the exchanges in the courtroom in considerable detail. The reports were mainly descriptive in both broadsheet papers and tabloids such as the *Daily Mail* or *Daily Mirror* and delivered fairly accurate pictures of the proceedings. It was clear, nevertheless, that the press stood on the side of the Defence, despite the mockery of their hyperbolic argumentation and rhetoric. The *Times*, the *Guardian*, and to some extent the *Daily Mail*, for example, expressed their concern about censorship and freedom of speech. Kenneth Tynan (1960, p.21) concluded his summary of the trial with a rather exalted declaration that it had turned into 'a real battle [...] between Lawrence's England and Sir Clifford Chatterley's England; between contact and separation; between freedom and control; between love and death'. Similarly, Wayland Young (1960, p.22) pointed out with irony the farcicality of numerous moments of the trial but his voice turned contrastingly reverential in attributing Lawrence's victory to the 'goodness, truth and beauty' embedded in his art and 'the single cauterity of clean English prose'. The *Daily Mirror*, on the other hand, made no such pretences. Consequently, the relatively unbiased contents of their courtroom reports contrasted with some of the headlines and sub-headings, designed to resonate with the papers' readership. Their headlines nurtured a mood of scandal by referring repeatedly to the '4-

letter words' and displaying the word 'sex' (*Daily Mirror* Reporter, 1960b, p.12; *Daily Mirror*, 1960a, p.7; *Daily Mirror*, 1960b, p.1). The verdict was announced with the headline 'Four-Letter Words: Lady Chatterley is Innocent' running across the front page, followed by a cartoon titled 'The (Innocent) Lady Chatterley', covering the front page the following day (*Daily Mirror*, 1960c, p.1).

Humour, particularly irony and mockery, was the general attitude towards the events, which seemed to offer themselves up for ridicule. Every day of the trial, the press delivered innumerable cartoons, which mocked the heated courtroom polemics concerning the use of indecent vocabulary and the expressiveness of sexual scenes. Implicitly, they revealed the patronising attitude towards the general adult reading audiences to whom the controversial language items were neither novel nor shocking. Nick Thomas's recent enquiry into the popular response to the trial exposes the incongruence as a symptom of the growing gap between 'the ruling elite' and 'the wider public' in a 'changed society in which Victorian paternalism no longer had a place and with a changed moral climate in which public discussion of sex was to be encouraged rather than restricted' (Thomas, 2013, p.620). The implicit critique of the patronizing attitude towards the less educated classes is apparent in many reports, creating the sense that 'the poor old baggage Lady Chatterley' affair was considered unfortunate and misplaced (Allsop, 1960b, p.8).

As made evident by the above examples, the novel was often metonymically referred to as 'Lady Chatterley' or 'Lady C', blending the connotations of familiarity and secrecy. This shortcut also reflects one of the greatest paradoxes of the trial, namely many observers' impressions that the novel's heroine, rather than the book, was actually being prosecuted. One of them was Kenneth Tynan, who recalls how

both judge and prosecutor had hammered it home that Lady Chatterley was an immoral woman, that she had had sexual relations before marriage, that she had

committed adultery under her husband's roof: as if these charges somehow disqualified her from participation in serious literature. Indeed, there were long periods of the trial during which an outsider might well have assumed that a divorce hearing was being heard; and it often seemed that the Crown was labouring under the same misapprehension, intensified by spasms of uncertainty as to whether the defendant was Constance Chatterley or Frieda von Richthofen. (Tynan, 1960, p.21)

Unsurprisingly, numerous letters to the editors published during and immediately after the trial proved his point, as they discussed whether Constance Chatterley's adultery was justifiable considering her husband's sterility or they criticised the absence of proper consideration of Sir Clifford's perspective (Krasso, 1960, p.11; Fingleton et al., 1960, p.17). A later section of this chapter shows how Byatt works this paradox into *Babel Tower* by separating these two aspects in two parallel court cases and using Lawrence as the major link between them.

Leavis's concern that the trial would negatively influence the understanding of Lawrence's art, by focusing on one of his weakest works, did materialize. Leavis had refused to speak out for Lawrence in court due to his scepticism about the novel's literary quality, and subsequently condemned the Defence's commendation of its 'integrity' and claims that the book was vital for a complete understanding of Lawrence's work (Leavis, 1967a, p.236). Retrospectively, the subheading 'The Book that D.H. Lawrence Wrote' (*Daily Mirror*, 1960a, p.7) that accompanied the *Daily Mirror* reports sounds prophetic in that it virtually equates the author with his most notorious work. The post-trial Lawrence would be most readily remembered as 'the author of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*' and a proponent of hypersexuality and permissiveness, including extramarital sex and sexual practices viewed as perverse by many. Thus paradoxically, an artist deemed as a Puritan who believed in the sacredness of the sexual union as a deep, quasi-religious experience was misinterpreted as a champion of extravagantly promiscuous behaviour. Comparably, the same writer whose creative qualities and prominent place in the English literary tradition were verified by

academic experts became a symbol of transgression and sexual and social liberation. And yet, some of the principles foregrounded in his writing, such as Romantic individualism and mysticism of nature, as opposed to crowd mentality and mechanical society, that helped him become the symbol of the libertarian 1960s, contrasted sharply with the eventual mass character of the counterculture movement.

Lawrence's post-'Lady Chatterley' image at the beginning of the Swinging Sixties could not be more contradictory. What mattered most for his passage through the oncoming decade was his image of a daring, revolutionary voice delivering a stirring alternative vision, the nature of which resonated with the sentiment of the day. With his art cleared as 'clean' and 'healthy', he was seen as a model of libertarian individualism centred on the overthrowing of social conventions concerning class, gender and sexuality. His form of nature mysticism was seen as an alternative to those dissatisfied with an outmoded Christian morality. The spirit of revolt and liberation, with sexual unrestraint at the forefront, appealed to the young bearers of the counterculture. Having said that, those to whom neither literary merits nor a countercultural agenda appealed, continued to associate Lawrence with sex obsession and pornography.

Lastly, a notion of ludicrousness, or silliness, associated with Lawrence's writing about sexual experience as religious or mystical, further magnified by the laudatory interpretation of his efforts during the trial, existed across all the three groups mentioned above, and had a major influence on Byatt's portrayal of Lawrence and the trial.

Whatever the reception, the impact of the court case on Lawrence's publicity was immense. Within a year, the novel's sales exceeded 3.5 million volumes, whereas without the publicity from the process, the sales would have reportedly reached half a

million (*Daily Mail* Reporter, 1961, p.9). Helped by his presence on school curricula and exam reading lists, Lawrence ranked second in a 1971 *Daily Mail* 'Teenagers' Top Ten', beaten only by the James Bond author Ian Fleming (Nash, 1971, p.3). With *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and *Women in Love*, he even became Number One in the A-levels pupils' rating (Nash, 1971, p.3). In the late 1960s' popular imagination, Lawrence was seen as revolutionary and inspiring as the contemporary music megastars and became one of the period's cultural icons. In his article about children's reading, David Frost (1969, p.3) writes:

I could not help wondering how many of the girls smiling with pleasure at the thought of the complete works of William Shakespeare, Pilgrim's Progress or insect life in the Antipodes were secretly wishing they had gone for John Lennon, James Bond and D.H. Lawrence.

Evaluating the cultural impact of the Beatles, Pearson Phillips (1970, p.5) makes a direct link between the band and Lawrence, asserting that, by introducing 'sincerity, realism, [and] sex' into their music, '[t]hey picked up a pass from D.H. Lawrence and they ran the whole length'.

Almost at the end of the decade, Ken Russell's film adaptation of *Women in Love* (1969) highlighted some of the aspects of Lawrence's work that corresponded with the atmosphere of the late 1960s' counterculture and offered a contemporaneous version of the Birkin/Lawrence figure. Appearing shortly after what *The Times* (1968, p.6) called a 'court season of D.H. Lawrence', a year during which three of Lawrence's plays were staged in London, *Women in Love* was the fifth film adaptation of his work since 1949. As expected, the film attracted significant attention in critical circles but also gained wide publicity that built on Lawrence's notoriety, caused by the 'Chatterley trial'. Apparently, the expectations raised by advertisements routinely referring to 'the author of Lady Chatterley' were as out of place as those provoked by the early 1960s

Lawrence paperback covers. According to Cecil Wilson's review (1969, p.12) in the *Daily Mail*, the 'fleshiness' of the erotic scenes and the appearance of the 'first full male frontal nude ever shown in a British picture' were grossly misleading in respect to the actual artistic merits of the film, which he described as 'a poem for the eyes'. The naturalist feel of some of the film's salient scenes, such as Ursula and Birkin's lovemaking in the flowering meadow, Gudrun's dance with the cattle, or the naked Birkin's stroll through the wood, harmonized with the contemporary holistic ideals and yearning for a closer connection with nature. Lawrence's nature mysticism in Russell's adaptation, including the ecstatic nature of these scenes, matched with the hippie spirituality turned towards occultism and Eastern religions. Unrestrained sexual behaviour, of which Lawrence was considered a master exponent, was not only regarded as natural and good for the individual but became politicised as a general revolt against conformity and the establishment as well as a part of the hippies' pacifist call for free love. Finally, the film's attention to Lawrence's critique of industrialism and militarism tallied with the latter part of the decade's political protests, most particularly against the US military intervention in Vietnam and the cold-war nuclear armament race. The anti-establishment spirit, reflected in the portrayal of the Crich dynasty's decline in *Women in Love*, also played out in the contrast between Birkin's rather genial eccentricity and Hermione's tense would-be bohemianism.

Retrospectively, the film's double 'periodicity', as Louis K. Greiff (2001, p.75) puts it, becomes even more obvious as a result of Russell's blending of historical representation with contemporary sensibility and is most apparent in his portrayal of Birkin-cum-Lawrence himself. Russell's Birkin, played by Alan Bates, has clearly Lawrence's looks. Nevertheless, compared to the novel's character, he is dramatized in a more lively and buoyant way than Lawrence's torn prophet. As Greiff (2001, p.75)

points out, just as the film demonstrates the spirit of its makers' age, the Lawrentian figure takes the shape of 'the idealized hippie', and thus gives us an idea about how Lawrence the writer may have been imagined at the end of the decade.

Feminist criticism

At the end of the decade, however, Lawrence's standing dramatically and lastingly altered. One reason for this was the emergence of second-wave Anglo-American feminist politics and cultural criticism. Anglo-American feminist critics, such as Kate Millet (*Sexual Politics*, 1970) and Germaine Greer (*The Female Eunuch*, 1970), sought to expose and challenge the political, social and cultural structures of patriarchal society and their implications for the constitution and existence of the female self. This included attempts to deconstruct the prevailing cultural patterns, including the literary canon, and inaugurate an alternative female, or feminine, tradition and discourse. The French post-structuralist feminist criticism, associated mainly with the works of Julia Kristeva, Hélène Cixous, and Luce Irigaray, concentrated more on linguistic and psychological issues and addressed the problems of representation of the feminine in defiance of what they saw as an essentially male logocentrism.

The distinction between Anglo-American political feminism and French feminist theory was significant in relation to Byatt's feminist position and will be addressed again in Chapter 3. The following demonstration of the impact of feminist criticism on the reputation of D.H. Lawrence in the UK is thus limited to examples by Anglo-American critics.

In her condemning analysis of the development and nature of Western patriarchal society in *Sexual Politics* (1970), Kate Millet singled out Lawrence as one of her main targets. Paradoxically, the critical acknowledgement and literary status he

received during the previous decades made him, for Millet, a representative of patriarchal culture. Millet's critical psychoanalytic feminist reading of Lawrence's novels involved a biographical reading of a selection of Lawrence's major works, linking the misogynist positions in his novels with what she saw as Lawrence's Oedipal complex which turned to pure desire for power. The study opens with *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, which appears to be a good departure point to support Millet's key contentions regarding Lawrence's alleged hatred of women, of male supremacism and sadism. The case study then continues with a chronological analysis progressing from *Sons and Lovers* (1913), to the later novels, and eventually culminates with Millet's interpretation of the sacrificial killing of a woman in the story 'The Woman Who Rode Away', presented as the climax of Lawrence's perverted misogyny. Millet creates a sense of gradation, starting with Paul Morel/Lawrence's troubled use of women as disposable tools in his identity search, and closing with what she regards as the central point of his 'demented fantasy', that is 'coitus as killing' (Millet, 2000, p.292). The result is an enactive, and strictly focused critique that ignores other aspects of Lawrence's work. The trajectory reflects, according to Millet, 'the ordinary progress of masculine experience in our culture' starting with the repudiation of the father figure and early identification of the mother figure, the subsequent rejection of her, 'followed by a greedy arrogance for masculine privilege, which at last grew so overweening that it veered toward extremity and invented a religion whose totem was penis – his own penis at that' (Millet, 2000, p.280). By identifying the characters with the author, which treats their behaviour and value systems as direct projections of Lawrence's own values and desires, Millet's book was also, by implication, an attack on Lawrence himself. Alongside accusations of fascism and anti-Semitism, Millet uncompromisingly identifies Lawrence with hostility towards women, aggressive enforcement of an

allegedly natural male dominance, sadism and violence, justified by assumptions of innate female passivity and masochism, as well as undisguised racism.

Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman in the Twentieth Century* (1987) also presents Lawrence as a prime exponent of aggressive misogyny, who 'often concentrate[s] with virtually sadistic fervor on the war between the sexes' (Gilbert and Gubar, 1988, p.30). Nevertheless, his writing is this time considered not in isolation but in relation to existing literary traditions. Gilbert and Gubar place Lawrence's writing in the oppressive masculine tradition of writers, most of whom expose open hostility towards women. His portrayal of Gudrun is read, as in Millet's case, as an attack on the modernist 'New Woman', depicted as a sterile and destructive individual. In the literary context, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is blamed for the sexualisation of the struggle between the sexes (Gilbert and Gubar, 1988, pp.40, 43). Gilbert and Gubar (1988, p.155) detach Lawrence from his female predecessors such as George Eliot, arguing that he ranks amongst writers to whom 'a literary landscape populated by women [...] may have seemed like a no man's land, a wasted and wasting country that left them with what Beerbohm called "an acute sense of disgrace"'.

The last point was disputed by other critics. Carol Siegel in her study *Lawrence Among Women* (1991), for example, queried the feminist condemnation of Lawrence's work by drawing attention to the fact that many female writers responded to Lawrence in a more benignant, however troubled, way. Her attempt to create a feminist defence of Lawrence's work took into account the complexities and dynamics of such engagements and established Lawrence's position in relation to the female literary tradition that was being drafted (but not exclusively) by feminist critics. Her revisionist reading focused on a selection of his most significant female predecessors such as George Eliot or Charlotte and Emily Brontë, and followers, including Virginia Woolf, Doris Lessing

and Eudora Welty. She emphasised how important some of his female contemporaries were for his creativity in terms of their feedback but also of how they shared their female experience which he reproduces and explores in his work. In order to demonstrate the enabling quality of the dialogue, Siegel traces chains of critical rewritings in which later authors responded to Lawrence's readings of his female forerunners. Siegel's key thesis is that Lawrence's affiliation with the female literary world resulted from his equally marginalised position in relation to the cultural mainstream, and his interest in the female experience. According to Siegel (1991, p.50), Lawrence was initially seen as an outsider to the patriarchal literary tradition, a 'non-man' writer, which resonated positively with (at least a part of) his female followers, some of whom saw him as a partner in their struggle with the traditional patriarchal definition of femininity. Siegel asserts that Lawrence's elevation as a (masculine) moralist writer in the 1950s, particularly thanks to Leavis and Harry T. Moore, and his resultant inclusion within the mainstream, patriarchal, literary tradition, played a considerable role in the later feminist attacks on Lawrence. Siegel's book is an attempt to facilitate a more open feminist approach to Lawrence that avoids a denial of his sexism and indisputable ambivalence in relation to women writers and, at the same time, prevents a forthright dismissal of his art, based solely on gender-related charges. A self-declared 'political feminist' (Byatt, 1996, no page), Byatt was often critical of feminist literary theory and criticism and considered Lawrence one of its victims. She maintained that the "unfortunate gender politics of literary studies" made Lawrence into an embarrassing model, reduced him to caricature, and turned women into "peacocky men" whose creativity went into feminist theory rather than into writing novels and poems' (Byatt, cited in Adelman, 2002, p.117).

Byatt's historicised portrayal of Lawrence as a cultural phenomenon as well as an individual artist fictionalizes several aspects of Lawrence's afterlife, examined in Siegel's study. Part of Byatt's ambivalence to Lawrence stems from the conflict between her indignation over Leavis's normative idolisation of Lawrence, and her own aesthetic, and feminist response to his work. Consequently, her negotiation of Lawrence in *The Shadow of the Sun* and the *Quartet* combines two essential ways of reading that sustain this ambivalence. One is a feminist reading, which focuses largely on the intertextual sphere, especially in Frederica's testing of what she describes as Lawrence's 'listen[ing] to – to our passions – to our bodies' (BT, p.491) and his assumption of 'the attraction of the opposites' (BT, p.492). At the same time, Byatt's response is to reproduce the techniques of close reading determined by her literary critical training under Leavis, which are performatively focused on discussions of Lawrence's work. In the above novels, Frederica lectures her students and friends, about the poetic and narrative qualities of Lawrence's texts. In contrast, Byatt never uses a fictional character to confront the issues that became targets of feminist criticism.

Byatt is aware of her feminist ambivalence to Lawrence's writing and this awareness partly explains her historicizing approach, which has two main benefits. Firstly, the historical contextualisation of her negotiation of Lawrence creates a distance needed for the revision of her relationship to Lawrence, and secondly, it provides a backbone that allows her to use and parody the various oddities of Lawrence's afterlife, in juxtaposition with the discussions of his art and her own rewriting of his texts.

The representation of D.H. Lawrence in Byatt's fiction

Byatt's novels that feature D.H. Lawrence are discussed chronologically since chronology plays a major role in her representation of Lawrence as it captures the shifts of Lawrence's standing over time.

The Shadow of the Sun

It is significant that Byatt reportedly started writing her first novel *The Shadow of the Sun* (1964) as an undergraduate at Cambridge University during lectures on D.H. Lawrence in the mid-1950s (1954 – 1957). She was right in the centre of the Lawrence revival forged by F.R. Leavis, and it was his appropriating approach to Lawrence's work that provoked Byatt into writing her debut novel. *The Shadow of the Sun* thus represents a very particular moment at Cambridge, dominated by Leavisite criticism and moralistic idolisation of Lawrence. It is the Cambridge that, as phrased in *Babel Tower*, saw Lawrence as 'the point of perfection' (BT, p.212). Lawrence's work became the norm in terms of both literary qualities and the setting of moral examples. *The Shadow of the Sun* reflects critically on this environment and uses Lawrence to frame a conflict between authority and independence.

Lawrence is introduced into the narrative as a 'real' historical figure, who occupies a position in the university of a 'a great man, a prophet' (SS, p.86) and, in a different reference, a subject of '[r]everence' (SS, p.194). But his power within the Cambridge critical milieu is also questioned. Anna, the central protagonist, suggests sceptically that they teach Lawrence like the 'Ten Commandments' (SS, p.157), a conflation of literature with religion that implies a problematic unquestioning subservience to Lawrence's ideas. The problem of conflating literature and religion preoccupied Byatt in other texts. In a later essay 'People in Paper Houses' (1979), Byatt criticised the

tendency to treat Lawrence's texts, and other 'fictional texts of the Great Tradition' as 'the texts of the Religion of Humanity' and 'the source of enlightenment' (PM, p.167). This approach, Byatt suggests, made writers feel that they needed to relate to these texts and fuelled the Bloomean 'anxiety of influence'.

In *The Shadow of the Sun*, Lawrence thus acts as a signifier of a particular educational milieu and dogmatic teaching style, represented by Oliver Cuning, a literary critic and teacher of literature at Cambridge. Byatt mimics 'Leavis preaching Lawrence' (SS, p.xi) in Oliver's zealous delivery of 'his catechism' (SS, p.76) to Anna during their dispute over moral issues, in which Lawrence features as a significant reference point. Oliver makes a Lawrentian distinction between 'meaningful life' (SS, p.86), interpreted, however, as a life in which an individual makes full use of their talents and abilities and thereby fulfils their commitments to society, and a 'dead way of living', or 'substitute for life' (SS, p.86), associated with an intellectually wasted life in marriage, domesticity and conventional socialising. Byatt uses Oliver and his bending of Lawrence's thought for moralising purposes as a critique of the moralistic exploitation of Lawrence's legacy in the mid-1950s. Anna's awareness of 'the importance of Lawrence in relation to these themes' (SS, p.86) exposes Lawrence's significance as a symbol of a particular set of values at a particular historical moment. Leavis's narrowing view of the English literary tradition is echoed in Byatt's hints at the issues of national belonging and exile raised in Anna and Oliver's dispute. Oliver dismisses Anna's remark that 'Lawrence had left England' (SS, p.86) and is thus a dubious example of social responsibility, by emphasising Lawrence's exceptionality as 'a great man, and a prophet' in contrast to Anna, who is 'a moderately intelligent girl [...] with no particular skills' (SS, p.86). The belittling streak in Oliver's words echoes Byatt's sentiment about Leavis's damaging treatment of his students' literary ambitions.

More importantly, Oliver claims that ‘Lawrence had written nothing really relevant after forgetting the society he knew’ (SS, p.86). Oliver’s and Anna’s views represent two different attitudes to Lawrence’s work, i.e. the Leavisite one, focusing on Lawrence as an English writer, writing about English society with an emphasis on authenticity and the immediacy of the conveyed experience, and one that considers the significance of his writing in a wider geo-cultural context. As in *Babel Tower*, Byatt’s sympathies are with the latter approach, which places Lawrence in the landscape of European modernism.

Lawrence also features in the text as a means to describe sexual identity, and specifically female sexual identity. At a Cambridge party, Anna is faced with a male student’s attempt to cast her as a ‘Lawrentian woman’ (SS, p.157). Anna recoils from this category description by refusing to define her identity ‘in those terms’ (SS, p.157). She rejects it as a man-made construct that, whilst ascribing the female subject a degree of sexual autonomy, implies male superiority. Her disapproval is aimed not so much at Lawrence himself, nor any of the qualities associated with him or his work, but rather at the fact that he is made, by a significant part of the contemporary critical elite, to represent an authoritative quasi-religious vision of female sexuality, hostile to Anna’s bid for sexual freedom.

Lawrence himself appears in a flatter way in *The Shadow of the Sun*, for he is not subjected to the level of scrutiny that comes in the subsequent novels. Direct references to Lawrence are an important part of the novel’s overall scheme, imagined as an encounter between a Lawrentian artist and a Leavisite critic. Byatt’s criticism of the use of Lawrence’s legacy as the norm and as a cultural signifier, accompanied by the rewriting of his texts, tests one of the possible ways in which a contemporary writer can engage with their predecessor’s legacy, and which continues, with increasing

complexity, in the longest project of Byatt's career; a series of four novels, collectively known as the *Quartet*.

The *Quartet*

In the so-called *Quartet*, chronology plays an even more important role than in *The Shadow of the Sun*. The series, conceived as a tetralogy from its birth in the 1970s, consists of four novels written over a remarkably long period of 24 years between 1978 and 2002. The time span captured in the novels is, on the other hand, notably shorter: 1952-1969. The main shift in Lawrence's status within the narrative is thus determined by the outcomes of and responses to the *Lady Chatterley's Lover* trial in 1960. Byatt's representation of Lawrence in the *Quartet* is, however, also informed by later events and changes to his reputation of which her characters are historically unaware. Byatt therefore had to strive for a balance between historical accuracy and the image of Lawrence she wished to deliver to her readers.

The Virgin in the Garden, published in 1978, was written in the middle of the feminist debates about Lawrence introduced above. Its story, set in 1952-3, on the other hand, precedes the story time of *The Shadow of the Sun* by about two years. Lawrence is represented similarly as a moral authority, in a manner relevant to the historical moment. Nevertheless, unlike in the previous novel, he is presented in a more complex way with references to particular pieces of writing or ideas. *The Virgin in the Garden* and its sequel *Still Life* (1985), both set in the 1950s, as is *The Shadow of the Sun*, portray Lawrence predominantly as the author of particular texts, notably *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and *Women in Love*, with which the novel's main characters engage. This is caused partly by the fact that Byatt herself became more familiar with Lawrence and matured both as a reader and a writer, but she also apparently felt compelled to

respond to the changes in Lawrence's standing. Significantly more emphasis is put on Lawrence's representation of women and female sexuality, which is a result of both Byatt's personal preoccupation with gender issues, but also of her personal response to the feminist criticism of Lawrence in the 1970s when the novel was written. *Still Life* captures Frederica's student experience at Cambridge University in the mid-1950s, i.e. the same academic and cultural environment encountered by Anna Severell in *The Shadow of the Sun*. Based on Byatt's own student experience and placed in the same historical setting, Frederica's experience replicates Anna's. Later in *Babel Tower*, Frederica is asked the same question that Anna was in the earlier novel: Is she a 'Lawrentian woman'? (BT, p.212) Byatt chooses to leave the heroine's reply blank in both narratives. She thereby makes space for her own response by creating an alternative to the 1950s 'Lawrentian woman' construct: an archetype of an ambitious intellectual woman striving for independence amidst a stiff post-war patriarchal society and the gender assumptions inherent in the 'Lawrentian woman' label. In Mary Eagleton's words, these are women who 'are trying to construct a new gender identity in which the mind features as much as the body' but who 'find themselves caught between a past they want to lose and a future they do not know how to inhabit' (Eagleton, 2014, p.103). While Anna's story concludes at the moment when she might commence on such a journey towards independence, Frederica is allowed to travel further. In narrative terms, the phrase 'Lawrentian woman' is loaded with significance as a second-hand category. Rather than suggesting a straightforward repudiation of Lawrence himself, Byatt sees his major women characters as fruitful sources for her own writing of female independence. On the metafictional level, this strategy ties in with the representation of Lawrence and his legacy in the framework of social and

cultural inheritance and ancestral influence in *The Shadow of the Sun* and in the *Quartet*.

In line with the chronological shift, *Babel Tower*, published in 1996, introduces a significantly different picture of Lawrence in the late 1960s. The fact that the shift in his status is pointed out to the reader through Frederica's memories of the 1950s demonstrates the importance of showing Lawrence as an object of numerous changing narratives. Considering the historical chronology and the centrality of the 'Chatterley trial' to *Babel Tower*, Lawrence's status in the tetralogy can be roughly divided into two major stages: the pre-trial Lawrence, i.e. an academic and cultural idol of the 1950s, and the post-trial Lawrence, who becomes a shape-shifting figure whose image depends on the observer's lens. Consequently, *Babel Tower*, in particular, presents Lawrence in an openly dialogical form, which not only connects Byatt's texts to Lawrence's but also allows various voices to enter the narratives and bring in diverse views and impulses. Lawrence features centrally in Frederica's private consciousness, as a source of disagreement between characters, such as Frederica's father and her Cambridge teacher Raphael Faber, and as a transgressive and legally iconoclastic writer. Equally significant are representations of Lawrence conveyed through the historical contextualisation of several major situations in the novel, most notably the obscenity and divorce trials, or discussions about various social and cultural issues. Byatt's revisionist contemplation of Lawrence's legacy builds on the exposure of some of the most striking paradoxes of Lawrence's cultural afterlife and the re-creation of the popular images of Lawrence in her novels. The inherent critique suggests that the images are often based on manipulations or misinterpretations of his texts and that they need to be revised by way of close and careful reading, some of which Frederica and her sister Stephanie demonstrate in *The Virgin in the Garden* and in *Still Life*. In this dialogic way, Byatt's

historicising approach puts forward not only a revisionist reading of Lawrence's writing but also a fictionalized review of his legacy by way of contrasting various views and images alive in the 1950s and 1960s.

The Virgin in the Garden

The first novel of the *Quartet*, *The Virgin in the Garden* (1978) is set in the early 1950s, around the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II; that is shortly preceding the time of Byatt's experience of Leavis's Cambridge in 1954-1957. The portrayal of Frederica's father Bill Potter in this novel, a grammar school teacher of literature, is a parody of Leavis's moralising celebration of Lawrence. From his position of authority, as a father and teacher, he assumes the role of a censor, judging literature with an emphasis on its moral and educational values. Lawrence thus features as an author in disputes about books that are allowed and books that are banned. Bill Potter puts *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* at the top of his reading list of books, as opposed to historical romances or information handbooks Frederica encounters at school or among her friends. However, Frederica recoils from accepting Lawrence's books as role models and proclaims them as 'damaging' to young girls (VG, p.40).

Byatt depicts Lawrence's writing as both part of a patriarchal code and a framework within which Stephanie and Frederica, willingly or not, consider many of their life situations. In a chapter called 'Women in Love', in which Byatt rewrites the opening scene of Lawrence's novel, for example, Stephanie contemplates her upcoming marriage to the curate Daniel Orton by adopting Lawrence's vocabulary of transfiguration: she tries to imagine being 'enclosed with a transfigured man and transfigured possessions in a private place' (VG, p.247). Byatt both parodies

Lawrence's writing, and historicises his cultural dominance and influence in the 1950s, by depicting Stephanie using Lawrentian language to describe her private sexual life. Byatt also uses Lawrence's language to convey Frederica's sceptical attempt to imagine a different way of describing female sexuality:

[i]f I thought I'd really got to live the sort of life that book holds up for my admiration I'd drown myself in the Bilge Pond now. I don't want the immemorial magnificence of mystic palpable real otherness, you can keep it. If you've got it. I hope to God Lawrence is lying. (VG, p.41)

This is a partial quote from Lawrence's *Women in Love* where Birkin describes marriage as an 'immemorial magnificence of mystic, palpable, real otherness' (WL, p.320). In Byatt's representation, Frederica recoils from both the Lawrentian language and the magnified spiritualisation of the sexual and marital experience, particularly Birkin's demand that the woman abandon herself to the man. Her wishful remark that Lawrence might be lying, nevertheless, lays bare a tendency, or indeed a learned habit, to use literary texts as a sounding board for assessing and understanding lived experiences. Such a suggestion challenges the Arnoldian-*cum*-Leavisite view of literature as 'a criticism of life', which apparently sustains Bill Potter's critical method. His explication of 'literary truth' (VG, p.41) is mentioned a few paragraphs later but is never revealed to the reader, and so the question about the relationship between literature and life remains open and vital throughout the series.

In narrative terms, when Frederica confronts her first sexual experience with a chance acquaintance, she realizes that Lawrence's novelistic language of sexual understanding is not relevant for the reality of practical experience. She again partially quotes from Lawrence's language of revelation when she describes that she 'expected a revelation from the traveller in dolls' (VG, p.269). Similarly, Frederica thinks that '*Lady Chatterley* and all the other Lawrence Daddy insists on' are not helpful in

understanding the ‘culture’ introduced to her by the upper-class philanthropist Matthew Crowe. Whether finding Lawrence ‘corrupting’ (VG, p.40) or irrelevant, however, she is drawn to Lawrence’s writing and rereads *Women in Love*. With this, what she calls ‘another go at Lawrence’ (VG, p.460), more detailed and informative reflections on Lawrence begin to appear, and Frederica herself progresses from brief mocking jests towards more discriminating observations. They are ushered in by an arresting statement that might speak for Byatt herself. Frederica says: ‘I love Lawrence and I hate him, I believe him and I reject him totally, all at the same time all the time. It’s wearing. Maybe it was just the title. I mean, I wanted to read a book called like that’ (VG, p.460). What appears to be a sheer contradiction, illustrates the profound ambivalence of Frederica’s fascination with Lawrence’s writing. Whereas she regards many of the ideas put forth in his fiction as unacceptable, she is captured by the power of his writing and also, as the mentioned attraction of the title tells us, by his attempt to explore her own – female – world.¹

Within this binary framework, *The Virgin in the Garden* introduces Lawrence as a controversial, challenging figure, who can be experienced in very different ways in the public sphere and in a personal encounter. Within the specified historical context, Lawrence is referred to as a representative of the literary and cultural tradition defined in the early 1950s and a moral authority framed by liberal-humanist criticism. On a personal level, he is featured as a writer who can often sound ‘*silly*’ (BT, p.244, italics in the original)² and deserving of (Frederica’s) mockery, and yet who is able to capture the reader’s imagination with his language and imagery. Near the end of *The Virgin in*

¹ Cf. Stewart (2013, p.31). Stewart reads Frederica’s comment as an articulation of Byatt’s ‘anxiety of influence’ and of her desire ‘to write a book that would be a radical revisioning of the [novel’s] subject’.

² Unless stated otherwise, all italics in the quotations are from the original texts.

the Garden, Frederica makes a confession, in which she explains her captivation by Lawrence and Racine, p.

People in Lawrence's novels [...] love each other because of their unspeakable selves, their loins of darkness and starlike separateness and all that. They hector and gabble but they don't talk, though he does, Lawrence does. He loved language, he lied in a way when he indicated all those values 'beyond' or 'under' it. I like language, why can't one love in language? Racine's people speak the unspeakable. That's odd, I was going to say he had a very *small* language, but so did Lawrence, of that kind, and both of them indicate forms of what isn't speech, and yet one is precise and formal about what it isn't as the other is yelping and muttering and ... oh, I don't know. (VG, p.462)

Here Frederica's dialogue with Lawrence focuses on the quality of Lawrence's and Racine's abilities to express that which is beyond language. As their elusiveness makes reading and criticism equally precarious, an intuitive reading method is implicitly proposed as the most appropriate one. The quote itself is a play of (quasi-) contradictions, similar to that identified in Lawrence himself. On one hand, Frederica identifies the language-loving Lawrence's 'lie' in terms of his exaggerated attempts to reach "'beyond' or 'under'" language, and yet explains that the articulation of the 'unspeakable' is what makes his, and Racine's, writing special. As a part of her (and Byatt's) lesson to the reader, she warns of taking Lawrence at face value and concentrating too much on the signalled special meanings – "'beyond' or 'under'", where, according to Frederica, his characters 'hector and gabble' about 'their unspeakable selves, loins of darkness and starlike separateness and all that' (VG, p.462). While she intimates that such passages where Lawrence is at his most eager and self-conscious are those in which he fails, she does not yet reveal when or how, in her opinion, Lawrence *talks*. Nevertheless, this disclosure indicates not only where Frederica, and Byatt, see the main strength of his writing, but it also reveals one of the main impulses that inspire Byatt's own creative endeavour, the rendering of processes and states of consciousness.

Lastly, Lawrence appears as a representative of an English pastoral tradition in a novel that describes an attempt to revive and re-create a national myth in response to post-war nostalgia. While her writer character Alexander Wedderburn seeks continuities from the Elizabethan era, Byatt's parody of a pastoral novel turns to Lawrence and makes its own characters test and re-enact some of the experiences portrayed in his novels, as in the case of Frederica's erotic adventures on the Yorkshire moors in *The Virgin in the Garden* and *Babel Tower*. Lawrence is 'present' in one way or another in both cases, and the tension between Lawrence's quasi-religious eroticism and Byatt's narrative distance is the dominant feature of both passages. Chapter 17 of the *Virgin in the Garden* called 'Pastoral', on the other hand, plays with the meanings of the word. While delivering a conversation between Stephanie and Daniel about religion and the Church, it opens with a derisive reference to *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Lucas Simmonds, a teacher who seduces Frederica's younger brother Marcus, is compared to 'a dog' or 'Lady Chatterley's lover' while 'waiting in the dark' for Marcus (VG, p.221). The analogy between Simmonds, who styles himself as a prophet and whose would-be prophecy later proves to be misguided and dangerous, and the gamekeeper Mellors, invite another analogy between Marcus and Lady Chatterley.

While *The Virgin in the Garden* adequately represents the status of Lawrence as a moral authority and prominent in the English literary tradition as it was perceived in the 1950s, the frequency of references to *Lady Chatterley's Lover* suggests that the relatively recent 'Lady Chatterley' trial and Lawrence's post-trial images affected the shaping of the Lawrence narrative in the novel. This includes Frederica's criticism of Lawrence's erotic mysticism, especially the presentation of sex as a revelatory experience, in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, anticipating the 'healthiness' line of argumentation during and after the trial. The question of justifying adultery and the

notion of sexual healing, raised during the trial, are revived in a passage where Alexander unexpectedly catches himself using Lawrence's language, 'northern and not his own' (VG, p.458), when comforting his crying lover Jenny. It not only recalls Lawrence's controversial linguistic experiment of outsourcing dialect and the infamous four-letter words to create an idiom of love and its ridiculed defence at the trial, but it also replicates the plot of an unhappy married young woman finding emotional support and erotic gratification in the arms of an older and sexually superior solitary man. Byatt's re-make frees the scene from the mysticism by displaying the woman's pain and humiliation released by her lover's sexual failure. The anti-climax deems the language, 'Lady Chatterley's lover's' (VG, p.458), as inadequate and ridiculous. The episode is built on the post-trial notoriety of the novel and the associations of Lawrence with sexual unrestraint and extra-marital sex, in an inconspicuous feminist rewrite of Lawrence. At the same time, the analogy facilitates a critical reinterpretation of Lady Chatterley as a victim of male chauvinism.

Still Life

Published seven years after the first novel of the *Quartet*, the second part of the series, *Still Life* (1985) is a direct chronological follow-up of the previous novel, roughly covering the time of Frederica's undergraduate studies at Cambridge University, starting in 1953. The expectation of continuity is challenged, however, firstly by the novel's prologue, which transplants the reader briefly into 1980 before returning to the early 1950s, and secondly by a major stylistic shift. In contrast to *The Virgin in the Garden*, overflowing with figural language and Renaissance imagery, this novel was projected as a metaphor-free narrative in plain, simple language. The

trickiness of the project is confronted by way of folding self-reflexive discussions about language, taxonomy and naming strategies into the narrative. Lawrence is again employed as a major point of reference in Frederica's interpretation of her experiences and the surrounding world. There is, nevertheless, a shift in the focus, which is transferred from a personal father-daughter argument about role models to the issues of cultural environment and identity. The principles and values championed by Bill and questioned by Frederica, are identified explicitly as the 'Leavisite "values" and the "life" located and propounded so easily in D.H. Lawrence' (SL, p.221). The 'ease' is linked to the interpreter's extraction and alienation of useful elements from the literary texts and the extraction of substance. They become 'morals and gods without name or authority' (SL, p.221). This is a renewed critique of an appropriation and hollowing out of an author's work and ideas in order to fit critical categories as well as using criticism as quasi-religious moral instruction. This is part of Byatt's assumption that the value of Lawrence's writing lies elsewhere than in its moral lesson extracted by Leavis, whose argumentation, especially in regard to the 'moral judgement', is often considered too vague.³

Lawrence's writing is still depicted as a framework within which Byatt's female characters explore their sexuality and independence. When faced with the question 'How to live?' (SL, p.147), Frederica's thoughts run automatically to Lawrence. In the mid-1950s, we are told that the young Frederica 'believed unquestioningly, with part of herself, for instance, that a woman was unfulfilled without marriage, that marriage was the end of every good story' (SL, p.153). This becomes a foundation for her later departure from such assumptions. Her reading of Lawrence's *Women in Love*, and

³ René Wellek was one of the first critics who accused Leavis of lack of explicitness and methodology. For more detail see Wellek (1937).

Ursula Brangwen's part in this novel in particular, is depicted as one of the literary examples that further bolstered the 'desire to be abject' (SL, p.153) with which her culture endowed her. Lawrence is thus partly implicated in the 1950s revival of the domesticity cult and the expectation of a quasi-religious devotion to husband and family faced by women, unveiled and dissected by Betty Friedan's *Feminine Mystique* (1963).

Lawrence is again depicted as an interlocutor in Frederica's internalised debates about marriage and gender difference. The problem is seen in terms of rendering 'real' women and addressing 'real' situations. Frederica feels that '[w]omen in male novels were unreal and it was beyond Frederica's comprehension that young men might suppose she was any or all of these characters' (SL, pp.155-6). The depiction of Frederica's loss of virginity in *The Virgin in the Garden*, for example, is remembered as a 'revolt against "whole" (overwhelming) love' (SL, p.154). It is a symptom of the deep, gendered conflict that determines her personal wrestling with Lawrence. In order to be fully exposed in *Babel Tower*, it increasingly transpires that all understanding, and experience, depend to a certain extent on the choice of a narrative. The gender narrative faced by Frederica is featured as a male, patriarchal narrative, based on an institutionalized authority, of which Lawrence is the major outpost.

Byatt also uses Lawrence as a key figure in her dramatization of the intellectual conflicts of the 1950s over the value of poetry and prose: we are told that 'in the 1950s the recording compulsion took Lawrentian forms' (SL, p.73), as opposed to 'Wordsworthian' forms. Byatt here partially quotes and rephrases Leavis's notorious and controversial claim, made in *D.H. Lawrence: Novelist*, that since the nineteenth century, the 'strength – the poetic and creative strength – of the English language' is to be found in prose fiction (Leavis, 1968a, p.18). Byatt carries this thought into her depiction of the character Frederica, who has learned her lesson from Lawrence's

memorable maxims about the novel being ‘the one bright book of life’ and ‘the highest form of human expression yet attained’ (SL, p.73). This is quoted verbatim when she contemplates her own creative aspirations.

Lawrence is also a reference point in Byatt’s staging of a narrative conflict between literature that establishes and enforces national traditions and literature in the context of post-holocaust exile. The character Raphael Faber, a Jewish wartime émigré, castigates the so-called continuity of tradition implied in Leavis’s *Great Tradition*. Faber is critical of ‘the cultural insularity and narrowness of the English’ (SL, p.257). He also argues that art can no longer be made to conform to artificial national boundaries:

Art surely can’t any longer be thought of as inventing people and giving them names and social backgrounds and amassing descriptions of clothes and houses and money and parties. All that is over. (SL, p.259)

Faber’s wholesale critique of the insularity of national literary tradition sets the scene for Byatt’s formal experiments in *Babel Tower*, in which Frederica’s sense of an English literary legacy, represented by George Eliot, Jane Austen, and, particularly, D.H. Lawrence, is questioned and re-written.

In *Still Life*, Frederica, however, disagrees with Faber, arguing that her national identity is tied to Lawrence’s writing: ‘It was like D.H. Lawrence: I have roots like D.H. Lawrence: my people better themselves a little, like Lawrence’s ambitious women’ (SL, p.259). The background that she proclaims as shared with Lawrence and his characters is earlier characterised as ‘[p]ure Anglo-Saxon, *echt* English’, ‘*Northern*’ and ‘Nonconformist’ (SL, p.258).⁴ The adjectives ‘pure’ and ‘*echt*’ are used in an ironic

⁴ Frederica’s class reference as ‘Northern lower-middle-class’ does not correspond with Lawrence’s family situation, who grew up in a working-class mining community. His father, Arthur Lawrence, was a miner, and his mother Lydia Lawrence, nee Beardsall, came, despite her social aspirations, from a skilled working-class rather than middle-class background (Worthen, 1992, p.26). Nevertheless, Ursula and Gudrun, Lawrence’s major ‘ambitious women’ were lower-middle-class.

way, adopted by Frederica to oppose Faber's claim that 'the English have no sense of roots' but also to signal her secret yearning for being 'classless' (SL, p.221) and free from any burden of inheritance. Notwithstanding, the confrontation with Faber's disturbing post-apocalyptic-like mindset makes Frederica acknowledge the strength of her social and cultural ties.

However idiosyncratic or outlandish Faber appears, he is still a very Byattesque character on the grounds that while dismissing the past literary traditions, he implicitly refers more or less to descriptive realist writing – hence Frederica's reaction – and pays no heed to experimental modernist writing by, for example, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf. The modernist attempts to question the objectivity of human perception and focus on the inner world, which frequently include processes of distortion and disintegration, are rejected. He, and Frederica, thereby roughly follow the literary tradition drawn up by Leavis that circumvents the high modernist writers, mainly on the grounds of formal artifice. Faber's and Frederica's limited views betray the author in the sense that she too did learn her lesson and adopted her teacher's preferences, to a certain degree.

The provincial character of Lawrence's writing comes again into the foreground. Admiring 'D.H. Lawrence's decency, intelligence (as opposed to Bloomsbury cleverness) and vision' (SL, p.137), Tony Watson, another Cambridge friend of Frederica's, mimics Leavis's praise of purity and authenticity in Lawrence's writing as opposed to the elaborate prose of the high modernist authors. The instilled irony challenges the corresponding part of the Leavisite narrative.⁵

⁵ When discussing Lawrence and class in *D.H. Lawrence: The Novelist* (1968a, p.77, 76) Leavis (1968a, p.78) identifies the category of 'reverence', that is reverence for 'life' as the one that matters in regard to moral quality of Lawrence's characters rather than class. Nevertheless, he indicates that the major effect of Lawrence's working-class upbringing is the ability to present a 'classless truth' as opposed to class-superiority and snobbery. A 'superiority of moral sensibility' is thus implicitly associated with working-class, or lower-middle-class

In contrast with the previous novel, *Still Life* approaches Lawrence's legacy from a wider cultural view with multiple voices addressing various aspects of his literary and cultural impact. Bill Potter and Tony Watson represent the Leavisite viewpoint and see Lawrence as an eminent artist and a moral authority, whereas Raphael Faber's criticism targets his mentoring style, the lack of credibility of his characters and what he judges against the new post-war measures, as triviality of the narrative focus in pre-Holocaust art in general. Frederica's consciousness provides a stage where all these narratives mingle and interact with her own thoughts and feelings. The resultant composite picture of Lawrence drawn in *The Virgin in the Garden* and *Still Life* corresponds with Lawrence's standing in the 1950s, conditioned particularly by the scholarly interest led by Leavis, with his prominent place in the English literary tradition at the centre. Byatt mixes the criticised elements of the Leavisite narrative that present Lawrence as a moral authority, with the popular association of Lawrence with uninhibited, or even revelatory, eroticism and, as a result, depicts her characters interpreting their erotic expectations and experiences, unavoidably, through a Lawrentian lens.

Compared to *The Virgin in the Garden*, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is notably absent from *Still Life*. Firstly, its relevance for the sex-haunted teenager Frederica has diminished, and secondly, the historical distance shifts the focus of the Byatt-Lawrence negotiation to new levels. By 1985, when the novel was written, not only the excitement over the 'Chatterley trial' and Lawrence's 1960s popularity as a subversive artist had long faded away, but also the controversies caused by the feminist criticism of Lawrence had died down. Byatt uses the historical distance to review the mid-1950s

figures who are more likely to possess 'the full range of human feelings' (Lawrence, cited in Leavis, 1968a, p.79).

situation and to re-assess Lawrence's role in relation to the cultural and social paradigms of the day, especially in relation to gender, class and cultural tradition. The questioning of the relevance of his writing in terms of realness (by Frederica) or credibility (by Faber) reflects the decline in his attractiveness since the 1980s.

Babel Tower

Babel Tower (1996) was published eleven years after *Still Life* and nearly two decades after the first part of the series. Over this time, Lawrence's cultural status had shifted yet again. As Chris Baldick indicates in the *Cambridge Companion to D.H. Lawrence* (2001), the academic interest in Lawrence in the UK began to diminish from the 1980s⁶ while it remained comparably alive in some other parts of the world, especially in Asia. The main shift seems to have occurred in the research focus, as Lawrence began to be studied in relation to the socio-cultural and socio-economic contexts of his time. Ambivalences in his writing and oscillations in its quality became another new focus in Lawrence studies. Harrison and McCoy (1992) suggest an expansion of the research field due to interest in genre studies, which generated greater interest in the short stories, novellas, drama etc. Intensive textual research made the publication of the scholarly Cambridge editions of Lawrence's work and letters (started in 1979) possible. Lawrence remained included on school syllabi and GCSE and A-levels reading lists. His popular image, on the other hand, remained linked with sexual unrestraint and the breaking of social taboos, as a mixed result of his 'Chatterley-trial' publicity and the adoption by the 1960s counterculture and the later feminist charges of misogyny and sexual violence. The chronology of *Babel Tower* gave Byatt an

⁶ Also Harrison & McCoy (1992).

opportunity for a critical review of the trial and its aftermath and a reassessment of their impact on Lawrence's legacy. The awareness of feminist criticism of Lawrence remains only in the background and informs Byatt's representation of his women characters in the novel. Byatt's portrayal of Lawrence in *Babel Tower* is influenced by her literary interests and formal preoccupations. *Babel Tower* is far more formally experimental than its prequels and continues travelling on the postmodern wave of Byatt's previous novel, *Possession*, published in 1990.

The change of narrative style shifts the way in which Lawrence is represented in the text. His presence in the novel is the most robust and complex in Byatt's *oeuvre* to date. This complexity is facilitated by the composite structure of the novel that replaces the straightforward linear storytelling of the first half of the *Quartet*. Just as the novel is composed of a range of narratives, so is Lawrence's kaleidoscopic portrayal comprised from numerous, often contrasting, images. The tensions and interactions between the various narratives about Lawrence are parts of the metanarrative which focuses on the problem of language and interpretation, specifically literary, historical and legal. Correspondingly, Lawrence appears in all his contradictory guises in this novel – a part of the novel's broader production of multiple points of view.

Most importantly, Byatt's dialogical method highlights the major paradoxes of Lawrence's afterlife and exposes the narratives that sustain them. Byatt uses different approaches to establish two major schemes. The first features Lawrence as a prominent and powerful writer and a member of the English as well as European novelistic tradition and is delivered mainly through the account of Frederica's teaching. While there are a few complementary voices that moderate the didactic feel of these passages, with their mocking tone and alternative visions, the narrative mode is essentially serious and analytical. Sharing her appreciation of Lawrence's writing with her students,

Frederica offers a criticism of selected aspects of Lawrence's work, based on close reading, and carries out a textual experiment in which she rewrites a passage from *Women in Love*, directed towards him as a source of sexual understanding and liberation.

The second scheme is shaped by Byatt's negotiation of Lawrence's position in the historical and cultural backdrop of the novel, namely the late 1960s. She is aware of presenting a particular historical moment and her portrayal of Lawrence represents views considered standard at the time. The central narrative mode is parody, aimed, nevertheless, at displacing the popular narratives about Lawrence rather than vilifying Lawrence himself. At the centre is the juxtaposition of two fictive trials, an obscenity trial and Frederica's divorce trial, and the roles which Lawrence's legacy plays in both cases. It features the most significant perceptions of Lawrence in the 1960s, derived most notably from his place in the English literary canon, on one hand, and from his popular image as a cultural icon and symbol of the libertarian spirit and dissent from the hippie years. A significant binding element between Byatt's trials, as well as between themselves and their 1960 model, is the question of whether reading can corrupt. This question was central to the 'Chatterley trial' and is reiterated with the same urgency in *Babel Tower*.

Byatt continues to depict Frederica as a character who has internalised and debated Lawrence's ideas and work as part of her understanding of her personal experiences as well as of the world around her. However, her thoughts are increasingly more mature, inquisitive and earnest. Remembering, for example, the circumstances of her sister's accidental death, she makes another association with *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, but this time, the notion of Lady Chatterley's ritualistic sexual adventure is not contemptuously dismissed but presented as a legitimate attempt to reach 'sensuous

happiness' (BT, p.125) and placed alongside Milton, Keats and Shakespeare. Byatt also uses Frederica as a vehicle to produce a historical view of the 1950s. She describes Frederica as realising that the Lawrentian idea of losing oneself and finding oneself 'in the body', or that 'the body is truth' was indeed the 'myth' (BT, p.125) lived with in the 1950s, despite her pretences and revolts.

The classroom is a site of historical-literary exchange. Frederica's course on '*The Modern Novel*' includes Lawrence, alongside E.M. Forster, as the second source of the 'oneness' trope, with other prominent European writers such as Thomas Mann, Jean-Paul Sartre and Franz Kafka. Lawrence, as expected, stands out in terms of both the number and complexity of references and implicit intertextual links. But Byatt also opens the record with a brief but crucial historical resumé of the changes that have affected Lawrence's standing. The omniscient narrator who follows Frederica's thoughts summarises Lawrence's changing status in history: she reiterates Lawrence's claim about 'the one bright book of life' quoted in *Still Life* – indicating Lawrence's prime place in Frederica's knowledge but also the external weight attributed to it – but also historicises his relevance (BT, p.212). She points out that during her schooldays in the 1950s, Lawrence represented 'the point of perfection towards which the novel had been heading' (BT, p.212). Then she reports that '[t]he Sixties are slowly gathering speed, and the Sixties do not find Lawrence daring: he has been admitted to the Establishment with the Lady Chatterley trial in 1961. Daring is *The Naked Lunch*, is Allen Ginsberg, is Artaud.' (BT, p.212)⁷

The idea that Lawrence has been institutionalised accords with the institutionalisation of other once-daring modernist writers such as Joyce. The fact of

⁷ Byatt's date is inaccurate for the trial of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* which was held in late October and early November 1960, not 1961.

Lawrence's literary canonisation resurfaces in the fictive obscenity trial and the tension between its being modelled on the *Lady Chatterley's Lover* trial and using Lawrence as part of the argument in favour of the prosecuted book, contributes significantly to the parodic effect. The response to the suggestion that Lawrence is a role model, however, generates a critical reaction during the hearing of Frederica's divorce case, indicating that while Lawrence may no more be viewed as 'daring', the ideas he puts forth in his novels can be still regarded as dangerous. A seemingly contradictory effect of Lawrence's institutionalisation is his elevation as a symbol of counterculture and anti-establishment sentiment. Yet as we will see later, it was both the defence of his ideas by Leavis and others, such as Richard Hoggart or Helen Gardner, particularly concerning the centrality of erotic experience for an individual's fulfilment, as 'healthy' and full of 'integrity', that helped win the 1960 libel case and align Lawrence with the late 1960s libertarian spirit. This historical summary is, therefore, an essential springboard for the understanding of the contrasts and interactions between the various Lawrence narratives in the novel.

Byatt diagnoses the dialogic importance of Lawrence depicted in previous novels: 'Frederica by a pure trick of time feels involved in *Women in Love*, which is a book about which she feels a fierce ambivalence (it is powerful, it is ridiculous, it is profound, it is wilfully fantastic.) Its existence is part of the way she sees the world' (BT, p.212). Here we have a replication of 'ridiculousness' that many observed at the time of Lawrence's trial, and Byatt herself recognises as its major characteristic. Equally significant is how the statement identifies the profound ambivalence and imbalance of Lawrence's writing that informs Byatt's relationship to Lawrence and marks a shift in the representation of Lawrence in her fiction. She moves from the historically appropriate depiction of Lawrence as a moral guide in the 1950s in *The*

Virgin in the Garden to a multi-faceted representation that responds to this ambivalence as well as the varied and often contradictory attitudes to his legacy from the 1960s onwards. This shift in Byatt's representation coincides, or corresponds, with the similar trend in the academic criticism of Lawrence around the time when *Babel Tower* was written. The revisionist nature of Byatt's look at the 1960s and Lawrence's part in them from the 1990s may have been partly influenced by these new trends. The problem of any historical understanding of Lawrence's writing is, nevertheless, not incorporated into *Babel Tower*, which concentrates on the historical contexts of Lawrence's afterlife as opposed to those of his own time. Moreover, Frederica's reading of Lawrence follows the close reading model, in which historical context has very limited relevance.

Frederica's use of *Women in Love* to illustrate how literary art works through the interaction of language with imagination contains an implicit valuation of the novel. Byatt pays tribute to Lawrence's novelistic bravura by having Frederica select *Women in Love* as a model for the introduction to her course on the modern novel. She selects the chapter 'Water Party' to explain the rich symbolic texture of Lawrence's writing to her visual art students. She tells students how a novel works and borrows Lawrence's examples to show them the main asset of verbal art – the creation of '*unseen visible images*' are described as products of '*all our imaginings* and their sameness and their difference' (BT, p.213) prompted by language. The seemingly contradictory notion of an unseen visible picture – an image of something described in words generated in our imagination, comes from the same understanding of how literature works as Stephanie's ruminations about Keats's '*unheard melodies*' (VG, p.101) during her own poetry lesson. Frederica selects the chapter 'Water Party', rich with vivid visual writing and full of vibrant colours and contrasts, chosen to appeal to her arts students' imaginations. The narrator reports that:

Frederica is speaking passionately about paper lanterns on a dark lake, primroses and ruddy sea with crabs, white storks and turquoise sky, and the great sinister cuttlefish 'that stared straight from the heart of the light'. Everything for Lawrence, she says, is loaded with *meaning*. She describes the shattered circle of the reflected moon. She talks of the white flowers of evil, the *fleurs du mal* floating on the sea of death. (BT, p.212)

The particular passage of the chapter in *Women in Love*, from which Frederica quotes, the lantern-lit boat ride of the novel's two central couples on a dark lake, is filled with symbolic imagery, interlinked with ideas and associations within the narrative and beyond it.

The lantern scene is immediately preceded with a passage where Birkin tries to explain to Ursula his theory about the cyclic processes of creation and destruction, which is clearly derived from Lawrence's 'metaphysic', articulated in 'The Study of Thomas Hardy'. With lit-up lanterns floating on the darkening lake in the backdrop, Birkin describes the destructive element as 'the black river of corruption' (WL, p.173) and, at the same time, identifies Gerald and Gudrun as impersonations of the death-process, metaphorized as 'flowers of dissolution'. Ursula responds by drawing an explicit analogy with Baudelaire's 'fleurs du mal' (WL, p.173) and hence with Baudelaire's nihilism and will to death, of which Gerald, who had accidentally killed his brother in childhood, is the major exponent in the novel. In the complex symbolic pattern of the chapter, the lake symbolizes, but also literally becomes, a 'sea of death' (BT, p.212), in which the newly-wed couple, Gerald's sister and her husband, drown on the same night. The dead white bodies of the lovers, found clinging to each other in the dark mud later on, represent 'flowers of evil' too, as did the shining lanterns floating on the dark lake on the previous night. Moreover, their tragic fate appears to affirm Baudelaire's nihilistic association between sex and desire for death. Birkin, nevertheless, responds to Ursula's Baudelairean analogy by pointing out the key

difference between Baudelaire's nihilism and his own concept of 'destructive creation' (WL, p.172). He reassures Ursula that not all people are doomed like 'pure flowers of dark corruption – lilies' since 'there ought to be some roses, warm and flamy' (WL, p.172), and that due to its cyclic nature, the corruption-and-creation process is not a cursed road to annihilation but a natural productive process where a 'beginning comes out of the end' (WL, p.173). This particular conversation is also an example of Ursula challenging Birkin's preaching pronouncements by declaring herself 'a rose of happiness' (WL, p.173) in defiance of Birkin's sinister propositions.

The images and colours on the lanterns acquired by the two couples, recalled by Frederica, participate in the symbolic pattern, as do the colours and shades of the surrounding space. Ursula's first lantern is described as 'primrose yellow, with tall straight flowers growing darkly from their dark leaves, lifting their heads into the primrose day, while butterflies hovered about them, in the pure clear light' (WL, p.174). The second 'had a pale ruddy sea-bottom, with black crabs and seaweed moving sinuously under a transparent sea, that passed into flamy ruddiness above' (WL, p.175). Finally, Gudrun's lantern 'was of a lovely deep blue colour, with a red floor, and a great white cuttle-fish flowing in white soft streams all over it. The cuttle-fish had a face that stared straight from the heart of light, very fixed and coldly intent.' (WL, p.175).

The ekphrastic descriptions rely on repetition of certain colours, most notably 'ruddy' and 'primrose (yellow)', and the contrast between light and dark, and give further examples of Lawrence's painterly visual writing. Lawrence's 'dark' symbolizes natural processes, bodily instincts and the unconscious as opposed to 'light', associated with mental processes, and particularly the will, and in this case, the will to death. 'Ruddy', or red, the colour of blood, is associated with human physicality, sex and eroticism, but also with violence. Dark colours, particularly black, are linked with night,

mystery and the unknown, and typically with death. Primrose yellow is a joyful, spring hue but yellow is also the colour of deceit, cowardice and madness. Moreover, primrose has a connotation of being first, pure and unspoilt; it echoes a primeval, inhuman or pre-lapsarian world, or state of being. It is this world which seems to hover almost within each character's grasp that evening. So even Gerald, who is in many ways the embodiment of wilful destructiveness, 'was almost transfused, *lapsed out* for the first time in his time, into the things about him [...], melting into oneness with the whole' (WL, p.178). The colour schemes and imagery of the lanterns match symbolically with the characters' typologies. Gudrun and Gerald, in particular, are associated with cold, Nordic energy and a destructive will to power. The white stare of the cuttlefish on their lanterns is reminiscent of the 'pale gold, arctic light that [Gudrun felt at her first sight of Gerald] envelops only us two' (WL, p.15). In contrast, the picture on Ursula's second lantern is very sensual and erotically charged, displaying 'a pale ruddy sea-bottom, with black crabs and sea-weed moving sinuously under the transparent sea, that passed into flamy ruddiness above' (WL, p.175). The warm colour scheme, as opposed to Gudrun's cold light, and especially the word 'flamy' connect with Birkin's image of the 'roses' as positive opposites to the purely negative 'flowers of evil', 'lilies'. In his analyses of Lawrence's visual writing, Stewart (1999, p.85) identifies 'a symbol of creation from Genesis' in Ursula's second lantern, showing 'the heavens above, and the waters under the earth' (WL, p.173, cited in Stewart, 1999, p.85). The 'terrifying' (WL, p.175) cuttlefish face on Gudrun's lantern is linked, on the other hand, with her 'life-denying art' (Stewart, 1999, p.85).

Byatt's choice of text for Frederica's lesson on *Women in Love* in *Babel Tower* highlights for its readers those qualities of Lawrence's writing that Byatt appreciates the most and which, in her opinion, earn him a well-deserved place among the best

European novelists. They include the imaginative appeal of his visually evocative prose and its rich and complex symbolism.

The teaching context is not accidental: many of Byatt's fictionalized literary debates include a pedagogical element. In this case, Frederica's lesson on *Women in Love* as a rich and enticing novel, and a prime illustration of the merits and potential of the novel as a genre, is a clear tribute to Lawrence and his novelistic bravura. Not unlike Birkin's preachments in *Women in Love*, moderated by Ursula's objections, Frederica's lecturing is toned down by a corrective voice, delivered by Jude Mason, a visiting model to the art school and the author of the book prosecuted in the imminent fictive obscenity case. The comedy of the passage describing their first encounter is determined by the contrast between the newly emerged character's (lack of) attire and posture, and his high-cultured proclamations:

He is partly dressed: below his spare haunches he is naked: he sits on the edge of the platform, his knees drawn up amongst his long grey veil of hair, his balls poised on the dust between his dirty feet. He wears a dirty velvet jacket in a faded speedwell blue, a skirted jacket, from the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in style, with filthy lace cuffs and a kind of jabot or cravat. Under this jacket and beneath the cravat, he is unclothed, his body lean like dark metal. He calls out now, in a sawing voice,

‘You should teach them Nietzsche. Man in a little skiff on the raging sea of Maya, of illusion, supported by the *principium individuationis*.’ (BT, pp.213-4)

There is an added disparity between Jude's shabby old-time ghost's appearance and the metallic quality attributed to his lean body and voice. However, both accentuate his apparently knowledgeable yet scathing comments, by which he assumes a position of authority, very different from Frederica's. The character's name 'Jude Mason' is an allusion to Thomas Hardy's novel *Jude the Obscure* (published serially 1894/1895), whose hero is a stonemason. In *Babel Tower*, Jude's, to a great extent conscious, self-stylization, is that of a subversive prophet; an image that, especially in anticipation of the obscenity trial, draws a clear analogy between Jude and Lawrence. Jude is cast as a

jokey 1960s countercultural Lawrence figure – an eccentric outsider, defying social conventions. The description of his physical appearance underlines the parody by contrasting the display of what is ‘natural’, and using the Chatterley-trial rhetoric, implicitly ‘healthy’ and ‘clean’, human body, with its physical dirt and repulsiveness. The controversial sense of ‘healthiness’ is revived later during the trial of Jude’s book. Nudity, on the other hand, is a shared feature with another Lawrence figure, namely Herbert Methley in *The Children’s Book*, where it is explicitly presented as a part of a lifestyle in harmony with nature. Jude’s figure is also compared to William Burroughs, with whom Jude shares topics of sexual violence and moral degradation, and with whose work his novel *Babbletower* is compared in the courtroom. The invocation of Nietzsche connects all three subversive figures and suggests Burroughs as an alternative intellectual inheritor of Lawrence’s ideas.

Jude’s humour undermines the didactic substance of Frederica’s commentary and the momentary feel of her passion for Lawrence by way of mocking the relativisation of her postulations. When Frederica claims, for example, that ‘*Women in Love* is a novel about experiencing the world as art’ and ‘the forms of vision and the forms of thought’ (BT, p.215), Jude reminds her that it is also about sex. Provoked by her refusal to believe in the proposed Nietzschean idea of ‘the veritable creator’, Jude also questions her authority as a critic by accusing her of being ‘snarled up in [her] own narrow little utilitarian roots’ (BT, p.216). Jude’s response that ‘maybe your David Herbert does or did, maybe his Birkin does or did or will [believe in one]’ touches upon the problems of the critic’s subjectivity and potential proprietary tendencies in relation to the source material. The staged debate between Jude, as an ironized, dirty, Lawrence in person, and Frederica in the position of teacher, with echoes of her father, stages a key question about the role of art in society.

Despite Jude's provocative interference, Lawrence comes out of the debates in a positive and affirmative light. The general judgement of Lawrence the novelist is conveyed in Frederica's father's statement during their reconciliatory meeting as teachers who teach Lawrence. Lawrence is reported to be 'a *silly*, even at times a bad man – and pompous' but more important is his '*shining*' 'language' and 'vision' (BT, p.244). Bill Potter's words verbalize, of course, Frederica's 'love-hate' relationship to Lawrence, expressed in her previously reported feelings about *Women in Love* as 'powerful', 'ridiculous', 'profound' and 'wilfully fantastic' (BT, p.212).

Frederica's views are similar to Byatt's. The literary features that Frederica admires, in particular the power of Lawrence's imagery, are the same ones Byatt praises in her various commentaries on Lawrence, particularly in her introduction to *The Shadow of the Sun* (1991), the article 'The One Bright Book of Life' (2002) and her responses to Adelman in *Reclaiming D.H. Lawrence* (2002). At her most accurate, Frederica replicates Byatt's own fascination with the figure of Birkin disclosed in the introduction to *The Shadow of the Sun*, who, in Byatt's view, 'is only explicable if he is Lawrence and a driven artist [...] but who remains a school inspector driven by a need for sexual honesty and personal freedom' (SS, p.xi).

Lastly, teaching Lawrence draws Frederica closer to the writer and reminds her of their affinity in personal and social circumstances. She finds herself becoming an advocate for him against the ideas of the young post-war British novelists known as the 'Angry Young Men' who were seen as pioneers of the provincial working-class novel. She recalls the intellectual and social aspirations shared with Lawrence and some of his major characters that she misses in the work of those young men. Frederica disagrees with the view that the 'Angry Young Men' were the first working-class voices in British literature and asks:

has the author of this work never read Lawrence, never read Arnold Bennett? She reads this book and takes a certain aesthetic pleasure in the critical attempt to make interesting what is (compared to Lawrence and Bennett) intrinsically *not very interesting*, except that everything is interesting *if you take a run at it*, she tells herself, I will get myself interested in Amis and Wain and Braine and all those others. [...] I am myself a provincial person become self-conscious but I cannot like the world of these novels. Lawrence was greedy for knowledge, for learning, he felt people should get out of mining villages. These people mostly sneer at such things. (BT, p.219)

Frederica's thoughts rephrase Byatt's suggestion that 'Wains and Braines' are inferior latecomers to Lawrence and Bennett in her interview with Newman and Friel (2003b, no page).

Having said that, it would be a mistake to equate Frederica's and Byatt's views. Frederica's thoughts clearly follow Byatt's preoccupations, but so do at least some of the additional polemical voices mentioned earlier. As a result, the *Quartet* becomes a platform for an exploration of various aspects of Lawrence's legacy, instead of delivering a definitive, static picture of Lawrence, and foregrounds its essential ambiguity and volatility.

The opposite pole to Byatt's making a case for Lawrence the novelist is his portrayal as a cultural icon, woven together from a range of narratives that represent the changing attitudes to Lawrence. These narratives wind their way through the fictive trials in *Babel Tower*, which themselves were created by separating the two main strains of the 'Chatterley trial' polemic, outlined above. While the questioning of 'Lady C's' behaviour informs the staging of Frederica's divorce hearing, the treatment of Lawrence's novel is the referential framework for Byatt's obscenity case. As indicated above, both trials raise directly or indirectly the same question: can reading corrupt?

During Frederica's divorce hearing the word 'corrupt' is never used. Nevertheless, reading is described as an improper and potentially harmful activity for young women. It is suggested that excessive reading or reading of certain literature can

affect women's attitude to their perceived roles as wife and mother (BT, p.517). Most importantly, it can affect their preferences in making important life choices. The discussion of propriety and the potential harmfulness of reading is staged specifically as a gender issue. With the rhetoric of the divorce trial echoing that of the 'Chatterley' case, it reveals the rigidness of the state institutions and the existing social structures in relation to the sexual, social and intellectual freedoms of women, nearly a decade later. The hearing opens with Frederica's solicitor's patronizing portrait of 'a very young woman who has found herself in a world that turned out to be unpredictable and dangerous' (BT, p.486). Despite admitting a degree of youthful naiveté, Frederica refuses to be patronized and wants to be seen as an educated, intelligent woman. Facing the conservative court and the prevailing social conventions, she feels as if she is speaking for 'intelligent women, everywhere' (BT, p.486).

Lawrence is referred to when Frederica attempts to explain the importance of sexual satisfaction in her decision to marry Nigel Reiver, a man from a strikingly different social, economic and educational background than Frederica's. She tells the court that '[a]ll intellectuals these days read D.H. Lawrence, who says we should listen to – to our passions – to our bodies' (BT, p.491). The interrogator mockingly retorts: 'Ah, D.H. Lawrence. The immemorial magnificence of mystic palpable, real otherness. You felt *that*' (BT, p.491). This indicates that he regards Lawrence as a notoriously inadequate guide and interprets Frederica's reason in the same reductionist way, applied to Lawrence's writing, that she married 'for good sex' (BT, p.491). Here the suggestion is that reading has the ability to corrupt. Frederica is humiliated through a phrase she herself used to mock as a teenager. She reaches to Lawrence for support, but it turns out to be to her detriment rather than advantage. Before this court, where intelligence and imagination are treated as undesirable, particularly in women, Lawrence is regarded as a

somewhat deluded eccentric, whose work is misleading, if not dangerous.

Paradoxically, her misjudgement regarding her marriage validates to a certain extent the respondent party's assumption about the potentially harmful power and influence of literature on the (female) mind, which is a problem addressed by both the historical (*Lady Chatterley's Lover*) and fictive (*Babbletower*) obscenity trials.

The gender prejudice that had powered the ill-famed wife-or-servants question in the 'Chatterley' case is evident throughout the divorce hearing and echoes in the judge's verdict in *Babel Tower*. Whilst Frederica's petition is labelled as 'melodramatic', her husband is deemed right to have 'expected to find a wife who behaved like a wife and accepted the constraints upon her freedom inevitably incurred by becoming a wife' (BT, p.518). Frederica's former feeling that she was 'on trial for reading books' (BT, p.501) is legitimized by the judge's conclusion that '[t]he higher education of women [...] has encouraged skills and raised expectations which society as it is at present constituted is incapable of fulfilling or satisfying – skills and expectations perhaps incompatible with the fulfilled life of wife and mother' (BT, p.519). What matters here in relation to the portrayal of Lawrence is that he is associated with the 'intelligent' (BT, p.327) and 'ambitious' (SL, p.259) women that Frederica feels to represent and speak for in the court room (BT, p.487).

While the analogy between Frederica's divorce hearing and the 1960 trial of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* relies on intertextual links,⁸ Byatt's fictive obscenity trial in *Babel Tower* is explicitly tied to the historical prosecution of the novel. The 'Chatterley trial' serves as a model for the staging of the obscenity case, while, intertextually, the novel's characters look back at the case as a legal precedent when planning the defence

⁸ For more detailed discussion of the historic circumstances and Byatt's treatment of the trial in *Babel Tower*, see Janktova (2016).

of Jude Mason's *Babbletower*. Byatt's view of the trial as 'one of the great comic moments in British culture' (Byatt, 2002b, p.110) determines the parodic tone in which the parallel court hearings are rendered and how Byatt's revisionist look at the convoluted twists in Lawrence's reputation is delivered.

Byatt imitates several concrete features of the 'Chatterley trial', some of which are fully or partly revealed to the reader, whereas others remain hidden in puns and jokes discernible by readers closely familiar with the particularities of the case. One of the former is the body of expert witnesses that the *Babel Tower* characters decide to set up following the 'Lady Chatterley' precedent. In order to familiarise the reader with the 1960 situation, one of the characters in *Babel Tower*, describes it as follows:

When Lady Chatterley was triumphantly acquitted, the defence produced an impressive file of the great and the good, poets, professors, bishops and one young girl, to say that the book was full of tenderness and sweetness and light and advocacy of married fidelity. The prosecution relied on reading aloud 'bouts' of explicit sexual description, and rhetorically and famously asking 'Is this a book you would allow your wife and daughters, or your servants, to read?' (BT, p.471)

In a recognizably ironic tone, the summary not only reminds the readers about the role and points of argumentation of the expert witnesses in the 1960 case but also remembers one of the most controversial and notorious pronouncements of the trial. The patronising charge of the 'wife and daughters' question is echoed in the treatment of Frederica before her divorce court and in the judge's concluding speech, which resembles the period of 1950s rather than the permissive late 1960s.

Another highly controversial feature intimated in the above quote was a bishop's statement that the novel ought to be read by Christians. Byatt rewrites it as follows:

'There was a bishop in the Chatterley case,' says Hefferson-Brough. 'Got rather mangled. Said the book promulgated marriage. Got reprimanded by the Archbishop, I hear. Cantuar. Not a good precedent, on balance.' Canon Holly says he knows a better Bishop, a radio Bishop with a large following who might

appear, who has thought much about the experience of pain and desolation. Raby says he is against bishops. Martin Fisher says bishops are sods and buggers like everyone else. (BT, p.472).

The clergy's representative, Canon Holly, eventually terms the prosecuted *Babbletower* 'a deep, a profoundly Christian book' and its controversial passages 'oh *superbly* horrible, *brilliantly* effective, *beautifully* dreadful' (BT, p.554).

The above quotes, particularly the emphasised oxymorons, illustrate the strong parodic mode in which the 'Chatterley' case is revived, and Byatt's obscenity trial designed. During the obscenity hearings, Lawrence is, on the other hand, referred to as an established literary authority, whose work has recognized literary merit and whose 'status' is 'final' compared with living writers, especially at the beginning of their literary career where 'judgements of literary merit are *provisional*' (BT, p.537). Jude's position is thus contrasted with Lawrence's but also with those of William Burroughs and Mickey Spillane, who are situated at the other end of the spectrum compared with the canonized Lawrence. Having said that, the evidence of another expert witness, the rather extravagant psychoanalyst Elvet Gander, reminds the reader how fragile Lawrence's standing remains, nonetheless. He compares Jude's book to Lawrence's work based on their allegedly shared strive for 'healthiness' by way of revealing the deepest recesses of the unconscious. In the case of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, what is considered obscene is rendered as 'healthy' and beneficent (BT, p.548). The strong parodic effect is achieved through the extravagant exaggeration of Gander's rhetoric, which imitates and ridicules the criticized hyperbole of the Defence in 1960.

The above paragraphs have demonstrated how the juxtaposition of the divorce hearing and the obscenity trial, and the interactions with the 'Chatterley' case form key building blocks of the parody, which is based on the contrast between the diverse images of Lawrence in either court. The divorce hearing sees Lawrence turned into a

deluded eccentric fool whereas the obscenity case grants him the authority of an acclaimed novelist. In this respect, Frederica's remark about intellectuals following Lawrence's advice to listen to their bodies is an apt expression of the paradoxical nature of Lawrence's literary legacy.

Lastly, this reading of *Babel Tower* demonstrates how central Lawrence is to the book. The ambiguity of the 'Chatterley' case regarding the actual culprit on trial – whether it was the obscene book or an adulterous woman – directly informs the novel's narrative structure. Byatt splits the two strains, and constructs two parallel cases instead; one prosecuting an obscene article, Jude's novel *Babbletower*, and the other charging a woman with indecent behaviour. Byatt's fictive trials replicate the prejudices and gender assumptions that shaped the 'Chatterley' case, and also show us the misrepresentations of Lawrence, whose legacy is reduced to names and labels.

Byatt, by situating the action in the 1960s, avoids a direct confrontation with the fact of Lawrence's shifting cultural status in the 1970s and 1980s. Byatt chooses to ignore the controversies caused by feminist criticism of Lawrence in her fiction altogether. While the Lawrence text about 'oneness' used in Frederica's cut-up experiment may evoke the ideas about women's subjugation and passivity, for which Lawrence is frequently criticized, and the concept itself can be suspected of enforcing such assumptions, Lawrence is presented mainly as a writer who portrays strong, emancipated women and whose work can empower his female readers. Hence, despite her rebellious dislike for the label 'Lawrentian woman', Frederica has a great deal of admiration for his 'ambitious' (SL, p.259) and 'intelligent' (BT, p.327) women. It is no coincidence that Byatt's narrator repeatedly draws attention to the (desire for) emancipation and independence in the chosen Lawrence women characters, and Frederica's recognition thereof, while presenting Lawrence as someone who can speak

for women rather than *against* them. Byatt's narrative strategy is aimed at removing the 'woman-hater' label from Lawrence and disentangling 'the very powerful artist' from the 'caricature' and 'embarrassing model' that, in Byatt's view, is the outcome of 'the unfortunate gender politics of literary studies' (Byatt, cited in Adelman, 2002, p.117).

A Whistling Woman

The closing part of the *Quartet, A Whistling Woman*, was published six years later, in 2002. The action is set in the late 1960s, but its depiction of Lawrence highlights the problematic aspects of his view on race and sexual violence and attests to Byatt's shifting response to Lawrence – in line with broader critiques of his legacy. The representation of Lawrence's legacy is also informed by Byatt's depiction of the cultural changes in the late 1960s, particularly the growth of popular culture and the expansion of television broadcasting. Analogous to the flashy reductionism of the TV production criticized in the novel, Lawrence's presence is limited to brief occurrences as a symbol of sexual obsession and even depravity, largely without mentioning his writing. The novel reflects Lawrence's surviving status as a symbol of transgression and sexual liberation, an image that stood behind his popularity with the counterculture. Byatt makes a point about Lawrence's notoriety as a mere symbol, or in Preston's coinage 'signifier', in the late 1960s. When Frederica gives her students free choice of a seminar subject at the beginning of the 1968 student protests, they choose *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, although, as it turns out, few have read it and nobody is interested in either the book or the discussion.

Lawrence is briefly mentioned amongst suggestions for a new 'intellectual' TV programme called *Through the Looking Glass* on which Frederica is invited to

collaborate. Defined as ‘a rapid and elaborate joke about the boxness of the Box’ (BT, p.134), it is supposed to take the form of discussions of ‘an object, an idea, and a person, living or dead’ (BT, p.135). The outline of writers to be discussed include ‘Shakespeare, Dostoyevsky, Mrs Beeton and D.H. Lawrence (who went with sex and the padlocks)’ (BT, p.135). The inclusion of Isabella Beeton, an author famous for her nineteenth-century cookery and housekeeping books, among the acclaimed novelists as well as the bracketed addition, help the narrative imitate the jokingly entertaining nature of the programme. The addition itself is an ironic dig at the popular imagination, linking Lawrence with sex, including unconventional sexual practices.

Lawrence is also suggested as a representative of English Literature at the Body and Mind Conference organised by Frederica’s academic friends. Byatt uses this as an opportunity to acknowledge Lawrence’s engagement with anti-Semitism and proto-Fascism. The direct references in *A Whistling Woman* are about sex and sexual violence, stating that ‘D.H. Lawrence [...] was always going on about blood and semen’ (BT, p.274). These alleged academic references to Lawrence recognize the racial and anti-Semitic elements in Lawrence’s work and his theory of natural aristocracy as a segment of one part of society naturally superior to the rest, but they also indicate the risk of their decontextualized misinterpretation. In Lawrence’s criticism of the decadent, materialistic state of contemporary society, Judaism represents the corruption of humanity (cf. WL, p.428). His references to Jews are disdainful and antagonistic, such as the association between Jews and cowardice and hypocrisy (WL, p.71) or blaming ‘the Jewish intelligence’ for ‘picking holes in our ideal system – scientific and sociological’ (Lawrence, 2004c, p.190). After World War Two, his opinions on Jews and his racial assumptions, were branded as pro-Nazi (cf. Granofsky, 1999-2000). Byatt’s inclusion of this ugly aspect of Lawrence’s legacy complements his portrayal, in

a way, as a complex and controversial figure while also reflecting the debates about Lawrence's anti-Semitic and Fascist beliefs, revived as parts of the historicised reviews in the 1980s and 1990s.

What is striking in *A Whistling Woman*, compared to the previous parts of the *Quartet*, is the utter lack of Frederica's personal involvement with Lawrence. It seems that after her close preoccupation with his writing in *Babel Tower*, including the mutilation of his text, and the symbolic settlement with the writer through the reconciliation with her father, Frederica is able to let him go.

The Children's Book

In *The Children's Book*, first published in 2009 and set between 1895 and 1919, Lawrence becomes, first and foremost, the model for Herbert Methley, an eccentric novelist figure and proponent of sexual freedom, who seduces the novel's main female character, Olive Wellwood, a writer of enchanting children's stories.

Methley is not only named after Lawrence (having Lawrence's middle name), but shares numerous personal characteristics, opinions and life experiences. Similarly to the *Quartet*, Byatt adopts a parodying style to create her character, but without the former aim of a critical renegotiation of Lawrence's legacy. Reading Methley is an entertaining intertextual game for the reader as he is one of a whole cast of rather idiosyncratic characters. He is introduced as the author of, among others, *Marsh Lights*, a novel reportedly characterised by nature spiritualism, whose title refers to the Brangwen family farm 'the Marsh' in *The Rainbow*. His latest work *Daughters of Men* is effectively a parody of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. It is titled with the biblical phrase repeatedly used by Lawrence in his religious glorifications of sex, most notably when

describing Connie Chatterley's sexual bliss in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (LChL, p.153). The main character Roger Thomas is called after 'John Thomas' (LChL, p.185), Oliver Mellors's nickname for his member, and possibly also after an introduction to the Paris edition of the novel, later expanded into 'A Propos to Lady Chatterley's Lover', called 'My skirmish with Jolly Roger' (1929). This is described as a controversially sounding work about 'a young man in the provinces' (ChB, p.184), whose search for 'the One Woman' involves generous testing of sexual relations with women, until he meets 'a melancholy woman, a married woman, his elderly headmaster's young, lovely wife' (ChB, p.185). Parodying Lawrence's pastoral sexual scenes, the *Children's Book* narrator reports a passage describing the couple lying 'tragically in each other's arms on blankets in the woods, on the carpet in front of the little heater, with its red glow, in his rented room' (ChB, p.185) and eventually eloping together, like Herbert Methley and his pretend-wife Phoebe did themselves. The Methleys' situation is modelled on Lawrence's elopement with Frieda Weekley, the wife of Professor Ernest Weekley whom Lawrence met at the University of Nottingham. Phoebe resembles Frieda by deserting her three young children. She is portrayed as a feminist who gave a lecture about the absence of women's rights and freedoms.

In Methley, Byatt mimics Lawrence's call to follow natural, especially sexual instincts and his preoccupation with primitivism. Methley appears physically for the first time in the novel '[s]un-worshipping' (ChB, p.122) with his wife, both naked, in their garden. His obsession with sex and hinted indulgence in potentially deviant sexual practices exploits the popular image of Lawrence as a sex maniac (matching *A Whistling Woman* references to 'blood and semen', WW, p.274), whilst his persistent incantation of Olive with "'You must come to me, you must come, it is meant to be'" (ChB, p.223) reminds the reader of Count Psanek luring Lady Daphne in Lawrence's

‘The Ladybird’ (L, p.212-15). During their lovemaking, Methley speaks like Mellors in *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, in a ritualistic language that in his case simulates biblical discourse instead of Mellors’ vernacular.

Byatt’s Lawrence character is a comical pastiche that includes some of those aspects of his work and thought that would most likely fall under Frederica’s formerly discussed attribute, ‘silly’. The creation of Herbert Methley is Byatt’s last fictional preoccupation with Lawrence to date. Coming after the complex, multi-layered and multi-vocal critical negotiation of his legacy in the *Quartet*, it is a light-hearted, witty and imaginative conclusion.

Having said that, D.H. Lawrence actually makes an appearance as himself in *The Children’s Book*, namely within the narrator’s historical portrayal of Edwardian society, characterized by ‘the huge pull of earthly nostalgia’ (ChB, p.393), anti-militarism, and the birth of psychoanalysis, among other things. D.H. Lawrence is referred to as ‘a miner’s son, reborn as a German sensibility after finishing *Sons and Lovers*, having read the letters of Otto Gross, Frieda Lawrence’s earlier lover, and *The Meaning of Dreams*, by Sigmund Freud’ (ChB, p.393). He is linked as a ‘Sun Hero’ to Siegfried, the German legendary dragon-slayer and a source of inspiration for the chief protagonist of Lawrence’s novel *The Trespasser* (1912). By being lined-up with German artists and thinkers rather than the contemporary English literary elite exemplified by the Bloomsbury Group, Edward Carpenter, Ford Maddox Ford, and E.M. Forster, his connection to a European literary heritage is foregrounded, as are his social outsidership and subsequent cultural alienation. His alignment with the Germans may also be read as a reference to the persecution of Lawrence and Frieda based on the suspicions of war espionage.

This chapter has analysed Byatt's fictional responses to Lawrence's changing status as a key cultural historical figure. In many respects, the changing significance of Lawrence as a real historical person and quoted author in Byatt's fiction mirrors the changing nature of his broader cultural status. Her own fictional portrayal moves from understated but an informing literary framework, to a sceptical portrayal of Lawrence's role as an educational figure, including the idea that freedom might involve breaking from this, to showing Lawrence as a countercultural figure whose words transgress, but are also mangled and cut up, to the later gestures of parody and pastiche. The focal point of her criticism is *Babel Tower* and the way in which she uses the 'Chatterley' case to expose it. Her construction of two trials instead of one, splits apart the obscenity and the misogyny of the authorities' responses to Lawrence.

Lastly, the complexity and dynamic of Lawrence's presence in the *Quartet*, whilst considering the duration of the whole project, convinces me that the renegotiation of Lawrence's legacy was a planned part of the scheme. This matters because it puts Lawrence in a very special, privileged position amongst other literary influences that shape Byatt's writing. Taking into account the scope of literary-critical preoccupations in Byatt's fiction and the abundance and sophistication of her literary references, it is beyond doubt that Lawrence occupies a unique place in this fiction, considering the invested time, space and energy. As such, Byatt's 'Lawrence project' may be a rare example of a novelist's fictionalized negotiation of another writer's legacy in contemporary English literature.

CHAPTER 2

Byatt and Leavis

Byatt's relationship to Lawrence cannot be fully captured without acknowledging the profound formative influence of F.R. Leavis. Byatt's encounter with Leavis during her undergraduate studies at Newnham College, Cambridge, in the mid-1950s was essential to her formation as both writer and critic. The liberal humanist approach in literary criticism, championed by Leavis, shaped her own approach to literature, her ways of reading, and her reception of the new critical approaches that emerged in the late 1960s and 1970s, particularly feminist and post-structuralist criticism. It also became a direct source of inspiration for characters and themes featured in her fiction, most notably the critic Oliver Canning in *The Shadow of the Sun* (1964), and Bill Potter in the *Quartet*. Both characters are also entangled, in one way or the other, with Lawrence. While Oliver is parasitically living off a visionary artist modelled on Lawrence, Bill Potter imposes Lawrence as a moral guide for his daughters. The association between Leavis and Lawrence in Byatt's fiction manifests the strength of the impression that Leavis's idiosyncratic advocacy of Lawrence in the 1950s made on her. Byatt's response is one of deep ambivalence. Her reading of Lawrence goes against Leavis's, in many ways, while it remains close to it in other aspects. Most significantly, Byatt is critical about Leavis's moralistic emphasis on earnestness and what he calls 'integrity' (1968a, p.184, 188) in his reading of Lawrence. According to Leavis, Lawrence's work, both content and form, is vitally informed by Lawrence's devotion to 'life', which, becomes reciprocally almost a *terminus technicus* in Leavis's criticism of

Lawrence. Similarly to Leavis, Byatt appreciates the liveliness of Lawrence's prose and his visual writing. Nevertheless, she links their quality with Lawrence's love and mastery of language and creative drive, rather than with his metaphysical preoccupations.

The majority of the existing literature on Byatt acknowledges Leavis's ambivalent impact on Byatt's writing. Jane Campbell (2004) recognizes Leavis's influence; particularly the novelist's belief in the moral power of literature and the writer's moral responsibility. Like other critics, Campbell (2004, p.14) notices the ambivalence in Byatt's relationship to Leavis, particularly in her criticism of her teacher's exaggerated moral fervour and the high demands he placed on both the artist and the critic. Byatt's holistic approach to literary texts and her resistance to theory and ideology are identified as further links to Leavis. As Campbell points out, the problem of the critic's appropriation of an author's work, as exemplified by Leavis's possessive attitude to the legacy of D.H. Lawrence, becomes one of the major themes of Byatt's first novel *The Shadow of the Sun*. Byatt draws attention to Anna and Oliver studying Matthew Arnold, whose idea of impersonality had motivated Leavis, and is reflected, according to Campbell, in the nature of Henry's creativity (Campbell, 2004, p.29).

In their insightful treatise on Byatt's fiction, interpreted in terms of 'critical storytelling', Alfer and Edwards de Campos (2010) challenge biographical readings of Byatt's early prose, however encouraged they may be by the author's own comments. They recognize the conflict between the 'Romantic-cum-Lawrentian belief in the potential totality of the artistic imagination, as represented by Henry and Oliver's socially committed and essentially Leavisite pragmatics of reading' in *The Shadow of the Sun*, as the basis for the novel's 'aesthetic argument' (Alfer and Edwards de Campos, 2010, p.15). They also focus, however, on theoretical questions arising from

this opposition, for example, the problems of criticism versus creativity, and art versus life. They make a significant point by identifying the obvious textuality of Henry's visions, constructed from 'an unmistakably Lawrentian imagery' (Alfer and Edwards de Campos, 2010, p.16), which turns them into 'revelations of a textual rather than of a truly transcendent nature' (p.17). Their pastiche quality calls the authenticity and originality of Henry's visions into question through what they describe as 'knowing irony' (p.17). In line with this argument, I suggest below that, whilst casting doubt on the type of artist represented by Henry, Byatt also indicates the possibility of an alternative kind of creativity that reconciles the two potentially antithetical principles of intellect and sensitivity.

Christien Franken's treatise *A.S. Byatt: Art, Authorship, Creativity* (2001) stands out amongst Byatt studies due to the space devoted to Byatt as a thinker and critic. Even though Franken's reading is centred on the role of gender in Byatt's relationship with Leavisite criticism, she focuses on the complexity and ambiguity of this relationship. By comparing Leavis's and Byatt's readings of George Eliot, Franken concentrates on the concept of 'impersonality', especially in relation to gender and 'femininity', as the pivot point of Byatt's disagreement with Leavis's critical approach, and of her feminist critique of the 'Great Tradition'. According to Franken, Byatt's attitude to 'impersonality' is complicated by what she sees as her gender-related predicament, the split between 'the woman' and 'the intellectual' (Franken, 2001, p.28).

Franken (2001, p.16) argues that Byatt's critical approach is partly caused by her 'double-speaking position' as both writer and critic. As a result, '[i]n A.S. Byatt's work, more than in the average writer's, nothing is as authentic or central as her contradictions and her ambivalences' (Franken, 2001, p.20). Nonetheless, recognizing all the fundamental intersections – between the importance and moral function of literature,

rejection of ideological and political engagement, the basic notion of ‘impersonality’, and the general standards of critical judgement – Franken concludes that ‘the first and most dominant speaker in [Byatt’s] critical work is the Leavisite thinker’ (2001, p.30).

For the purposes of my enquiry, Franken makes an important point by relating Byatt’s and Leavis’s views about the relations between literature and life. By quoting from Byatt’s childhood memories Franken demonstrates the novelist’s belief that ‘reading literature is a way of living which contains more life, more thoughts and feelings, than a life spent not reading’ (Franken, 2001, p.10). Franken’s reflection validates my proposed focus on the concept of ‘life’ as the key element of Leavis’s criticism, including its reciprocal relation to the writings of D.H. Lawrence, as a part of my investigation of the relations between Byatt, Lawrence, and Leavis.

Lawrence’s view of life as something that transcends individual existence and yet can only be realized, and achieved, through it, significantly informed Leavis’s critical approach to both literature and society. Moreover, Lawrence’s writing, in addition to Matthew Arnold’s criticism, inspired Leavis’s critical vocabulary, particularly expressions associated with ‘life’, such as ‘vital’, ‘living’ or ‘alive’, and supplied quotations to demonstrate the specific meanings ascribed to these otherwise vague categories. In return, Lawrence’s attention to ‘life’ became the essence of Leavis’s glorification of Lawrence. The criteria of livingness and intensity in relation to literary language that informed Leavis’s reading and valuation of literary texts play a significant role in Byatt’s criticism, and also in her appreciation of Lawrence’s art.

Byatt’s relationship with Leavis is marked with the same degree of ambivalence as is evident in her relationship with Lawrence. My argument is that this ambiguity became an enabling rather than obstructive element as it helped Byatt to maintain a distance from both of them. Her disagreement with Leavis over the assessment and

valuation of Lawrence's work gave her an opportunity to define her own critical position. At the same time, Byatt remained aware of her indebtedness to Leavis, which becomes apparent in her own critical idiom and approaches.

F.R. Leavis: Teacher and Critic

When Byatt met Leavis at Cambridge in the 1950s, he was already a controversial figure with a circle of dedicated followers, recruited largely from his graduate students at Downing College, but also many adversaries. He had co-founded the journal *Scrutiny* in 1932 and edited it until its demise in 1953. It was a platform for his own criticism, and for criticism influenced by his thought. Despite his initial preoccupation with poetry, his later publications – *The Great Tradition* (1948), *The Common Pursuit* (1952) and *D.H. Lawrence: Novelist* (1955), had made him known principally as a critic of the novel.

The fact that Byatt came to know Leavis as a student is significant. Not only do most of her references to him mention the fact, but her most notably Leavisite figures, Oliver in *The Shadow of the Sun* and Bill in the *Quartet*, are literature teachers. In addition, both are described as good teachers and good readers. The priority of a close focus on and an essential respect for the literary text was part of Leavis's rudimentary lesson and informed Byatt's own approach to literature and her teaching of it significantly, a hint of which can be obtained from her portrayal of Frederica's discussions of literary texts with her students in *Babel Tower*. Nonetheless, Byatt remained critical of her teacher's prescriptiveness and insistence on the highest standards, arguing that:

[h]e could show you the toughness of a sentence, the strength and the grace of it, the way another one failed and betrayed itself, but you paid a terrible price for this

useful technical knowledge [...] In his shadow his pupils, would-be critics and would be poets and novelists alike shrivelled into writing-blocks. (SS, pp.x-xi)

This view is echoed in *Possession* (1990), which contains the most detailed and outspoken reference to Leavis in her fiction. Leavis is described as the former teacher of Professor Blackadder, the main character's PhD supervisor and the leading scholar on Randolph Henry Ash, a fictive Victorian poet of a prominent status, comparable to that of Robert Browning, who served as a model for Byatt's character. The narrator reports that:

Leavis did to Blackadder what he did to serious students; he showed him the terrible, the magnificent importance and urgency of English literature and simultaneously deprived him of any confidence in his own capacity to contribute to, or to change it. The young Blackadder wrote poems, imagined Dr Leavis's comments on them, and burned them. [...] The lean and agile don, in his open-necked shirt, stood on the window-sill and tugged at the casement to let in the fresh air, cold Cambridge light. (P, p.27)

This portrait of Leavis in *Possession* encapsulates Byatt's own student experience of Leavis. Nevertheless, while Leavis's idiosyncratic approach to English literature and its students quenched Blackadder's artistic appetites and turned him into 'a stringent scholar' (P, p.10), who 'was discouraged and liked to discourage others' (P, p.9), Byatt withstood the pressure and became a practising writer.

Leavis's Approach to Literary Criticism and the Teaching of Literature

Leavis's approach to literature, literary criticism and cultural tradition appeared in his earliest published works – his pamphlet *Mass Civilisation and Minority Culture* (1930), *How to Teach Reading: A Primer for Ezra Pound* (1932), and *New Bearings in English Poetry*, and remained largely consistent throughout his life. Leavis (1979, pp.143, 144) positions himself as a defender of literary and moral values, a member of a 'minority' capable of a 'discerning appreciation' of literary masterpieces as well as of

‘unprompted, first-hand judgement’, which determine the moral, ethical and aesthetic standards of an era. The centrality of literature is grounded in the fact that it uses language that is not only ‘an analogy of cultural continuity’ but also ‘the essential core of it’ (Leavis, 1986c, p.131).

The crucial components of Leavis’s criticism are derived from the ideas of his foremost intellectual forebear, Matthew Arnold. Arnold’s nineteenth-century critical approach is based on the opposition between the ‘mechanical’ principle, associated with ‘stock notions and habits’ (Arnold, 1970, p.xi), and a mode of living motivated by striving toward ‘human perfection’, understood as ‘an inward spiritual activity, having for its characters increased sweetness, increased light, increased life, increased sympathy’ (Arnold, 1970, p.35). The word ‘life’ thus gains a specific meaning as it comes to encompass not only ordinary day-to-day living but also a moral humanist striving, including the awareness that there is something more (‘perfection’ seen in terms of beauty and wisdom) for which to strive.

Leavis also links an enhanced mode of living with high culture, seen primarily in terms of continuity, as ‘a sense of relative value and a memory – such wisdom as constitutes the residuum of the general experience’ (Leavis, 1968c, p.64). As in Arnold’s criticism, ‘life’ becomes a crucial concept in Leavis’s criticism, and categories like ‘vital’, ‘living’ or ‘alive’ are significant criteria in his evaluation of literary texts and the appreciation of writers. His terminology derives from the Arnoldian dichotomy between ‘living’, or ‘organic’ vs. mechanical, an opposition also important in Lawrence’s lexicon. Aware of the problematic evasiveness of the terms, Leavis resorts to the same means employed by both Arnold and Lawrence to explicate their use of the words, namely the stylistic tools of illustration, analogy and contrast. Moreover, he takes advantage of his predecessors by quoting them and referring to their work. This

allows him to develop a highly idiosyncratic critical vocabulary and operate fluently with expressions like ‘irrelevant “life”’ (Leavis, 1973, p.152), or ‘livingness’ (Leavis, 1968a, p.86).

Seeing a direct link between ‘life’ and creativity, Leavis adopts Arnold’s concept of poetry (and literature) as ‘a criticism of life’ where ‘the greatness of a poet lies in his powerful and beautiful application of ideas to life, – to the question: How to live’ (Arnold, 1865c, p.353). Similarly, Leavis views the poet as a person who is ‘more alive than other people’ (Leavis, 2008, p.16), and it is on this premise that he prefers Lawrence over T.S. Eliot. Equal criteria apply to literary critics, who, according to Leavis, must be ‘emotionally alive in every fibre’ in order to ‘be able to *feel* the impact of a work of art in all its complexity and its force’ (Leavis, 1986d, p.246). These are Lawrence’s words, borrowed by Leavis for his essay on ‘Standards of Criticism’, which presents Lawrence as ‘the real original critic’; one, who, unlike T.S. Eliot, is capable of recognizing ‘the difference between what makes *for* life and what is against life’ (Leavis, 1986e, p.281).

Lawrence’s texts also serve as examples used by Leavis to demonstrate how ‘life’ or ‘livingness’ are embedded in literary language and style. Both Arnold and Leavis associate ‘livingness’ with a specific in-text dynamic. Whereas Arnold (1865b, p.293) operates with terms such as ‘liquid diction’ and ‘fluid movement’, Leavis (1965d, p.130) speaks of ‘poetic intensity’ and ‘enactment’, achieved by poetry (Leavis’s initial model was Shakespeare), or by the poetic use of language, through its capacity of ‘creating what it presents, and as presenting something that stands there to speak for itself, or rather, that isn’t a matter of saying, but of being and enacting’ (p.130).

The Leavis-*cum*-Lawrence idea of 'life' as the transcendental unity of being realised through individual lives and the ability to see, or *intuit*, is a key component of Leavis's holistic approach to works of literature. The idea of 'wholeness', especially in relation to the ideal response to poetry, comes again from Matthew Arnold. Nevertheless, it accumulates many more meanings through Leavis's abundant, and greatly varied, application in his critical discourse. It is used as a measure of personal integrity, demonstrated by the degree of perception of, and response to life experience as well as a quality of literary texts. A 'whole' response to life, which Leavis looks for in poets, in critics, as well as in literary characters, is one that recognizes the interconnectedness between individual life and experience with the greater 'life', the existence and continuity of which is observable in natural life cycles and intuited from personal spiritual experience. In *The Rainbow*, for example, Leavis praises Lawrence for his delivery of the spiritual crisis in Tom Brangwen's courting episode: the way in which Lawrence captures the 'depth and wholeness in the [character's] response' is, at the same time, evidence of the 'impersonal wholeness' of Lawrence's art (Leavis, 1968a, p.119, 124).

Viewed by Leavis as a major attribute of Lawrence's excellence, 'impersonality' is another key category that can be traced from Arnold via Leavis to Byatt. Leavis (1967b, pp.177-96) developed and formulated his approach in opposition to T.S. Eliot's theory of impersonality, which interprets poetry as an escape from emotion and personality with the poet's mind acting as a neutral medium that transmutes and depersonalizes the author's personal experience and thereby separates the poem from its creator. Leavis's concept of impersonality, on the other hand, does not repudiate a more direct translation of personal experience and emotional urgency into a work of art, on the premise that it is transformed by the author's 'impersonalising intelligence' (Leavis, 1968a, p.149),

which is preoccupied with and aiming at things that transcend the merely personal. Instead of escaping from the personal, Leavis's process of depersonalisation is rooted in the author's lived experience and its active personal exploration, which aims to understand greater forces and processes of nature and civilisation. The author's lived experience becomes depersonalised in the process of its translation into art with the aim of exploring human experience as a whole as opposed to expressing the author's personality. Byatt inherits Leavis's model of impersonality in terms of the author's ambitions to transcend the personal sphere, and criticises writers' extensive preoccupation with their own inner worlds, that compromises, in her view, a significant proportion of contemporary fiction.

Finally, 'disinterestedness', characterised as the detachment from any outward (social, political, religious) interests and influences, is a capacity required by both Arnold and Leavis from both authors and literary critics. In Arnold's terms, 'disinterestedness' means freedom from any 'ulterior, political, practical considerations about ideas' that allows 'a free play of the mind on all subjects (Arnold, 1865a, p.12). Leavis (1965c, p.254) endorses the pre-requisite and insists on 'the scrupulous and disinterested approach of the literary critic', adding that if any ideological inclinations influence the critic's sensibility, they are inherent in their judgement and ought not to be made explicit in the critical statements. Byatt adopts a similar notion of the 'disinterestedness' in artistic judgement and is critical about approaching art in what she sees as political or ideological terms.

Neither 'the free play of the mind', nor 'curiosity' as vital aspects of Arnoldian criticism, found their place in Leavis's criticism. They are, however, vigorously promoted by Byatt. Unsurprisingly, Leavis's disregard of curiosity as a motivational force and a quality in itself is a vital point of her criticism.

The 'Great Tradition'

Byatt's response to Leavis was significantly influenced by Leavis's approach to English literary tradition, outlined in his treatise *The Great Tradition* (1948). Opening with Jane Austen, and followed by George Eliot, Henry James and Joseph Conrad, his definition of the 'Great Tradition' was extremely compressed and selective. The only twentieth-century writer who qualified as a member of the prominent group was D.H. Lawrence. Anticipating charges of narrowness, Leavis opens his treatise with an explanation of his method, which lays major emphasis on vigorous and thorough discrimination between 'great', or 'major' novelists and minor writers, who can be, nonetheless, historically important, such as Johnson, Swift or Richardson. One of the key distinguishing qualities of great writers is, according to Leavis (1973, p.18) a 'profoundly serious interest in life', contrasts with a negative, aversive attitude to life represented by Flaubert – an example borrowed from Lawrence. Qualities such as advanced sensibility and intelligence, impersonality, maturity, and earnestness, understood in Leavisite terms, are recognized as ultimate competences of such writers. Translated into a work of fiction, all the above properties require and inspire technical innovation and preoccupation with "“form”" (Leavis, 1973, p.8). Leavis argues that compared with literary trends such as the avant-garde, in which aesthetic categories of 'style', or 'form', are the main measures of quality, a major creative artist's 'innovations and experiments' are secondary to and controlled by an overarching 'interest in life' (Leavis, 1973, p.24).

A critical point of Byatt's negotiation of Leavis's criticism is his critique of George Eliot. According to Leavis, Eliot's earlier fiction was marked by a lack of impersonality. It is distinguished from the mature later prose, which fully reveals Eliot's

‘reverend attitude towards life’, ‘psychological insight’ and ‘fineness of human valuation’ (Leavis, 1973, pp.14, 56). In Leavis’s interpretation, Eliot’s weakest spots are those of personal emotional engagement where, according to him, Eliot’s femininity becomes involved. Although her sex may bring some advantages, such as profound psychological insight into the female nature, allegedly lacked by James in his portrayal of Isabel Archer, the feminine aspect is understood as an impediment. Leavis’s gendered reading is strongly opposed by Byatt, who admires George Eliot’s art and looks up to her as a model for writing about ‘*ideas*’ (PM, p.75). She also appreciates Eliot’s ‘feminine’ virtues, or denies that these virtues are ‘feminine’ at all, as an inherent and productive part of her ‘artistic ambition’ (PM, p.82).

D.H. Lawrence, described as ‘a most daring and radical innovator in “form”, method, technique’ (Leavis, 1973, p.24), occupies a privileged position amongst the novelists praised by Leavis, who also include Henry James and Joseph Conrad.

Leavis’s Criticism of Lawrence

In *D.H. Lawrence: Novelist* (1955), Leavis describes the nearly three decades passed since his first encounter with the writer as ‘a long battle to win recognition for Lawrence, and to kill the currency of the grosser misconceptions and prejudices’ (1968a, p.12). He claims that Lawrence had always been seriously undervalued and frequently misapprehended and puts himself forward as the major advocate of Lawrence’s work. The tone and line of argumentation closely resemble his first essays on Lawrence in the 1930s,¹ written in response to the prevailing, largely antagonistic,

¹ ‘D.H. Lawrence’ (1930); ‘D.H. Lawrence’ (1932); revised and extended version of the previous essay; ‘Mr Eliot, Mr Wyndham Lewis and Lawrence’ (1934); ‘The Wild Untutored Phoenix’ (1937).

criticism of Lawrence. As in the 1930s, he defends the novelist against the most notorious accusations, including lack of intelligence accompanied with insufficient formal education (accusations of ignorance, barbarism), snobbery and exaggerated class consciousness, a minority complex linked to frustrated social ambitions, social insensitiveness, obsession with sex and violence and last but not least, bad writing. He also launches his own 'counter-attacks' and tries hard to present Lawrence as 'a creative writer of the greatest kind' (Leavis, 1968a, p.25) by using examples and interpretations of his writing. When judging Lawrence's work, he applies the same criteria as those used when defining the 'Great Tradition', such as profound psychological insight, impersonality, deep interest in life and human nature, which all contribute to the achieved 'depth, range and subtlety in the presentment of human experience' (Leavis, 1968a, p.18).

The changes in his attitude to the three core works, *The Rainbow*, *Women in Love* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, over the period, are worth mentioning. In his first critical essays, *The Rainbow* was considered similarly shaped by personal experience as was *Sons and Lovers*, yet more complicated, and also significantly flawed. Leavis (1968b, p.117) initially argued that 'Lawrence's fanatical concern for the "essential" often results in a strange intensity, but how limited is the range!' and accused the novelist of 'monotony'. Having said that, the opening section of *The Rainbow* was praised for 'sensuous richness' of Lawrence's language, as an aspect of the 'poetic use of language', discussed earlier, 'that leads one to talk loosely of the author as a "poet"' (Leavis, 1968b, p.115). The same quality was attributed to *The White Peacock* (1911) and *Sons and Lovers*. Leavis was, nevertheless, rather critical of Lawrence's 'religion', which he saw as being born from '*The Rainbow* onwards' (Leavis, 1968b, p.117).

Women in Love, later considered as Lawrence's ultimate masterpiece, was originally criticised for lapses into the mechanical, and a failure to affect the reader's consciousness in any novel way. There were, nonetheless, certain, yet unidentified, 'passages of description, and passages evoking subtle shades of consciousness, strange stirrings of emotion, intuitions of "unknown modes of being"' that, in Leavis's view, manifested Lawrence's genius (Leavis, 1968b, p.123).

In Leavis's first article on Lawrence in 1930, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was presented as 'a masterpiece of rare order' (Leavis, 1986a, p.22). In a moderately rewritten and extended version of the essay, two years later, the word 'masterpiece' was dropped in favour of 'an entirely mature novel', in which 'Lawrence knows exactly what he wants to do and does it perfectly' (Leavis, 1968b, p.130). This seemingly slight change anticipates the novel's gradual fall from Leavis's esteem, which eventually prevented him from defending it in the 1960 obscenity trial. Having said that, the arguments, and particularly the vocabulary of health and cleanliness, used by Leavis in describing the qualities of the novel in these early essays, played a vital role in its defence in court, despite Leavis's absence. Interestingly, Leavis proposed *The Lost Girl* as perhaps Lawrence's 'best novel' (Leavis, 1968b, p.123) thanks to its Dickensian quality, its humour and accuracy of social observation.

In Leavis's *D.H. Lawrence: Novelist, The Rainbow and Women in Love*, these books now regarded as Lawrence's masterpieces, are each dealt with in a long separate chapter. The uneasiness of grasping Lawrence's work is viewed as proof of creative originality, and sensitive re-reading, and hence 'growing into understanding' (Leavis, 1968a, p.21) is considered absolutely essential. Leavis indicates the shifts in his own reception of Lawrence over the period of thirty years precisely in respect to these two novels. Having initially considered *The Rainbow* as a more successful literary

achievement, over this period, he came to see *Women in Love* as a self-sufficient piece of work that could not have been written without the earlier novel, but outgrew it significantly.

Leavis (1968a, p.102) repeats his view of the ‘poetic intensity’ in *The Rainbow* and explains why the passages cannot be interpreted as mere ‘descriptive “lyricism”’ but as examples of ‘creative poetry’, where words ‘establish as an actual presence – create as part of the substance of the book – something that is essential to Lawrence’s theme’. The ‘impersonalisation’ of experience through the ‘filter’ of the author’s intelligence and imagination acts as an important factor in the achievement of ‘poetic intensity’ that enables the transmission of experience into writing. According to Leavis, it is manifested, among other ways, by Lawrence’s convincing expression of female experience in his main protagonist Ursula Brangwen.

In Leavis’s view, it is Lawrence’s command of the language particularly and ‘psychological insight’ into the minds of his characters that are responsible for ‘the vividness in his rendering of all the varieties of life, human and non-human [with a] depth that involves an impersonal wholeness’ (Leavis, 1968a, p.124), referring to the outreach of Lawrence’s descriptions that involve the intuited spheres beyond particular individual experience. The passages highlighted by Leavis include the opening paragraphs introducing the Marsh people, Tom Brangwen’s courting episode, and the Lincoln cathedral scene.

One of the passages chosen by Leavis to demonstrate the ‘poetic intensity’ achieved by Lawrence is the closing part of Chapter 2 of *The Rainbow* that captures Tom Brangwen soothing his stepdaughter Anna and attending to the farm while his wife Lydia is giving birth to their child. The following passage is a part of a longer quote given by Leavis in the chapter ‘Lawrence and Tradition’:

In a sort of dream, his heart sunk to the bottom, leaving the surface of him still, quite still, he rose with the panful of food, carefully balancing the child on one arm, the pan in the other hand. The silky fringe of the shawl swayed softly, grains and hay trickled to the floor; he went along a dimly-lit passage behind the mangers, where the horns of the cows pricked out of obscurity. The child shrank, he balanced stiffly, rested the pan on the manger wall, and tipped out the food, half to this cow, half to the next. There was a noise of chains running, as the cows lifted or dropped their heads sharply; then a contented, soothing sound, a long snuffing as the beasts ate in silence.

The journey had to be performed several times. There was the rhythmic sound of the shovel in the barn, then the man returned walking stiffly between the two weights, the face of the child peering out from the shawl. Then the next time, when he stooped, she freed her arm and put it round his neck, clinging soft and warm, making all easier. (R, pp.75-6)

The passage contains several typical features of Lawrence's poetic prose. They include, most importantly, textual rhythm, which is created through alliteration, as in 'silky fringe of the shawl swayed softly' and 'soothing sound, a long snuffing as the beasts ate in silence', and semantic or syntactic repetition. The repetition of words and phrases such as 'shawl', 'stiffly', 'soft'/'softly' and 'half', is aligned with the repetition of action or movement, such as Tom's repeated passage through the barn, the repetitive activity of feeding, and the cows lifting and dropping their heads. The setting and actions are described mainly through sounds, for example the 'noise of chains', the 'snuffing of the cows' and the 'sound of the shovel'. The repetition of sibilants enacts the soft rustling sounds of hay and corn but it is also associated with the soothing sound 'sh' or 'hush', and hence with Tom's soothing the anxious child. In addition, the text also raises an awareness of different textures and tactile experiences, implicitly contrasting the softness of the shawl with the hardness of the chains as well as the softness and warmth of the living creatures and organic things, such as the grain and hay, against the stiffness and solidity of the inorganic objects, such as the pan and the shovel. There is also the overarching contrast between the warm and cosy inside of the barn and the cold and rainy night outside. The dichotomous imagery creates a sense of plasticity, which is in tune with the syntactic rhythm of the text. The sentences are

relatively long, yet most of them consist of shorter syntactic units, especially independent clauses, nominal or adverbial phrases, as in the third sentence. Syntactic condensation and repetition are important tools used by Lawrence not only to create rhythm, but also to control pace, by adjusting the length of the syntactic units. The passage illustrates a characteristic way in which Lawrence blends form and theme by making language imitate the rhythms in the narrative. Stewart (1999, pp.70, 86) identifies this kind of plasticity created by a rhythmic movement between surface and depth as an expressionist technique used by Lawrence, particularly in his visual writing, discussed in detail in Chapter 4 of the thesis. Here, it is expressed predominantly in the form of kinetic, aural and tactile sensations but it has the same aim of creating the sense of unity between the individual and the universal.

The rhythmic activity of attending to farm animals represents both individual physical performance and, placed parallel to childbirth, an archetypal process that transcends personal experience into the sphere of universal human experience, which belongs to what Leavis calls ‘the living tradition’ (1968a, p.110). The barn feeding episode illustrates, according to Leavis, how tradition and continuity are embedded in Lawrence’s records of English rural life. Comparing his approach with George Eliot, he highlights the ‘poetic intensity’ and ‘charge immediacy’ amongst the major properties that make his texts surpass Eliot’s (Leavis, 1968a, p.116). He introduces the quote by indicating the innovative originality of Lawrence’s text by claiming that:

George Eliot could not have given us, with that disturbing intensity, the child’s blind soft-shaken stiffness, the controlled exasperation of the man, and the overriding presence in the house of the long-drawn-out crisis, in relation to which he can only do what he feels he cannot do – wait. Nor could she have evoked with what sensuous immediacy the change to the wet night (‘The child was suddenly still, shocked, finding the rain on its face and the darkness’) and then to the ‘other world’ of the lantern-lit and warm smelling barn, full of the tranquilizing wonder of its strangeness, when Brangwen goes with the child in his arms to feed the cows. (Leavis, 1968a, p.111)

He uses the comparison with George Eliot to demonstrate the points where Lawrence surpasses his predecessors, namely the vivid, evocative rendering of the characters' mental states and feelings as well as the atmosphere of the place. He commends the expressiveness of Lawrence's visceral writing that allows him to express complex semiconscious feelings and tensions in the characters in the form of immediate experience to be re-imagined by the reader. Leavis continues to comment on the closing part of the passage (not reproduced here) where '[Tom] looked down at the silky folds of the paisley shawl. It reminded him of his mother. She used to go to church in it. He was back again in the old irresponsibility and security, a boy at home.' (R, p.76) Leavis argues that:

[t]he presence of the associations introduced by the shawl – the 'mother', 'church', and 'the boy at home' – is not merely felt as an emotional colouring, giving depth and richness to the recovered serenity that marks this phase of the little drama. It is also felt, not as something new, having a given dramatic and emotional felicity at this point (which it has), but as a presence that is being continued and reemphasized; that of the pieties and sanctions that have played so essential a part in life as these early chapters of *The Rainbow* have evoked it. (Leavis, 1968a, p.112)

Leavis lifts the significance of detail in the symbolic texture of Lawrence's texts – a notion upheld by Frederica in *Babel Tower* when she claims that '[e]verything for Lawrence, is loaded with *meaning*' (BT, p.212). Leavis interprets 'the shawl' as a symbol of 'the moral and religious tradition' (1968a, p.112) passed down the generations of the early Brangwens, which the later generations find increasingly wanting. Yet it is something that stays ingrained in who they are. Leavis explains Lawrence's ability to express the latent influence of tradition on individual life as evidence of 'the essential relation of Lawrence's genius to an upbringing "in the environment of a living tradition"' (Leavis, 1968a:113). The environment and experience of Lawrence's youth are seen as sources of 'his mature insight and wisdom,

his creative impulse, and his criticism of the contemporary civilized world' (Leavis, 1968a, p.114).

The above examples of Leavis's criticism highlight two important features of his critical approach: on the one hand, he performs sensitive close readings that appreciate the vividness of Lawrence's writing and, on the other hand, makes sweeping generalisations and self-evident claims and hastens to moralistic judgements. A similar focus on vitality and spontaneity of expression as well as close reading techniques inform Allan Ingram's reading of Lawrence's writing in *The Language of D.H. Lawrence* (1990). In a language that resembles Leavis's critical idiom, Ingram (1990, pp.2, 4) emphasises the 'vitality of [Lawrence's] intense personal commitment', his 'alertness to the life that is in people and creatures' and 'spontaneity of expression'. According to Ingram, Lawrence's main achievement dwells in his ability 'to exploit the resources of language and to exert control over the intensity of personal commitment, without sacrificing the vitality drawn from strong feelings' (Ingram, 1990, p.3).

In Leavis's view, Lawrence's major formal innovation in *The Rainbow* is 'the 'complex rhythm organizing the book' that replaces the usual types of organisation (e.g. plot, conflict and climax, etc.) (1968a, p.126). This rhythm, created through the portrayal of the succession of generations, in a family juxtaposed between cycles observable in both organic and inorganic nature and the individual human life cycle, shapes the novel into a 'dramatic poem' (Leavis, 1968a, p.121).

In the case of *Women in Love*, Leavis draws attention to the novel's relation to Lawrence's treatises of the unconscious and praises the novel's complex organisation. Similarly to *The Rainbow*, he celebrates *Women in Love* as a 'dramatic poem' with a 'rich and close' organization, and 'an astonishing fertility of life', and characterized by a 'formidable originality of method and style' and 'astonishing variety and force of the

enacted life' (Leavis, 1968a, pp.158, 154, 155). Leavis's esteem for *Women in Love* grew since the 1930s and even though he identifies a number of flaws, his criticism is considerably more moderate than in his earlier essays. One of the criticisms is Lawrence's 'insistent and over-emphatic explicitness, running at times to something one can only call jargon' (Leavis, 1968a, p.155), demonstrated in a part of the chapter titled 'Excuse'. Compared with his previous criticism, Leavis makes mitigating concessions in Lawrence's favour and argues that such 'lapse[s] into jargon' (1968a, p.192) and passages that the reader may find arduous to read allegedly occur where the author allows himself to be carried away by his present fascination with a subject, such as the prolonged rendering of religious ritual in *The Plumed Serpent* (1968a, p.70), or where he feels uncertain about his grasp of the subject (1968a, p.155). What could be called 'jargon' is here the excessive usage of 'Lawrentian' vocabulary ('dark', 'potency'), and style (repetition, repetition with variation) with unclear communicative value. Leavis interprets such cases as rare instances of 'insistent and overemphatic explicitness' that cannot be regarded as evidence of Lawrence's creative failure (Leavis, 1968a, p.155).

The essay 'Lawrence after Thirty Years' published in 1960 recapitulates Leavis's critical engagement with Lawrence's legacy and acknowledges the shifts in his attitude to Lawrence as an entirely natural and necessary condition of an encounter with 'a great original artist' (Leavis, 1986b, p.104). The apparent necessity to reread and reevaluate prompted by the quality and complexity of Lawrence's work is regarded as essential evidence of the novelist's greatness.

If Leavis's discussions of Lawrence's works in his early criticism and in *D.H. Lawrence: Novelist* shared a very similar approach and line of argumentation, his last book on Lawrence, *Thought, Words and Creativity: Art and Thought in Lawrence*, is significantly different. In this work, Leavis (1976, p.9) argues that its highly specific

focus on what he calls ‘the embracing organic totality of Lawrence’s thought’ requires a particular selection and treatment of works. The elevated expression ‘embracing organic totality of thought’ derives from Leavis’s premise that Lawrence’s thought was inseparable from his art, and therefore, an inherent part of his creativity (Leavis, 1976, p.20). To demonstrate this, he rereads *The Plumed Serpent*, *Women in Love*, *The Captain’s Doll* and *The Rainbow* alongside a discussion of Lawrence’s writing on the unconscious. By bringing all these aspects together, Leavis explains how the specific Lawrentian vocabulary such as ‘life’, ‘wonder’ or ‘unknown’ developed and acquired their special meanings. It is this ability to productively endow words with new powerful meanings that, according to Leavis, demonstrates the alleged fusion of creativity and thought in Lawrence’s writing.

It should be pointed out that although Leavis had used words like ‘vital’, ‘living’, or ‘organic’ before, his adoption of Lawrentian vocabulary, which he, at the same time, attempts to elucidate, is very apparent here. The fact that Leavis’s critical terminology has become so close to Lawrence’s language, along with the ease with which it is applied, demonstrates the affinity between Leavis’s framework of thought and Lawrence’s. Another question is how much Byatt herself was initially aware of Leavis’s borrowing of Lawrence’s vocabulary. Undoubtedly, some of it has, via Leavis, penetrated her own critical idiom.

Byatt’s response to Leavis

The period of Byatt’s undergraduate studies at Newnham College (1954-7) coincided with the climax in Leavis’s preoccupation with Lawrence, preceding the publication of *D.H. Lawrence: Novelist*. Byatt recalls that the idea for her first novel, *The Shadow of the Sun* arrived during John Holloway’s lectures on Lawrence (SS,

p.viii). The retrospective introduction to the novel, added in 1991, is a central text for the understanding of Byatt's responses to Leavis and Lawrence, and her perception of the relationship between them. The Leavis mentioned in the introduction is both the scrupulous moralistic judge of literature and the skilful close reader and knowledgeable teacher who appears in Byatt's fiction. Byatt became so discouraged by his stress on moral values, seriousness and the responsibility imposed on the artist, endorsed by his critical approach, that she purposefully focussed on poetry during her undergraduate studies as well as in her unfinished postgraduate project (PM, p.72). It was only later that she returned to the genre during her own teaching on the contemporary European novel in the late 1960s. There are indications suggesting that this preoccupation with the genre (the first 'solid training' in it; PM, p.1), which occurred through the practice of teaching, reconciled her, to a certain extent, with Leavis. She must have realised that the core works she was teaching had indeed been written by authors of the 'Great Tradition' (Eliot, James, Lawrence), and other novelists highly valued by her former teacher. She admits that this mature reading made her into 'a discriminating reader' who 'saw merits in the heavy, broad, open-ended Victorian novels, admired by Dr Leavis and Iris Murdoch' (PM, p.242). Even though she remained extremely critical of Leavis's insistence on 'strenuous moral valuation' (Byatt, 1976b, p.8) and his 'dogmatic dismissal, irascibility or prescriptiveness' (OHAS, p.5), she recognized his qualities of 'an excellent scrupulous reader' (Byatt, 1983, p.8) and 'a quoter of genius' (OHAS, p.5). Her own reliance on quotations as evidence of the properties identified in a literary text and as the principal support for critical argument, betrays her teacher's influence advocating maximum concentration on primary texts, the quality of which is regarded as inherent and self-evident. As opposed to critical texts, which she approximates to 'nets' in which writers are captured, 'quotations are like the slides in an art historical

lecture – they are the Thing Itself. Which is in danger of being crushed under a weight of commentary’ (OHAS, pp.5, 6). Finally, while opposed to the Leavisite overemphasis on morality, Byatt shares his belief in the significance of (great) literature as well as the enriching, and rectifying effect of reading it (Byatt and Sodr , 1995, p.250).

Similarly to Leavis, Byatt sees the quality of (poetic) language as the centre of literary value. She too contemplates poetic language in terms of dynamics: ‘inert’ language (Byatt, 1988, p.1278) cannot produce a good poem, as it is incapable of setting ‘the mind at play’ (Byatt, 2006a, p.13). In her view, unsuccessful authors are often those who do not ‘care, or think, or know enough about language’ (Byatt, 1988, p.1278). On the other hand, ingenious use of language prompts ‘the peculiar excitement and pleasure of mental activity’ (Byatt, 2006a, p.13) and is responsible for the ‘shiver of awe’ (Byatt, 2003a, p.13) that good books can create. As indicated earlier, the notion of the play of the mind in connection with curiosity and pleasure goes back to Matthew Arnold, who understands curiosity as a desire for and pleasure of mental activity. For Byatt, this kind of pleasure principle and curiosity are the main driving forces in relation to both reading and writing.

Byatt’s association of literary discourse with aliveness is very close to the previously mentioned qualities of ‘vividness’ and ‘immediacy’ of Lawrence’s prose, or the element of ‘the sensitive livingness’ detected by Leavis in Lawrence’s writing, and demonstrated as ‘the play of changing tone’ (Leavis, 1986b, p.111) within a piece of his correspondence. Also speaking about his letters, Byatt locates Lawrence’s best writing in places where the author becomes personal and concrete – in such places his text is, again, ‘alive and exciting’ (Byatt, 1982, p.26). Consequently, the passages admired by Byatt in Lawrence are those in which his language has the power to pass his vision on to the reader and fully engage their imagination and emotions. One example is the scene

where Anna and Will meet in the moonlit cornfield in *The Rainbow*, which Byatt calls ‘magical’ (SS, p.xvi), with its elaborate imagery of sun and moon.

Although Byatt (1976b, p.8) mocks the moralising Leavisite ‘criticism of the Criticism of Life’, her own idea of the novel places it close to our everyday experience ‘as a way of coming to terms with everything, of mapping the world out’ (Byatt, cited in Shakespeare, 1985, p.20). Furthermore, her opinion that a teacher/author’s ‘exposure to masterpieces and students [is] good for both the writer and the human being’ (Byatt, 1976b, p.8) echoes the Leavisite notion of the moral potency of great literature as well as Leavis’s view on the inseparableness of the writer/critic from the person. In fact, Byatt (2003b, no page) has her own idea of morality in literature: ‘if you want to be moral, if you want to communicate, you have to use language. Novelists still do it better than anybody else, except for Wallace Stevens and Emily Dickinson.’ She links the notion of moral behaviour with verbal consciousness and the articulation of what is right and wrong, which is, in her opinion, best achieved in literary art, and in the novel in particular.

It was the teaching of literature that helped Byatt to accept some of Leavisite academic credos, such as the maximum possible contact with great literary works. Whilst refusing Leavis’s insistence on the primacy of English literature over other disciplines, her passionate argument ‘in favour of keeping alive the teaching of as much of the past as can be managed’ (Byatt, 1993b, p.3) signals a similar belief in the significance of the literary tradition, perceived, however, in a much broader sense. Even though teaching was not Byatt’s initial ambition, she became a keen teacher, who, like Leavis, campaigned with great fervour for improvements in education. Byatt also warns of the lowering of standards not exclusively at university level, claiming that ‘abstract thought, the pursuit of excellence, do matter’ and that ‘the bright ones do suffer’ in a

levelled-down educational environment' (Byatt, 1976a, p.10). For Byatt, teaching is an enriching experience that makes her capable of writing (Byatt, 1972, p.10).

Lastly, like Leavis, Byatt became an alert commentator on wider social and cultural issues, including the impact of mass media and the entertainment industry on society. Her opinion of Leavis's cultural and social commentary is, nevertheless, very critical. Her review of *Nor Shall My Sword: Discourses on Pluralism, Compassion and Social Hope* (1972), a collection of Leavis's lectures on predominantly cultural issues, describes it as blank and unconvincing. Furthermore, Byatt (1972, p.10) refuses Leavis's 'ultimately unacceptable language' whilst using his own phraseology, ironically, to conclude that he was 'too angry' to create for the reader 'a living sense of the modern world'. Interestingly, she finds the major stylistic fault of *Nor Shall My Sword* in its irritating 'incantory, repetitive' prose, a feature so characteristic of and frequently criticised as exorbitant in Lawrence's writing (Byatt, 1972).

One of the key differences between Byatt and Leavis rests in the drive behind their creative and/or critical pursuits. Leavis's primary emphasis on the moral responsibility of both writers and critics contrasts with Byatt's focus on the pleasure and curiosity of linguistic play. In a celebration of Donne's poetry, she confesses to having no 'message to give to the world' except for sharing, like Donne, 'the excitement and pleasure of mental activity itself', that is of thinking and imagining (Byatt, 2006a, p.13).

Class is an interesting factor in the Leavis-Lawrence-Byatt relationship triangle. Leavis defended Lawrence's working-class origins, his own roots being, as David Ellis remarks, not much grander (Ellis, 2013, p.275). In the introduction to *The Shadow of the Sun*, Byatt also claims an affinity with Lawrence's social background, making an even stronger case than Leavis does. She sums up her family origins as from 'the north midlands', 'of mixed working-class and intellectual lower-middle-class stock, with low

church Christianity for myth and morality, with a terrible desire for something *more*' (SS, p.xii). In fact, what this confession does, in addition to highlighting her similarity to Lawrence, is reveal the close links to Leavis's original family situation.

If class background is something that connects Byatt and Leavis, gender is a critical alienating element. Byatt's previously mentioned objection to the masculinity of the 'Great Tradition' and Leavis's gendered reading of George Eliot's fiction were major obstacles in her response to Leavis. In some of his criticism he renders femininity as an undesirable, disabling quality, antagonistic to artistic sensibility. According to Franken, Byatt takes a clearly feminist stance in her defence of George Eliot, dismissing Leavis's forceful splitting of the author's identity in two: the creative genius and the woman (Franken, 2001, p.24). Nevertheless, there is a certain contradiction between her criticism of Leavis's different treatment of George Eliot as a writer and as a woman, and her own invention called 'laminations'. The deliberate division of the *Quartet* character Frederica's identity into woman versus intellectual, and the switching over between these layers (Byatt, 1994c, p.69) indicate a very similar split, albeit self-inflicted. In contrast to Leavis's devaluation of George Eliot's femininity, however, Byatt does not repudiate hers, but acknowledges its due part in the constitution of her identity as well as in her writing. Hence, even though she continues to consider writing as an essentially non-gendered activity, her female identity necessarily informs her writing. Implicitly, the 'lamination' strategy does not mean a complete and mutually exclusive division of the self. In addition to that, Byatt's 'desire to connect everything I see to everything else I see' further compromises the sustainability of 'laminations' (Byatt, 1994c, p.69).

Franken (2001, p.20) considers Byatt's persistent assertion of the non-gendered identity of the writer as counter-productive, suggesting that a full acceptance of female

identity would help Byatt to overcome many difficulties in positioning herself in the critical-theoretical landscape, including a firmer point of departure in her negotiations with Leavisite criticism. Yet this is precisely the notion to which Byatt cannot subscribe. Firstly, the attraction to Leavis's teaching is, despite numerous differences of opinion, too strong, and secondly, her wide interests and 'excitement about things' (Byatt, 2011c, p.70) demand the pluralistic complexity that Byatt's solitary position allows. As Franken argues, 'the contradictory yet highly productive ways in which Byatt's work moves across and in and out of the post-structuralist debate, tracing an itinerary of her own' (2001, p.13) must be seen, in final effect, as fruitful in terms of maintaining a wide manoeuvring space for debate and exploration.

My reading of Byatt's critical output reveals two currents of the same stream, which seem to correspond with Franken's thought, a 'conflictual continuity between Leavisite criticism and Byatt's critical work' (Franken, 2001, p.4). On the one hand, Byatt delivers many highly critical statements and rejections of Leavisite assumptions, yet on the other, her critical discourse reveals the impact of Leavis. They resonate in Byatt's resistance to the separation into female and male writing and the understanding of literature as self-expression; her resistance to modern theoretical methodologies; a rigorous respect for both the literary text and its author, and lastly, the belief in the moral power of literature. I agree with Franken that Byatt is, at heart, a Leavisite thinker. Nevertheless, her curiosity and hunger for 'ideas' allow her to develop and modify the basic attitudes inherited from Leavis, and overcome their limitations, by embracing new thoughts and impulses.

The Shadow of the Sun

Byatt's debut novel came into being as an immediate response to the encounter with Leavisite criticism in the 1950s. Filled with an aspiring writer's expectations, the undergraduate Byatt seems to have been very sensitive to Leavis's usurpative manner in his approach to Lawrence: "The undergraduate I was saw the dangers of a writer appropriated by an individual critic by worrying about what Lawrence would have made of Leavis and vice versa" (Byatt, 1993b, p.5). Her impression was that 'they would have hated each other' (SS, p.xi). The novel may thus be read as staging a play of imagination set around a meeting between them. Its focus on the difficulties in the dealings between a 'possessive critic' and 'a solitary-natured, late Romantic writer' (Byatt, 1993b, p.5) also opens challenging questions concerning authorship, authority and artistic influence. In addition, Byatt's statement that the novel is 'about the paradox of Leavis preaching Lawrence' (SS, p.xi) links the novels' characters with their models.

The opposition between good and bad in relation to that of the creative and the critical is established by how the characters are initially portrayed and presented. Having said that, Byatt's characterisation is far from 'black-and-white' since all characters have both positive and negative qualities. A vital component of the characters' portrayals is the correspondence between their physical conditions with their general mindsets, using the metaphors of size and space. The critic Oliver Canning in *The Shadow of the Sun* is characterised as an ambitious, cunning individual, who is apparently ready to use unfair methods in order to elicit information. He is approximated to quick little rodents for their ability to sneak unexpectedly through small gaps. He is 'a little man [...] with the little man's compact command over his own body' (SS, p.24). Although his physique looks slender and not very strong, it conceals great agility and energy. More importantly, his most prominent physical feature is

pointedness, or sharpness: he has a ‘pointed’ head, ‘sharpened’ nose and mouth, and ‘cornered’ eyebrows (SS, p.24), while his voice is ‘thin’ (p.54). These physical and vocal attributes signal his sharp mental and psychological qualities. Henry is told to dislike Oliver’s ‘screw-driver mind’ capable of ‘researching into the flesh’ (SS, p.33) while Anna notices his ‘prickliness’ (p.42). Oliver displays some of the negative features of these qualities that may be associated with such extreme focus, such as narrowness of vision and a limitation of mind. Oliver’s wife Margaret, for example, hopes that Oliver will profit from his contact with Henry’s great mind, which she describes as ‘preoccupied with larger issues’ (SS, p.25). The repetition of ‘the little man’ in reference to Oliver also creates connotations of lower personal significance, in contrast to Henry’s authorial status. The metaphors of size and space in relation to the characters’ psychological portrayals become prominent in the scene in which Henry and Oliver contemplate the rural countryside surrounding Henry’s home. Oliver shows an inability to transcend his narrowly focused frame of vision and comprehension in contrast to the expansiveness and boundlessness of Henry’s vision. At the same time, he shows a pragmatic attention to facts and an awareness of contemporaneity, both lacked by Henry.

Henry Severell, Byatt’s first version of a visionary artist, is described, in contrast with Oliver, as a robust man with a rich crop of white hair, and ‘a live, almost patriarchal beard’ (SS, p.9). The ‘patriarchal beard’ works here as a general attribute of senior power and authority, but it also represents paternal authority in both Anna’s personal relationship to Henry and, symbolically, the ancestral authority in the Bloomean pattern of creative influence. The image of his body encompassing, or conquering, large portions of space, recurs several times in the course of the novel. A typical example is the description of his progress through the countryside during one of

his visionary bouts. On this occasion, an extra perspective is delivered through a boy watching Henry's 'huge figure' with 'all his huge weight' make a 'huge leap [...] down the hill again like some enormous animal, an ancient white bull, in full charge' (SS, p.57). An important function of this additional external view is the satirisation of Henry's figure through accentuated exaggeration and the creation of comic effect. It can be read as a form of guidance for the reader towards a critical consideration of the presented kind of 'genius'. At a later stage, the novel will indicate the possibility of an alternative type of creative talent in Henry's daughter Anna.

From Henry's perspective, the narrator explains how the initial states of heightened sensitivity developed into his present 'attacks of vision' (SS, p.58), in which he is urged to escape the confines of ordinary everyday existence and walk miles through the open landscape, and how this feels from the inside. There is a clear link between physical size and space and the expanse of the mind: Henry is referred to as 'one of the few living giants' (SS, p.9). The main attributes that make him an artist are his detachedness from everyday reality, single-mindedness, and the intensity that marks his perception and emotional responses. His visionary bouts are presented as the major, dynamic part of his literary activity compared to the writing down of the acquired 'material', which appears more as a chore in Byatt's representation. In any case, the portrayal of Henry offers a critique of the artist as a hyper-focused, individualistic, egotistic male visionary. The inadequacy of his responses to ordinary life situations, which put him repeatedly into comic positions, raise questions about the status of the artist as a visionary and challenges the implied paradigms of art and life. Can Henry's art justify the damage done to the people around him? How does the artist's responsibility linked to the creative process stand against a person's responsibilities in ordinary life? The fact that Henry's last appearance in the novel has him walking away

from the 'human' whilst leaving other people to deal with their lives, without a hint as to where his visions actually lead, leaves the questions suspended and opens space for possible alternatives.

The introduction of a third actor into the relationship distorts and complicates the initial basic opposition between the two contrary forces. Henry's teenage daughter Anna can only roughly be called 'the Byatt figure'; nonetheless, her feelings echo Byatt's concerns, to some extent, especially the anxiety about finding one's own voice, which inspired the novel. Anna is initially more of an observer of the relationship between the two men, but soon finds herself caught up in it. As a potential writer herself, she is faced with a double challenge. She is confronted with the peculiar relationship of her novelist father with his critic and, at the same time, she needs to disentangle herself from the intricate net of paternal and artistic authority. Albeit, sensing the creative potential of her own writing, she is completely disabled from writing by the awareness of her father's artistic success but also by her illusion about the seeming easiness of his creative work. Anna's anxiety resembles the concerns of Leavis's students who, according to Byatt, felt that 'that anything you wrote yourself would fall so woefully short of the highest standards that it was better not to try' (SS, p.x). To Anna, her father's art too represents perfection and, immature as she is, she cannot think of creativity outside the framework set up by his example. In Byatt's present interpretation, the issue of knowledge is at the heart of the problem of creativity. Watching Henry leave on a visionary quest, Anna suffers from the awareness of her ignorance, confessing that

it was terrible not to know, to have no idea what he went for, what he thought; she wept for herself, I would give anything to be like that, if I knew what like that was. How could one sit here just the same, when there's anyone alive who finds anything as tremendously important as he finds climbing that hill? (SS, p.52)

She is unable to conceive of an alternative kind of creativity other than the ideal of the ultimate visionary, represented by Henry, and her incapacity to achieve it thwarts her ambition. Oliver, too, sees the gap between Henry and himself as defined by (the lack of) experience and knowledge. As he puts it, it is unbridgeable ‘not only because one hasn’t his [Henry’s] command of language but because one hasn’t the experience, one doesn’t know where he starts from, except by guessing from what he writes’ (SS, p.52). Recognizing the creative potential in Anna, he is the one who first uses the word ‘shadow’ to pin down her condition and sums up his idea of ‘the anxiety of influence’² in a generalizing statement that ‘great men are always hard on the next generation’ (SS, p.53).

Trying to arouse Anna from her passivity, he unveils to her his world – the world familiar to ‘most human beings’ (SS, p.91), very different from ‘the enclosure’ (p.92) in which she grew up. Anna becomes trapped between her old existence, the new world of ‘Oliver’s myriad concerns’, and Henry’s ‘third way’ (SS, p.92). As Oliver points out in his final dialogue with Henry, those not endowed with privileges of any kind, including social and spiritual ones (which seem to blend in Oliver’s contemplation of Henry’s position), must take an active way in order to fulfil their ambitions. Unlike Henry, who can be seen, from this point of view, as a fairly passive beneficiary of his gift, people like Oliver ‘have to find [their] own way of living’ (SS, p.277). As for Anna, Oliver sees her on his side and insists that ‘she is like me, she knows. She knows more than she can bear’ (SS, p.277). Yet she also has, at least partly, inherited her father’s sensibility, which her two quasi-visionary experiences exemplify, one in the bathroom and one on the bridge in Cambridge. In addition, the necessary implication of Anna’s story is that, being a woman and a (prospective) mother, she cannot afford the

² Cf. Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973).

same amount of detachment and single-focusedness which is enjoyed by Henry. The intuition for a possible alternative kind of creativity is reinforced towards the end of the novel, where we witness Anna taking the first crucial decision of her own, regarding her pregnancy and the planned marriage. Interestingly, this is a quasi-Lawrentian decision between 'life' and 'non-life' that results from a peculiar blend of conscious deliberation and vision mixed with memory. Anna suddenly recognizes the significance of her supposedly idle and unhappy teenage years towards her present capacity to understand things. The narrator describes the moment of recognition as follows:

'I was terribly unhappy then but I *knew* something,' she thought, whilst memory selected patches of sun, a heroic gesture from Michael, bright trees from the whole orchard, and a significance from a tangle of distress. 'I *did* know,' she insisted to herself, meaning: I have come to know, now. Whatever had been learned, not to be unlearned, on the bridge at night. She would come to remember the flakes of ash in this hearth with the same sense of significance, but that would be years later. Now the past rose bright and decisive; Peter was not Michael; nothing here mattered to her, nothing was live, as Michael had been. She must go away from here, before she could find what was. Not Michael himself, she had never supposed that, but something of the same weight. I thought it was a retreat, a dead end, she told herself, as she searched Peter's jackets in the hall cupboard for keys to Peter's sports car. But there are no ends and I must do something. (SS, p.295)

The depiction of the synthetizing experience fuses the mental processes of thinking, intuition and remembering into a moment of cognizance, and brings together the imagery of sun and moon, used previously on separate occasions in the novel, with the Lawrentian opposition of 'life' and 'not life' explained earlier. The text also acquires a certain rhythm that resembles Lawrence's prose. As in the previous example from *The Rainbow*, it is created through condensed syntax; here, it means sentences consisting of short clauses and phrases, often linked by 'and' or 'but', or lined up without conjunctions, and repetitions of words, for example 'know', 'learned', 'bright' and 'nothing'. In the first part of the following sentence the imitation of the Lawrentian rhythm even turns to a shortening of syntactic units to increase pace, as if heading

towards a culmination: 'I thought it was a retreat, a dead end, she told herself, as she searched Peter's jackets in the hall cupboard for keys to Peter's sports car.' (SS, p.295)

The longer clause that forms the latter part of the sentence, suggests a relaxation following the recognition of 'the dead end'. The emphasis on instinctive knowledge and 'aliveness' are important features of Lawrence's texts and praised by Leavis. Compared with Lawrence, however, this passage describes a mental activity that processes a past sensual experience, whereas a Lawrence character would more likely draw the knowledge directly from the sensual experience. Anna interrogates the nature of the knowledge, which is retrospectively recognized as intuitive and rooted in the unconscious, but which can prove fruitful when it becomes conscious and mentally processed. She also ponders about how memory distorts and distils what we think we know, and how past images constitute and shape the present. As retrospection makes things of significance stand out, or shine 'bright', Anna comprehends that she was previously incapable of 'reading' her affair with Michael properly. When distilled by memory and negotiated consciously, it turns into knowledge, however incomplete at this stage. Byatt uses the sun and moon imagery to distinguish between the heliotropic, distinctly sensuous experience, which Anna, unlike her father, cannot directly access, and the more mental, quasi-visionary process of intuitive cognizance as the one experienced on the moon-lit bridge in Cambridge. The different sensitivity in Anna indicates the potential alternative to Henry's impersonal visionary creativity indicated before: one that takes into account conscious mental processes. In 'Identity and the Writer', Byatt says: 'I do believe in coherent, rational, ordered thought; and the conscious life, as opposed to the unconscious life, as terribly important things in our existence' (Byatt, 1987, p.25). Anna thus becomes the first character in whom Byatt wants to present 'people who have thought processes which can change them, which

matter to them. Not beliefs, but thought processes' (Byatt, 1987, p.25). Anna's present insight vitally depends on intuition, which is intense, yet still rather unspecific. The sense of limitlessness implied in the phrase 'there are no ends' is, nevertheless, rendered as positive, in contrast to Anna's earlier teenage feelings of purposelessness and incompetence. Despite the possible interpretation of her situation (pregnancy and the consequent dependence on other people's support) as entrapment, the novel's ending leaves the heroine on a note of positive anticipation, reconciled and 'content'.

Lastly, we must ask to what extent Byatt's characters actually resemble their models? Some parts of Oliver's characteristics can indeed be related to Leavis. The latter was, similarly, not a large man but reported as very agile, energetic, and vigilant (Ellis, 2013, pp.13, 32). He was a critic of acute intelligence and brusque tongue, and, like Oliver, a very good teacher. His treatment of Lawrence, as experienced by Byatt in the mid- and late 1950s, can be described as uncompromising and proprietary. At the same time, he genuinely admired and cared for Lawrence, and most of his controversies had been powered by perhaps misguided, but honest motives. Like Leavis, Oliver too presents his reading and understanding of 'his' author as 'a constant struggle' (SS, p.53), motivated, nevertheless, by a sincere desire to grasp and comprehend. The implication of Oliver's narrowness, or limitation of mind, compared to Henry's genius, resounds with Byatt's objections to Leavis's reductionist prescriptiveness and his favouring of tightly focused concentration over curiosity and unrestricted, eager readership. Having said that, numerous episodes in the novel, for instance his recognition of Anna's frustration in regard to Henry, demonstrate his capacity for insight and empathy. Moreover, thanks to his rationality and pragmatism, however reductionist compared to Henry's broad vision, he is the one who is able to apprehend Anna's situation and respond adequately. Byatt's portrayal of Oliver contains a fair

amount of ambiguity that corresponds with the ambivalence of her relationship to Leavis.

While it can be said that Oliver was partly modelled on Leavis, Henry as a person has little to do with Lawrence. In fact, there was an undeniable resemblance between Leavis and Lawrence in regard to their physique and character (alertness, agility, previously attributed to Oliver), although Leavis was, unlike Lawrence, physically fit and of good health. In Byatt's novel, however, the artist figure is created as an evident counterpart to Oliver – hence he is a strong, healthy-looking man of extraordinary intelligence, and creative visionary genius. The only physical resemblance to Lawrence may be seen in Henry's 'patriarchal beard', nevertheless, despite the potential connotation of male sexual, and consequently social, dominance, Henry's white beard symbolises a sage's prophetic wisdom and intellect, rather than sexual masculinity. Henry's personal characteristics are derived from an archetypal image of a genius as an extremely sensitive introvert, and hence a vulnerable individual, rather than from the real Lawrence, whom Byatt had of course never met. He embodies the Romantic image of artistic genius that is capable, by entering into a special mode of consciousness, of approaching those aspects of the world and life that lie beyond the reach of ordinary cognition and experience, the Romantic 'Absolute' (Gorodeisky, 2016). His visionary status takes the form of a quest, undergoing both spiritual and physical struggles. Except for the deliberately Lawrentian dictum and imagery used to render his visionary states, Henry is one of Byatt's variations of a visionary figure, alongside Marcus or Joshua in the *Quartet*, Cassandra in *The Game*, or Benedict Fludd in *The Children's Book*. The Lawrence twist is thus relatively inconspicuous and restricted to the articulation of Henry's visionary experience expressed with what may be called Lawrentian language. This can remain unrecognized and unappreciated by

readers who are unfamiliar with the writer's prose. One of the most important examples is a passage inspired by one of Byatt's favourite scenes in *The Rainbow*, the episode where Anna and Will are in the moonlit cornfield, constructed on the contrast between the sun-heated straw and the cold moonlight. The fusion of the solar and lunar energies creates, in Byatt's view, 'a kind of creative paradox' (SS, p.xvi), which suggests the possibility of a symbiosis of the creative and critical sensibility, the opposition of which is central to the novel. A detailed discussion of Byatt's rewriting of the scene follows in Chapter 5 (p.232).

The Quartet

The *Quartet* is a series of novels featuring two sisters, Frederica and Stephanie Potter, brought up, together with their younger brother Marcus, in a middle-class family in Yorkshire. Frederica becomes the central figure of the *Quartet* when Stephanie dies in a domestic accident at the end of the second novel, *Still Life*. The *Quartet* watches Frederica mature from a teenage girl in *The Virgin in the Garden* to a self-confident, emancipated woman in her thirties in the closing novel *A Whistling Woman*. The narrative is centred around the siblings and their family situation, especially in the first two novels, all dominated by their authoritative father Bill Potter, who is, at the same time, Byatt's most obvious Leavisite figure. Informed by Byatt's experience of Leavis at Cambridge, Bill Potter's portrayal in the *Quartet* is not static but evolves with the changing relationship between Bill and Frederica. In the first two novels, *The Virgin in the Garden* and *Still Life*, which depict Frederica in a teenage conflict with paternal authority, the relationship is shaped by those aspects of Leavis Byatt felt most critical about. Bill is depicted as an authoritarian censor and moralist, who 'burn[s] books'

(VG, p.40) and preaches about ‘literary truth’ (p.41). He is convinced about the relevance of literature for dealing with everyday life experience, which is a recognizably Leavisite line of argumentation. His dispute over the veracity and integrity of religion with the curate Daniel Orton in the opening part of the novel, which manifests Bill’s conviction about the dominant ethical significance of literature, reflects Byatt’s criticism of confusing literature with morality which treats literature as a substitute for religion, which she had felt to be the case at Cambridge. Bill Potter’s Leavisite character traits include ‘single-mindedness’ (VG, p.38) and self-righteousness, an ‘indiscriminate and gleefully analytic greed for the printed word’ (p.41), and an argumentative zeal. Most importantly, he is criticised for very narrow criteria in assessing literature worth, and for his unwillingness to accommodate other people’s views. As Frederica reports, ‘*Lady Chatterley* and all the other Lawrence Daddy insists on’ (VG, p.389) are at the top of her prescribed reading list. ‘Lists are a form of power’ (VG, p.90), the narrator remarks, and this gibe is aimed at Leavis’s ‘Great Tradition’ as much as Bill Potter’s selection.

At the same time, Bill is described as a good and popular teacher, to whose lectures ‘people travelled miles in all weathers, in vans, in country buses, from moorland villages, seaside resorts, wool towns and steelworks’ (VG, p.24). He also resembles Leavis by being a perfectionist, ‘a first-rate teacher, inspired, dogged and ferocious’, both ‘respected’ and ‘feared’ (VG, p.24). Bill’s feeling for language and his ability to help his students develop a better grasp of it, exemplified by giving ‘an inarticulate woman the right hints about the direction in which her clumsy sentences might be twisted to make a pleasantly idiosyncratic style’ (VG, p.25), resembles Leavis’s capacity to ‘show you the toughness of a sentence, the strength and the grace of it’ (SS, p.x). However, as in Leavis’s case, the teacher’s laudable didactic skills and

genuine enthusiasm for his subject are reported to be compromised by his ambiguous attitude to pupils, whom he exposes to stress and humiliation.

Notwithstanding, Bill does not remain unchanged throughout the series. On the contrary, his negative, and many Leavisite, features, especially his stubbornness and irritability, weaken with passing years and following the tragic events in his family. He calms down and becomes more patient and emphatic, both as person and a teacher, which allows his commendable qualities, especially his teacherly insight, acumen and the love for his subject, to take over. Eventually, it is a meeting of two good, experienced teachers when Frederica and Bill find themselves in sincere agreement and understanding, after years of estrangement in *Babel Tower*.

Byatt's portrayals of Leavis and Lawrence figures in her early works are multiple. While placing the imaginary Leavis and Lawrence figures in the situation of a personal relationship, *The Shadow of the Sun* transforms Leavis's interpretation of Lawrence by excluding the moral seriousness valued by Leavis and emphasising the author's creative commitment to 'life' and the lived experience. The juxtaposition of the characters calls attention to the perceived narrowness and limitations of Leavis's criticism in general. Oliver's use of Lawrentian language and criteria of 'life' mimics Leavis's adoption of Lawrence's conceptual framework for his critical work. Meanwhile, the visionary figure, who is, in one way, presented as a larger-than-life character, is brought down from the pedestal in confrontation with everyday-life realities, and the critic's veneration is challenged. In *The Virgin in the Garden*, Byatt's critique shifts more to the moralising, preachy aspect of Leavis's approach to literature and to his students, and his prescriptive didacticism in the form of censorship and intellectual humiliation. The Leavisite character Bill Potter's maturation into a more patient and sensitive reader and teacher, and particularly his shift from the focus on

moral lessons towards appreciation of literary qualities and artistry, shows the kind of reader and critic that Byatt would prefer in Leavis.

Finally, Leavis makes a brief appearance as himself in *Babel Tower* in relation to the *Lady Chatterley's Lover* trial of 1960, treated as a precedent case by the defence team in Byatt's novel. Leavis, mentioned among the 'witnesses to literary merit', is recalled as 'that chap at Cambridge [...] everyone's always talking about' and described as 'cranky and paranoid, though undoubtedly a genius' (BT, p.473). His refusal to speak out in court is not mentioned. Nevertheless, Byatt plays a joke for readers familiar with Leavis's dedicated advocacy of Lawrence's work and his reluctance to defend his novel in court, by creating a character who, as a former student of Leavis's, initially nominates himself to represent his critical approach for the Defence in Byatt's trial but eventually defects to the opposing camp. The mocking tone of the references and the playful joke are parts of the parodic construction of Byatt's obscenity trial and her representation of Leavis in her fiction.

Leavis's training had a major impact on Byatt's formation as writer, teacher and critic. Leavis influenced Byatt in her response to D.H. Lawrence and is partly responsible for the not dissimilar ambivalence in her relationship to Lawrence. The extreme complexity of the relationships between Byatt, Leavis and Lawrence is for Byatt a remarkable stimulus for thought and creativity. The absence of either would make her writing very different and impoverished. In other words, Byatt would not be the writer as we know her without Leavis and/or Lawrence, inasmuch as Leavis would not be 'the' F.R. Leavis without Lawrence.

CHAPTER 3

Byatt and Literary Theory

Byatt's ambivalent relationship to Leavisite criticism has a significant impact on her attitude to modern critical theories, particularly post-structuralism and feminism. Her preoccupations with theory-based literary criticism have bearings on her negotiation of Lawrence's legacy, for example, her rejection of feminist criticism of Lawrence whom she sees as its victim (Byatt, cited in Adelman, 2002, p.117) and her doubts about the ideological investment of the theories in general, result in an interesting turn. Having initially been critical of Leavis's idolisation of Lawrence, her response to modern critical theories reveals the extent of Leavis's influence on her approach to his and other literary texts, which causes Byatt to defend Lawrence.

A closer look at Byatt's writing reveals that her portrayals of reading and readers in her fiction are in constant dialogue with her critical writing and that the most pressing issues discussed in her articles and essays are re-enacted in her fiction. Her advocacy of unprejudiced, disinterested reading, in her literary criticism, for instance, is played out in her depiction of the links between literary knowledge and moral understanding in her characters who read. The genuine, honest reader (and writer), such as Cassandra in *The Game*, emerges as the moral winner, even if they must suffer from misunderstanding and social isolation. Despite the overall coherence of the crossovers between Byatt's fiction and her critical writing, there are, nonetheless, certain strains that arise from the ambiguity that characterizes her relationship to trends in literary criticism. As Christien Franken indicates, some of the tensions spring from the different foci and demands of

literary criticism and of fictional writing (Franken, 2001, p.xi). However, I will argue that Franken's proposed writer/critic split is less clear-cut than she suggests. In addition, Byatt's ambivalence towards modern critical theories is revealed in the difference between Byatt's critical pronouncements about the limitations of contemporary poststructuralist and feminist theory, and her implicit acknowledgement of their merits and in the ways in which they are fictionalized. What distinguishes Byatt's presentation of reading in her fiction from that of other contemporary authors is her consistent preoccupation with the notion of an 'appropriate', or 'ideal' way of reading, which is, at the same time, shaped by her resistance to theory-oriented critical approaches.

The infiltration into Byatt's prose of theoretical preoccupations is obvious and has received attention from most critics. Alfer and Edwards de Campos (2010, p.37) call her writing method 'critical storytelling' in order to capture the way in which she unites the creative and the critical imaginations. They see the novelist's negotiation of the opposition between realism and experiment as an aspect of her ambivalent relation to the liberal-humanist critical tradition and modern critical approaches while pointing out her emphasis on the '*symbiosis*' of the critical and the creative (Alfer and Edwards de Campos, 2010, p.37). Recognizing Byatt's deliberate self-positioning as outside theoretical approaches to literature, they draw attention to her emphasis on agnosticism and summarize her stance by concluding that '[t]o Byatt, the best methodology is to have no fixed methodology' (Alfer and Edwards de Campos, 2010, p.144). This also highlights the 'both/and' (Campbell, 2004, p.5) quality of Byatt's relation to the traditional humanist approach and modern critical theories, and her deliberate non-alignment with any one approach. Her resistance is explained as 'a function of her age and education and of what she calls her agnosticism' (Campbell, 2004, p.17). When discussing Byatt's criticism of feminist theory, Campbell highlights Byatt's argument

that feminism focuses readers' attention solely on women's writing and thereby overestimates female issues, as well as ideas of a female language and style. Campbell repeatedly refers to the previously mentioned Christien Franken's study *A.S. Byatt Art, Authorship and Creativity*, which provides what is so far the most comprehensive analysis of Byatt's relationship with both traditional and modern critical theories to date. Franken (2001, p.9) finds Byatt's rootedness in Leavisite criticism (caused to a great extent by the strong early exposure) to be the main reason for her reserved attitudes towards the emerging critical theories of the 1970s, most particularly post-structuralism and feminism. Franken (2001, pp.16-17) argues that Byatt was particularly hostile to the post-structuralist and feminist focus on Barthes' 'death of the author' and the writer's identity, a hostility that fuels the split between Byatt the author and Byatt the critic, as well as the consequent tensions between Byatt's criticism and fiction. I agree with Franken's proposition that this paradox plays a significant part in Byatt's scepticism about feminist criticism and also reinforces her advocacy of androgyny. Franken (2001, p.20) makes the provoking proposition that a feminist approach involving the acknowledgment of her 'female identity' might help Byatt to find a firmer footing in her opposition to both post-structuralism and Leavisite criticism.

Post-structuralist Criticism and Deconstruction

Byatt's refusal to affiliate herself with any particular critical or theoretical current is influenced by her conviction that these theories are restrictive. Referring to post-structuralism and deconstruction, Barthes's 'death of the author', or feminism, Byatt credits literary theory (theories) with fresh inspiration, new perspectives and insights (cf. OHAS, p.6; Byatt, 1992c, p.18) but objects to the enforcement of reading practices

that, in her eyes, tend to violate and distort texts by approaching them with pre-fabricated conclusions, or pre-determined categories of understanding.

These arguments play out in her fiction. In *The Biographer's Tale*, she depicts a character afflicted by rigid pre-determined conclusions. The chief protagonist, Phineas Nanson, a postgraduate student of literature, is one of Byatt's characters who reads voraciously. He becomes disillusioned about his postgraduate theoretical seminars and starts to see that they all:

had a fatal family likeness. They were repetitive in the extreme. We found the same clefts and crevices, transgressions and disintegrations, lures and deceptions beneath, no matter what surface we were scrying. (TBT, p.1)

Phineas' statement replicates Byatt's critical claims about the repetitive nature of post-structuralist literary interpretations. Similar arguments inform her critique of modern criticism in general, which she associates with the assertion of power, force and the imposition of meaning. The harsh critique of post-structuralist criticism runs through the whole novel. Phineas abandons his research in postmodern literary theory in an urgent need to deal with palpable 'things', or 'facts' (TBT, p.4). His biographical quest fails to help him find any firm footing; to the contrary, it unleashes a 'new-found addiction' to words (TBT, p.255). We witness Phineas wrestling with his poststructuralist sensibility, trying hard to avoid any 'literary critical term[s] in current use or abuse' (TBT, p.99). To return to Stevens's imperative 'to find,/ Not to impose',¹ which he quotes verbatim (TBT, p.144). Explaining his motives:

One of the reasons I had given up post-structuralist thought was the disagreeable amount of imposing that went on in it. You decided what you were looking for, and then duly found it – male hegemony, liberal-humanist *idées reçues*, etc. This was made worse by the fact that the deconstructionists and others paid lip-service to the idea that they must not impose – they even went as far as half-believing they must not find, either. And yet they

¹ The term refers to Wallace Stevens's 'to find,/ Not to impose' from his 'Notes Towards a Supreme Fiction' (Stephens, 1997, p.349). Byatt quotes it, among others, in *On Histories and Stories* (p.122).

discovered the same structures, the same velleities, the same evasions quite routinely in the most disparate texts. (TBT, p.144)

Disregarding his ‘1990s need to think a 1950s critic both naïve and disingenuous’ (TBT, p.25), Phineas’s sympathies with the mid-century ‘pre-theoretical intuitive criticism’ (TBT, p.11) betray Byatt’s own inclinations. Similarly, his decision ‘most seriously *not* to impose that sort of reading, and more primitively, not to impose [his] own hypotheses about who Destrý-Scholes was, or what he was doing’ (TBT, p.144) is an attempt to find a reading practice resistant to the dominating structures of theory-led readings – what he describes as a disinterested or impersonal reading. Phineas also voices the author’s acknowledgement of theory’s contribution to the literary debate and the necessity ‘to give these thinkers their due where it matters’ (TBT, p.114).

Byatt was also critical of ideological criticism, specifically Marxism, in her critical writing, and warned against art being used as propaganda. In the 1990s, for example, she criticized what she called contemporary ‘political correctness’, which became an ideology in itself (Byatt, 1995c, no page). Ironically, the same perspective may make Byatt’s own idealistic requirement of disinterested reading impossible to achieve as it is, into a similar myth.

Byatt’s critical statements about modern critical approaches show a fair degree of generalization and simplification in that they frequently become crowded under the labels of ‘literary theory’ or ‘modern criticism’, with particular theorists or critical works being rarely named. In such cases, the issues that are raised hint at the particular critical currents or schools of thought concerned. In her interview with Mireia Aragay, for example, she speaks critically of undergraduate students in the 1980s whose ‘writing [on Wordsworth] was extremely boring, because it was regurgitated theory, and the reading of Wordsworth was not demonstrated because the theory is always the same as

itself. They were not good enough to be adding anything to the theory, so they were simply parrot-writing' (Byatt, 1994d, p.158). Byatt gives no further specification at this point. As she continues to speak about more recent students and their neglect of primary reading, she mentions Barthes but only in order to deliver her critique of excessive emphasis laid on critical theories that divert attention from primary texts. She reports that:

almost every student wrote the same sentence about Balzac seeing reality as a solid block which he supposes he can describe like a photograph. In fact, (a) that isn't true, and (b) not one of those students had ever read a word of Balzac. All they had done was read Barthes saying that about Balzac. (Byatt, 1994d, p.158)

More specialized pieces of critical writing, such as the essays collected in *On Histories and Stories* (2001), or 'Reading, Writing, Studying: Some Questions about Changing Conditions for Writers and Readers' (1993) are more specific and rigorous. It is possible to see, for example, as Adams (2008) or Boccardi (2013) do, this cumulative approach as a part of a polarising strategy with the (preferred) Arnoldian humanist criticism on one side and (post)modern criticism on the other.

The main problems critiqued by Byatt include what she sees as the post-structuralist debasement of language and the consequent preclusion of human cognition and elimination of authority, and the allegedly counterproductive and marginalizing effects of feminist criticism. In an interview with Michael Silverblatt in 2006, for instance, she argued that there had been 'a period of literary criticism in which it was fashionable to say that language is inadequate, that language cannot describe the world outside us' (Byatt, 2006b, no page). In her opinion, 'language is quite incredibly adequate for most of our human experience' (2006b). She claims that the successful mapping of language onto experience is partly a matter of competence and confidence. However, the above assertion is an overstatement on Byatt's part for, elsewhere, she is

well aware that there are things that resist verbalisation. Moreover, she also maintains that she does not trust language as opposed to physical objects. In other interviews, she says: ‘I mistrust language and I mistrust abstract words [...] They are always provisional and suspicious. Whereas a thing is a thing. [...] I can’t write and I can’t think without a lot of very concrete objects’ (Byatt, 2015, no page). While she is consistent in her lack of fondness for abstract words, her assertion about mistrust in language is at odds with her usual stance. The claim needs to be considered within the existing context as an overgeneralized response to a question directed at her admiration of physical objects. The comment is an example of an odd, contradictory statement that she sometimes makes in a very particular context, but which fails to find support in her other critical writing and fiction. It ought to be acknowledged that many of her declarations concerning the adequacy of language to express ‘human experience’ are made as condensed counterclaims against what she sees as limited theoretical frameworks. In general, she sees most modern critical theories as ‘self-referring closed language-systems’ (Byatt, 1993b, p.7), whose impositions on literary texts are inexorably constraining.

Byatt is also critical of post-structuralist theories of authorial identity and authority. In *On Histories and Stories* she writes about her excitement over the idea of texts being “‘written’” by readers but she does not see it as a reason for depreciating the author:

Barthes and others have put forward the idea that texts are constructed, in some sense ‘written’ by readers, which was an idea the writer in me used to find exciting before it became a commonplace. Writing a text does feel both the same as and different from reading one, and vice versa. But Barthes and others use it as a way of denying the authorship and authority of writers. (OHAS, p.99)

Byatt's critique of Barthes' concept of the writerly text, pinpoints the issue of authorial authority, forming part of her wider questioning of the critical imposition of meanings on literary texts.

In her essay 'Reading, Writing, Studying', where she discusses academic studies of living authors, she criticises Wimsatt's 'Intentional Fallacy', Barthes's 'Death of the Author' and the deconstructionists for the misappropriation of texts and exclusion of the author. She argues that deconstructionists 'read texts looking for what they can see that the writers did not see, did not "foreground", and ipso facto miss what writers can see that *they* do not foreground' (Byatt, 1993b, p.7).

As Franken and Adams (2008a) acknowledge, however, Byatt's own position is characterized by a marked ambivalence. On the one hand, she rejects the upholding of self-expression as the primary function of art, and, on the other, she cannot accept the absolute removal of the author and abandonment of personality. In her essay 'Identity and the Writer', she explains that her artistic identity is fundamentally defined by the awareness of her self as a separate, independent entity, distinguished by 'a sense of being *balanced* in one's relations to things' rather than a struggle with desires and anxieties that she finds foregrounded in 'most modern criticism' (Byatt, 1987, p.24). She criticises T.S. Eliot's theory of poetic impersonality, arguing instead that 'if you have no self, there are certain things that you simply cannot say' (Byatt, 1987, p.25). Nonetheless, Adams (2008a, p.351) rightly blames Byatt for failing to deliver a satisfactory alternative to the critiqued identity concepts – Romantic, Freudian, Barthesian or Nietzschean. She also suggests that Byatt fails 'to explain how literary texts can be both autonomous and intimately tied to the "living mind" of the artist who produced them' (Adams, 2008a, p.351). Adams justifiably claims that, in effect, Byatt the writer cannot help dwelling on personality at the expense of the impersonal and is

unable to solve the ‘dilemma of authority’. What Adams labels as a ‘paradoxical ideal of impersonal self-expression’ is in fact the inversion of another apparent contradiction in Byatt’s thought on reading and writing, especially the idea of disinterested passionate reading (2008a, p.352).

These critical arguments play out in Byatt’s *Possession*. The novel was written against what Byatt described in an interview as ‘the idea that we are spoken by the language’ (Byatt, 2001c, no page). Contra this post-structuralist idea of language, the author is re-installed to power by late twentieth-century scholars ‘resurrecting’ two Victorian writers through an intuitive, non-critical reading of their poetic work and correspondence. Reading is presented as a mutually enriching interaction between the reader and the writer where the former can ‘read the author in the book’ (Byatt, 1992d, no page). Through this dialogue, the reader learns more about the writer than through a personal encounter, thereby resurrecting the author and their text. Amongst her fiction, *Possession* best foregrounds the reciprocity of the process by using a system of parallels and analogies set up around the two central character couples, distanced in time but brought together by texts. In *The Biographer’s Tale*, the biography novice’s failure to identify and resurrect his subject from his texts is interpreted as the author’s brilliance at hiding, which implicitly demonstrates his power over the text and the reader. *The Shadow of the Sun*, on the other hand, explores the relatively balanced impersonal relationship between author and reader distortion through personal contact. Lastly, Byatt admits that the efforts to side-line the author also had some positive effects in the form of ‘a new energy and playfulness in writers’ as they created distance allows a new ‘space of freedom’ (OHAS, p.6).

Byatt and Feminist Criticism

Byatt's relationship with feminist literary criticism is more complex and troubled than with other theories, such as post-structuralism or deconstruction. Calling herself 'a political feminist' (Byatt, 1996, no page), she proclaims full sympathy with the fight for women's equality and rights. She appreciates the work of mid- twentieth century Anglo-American feminists such as Betty Friedan and Germaine Greer, who drew attention to the situation experienced by women in the 1950s and 1960s and called for change.

Byatt is doubtful, on the other hand, about literary feminist criticism, which, in her view, works like 'propaganda' (Byatt, 1994c, p.61) and leads to misinterpretation and the distortion of texts. In *Imagining Characters* (Byatt and Sodr , 1995, p.243), for example, she criticizes the feminist misreading of Sir Bertram's patriarchy in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*,² and the identification of its central female character Fanny as a 'feminist heroine' (Byatt and Sodr , p.41). She claims that Austen did not intend to emphasise either of those things and would not have used those words to describe them. Instead, for Byatt, these reductionist characters 'were part of her *complex* world' (Byatt and Sodr , p.41, italics added). In contrast, Pat Barker is praised for writing out of 'a true novelist's curiosity about *whole* people, thinking, feeling and acting' and for 'avoiding the constraints of the prescribed feminist subject-matter' (OHAS, p.31, italics added).

² Byatt provides no reference to a particular feminist reading of *Mansfield Park*. She may be thinking of Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *Mad Woman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth century Literary Imagination* (1979), which detects a critique of the 'emptiness of patriarchal hierarchy' in all of Austen's novels and speaks of Sir Thomas Bertram as an exemplary failing father (p.137).

This stance fuelled Byatt's criticism of some of her reviews. According to Byatt, the story called 'Chinese Lobster' in *Matisse Stories* was misread by a feminist reviewer who looked in vain for a straightforward feminist message (Byatt, 1996, no page). The reviewer, named as Michelle Roberts, allegedly refused Byatt's complex portrayal of a young feminist artist accusing an older teacher of sexual harassment on the grounds that it did not make a clear distinction between the victim and the perpetrator. The quoted examples associate feminist reading with programmed partiality, prescriptiveness and imposition of limits and restrictions. Byatt's comments about Mary Jacobus's *Romanticism, Writing and Sexual Difference* in *On Histories and Stories* indicate the uneasy complexity of the relationship. She finds Jacobus's interpretation exciting but also dubious. Most importantly, she doubts whether Jacobus asks the right questions or provides the right answers and wonders 'what use?' Jacobus's anachronistic claims are (OHAS, p.101). This seems to be one of Byatt's main grievances in relation to feminist literary criticism, namely that it produces some interesting insights but fails to ask the important questions about the problems faced by women, most notably what Byatt calls 'the biological/intellectual problem of women' (Byatt, 1994c, p.61). As mentioned in the introduction, the sex-versus-intellect conflict is the central issue of Byatt's own feminist thought, based on her experience in the 1950s when she felt forced to decide between marriage and family, or sex and motherhood, on the one hand, and intellectual pursuits and a professional career on the other. The dilemma, which men in her view did not have to face, was further complicated by social gender stereotypes that implement the first option as a norm and a desirable model to follow. Byatt argues that 'the biology of women, at least women who bear children, causes them to have restrictions on what they can do – at least temporary restrictions on what they can do with their minds' (Byatt, 2004, p.153).

Her ambivalence about the post-structuralist and deconstructionist critical approaches means that she is particularly critical of French feminist criticism and the Anglo-American critics who were influenced by it, for example the proponents of ‘gynocriticism’, Ellen Moers and Elaine Showalter. Byatt is particularly sceptical about the theories of Helen Cixous and Luce Irigaray over what might be an exclusively female language and style. She argues that such beliefs limit women’s imaginations and have an impact on women writers of the post-literary feminism generation. This resulted in ‘ghettoization’ (Cf. Byatt, 1994c, p.60) of women writers who started ‘writing about women’s themes for women in what they think are female styles. You wouldn’t catch men writing about male themes in male styles, or if you did it would be seen to be a sub-form’ (Byatt, 1996, no page). In an interview with George Greenfield, she makes another generalizing comment about ‘feminists’:

They’ve invented a subject-matter that was peculiarly female and they said that women must write in a particularly female style, whereas those of my generation who knew that we were trying to be serious writers, were on the aggressive – we had to prove more than any man. (Byatt, 1989, pp.48-49)

This becomes part of the plot of *Possession* in which validity of a feminist textual interpretation is described in the mock-feminist analysis of the fictional Victorian woman writer Christabel LaMotte’s text. Byatt explains the circumstances as follows:

Christabel LaMotte’s *Melusina* was written because I had heard a talk by the French feminist, Luce Irigaray, on powerful women who were neither virgins nor mothers. It was written to conform with a feminist interpretation of the imaginary poem – an interpretation I had in fact written before writing the text itself. (OHAS, p.47)

Byatt further explains: ‘When I came to write extracts from the poem, I quite deliberately went into a book by Ellen Moers about the feminized landscape. And I was getting very sick of women critics finding exactly the same feminized landscape in absolutely everything they read’ (Byatt, 2006c, p.337). Similarly in the composition of

Stephanie's dream with a Freudian interpretation in mind in *The Virgin in the Garden*, Byatt inscribes a feminist reading into her 'primary' text. The message is the same as that of Phineas Nanson's claim about the post-structuralist seminars in *The Biographer's Tale*: theory-controlled reading imposes its preferred meanings on texts.

On the other hand, she praises feminist critics, for their revelatory work on the symbolism of embroidery and needlework in the imagery of female writers (Byatt and Sodré, 1995, p.72), or for the exploration and exposition of 'powerful guiding images of women' (Byatt, 1994c, p.61) which were vital for *Possession*. Similarly, she recognizes the significance of feminist scholarship in the deconstruction of false cultural clichés and connections that play crucial roles in society. This is where feminism, in her view, still falls short. An example is the failure of feminist critics to unlock the woman/flesh and man/spirit opposition that she also opposes in Lawrence:

This is an example of thinking by false analogies – impregnation of females by male semen, impregnation of inert Matter by the divine Nous, which I think all feminists ought to deconstruct. Instead of which many of them have aligned themselves with earth religions of the Mother, as though both men and women were not both body and spirit or mind, related in complicated ways. (OHAS, p.111)

Byatt also blames what was called the 'gynocritical' strategies for putting female artists counterproductively in a disadvantaged position. As a result of the aforementioned emphasis on female themes and styles and discouraging women into writing about 'small things', women writers 'got side-tracked' (Byatt, 1994d, p.155). In Byatt's opinion, feminism's efforts to gain recognition for women artists worked counterproductively and led to isolation and what she interprets as self-imposed despondency. The consequence is a lack of great female novelists among contemporary English writers. She sees the roots of the problem in the misconception of British feminists in the 1970s about the alleged historical suppression of English women

writers, which meant that women writers have segregated themselves by producing exclusively female-centred writing. She argues that, on the contrary, in Britain, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were ‘centuries of really good women writers who are equally as important as the men and equally important in the canon’ (Byatt, 1994d, p.155). She even claims that ‘the only generation in which there are not obviously great women novelists is this generation of post-literary feminism’ (Byatt, 1996, no page). On the other hand, Byatt speaks critically of feminist attempts to introduce more women writers into school curricula, which in her belief leads to the promotion of minor female writers on the grounds of feminist merits rather than the quality of writing (PM, p.268).³ These strong allegations, nevertheless, seem to contradict Byatt’s complaints about the lack of female models in the early part of her career, as voiced for instance in the introduction to *The Shadow of the Sun* (1991, p.x). One cannot presuppose a direct proportion between the number of great novelists and the availability of role-models, nevertheless, the severe shortage of examples experienced by the young Byatt suggests far less favourable circumstances than those described above. Also, taking into account that the literary canon only began to be formed from the late nineteenth century with the rise of English literature as a subject, the statement seems too strong, considering that the strongest formulation of the English literary tradition by Leavis was criticized by Byatt on feminist grounds. Finally, Byatt’s negotiation of feminism and feminist criticism plays a significant role in her reading and portrayal of Lawrence as she wages a fictionalised defence of his prose from feminist misinterpretations.

Possession: The Pleasure of Reading

³ Also cf. Byatt, 1993c, p.5.

While Byatt is critical of Barthes's concept of authorship, she sympathizes with his notion of reading in terms of pleasure. It is explored particularly in *Possession*, whose prototype reader not only shares the first name with Barthes, but also experiences the reading process in Barthesian terms.

In addition to *The Biographer's Tale*, *Possession* is a major example of how the relation between Byatt's critical negotiations of 'theory' and her attitude to reading becomes re-enacted in her fiction. With the help of metafictional devices, the novel is constructed as a stage for the debate about and differentiation of various types and levels of reading, some of which are clearly favoured over others.

There are readings – of the same text – that are dutiful, readings that map and dissect, readings that hear a rustling of unheard sounds, that count grey little pronouns for pleasure or instruction and for a time do not hear golden or apples. There are personal readings, that snatch for personal meanings, I am full of love, or disgust, or fear, I scan for love, or, disgust, or fear. There are – believe it – impersonal readings – where the mind's eye sees the lines move onwards and the mind's ear hears them sing and sing. (P, p.471)

All of the above ways of reading are described as fully legitimate and associated with the 'intense pleasure of reading' (P, p.470). The last quoted, however, marks Byatt's privileged kind of reading clearly. Compared with Barthes's distinction of 'two systems of reading', namely anecdotal, content-oriented, reading and '*applied* reading' that is capable of discerning 'the play of language' (Barthes, 1998, p.12), Byatt's 'impersonal reading' is analogical to the more advanced '*applied* reading'. Barthes's differentiation between reading practices is linked to his distinction between writerly and readerly texts in *S/Z* (1970). A readerly text is straightforward and requires no special interpretation whereas a writerly text is that whose meanings are not immediately evident and demand labour or interpretative work on behalf of the reader (Barthes, 2002, pp.4-5). In the latter case, the writer loses control over the interpretation of his/her work and the reader becomes 'a producer of the text' (Barthes, 2002, p.4). The two kinds of emotional

response, associated with a certain degree of imaginative involvement, suggested by Byatt, correspond to Barthes's distinction between 'pleasure' in the sense of 'contentment' or 'euphoria', and the effects of 'bliss' associated with profound changes to consciousness, including a sense of both loss and acquisition, through 'novelty' (Barthes, 1998, p.14). Barthes's theory accommodates the fact that the relation between 'pleasure' and 'bliss' cannot be reduced to a dichotomy as their meanings converge in a complex way. In Byatt's rendering, they are:

readings when the knowledge that we *shall know* the writing differently or better or satisfactorily, runs ahead of any capacity to say what we know, or how. In these readings, a sense that the text has appeared to be wholly new, never before seen, is followed, almost immediately, by the sense that it was always there, that we the readers knew it was always there, and have always known it was as it was, though we have now for the first time recognised, become fully cognisant of, our knowledge. (P, pp.471-2)

As he 'read[s], or reread[s], *The Golden Apples*, as though the words were living creatures or stones of fire' (P, p.472), the chief protagonist Roland Mitchell enters a sort of textual ecstasy and encounters 'the language moving around, weaving its own patterns, beyond the reach of any single human, writer or reader'. He seems to be responding to what Barthes describes as 'fires of language' (1998, p.17). Barthes argues that the text exists in multiple bodies. Firstly, it is 'the pheno-text', the physical body for the critics, philologists and other readers to dissect. But there is also:

a body of bliss consisting solely of erotic relations, utterly distinct from the first body: it is another contour, another nomination; thus with the text: it is no more than the open list of the fires of language (those living fires, intermittent lights, wandering features strewn in the text like seed and which for us advantageously replace the '*semina aeternitatis*,' the '*zopyra*,' the common notions, the fundamental assumptions of ancient philosophy.) (Barthes, 1998, p.17)

Using philosophical analogies, Barthes's 'fires of language' refer to something latent in the language realized through the encounter with the text and experienced in the form of pleasure. Roland's sense of 'language moving around [...] beyond the reach of any

single human, writer or reader' is analogical to Barthes's 'body of bliss' that exist completely apart from the words of the text. Having said that, Byatt cannot fully subscribe to Barthes's reading as a purely sensuous process. Roland's reading ecstasy thus stems from the recognition of a latent 'knowledge', which connects the sensuous experience with mental activity. As Mark M. Hennelly (2003, p.470) points out, the process, presented as reading becoming 'alive', is marked by the mingling of 'cognitive and visceral pleasures' that for once, unite body and mind. Hennelly locates the novel's 'textual pleasures' in repetition and recurring patterns that produce 'endless series of textual metonymies', identified as 'a function of the metaphysical and metatextual quest for origins that motivates characters in and readers of *Possession* alike' (Hennelly, 2003, p.443). Repeated patterns are part of the quest itself, which includes the modern scholars' recovery and interpretation of lost texts, a resurrection of the past and the grasping of the past's legacy. Hennelly explains that the repetitive pattern revives the 'myth of eternal return' (2003, p.460) and raises questions about the plausibility of accessing the origins at all. More importantly, prompted by Kathleen Coyne Kelly's notion of the 'enactment of reading' (Kelly, 1996, p.95) in *Possession*, Hennelly examines the complicated interaction between the novel's (extrinsic) reader, the 'primary reader-identification character' (Hennelly, 2003, p.445) Roland, and the narrative voice that enables the reader to move in and out of, and beyond, Roland's consciousness.

Barthes's notion of linguistic play, which is an essential feature of writerly texts and is accessible only through a more advanced way of reading, is akin to Byatt's idea of the 'singing of language' that can only be discerned via a 'sensuous response' to the text (Byatt, 1994d, p.158); a response of the kind experienced by Roland. Barthes's 'play of language' that takes the form of 'the layering of significance' (Barthes, 1998,

p.12) is close to Byatt's idea of writing as knitting (cf. Byatt, 2001c), or weaving (Byatt, 1993b, p.6), which can be seen as a way of layering of ideas, meanings, and images that constitute a text. In the article 'Observe the Neurones: Between, Above and Below John Donne' (2006a), Byatt explains that her own response to poetry involves both sensuous and mental responses. She links 'the excitement and pleasure of mental activity' experienced during reading and the encounter with complex metaphorical language (Byatt, 2006a, p.13). Similarly to Barthes, she uses the word 'play' as a key figure to describe the process by directly linking 'the play on words, the play of light on a landscape, [and] the mind at play' (Byatt, 2006a, p.13). The main difference between Barthes's and Byatt's notions of the 'play of language' is the level of agency that is attributed to the writer, who exercises, in Byatt's understanding of the creative process, much greater control over the text.

In *Possession*, the battle of contradictory forces between unprejudiced reception and alert critical self-consciousness occurs, inevitably, inside the main characters themselves. Struggling with the burden of their post-structuralist training and postmodern sensibility, Roland and Maud question the validity and originality of their thoughts and pursuits. The novel, moreover, follows their progress, or rather regression, from the post-structuralist vision to a more rudimentary stage, free of modern theoretical bias and characterized by honesty, which eventually leads to the revelations inaccessible to their bigoted rivals. For Maud, it means, for instance, relaxing her feminist mistrust in Roland's research subject, a prominent Victorian poet, whom she perceives as a typical misogynist of his time.

It is useful to note that the return to more open, non-theoretical reading correlates with the previously mentioned insistence on the 'organic' and 'wholesome' nature of literary texts. Byatt's association between free, disinterested reading with a

‘whole’ response, that is ‘reading a book with the whole of yourself’ (Byatt, 2003b, no page) echoes Leavis’s demand for ‘fullness of response’ (Leavis, 1965b, p.212). Moreover, she assumes that her favoured ‘life of the mind’ (Byatt, 2004, p.145) can engage both intellect and emotion. Doing ‘literature’ (Byatt, 1994d, p.158) therefore requires sensuous as well as mental, or intellectual, engagement. Inasmuch as reading a good book can, and ought to, produce ‘a shiver of awe’, writing becomes a ‘sensuous act’ (Byatt, 2003a, p.13); at least in Byatt’s case, [she] claims to ‘write with the blood that goes to the ends of [her] fingers’ (Byatt, 2001c, no page). In relation to *Possession*, for instance, she insists that ‘[y]ou can both feel the passion of Ash and Christabel, and do the standing-back and thinking’ (Byatt, 1994c, p.62). Hence, it is entirely appropriate for readers ‘to live in a book’ (Byatt, 2003a, p.13), and/or ‘identify with characters’ (Byatt, 1994c, p.62) and, at the same time, enjoy both the aesthetic qualities and intellectual challenges of the text.

Literature and ‘Life’

The prominence of the word ‘life’ in Byatt’s thoughts about language and literature is major evidence of the formative influence of her critical and creative predecessors, Arnold, Leavis, George Eliot and D.H. Lawrence, in particular.

In contrast to Arnold and Leavis, Lawrence represents the ‘primary’, that is creative, or creative critical, rather than purely critical, source of inspiration. There are three reasons behind my choice of a text to illustrate the main points. Firstly, the text elucidates the Lawrentian meanings of ‘life’ and ‘aliveness’ and demonstrates the centrality and weight of these concepts in Lawrence’s thought; secondly, it shows the manner in which he links literature and his ‘philosophy’ (a challenging term to use considering the novelist’s declaration of supremacy over philosophers in this very

essay), and finally, it is the source of one of Byatt's most frequent quotes from Lawrence's work.

His essay 'Why the Novel Matters' is one in a series of texts focussed on art and the novel in particular, written in 1925. It opens with criticism of the misbalanced duality between body and spirit, or soul, which perceives the latter as livelier than, and superior to the former. Observing his writing hand, Lawrence explains that, unlike the spirit, the body is supremely 'alive' for it visibly displays 'life', and asks: 'Why should I imagine that there is a *me* which is more *me* than my hand is? Since my hand is absolutely alive, *me* alive' (Lawrence, 1985a, p.193). According to Lawrence, things learned through the body are the only true knowledge, whereas all 'words and thoughts and sighs and aspirations' are only 'tremulations upon the ether' (1985a, p.194). What follows is the quintessential Lawrentian mantra that '[n]othing is important but life', that is, life in (full awareness of) the 'living body' (Lawrence, 1985a, p.194), which is, nevertheless, endowed with an apprehension of a greater, universal 'life'. The recognition of this 'livingness', which underlies the distinction between 'man alive' and 'dead man in life', is, nevertheless, accessible only to novelists, who can see 'the whole man alive' (...), unlike philosophers, scientists, or even poets, who only see parts. It follows that out of all types of art, '[t]he novel is the one bright book of life', and although itself, like all books, only a 'tremulation on the ether', it is the only one that 'can make the whole man-alive tremble' (Lawrence, 1985a, p.195). The novel, Lawrence suggests, is the only literary genre, and indeed the only form of communication about life in its fullness. And as such, it also affects the 'whole' person 'in its wholeness' (Lawrence, 1985a, p.196). Lawrence's aim is didactic, and his lesson is that we must learn from novels: 'To be alive, to be man alive, to be whole man alive: that is the point. And at its best, the novel, and the novel supremely, can help you'

(1985a, p.197). In 'Morality and the Novel' (1925), Lawrence claims that the novel, as opposed to poetry or other art forms, is best capable of capturing the complexity of 'life' understood as the 'achieving of a pure relationship between ourselves and the living universe about us' (1985b, p.172). As 'the highest complex of subtle interrelatedness that man has discovered' (Lawrence, 1985b, p.172), it is 'a perfect medium for revealing to us the changing rainbow of our living relationships. The novel can help us to live, as nothing else can' (p.175).

Lawrence's belief in the 'one bright book of life' captured Byatt's imagination and the phrase resurfaces repeatedly in her creative and critical writing. She borrows the phrase for the title of her major article on Lawrence, 'The One Bright Book of Life' (2002), in which she voices her admiration for Lawrence's 'formal ambition – which is a vision of life' (Byatt, 2002b, p.112) in his major novels, *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*. The statement is also negotiated in her fiction, usually with a hint of irony as a sign of reserve with regard to its authorial overstatement. In *Still Life*, for example, Frederica acquiesces to Lawrence's influence on her literary preferences and choice of genre for her first writing attempts. She is reported to choose fiction over poetry, partly due to her indoctrination with his 'one bright book of life' mantra (SL, p.73). In *Babel Tower*, the quote is repeated in the opening session of her course on 'The Modern Novel' that takes place against the backdrop of the 1960s, which, as the narrator remarks, 'do not find Lawrence daring' (BT, p.212). Frederica quotes Lawrence again when questioning his idolization of the novel and what she views as an outdated ideal of 'oneness'. In her notes, she writes: 'Why bring in the stars? Ursula asks. D.H. Lawrence said the novel is the one bright book of Life. In the one bright book you have to have it all, the Word made flesh, the rainbow, the stars, the One' (BT, p.311). Such a holistic grasp seems incompatible with Frederica's current feelings of fragmentation

and discontinuity, which not only force her to refuse Lawrence's and Forster's ideals but also momentarily shake her trust in the genre, which appears archaic and irrelevant. Her scepticism is, nevertheless, temporary and her confidence in the novel is restored when she recovers stability in her personal life in the closing part of the *Quartet*. In *The Game*, Lawrence's phrase is inverted into a different paradigm, that of 'life as brightly-coloured as books' (G, p.18), presented as a chimera yearned for by the novel's main, and only genuine, reader.

Finally, the main character in the short story titled 'On the Day That E.M. Forster Died' (1987) challenges the Lawrentian-Leavisite insistence on the absolute interdependence of art and life. She views her own fixation on literature as 'an addiction' where '[t]he bright books of life were the shots in the arm, the warm tots of whisky, which kept her alive and conscious and lively' (SOS, p.130). Mrs Smith's (and Byatt's) position is again defined against selected critical current(s), this time, the theories of reading exemplified by T.S. Eliot, D.H. Lawrence and F.R. Leavis. The ironic Lawrentian turn above is again easily recognizable. Mrs Smith's experience indicates that what matters is not just what literature can teach about life; it is also that it actually adds 'life', that is a sense of vitality or vivacity, with a significant impact on the quality of living. This view corresponds with Byatt's openly proclaimed preference for 'living [...] in the mind', which is 'livelier' (Byatt, 1992b, p.127) and 'more serious, interior and brightly coloured' (Byatt, 2004, p.153) than real everyday life. Her life 'in the mind', dismissible by Lawrence's standards in its antithesis to the body, is associated with the same qualities, such as wholeness, vitality and spontaneity, celebrated by him in relation to the only real 'life', the life of the body. Nonetheless, despite the contradiction in attributing livingness and spontaneity to the 'body' by Lawrence and to the 'mind' by Byatt, the fact is that both find the ordinary daily living

impoverished, or even void, without some vitalizing force, or sense of a larger dimension.

Byatt's repeated use of the phrase 'one bright book of life' plays a part in the depiction of reading in her novels. It is used as a catchphrase, dislodged from the critical context to underline the positive image of reading delivered in her texts. The affinity between books and life, reflected in the textual dynamic and imaginative vivacity of texts, is a significant factor in the reader response.

Despite her doubts about the didactic Arnoldian-*cum*-Leavisite 'Criticism of Life' (Byatt, 1976b, p.8), Byatt (1996, no page) maintains that it is possible to learn about 'life' from books and that art helps understand 'life' better, which implies that she trusts that literature is capable of communicating the realities of the world and life effectively. Approaching the novel 'as a way of coming to terms with everything, of mapping the world out' (Byatt, cited in Shakespeare, 1985, p.20), Byatt uses her characters to explore various degrees of reliance on literature in her novels. Frederica, whose life and development is followed through the series of four novels from the age of seventeen into her early thirties, is a major example. The progress and shifts in Frederica's attitude to literature are presented, not unlike the problem of literary influence, as a matter of intellectual and emotional maturity. Like Anna in *The Shadow of the Sun*, the teenage Frederica rejects having literature imposed on her life, and yet feels a strong urge to engage with it. We have no information about Anna. However, it is made clear that, in addition to the unconscious impact of reading, Frederica does use literature as a tool to orientate herself in anchoring her identity and finding her place in the world. Hence, she is captured contemplating the (im)possibility of identification with some of Lawrence's major female characters (in an order that corresponds with the particular stages of her identity formation) despite her agitated refusal to accept his

novels as models for life. His philosophical ideas are sources of inspiration and challenge which influence the formation of her views and identity.

Byatt's latest novel, *The Children's Book* (2009) reveals, however, the reverse side of the coin, namely the destructive potential of writing and imagination; a return, in a way, to the theme of her second novel, *The Game*. *The Children's Book* describes a female children's book writer, who, in addition to her regular writing, creates tales for all of her children. Every child is the central figure of his/her tale, which continues unfolding over time as they grow. Most children are capable of separating their identity and emancipating themselves from their fictitious doppelgängers, save the eldest son who is unable to loosen himself and is eventually driven to suicide. As with Cassandra in *The Game*, he is unable to cope with the terror of having his life *written* for him by someone else.

Literary Influence

Byatt's beliefs about reading and writing correlate intimately (as does her critical and creative writing), including her inclusive, holistic approach, the centrality of pleasure and curiosity, or the notion of a literary text as a 'piece of knitting' (Byatt, 2001c, no page).⁴ In her opinion, literary influence is principally constructive, in contrast to the antagonistic 'anxiety of influence', conceived by Harold Bloom in his influential study *Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (1973). The latter is explained as a struggle for 'poetic priority' caused by later poets' more or less conscious concerns about their indebtedness towards their poetic precursors and their struggle 'to clear imaginative space for themselves' (Bloom, 1973, p.64). In the essay 'People in Paper

⁴ Also cf. BT, p.213.

Houses: Attitudes to “Realism” and “Experiment” in English Post-war Fiction’, first published in 1979, Byatt acknowledges the presence of such an anxiety in contemporary English literature and even proposes that the preoccupation with forebears has evolved into a characteristic quality of ‘much formal innovation in recent English fiction’ (PM, p.167). According to Byatt, the phenomenon as it occurs on the broader level of the national literature is unprecedented compared to other national literatures and is associated particularly with the authoritative power of Leavis’s ‘Great Tradition’. Leavis’s students are supposedly made to feel ‘that anything you wrote yourself would fall so woefully short of the highest standards that it was better not to try’ and that any ‘would-be critics and would-be poets and novelists alike shrivelled into writing blocks’ (SS, pp.x-xi). Similarly, in her interview titled ‘On Becoming a Writer’, Byatt (2013, no page) suggests that ‘a general intimidation from reading great writers’ is inevitable and claims that the academic study of literature and contemporary professional literary criticism are far greater dangers to would-be writers. Leavis is again criticised for quenching his students’ aspirations through his highly selective worship of several authors in combination with an exaggerated emphasis on the writers’ moral integrity and responsibilities.

Byatt thus suggests that the above anxiety is artificially sustained and deepened. She fears that the growing mass of literary criticism, the modern-age angst concerning the adequacy and reliability of perception and thought/language, and, last but not least, ‘the ambiguous power and restrictiveness of the tradition’ itself aggravate the problem (PM, p.170). In her fiction, on the other hand, attention is focused more on the personal concerns of individual artists regarding their literary predecessors and their relationship with an existing literary tradition. It is presented principally as the unavoidable, natural result of cultural dynamics and, above all, personal artistic development. Most examples

of poetic and critical anxiety in Byatt's fiction are presented primarily as matters of individual (im)maturity and self-confidence, with the desired outcome being liberation and emancipation rather than the achievement of Bloomean supremacy. Byatt seems to wrestle more with the enforcement of models by an external authority and with the lack of appropriate (mainly female) models than suffer from enervating latecomer anxieties. In this sense, Byatt's idea of the anxiety of influence can be viewed as a gendered alternative to the masculine Oedipal quest for priority, especially if we take Anna Severell in *The Shadow of the Sun* and Frederica in the *Quartet* as prime examples.

The Shadow of the Sun, first published nine years ahead of Bloom's theory of poetry (1973), can be read as both a precursor of and challenge to his scheme. The relationship between the visionary father figure and his young daughter seeking her place in the adult world contains several elements of the Freudian 'family romance', most notably the emancipation from an idealised, overvalued parent. Indeed, Anna is no 'autonomous ego' (Bloom, 1973, p.91) since she is confronted by her celebrated creative artist-father who, in regard to writing, represents a standard which is utterly 'impossible for her to attain' and whose presence 'drained her dreams of their force' (SS, p.16). In her struggle to establish her own identity, Anna develops an evasive strategy of splitting Henry's twofold authority – artistic and paternal – and seeking to 'ignore the writer in the father' (SS, p.55). The split artist/(wo)man that occurs to Anna to be the most obvious solution under given circumstances anticipates the predicament she faces at the end of the novel and recurs as a typically female conundrum throughout Byatt's work, particularly in the form of 'laminations' in the *Quartet*. The tactic allows her to prevent becoming 'submerge[d]' (SS, p.55), or as Bloom later said, '*being flooded*' (Bloom, 1973, p.57) by her father's art and, to try to save him as a parent. This entails, however, a further idealisation because Henry has never acted as one. Both

attempts prove futile and result in Anna's suspension in a state of tense inertia, and anxiety. Anna must exist in Henry's shadow; a condition paralleled on the symbolic level with the heavy, sun-filled pre-storm weather spell as a part of the narrative setting. It is the critic Oliver Canning, who urges her to leave the shadow, to cut herself off and enter what he labels 'the real world' (SS, p.56). Oliver Canning provides a Freudian-*cum*-Bloomean analysis of the Severell family situation by charging Anna's mother with dislike for her daughter and presenting her brother as a potential rival in attracting parental love. Bloom's understanding of Western poetic tradition is characterized primarily by exclusivity and hostility as 'a history of anxiety and self-saving caricature, of distortion, of perverse, wilful revisionism' (Bloom, 1973, p.30). According to Bloom, poetic history is identical to poetic influence in that it is made by 'strong poets' 'misreading each other, so as to clear imaginative space for themselves' (Bloom, 1973, p.5). Oliver foreshadows his theory by explaining that Henry's securing his own future as a novelist deprives Anna of attaining hers – 'it puts [her] out of place' (SS, p.56). Nevertheless, his eager attempt to help fails to bring genuine liberation, as it not only takes Anna merely out of Henry's sight and reach but also obliterates her creative desires, however vague they are at this stage. Oliver, ventriloquizing Leavis, tries to persuade Anna that the future has no place for her in the creative world because of Henry. Paradoxically, Oliver's effort brings Anna closer to her father's position and makes her feel that:

[i]t seemed suddenly, enormously important that he should be her ally, that he should support her in some way against Oliver's commonsense, or she was lost. There was an answer to what Oliver said and to what he did not say and Henry must know it. She was, after all, Henry's daughter. (SS, p.89)

Responding to Oliver's push into activity and yet intuitively resisting the invitation into his 'real world', Anna turns for support to her father, who typically fails, or is unable, to provide it. Their other close coming-together during Anna's stay in Cambridge ends in

confusion and despair, and yet a few symbolic moments indicate that Anna may, despite all, 'have inherited something' from her father (SS, p.201). At this point, Byatt draws attention to her heroine's gender in order to highlight the limitations and restrictions that young ambitious women face when trying to write. These limitations are portrayed as a complicated blend of biological restrictions and social conventions, with the problem of 'power', or 'energy' at its heart. (SS, p.201). Like in Frederica's case, analysed by Mary Eagleton, Anna suffers from 'doomed genealogy; however hard one tries, history or biology will triumph' (Eagleton, 2014, p.209). With a touch of comedy, Byatt (SS, p.201) dramatizes the female visionary question, outlined in her introduction, by making Anna consider her 'bodily strength' and 'size' against Henry's in relation to creative power, and seeing the differences between them first of all in terms of size and intensity. Anna recognizes that 'she could not be prodigal of power as he was, but must husband her resources or be easily exhausted, even when she had found out how to use them' (SS, p.201). Moreover, being a woman 'made it harder to go on looking for ways to go forward' (SS, p.201) and, as she eventually comprehends, the 'way' will need to deviate from available paradigms. After prolonged fumbling due to Oliver's misguidance and Henry's inability to provide an appropriate model, Anna arrives at a moment of insight, a kind of composite revelation, which reveals the dubiousness of the previous second-hand *quasi*-visions and makes her intuit the open choice ahead. The experience is presented, as in the case of Henry's visions, as a path to a special kind of knowledge, or profound intuition, that lies at the centre of artistic creativity. In *The Shadow of the Sun* (p.295), Byatt blends together the Lawrentian language of brightness ('the past rose bright and decisive'), the formal ordering of narrative time ('she would come to remember...but that would be years later'), and revelation through distance ('she must go away from here, before she could find what was'). As Byatt explains in

the introduction to the novel, '[t]his vision of too much makes the visionary want to write – in my case – or paint, or compose, or dance or sing' (SS, p.x). Even though the above episode is Anna's first timid experience of intuition of her own, it signals two significant things. Firstly, it indicates the availability of alternative routes to take, rather than the existence of a single path that would be blocked off for Anna unless she were able to conquer and outshine her father⁵; and, secondly, it suggests an alternative kind of creativity that is more imaginative than visionary. As a result of this, what is presented as far more frustrating than the alleged lack of ('imaginative') space is the absence of direction or relevant models. In the introduction, Byatt also claims that 'there was a feminine mystique but no tradition of female mysticism that wasn't hopelessly self-abnegating' (SS, p.x)⁶ and continues to explain why she struggled with its form:

I had no model I found at all satisfactory. I should say now that the available models, Elisabeth Bowen, Rosamund Lehman, Forster, Woolf, were all too suffused with 'sensibility' but that I disliked the joky social comedy of Amis and Wain considerably more than I disliked 'sensibility'. (SS, p.xi)

Like Byatt in the 1950s, Anna will need to find her own 'third way' (SS, p.92), quite dissimilar from the examples at hand. The composite nature of her revelation quoted above, alongside the earlier contemplation about the difference in energy, streaming between the sexes, indicate that it will be a more complex and layered imaginative activity than Henry's obsessional single-focused states of transcendence.

The belief that Byatt's understanding of literary influence offers an alternative to, or revision of Bloom's theory is put forward also by Marianne Børch in her reading of *Possession*. In her view, the morality of romance associated with feminine attributes

⁵ Byatt's idea of tradition is indeed recognizably closer to Northrop Frye's 'simultaneous and accommodating one' as opposed to Bloom's 'exclusive, competitive and fiercely elitist' system, as Steve Polansky puts it in 'A Family Romance-Northrop Frye and Harold Bloom: A Study of Critical Influence' (1981, p.236).

⁶ By 'mystique' Byatt refers to the central argument of Betty Friedan's book (1963) mentioned at the beginning of the introduction, about marriage and family being endorsed as women's natural fulfillment.

of love and desire challenges Bloom's male-centred predatory scheme. Roland's experience is presented as a characteristic example of 'poetic self-discovery' taking the form of 'a liberation from tradition: the precursors remain significant but stop standing in the way of new personal achievement' (Børch, 2013, p.153). In addition, the process is one of discovery and inclusion rather than a 'Freudian Oedipally motivated patricide' (p.158).

Byatt's standpoint is expressed clearly in her interview with Michael Silverblatt where she asserts that writers' reading does not endanger but enhances originality, 'by listening to so many voices' and learning from them (Byatt, 2006b, no page). The fundamental belief communicated in her writing is that poetic influence is essentially beneficial and enriching whereas a certain degree of anxiety regarding one's literary ancestry is an inevitable part of an artist's creative journey.

Considering the degree of engagement with literary issues in *The Shadow of the Sun*, the characters are never captured reading. Nevertheless, in accord with what was said earlier about Byatt's tendency to delineate her position by antithesis, this novel contains an inbuilt critique of the contemporary Cambridge approach to literary studies and its treatment of literature 'like a religion' (SS, p.157).

Critical and Creative – A Struggle towards Synergy

Byatt's second novel *The Game* (1967) continues the exploration of literary creativity in the story of two sisters, a Cambridge don specializing in mediaeval literature, and an author of successful novels about contemporary women's lives, both trapped in a complicated web of relationships and conflicts originating in their childhood fantasy game. *The Game* comes out much darker than the first novel in that it foregrounds the destructive potential of creativity. On one hand, Julia's art feeds off real

life and people around her, whereas Cassandra's 'real' life is being eaten away by her imagination, the result in both cases being a disastrous blurring of boundaries between fantasy/fiction and reality.

Their game relies on inventing and manoeuvring a compelling and intricate fantasy world. It is a synthesizing analogy to both reading and writing, as it seems to require a joint critical and creative effort that is both invention and interpretation. To begin with, the two modes appear quite separately in the opening chapters of the novel through the juxtaposition of Cassandra, presented principally as the 'critical' reader, and Julia, her 'creative' sister, a practising writer. Accordingly, reading is associated almost exclusively with Cassandra rather than Julia. Begun as a romantic quest for 'a life as brightly-coloured as books' (G, p.18), it is presented as a vigorous imaginative activity, fuelled by what is described as 'passion', 'curiosity', or 'hunger'; typical expressions used by Byatt talking about her own reading. Literature, capable of rendering the rich 'complexities of existence' (p.18), is thus contemplated as a source of 'that secondary, more intense life' (p.150) that had attracted Cassandra as a young student. From this point of view, it is compared to religious faith, associated with 'a harmony between sounds, and words and objects' (G, p.150). The failure of both literature and religion as sources of the 'secondary life' indicates the insufficiency of the 'secondary life' scheme in general, and it also draws attention to the problem of balance, which is central to *The Game*.

Even though Cassandra is featured as the central reader in the novel, the narrative gradually unveils her great creative potential, which, as it unfolds, is likely to surpass her sister's. Julia partly recognizes the creative power of Cassandra's imagination by realizing how 'much alive' (G, p.47) its childhood products have survived. It also becomes obvious that Cassandra's creativity was hampered by an

earlier event, namely Julia's appropriation of a story written by Cassandra as a young girl, based on their game. It was experienced by Cassandra as a fundamental violation of privacy and personal identity. Cassandra is revealed as the true 'maker' (SS, p.xi) of most of the Game. Conversely, Julia's originality and quality as a writer is challenged, by unveiling her working method, which rests on the observation and appropriation of people and events seen around her. Her books, as Julia rightly suspects, suffer from superficiality as they fail to get at 'the essence' of things (G, p.108). They are reported to be losing their force with the weakening of the 'romantic fantastic overtones' (G, p.47), which had, of course, drawn on Cassandra's imagination in the Game. Julia seems to be failing both creatively and critically, proving a poor 'judge' (SS, p.xi) with devastating consequences for people who love her.

In addition to dramatizing the powerful passions of storytelling and reading, Byatt also explores the harmful effects of reading and writing. *The Game* explores the danger of becoming overwhelmed by imagination and imaginary worlds which can jeopardize an individual's relation to the physical world and one's sense of identity, which is a theme shared by *The Game* and *The Children's Book*. The most serious consequences are portrayed in the cases of Cassandra and Tom where extremely sensitive readers coincide with 'dangerous' writers who, in Byatt's words, 'write books that destroy people' (Byatt, 2009, no page). In *The Children's Book*, Tom's over-identification with the *alter ego* character in his story means not only that he is unable to grow up and separate himself from the story but that the story's qualities of fluidity and endless variability have a destructive influence on Tom's sense of identity. As in Cassandra's case, the tale 'eats up life, reality, truth' (PM, p.22) and becomes inscribed in his destiny. The author is revealed as a different, sinister kind of 'maker' – a puppeteer – with a potentially devastating power over her readers.

The potentially dangerous effects of reading associated with moral corruption and depravity are discussed explicitly in *Babel Tower* where Byatt's invented obscenity case provides an outstanding stage to address the intriguing questions about art, morality and censorship. The urgency and relevance of the debate are underlined by analogies drawn between actual events of the 1960s, particularly the Moors Murders and *The Lady Chatterley's Lover* trials. Byatt's favoured technique of thematic parallelism, in this case further increased by the concurrence of the novel's invented trials – the obscenity case and the character Frederica's divorce hearing – creates more space for parody and irony, used to highlight the intricacy of the problems discussed. One of the major contradictions is in the treatment of reading, and specifically of D.H. Lawrence, in the fictional trials. In the obscenity process, Lawrence is acknowledged as a prominent novelist and his most notorious novel as a highly moral book of great literary merit (BT, pp.537, 548). Contrastingly, Frederica's passion for reading alone is considered to be in breach of the expected morality of a wife and mother whilst Lawrence is ridiculed for his inappropriate model of thought (BT, pp.491-2). Meanwhile, the references to the Moors Murders (BT, pp.374, 423, 426, 559, 584) keep the reader alert about the gravity of the dilemma concerning literature and moral responsibility.

This chapter has demonstrated the centrality of Byatt's preoccupation with reading and literature in her fiction. Byatt seems to be possessed with reading, nevertheless, it is a very particular kind of reading, and the way and vigour with which she translates her thoughts and interests into her writing, alongside her personal appeals to the reading public, makes her life-time work appear as a true 'mission'. Her approach to reading brings her into disagreement with modern theory-based critical approaches that apply reading methods that she views as restrictive and manipulative. Her criticism,

often in the form of generalizing statements about poststructuralism and feminism, plays out in her fiction. Byatt's novels and stories depict characters who are voracious and experienced readers. Some of them are trained in poststructuralist theory. The characters reveal Byatt's understanding of literary influence and history and her own processes of reading. The negotiations of different reading approaches in her fiction generate a direct model of reading, constructed as an antithesis to how poststructuralist and feminist theories approach texts. Theory-oriented reading is presented as repetitive, focused on prefabricated conclusions and failing to pay attention to the specificity of individual texts.

Overall, Byatt makes sure that reading in general is viewed and presented in exclusively positive terms. Wherever negative impacts or threats are implied or occur, as for instance in *Babel Tower*, the cause is always shown as a mixture of heterogeneous factors but never directly attributed to literature or reading.

CHAPTER 4

Language and Vision

You can go away from Lawrence and get in a frightful rage with him – a *silly* man, even at times a *bad* man – and pompous – and then you come back and open the book and there's the language, and the vision, *shining* at you, with authority, whatever that is. (BT, p.244)

The above words are uttered, somewhat surprisingly, by Frederica's father Bill, during the reconciliatory encounter with his daughter after a decade of estrangement in Byatt's novel *Babel Tower*. The fact that their personal reconciliation is associated with an agreement over Lawrence and his writing, which were at the centre of their quarrel in *The Virgin in the Garden*, highlights the centrality of Lawrence to the construction of the characters and the novels in general. Bill's response, as a reader, to the contradictions of Lawrence's writing converges with Frederica's teaching comments about Lawrence and *Women in Love* in *Babel Tower* and delivers an explicit critical opinion. The feeling of Lawrence as 'silly' resembles Milan Kundera's response to Gary Adelman's attempt to canvass the response of contemporary writers to Lawrence's legacy in 2002. Commenting on the novelist's endeavour to 'rehabilitate sexuality by rendering it lyrical and romantic', Kundera (cited in Adelman, 2002, pp.28-9) marks the religious, transformative character of sexual experience rendered as 'leaping off into the unknown' as 'ludicrous'. This is precisely what Frederica mocks about Lady Chatterley's 'annihilation' in the woods. Byatt satirizes Lawrence's belief that sex is a gateway to some kind of religious or sacred experience, most particularly through the grotesque, anticlimactic portrayals of Frederica's sexual experiences. In *The Virgin in*

the Garden, for instance, the thoughts of Lady Chatterley's 'florid spreading circles of satisfaction' (VG, p.556) enter Frederica's mind during her blood-bathed defloration. Comparing her sensations with Lady Chatterley's, Frederica rates that '[w]hat she had was vertical flickering lines of local tickling, interrupted electric messages which she hastily earthed' (p.556). In sharp contrast to Lawrence's erotic mysticism, Frederica's sexual experience is described, and approached, in a down-to earth manner as a scientific exercise, using technical vocabulary in combination with references to human bodies and their performances. The comic effect of the situation is created to a considerable extent precisely by the contrast with the Lawrentian notion of sex as a sublime and sacred process. At the same time, Byatt mocks Lawrence's own use of pseudo-scientific language to explain the unconscious and the ways in which it governs human relationships, and heterosexual behaviour in particular. In *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* (Lawrence, 2004a, pp.140-1), electricity is used as an analogy for the polarised sexual energy exchanged, 'like an electric spark', during sexual intercourse. Frederica's conscious earthing of the current is a symbolic subversion of his theory of sex and the unconscious through exercising mental control over a visceral process. In regard to his metaphysical scheme, Byatt regards temporal distance as one of the reasons why Lawrence appears as a 'slightly ludicrous prophet' (Byatt, cited in Adelman, 2002, p.33) partly due to the shift in permissiveness in post-1960s culture. The objection against pomposity, meanwhile, can be read as a critique of the preacherly dimensions of Lawrence's writing. Finally, the label '*bad*' refers to some of the most problematic and controversial aspects of his views and work. From Byatt's perspective, these include particularly his problematic gender assumptions, such as his belief in a natural subordination and passivity of women as presented, for example, in *The Plumed Serpent*. Through Bill's words, however, the narrator reassures the reader that such

barriers come in the way only occasionally – ‘at times’ – and it is writing that matters most in the end. Effectively endorsing the ‘Never trust the artist. Trust the tale’ (Lawrence, 2003, p.14) maxim, art is portrayed as creating its own authority irrespective of its author.

Bill’s statement is significant in that it foregrounds those aspects of Lawrence’s writing that Byatt values most: namely his ‘vision’ and ‘language’, as well as her ambivalent response to his silliness, pomposity and badness. It echoes very closely one of Byatt’s most exhaustive disclosures about her appreciation of Lawrence’s creative ambition:

The poems sing and glitter. But what Lawrence means to me is the formal ambition – which is a vision of life – of *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*. He had much less grip on the total texture of his text than the authors of *Ulysses* and *The Waves*. But the possibilities opened by his idea of unsettling the ‘old stable ego of the character’, of making a verbal object which explored not separated coal or diamond but the substructure of carbon, are still endlessly exciting and in some ways more liberating. He saw that a novel could have both characters and story, and also ‘some other rhythmic form, as when one draws a fiddle-bow across a fine tray delicately sanded, the sand takes lines unknown’. He learned from George Eliot, who had orchestrated the social, spiritual, chemical, physical and intellectual world of her novels into a whole in which her people walked and felt and lived and died. He wound suns and moons and primary colours, rainbows and corn and cats and rabbits into a recognizable Midlands world of fields, coal mines and shifting class relations. (Byatt, 2002b, p.112)

The declaration expresses recognition that Lawrence achieved an admirable degree of synergy of vision and technique. In reply to a question concerning her striving for a balance between the two, Byatt explains that in her ‘more romantic moments, [she] feels that one is the other, and the other is the one: your technique changes your vision, and your vision creates your technique’ (Byatt, 1994d, p.151). She praises Lawrence’s success in synchronising his mode of seeing and understanding the world with his writing method and thereby harmonising the novels’ formal structuring with the structures of the rich and complex worlds they depict. Lawrence views individual human lives as fluxional parts of the ‘life’ of the universe and its processes and

rhythms. Her attention to the shape of the whole constructed with language echoes her own 'desire to use language to make beautiful shapes', which are, at the same time, 'complicated work[s] of art' (Byatt, 1994d, p.151). She describes Lawrence's novels as rich and complex living worlds with special rhythms of their own, in which characters are fully immersed. Their inner worlds and mental states are thus depicted as parts of these larger processes. Drawing an analogy between Lawrence's coordination of the whole and George Eliot's 'orchestration' artistry, Byatt views Lawrence as Eliot's successor. His brilliance lies for Byatt in his ability to efficiently zoom in and out of the micro- and macrocosmic elements of his texts, switching between personal and metaphysical, and between action and reflection while flexibly adjusting his choice of language and style.

It is significant that the key quality of his writing that wins Byatt's appreciation is explained in terms of vitality versus artifice using a comparison with two supreme representatives of high modernism, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf. Byatt suggests that Lawrence's holistic vision of a universe in which everything is interlaced and subject to the same forces gives the artist more freedom compared to the typical modernist view of a fragmented reality and the resulting subjectivism. Lawrence's approach may be interpreted as a lack of control, but it is, by implication, less stiffened by stylisation. The reason is that Lawrence's language and stylistic shifts are one with the expressed content to the degree that language and thought become inseparable (cf. Becket, 1997, p.2; Bell, 2008, p.89). This gives Lawrence the freedom to invent his 'special language' continually as required, including the 'continual remaking' of his own vocabulary depending on its immediate context (Worthen, 1979, p.61). Moreover, Lawrence's primary concern is never with the form but with the conveyed idea or experience. According to Michael Bell (2008, p.89), his work lacks any 'consciously

planned stylistic shifts' and they are never signalled beforehand as, for example, in James Joyce's work. Formal stylisation for its own sake has no value for Lawrence, who rather prefers giving language 'free play' (Becket, 1997, p.2). Byatt's view is close to that of Allan Ingram, who also distinguishes Lawrence's writing from the works of the major modernist writers, most notably Joseph Conrad, James Joyce and T.S. Eliot, on the grounds of 'vitality' (1990, p.10). According to Ingram, the key factor is the degree of assertion of the author's personality and personal experience in their work. He claims that for most modernist writers, language and literary form are impersonal 'fields of experiment' (Ingram, 1990, p.15); yet the more these authors strive to be absent from their texts, the more obvious the existence of a controlling intelligence is felt by the reader. Lawrence, he says, managed to avoid this major paradox of literary modernism thanks to the serious personal commitment to his artistic 'mission', which prevented him from playing 'games with language' (Ingram, 1990, p.17). Hence, his writing never becomes a 'self-conscious and technical' striving for impersonality as in the case of Joyce and Eliot (Ingram, 1990, p.17).

The line that Byatt draws between George Eliot and Lawrence of course revalidates (at least) a part of Leavis's 'Great Tradition' whilst the route of her own associations with both of the writers indicates where she views herself in relation to the tradition thus defined.¹ Situating herself 'in a tough visionary line that goes through George Eliot, Balzac, *The Rainbow*, and *Women in Love*', she claims that, in this respect, Lawrence matters more to her than Forster or Virginia Woolf (Byatt, cited in Adelman, 2002, p.33). At the same time, she is acutely aware of Lawrence's

¹ Impressed by George Eliot's 'orchestration' skills and ambitions, Byatt claims to have learnt 'several primitive yet crucial lessons about writing novels' from her (Byatt, PM, p.73). Most importantly, she looks back at Eliot as the pioneer of 'the novel of ideas' – a genre that she claims to inherit (Byatt, PM: 76).

complicated position as a visionary or prophetic artist, whose philosophical thought and zeal not only caused controversies during his lifetime but also have clashed with the changed social and political sensibilities of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Byatt herself acknowledges, like many other scholars and critics, that his ‘metaphysic’, or ‘philosophy’, does indeed sometimes interfere with his artistic achievements and yet remains an inherent part of it. The celebrated ‘rhythmic form’, for example, can degenerate into what she calls an ‘insistent sawing noise, his making a point over and over – which he describes in terms of sexual repeated rubbing leading to orgasm, but which is also preacherly pulpit-thumping’ (Byatt, 2002b, p.112), if it becomes too insistent or excessive in the wrong place. Byatt resists Lawrence’s preaching and is strongly opposed to numerous aspects of his ‘metaphysic’, such as the proposition of natural female passivity and subservience and finds some features ‘corrupt and dangerous’ (SS, p.x), or even ‘powerfully repellent’ (p.xiv). Her own attitude sends out a signal that the reader need not approach Lawrence’s work and thought in a totalising way, and so it is admissible to acknowledge the author’s ‘vision of life’, to the extent to which it participates in his creative method, and still disregard some other beliefs that he may put forward in his work but which have limited impact on his creative practice and the elementary understanding of his work. She points out that typically in Lawrence’s case, the reader must approach a novel, not as ‘a belief-system, but a story’ in order to appreciate his best art, exemplified by ‘the ambitious shaping of *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, the ferocious precision of the poems’ (Byatt, 2002b, p.110). By paraphrasing again one of his most quoted mantras, she explains elsewhere her own way of reading any works of literature as listening to the ‘voice’ of the narrative itself, rather than that of the commentator’s: ‘That is why I read,

trusting the tale, not the teller' (Byatt, 1992c, p.15), revealing the irony of the prophetic streak in Lawrence's statement in regard to his own work.

For Byatt, the attractiveness of Lawrence's 'vision' dwells particularly in his specific painterly way of seeing, influenced by visual art, and his effort to express it in language. As a writer whose creativity is equally sustained by vigorous visual imagination and interest in painting, Byatt appreciates and learns from Lawrence's painterly technique of layering images and creating depth and sense of texture in his visual scenes. Nevertheless, Byatt also responds to the 'visionary', or metaphysical aspect of his writing. Her response is, however, very ambivalent. She appreciates his effort to address larger questions concerning human beings and their place in the world, but she is critical about the answers he delivers. His 'metaphysic' and its penetration into his fiction is the conundrum at the heart of Byatt's relationship to Lawrence.

D.H. Lawrence: Formal Ambition as a Vision of Life

Byatt's approach to Lawrence's legacy is one that directs the attention away from the 'man' towards his writing and artistic vision whilst acknowledging the impossibility of drawing a solid line between the two. The problem of such cross-interference is particularly poignant in Lawrence's case, but it is also addressed as a general ethical issue in respect to authorial responsibility in *Babel Tower*. My two main courses of enquiry follow the meaning of *vision* as a certain mode of seeing on the one hand, and the way in which Lawrence writes about vision and the influence this has on Byatt's writing, on the other. These enquiries respond to the main qualities of Lawrence's writing, appreciated by Byatt, namely the ambition of Lawrence's art to embrace what she calls 'the cosmic dimension to the sense of what it is to be human' (Byatt, 2003b, no page) elsewhere, and his bold striving for a new form of expression

that would correspond with his mode of seeing and would be able to communicate his vision. In her opinion, contemporary culture tends to avoid the preoccupation with essential questions about the place of humanity in the world and related moral challenges in favour of narrowing its focus on personal microcosms in the form of personal psychology and experience. She claims that ‘in place of a religious framework, we have taken to using reality television and celebrity gossip, and a dreadfully exhausting interest in our own personality’, and that ‘[i]t’s just an interest in the personal because everything else has gone’ (Byatt, 2003b, no page). She reckons that the only way to recover the larger sense of humanity is ‘by thinking of yourself as a rather small animal, in ecological terms, that inhabits an incredibly beautiful planet that your species is in the process of destroying’ (Byatt, 2003b, no page). Her view of the function of art that addresses such questions can be compared to Lawrence’s conception of (literary) art expressed in his essay ‘Morality and the Novel’ which postulates that ‘[t]he business of art is to reveal the relation between man and the circumambient universe at the living moment’ (Lawrence, 1985b, p.171). The passage from *Women in Love* that describes Tom Brangwen attending to the cattle in the barn while his wife Lydia gives birth to their child, analysed in Chapter 2 (pp.108-109), is a typical example. The ongoing childbirth is presented as a half-human and half-inhuman process, which makes Will feel both oneness and otherness in relation to his wife as well as an awareness of being part of something greater than individual human life. The situation is treated as archetypal, with the characters becoming the archetypal man and woman.

She looked at him as a woman in childbirth looks at the man who begot the child in her: an impersonal look, in the extreme hour, female to male. His eyes closed again. A great, scalding peace went over him, burning his heart and his entrails, passing off into the infinite.

[...]

The swift, unseen threshing of the night upon him silenced him and he was overcome. He turned away indoors, humbly. There was the infinite world, eternal, unchanging, as well as the world of life. (R, p.77)

The 'unseen threshing of the night' refers to the sounds of the rain outside, which, in addition to the 'black darkness' (R, p.75), represents another, inhuman world in contrast to the 'warm' barn and the 'familiar' house (R, p.77). Tom yields to what Lawrence describes as the pulsing impersonal 'being' and the 'unchanging' forces governing life, and finds that eventually, as Lawrence puts it, 'his heart in torture was at peace' (R, p.77). The oxymoronic tension of 'scalding'/'burning' and 'peace', and 'torture' and 'peace', where the contrasting combinations describe a single psychic condition, conveys a sense of intensity but also of delicate balance. The frictional quality of the oxymoron is useful for pointing at the instinctive or intuitive nature of such feelings as results of unconscious processes. It points at the ambivalence of Tom's emotions and particularly of his response to the 'impersonal' exchange of glances between man and woman in the 'extreme' moment of childbirth, when, Lawrence seems to suggest, personality is extinguished.

In Lawrence's ontological scheme, the body and the unconscious are seen as primary in relation to the conscious mind, and comparably, sensuous knowledge, or 'blood-knowledge' (Lawrence, 2002d, p.470), is rated higher than intellectual understanding. Every individual's goal is to become aware of and enter in acquiescence and harmony with what he perceives as the greater 'transcendental being' associated with the external, non-human world. Michael Bell (2008, p.10) explains, in an analogy to Heidegger's concepts of 'Being', that this "'external" existence' is inseparable from the individual 'human being in the world'. Bell even adopts the term 'Being' to refer to the universal and impersonal being of the (non-human world). Lawrence's ambition as a writer is the verbalisation of sensuous experience and impersonal feeling that provide a

connection with the universal being. As it is revealed in natural and visceral processes, Lawrence invents a mode of sensuous writing that imitates the rhythms and tensions he observes in them. His stylistic devices include rhythmic forms, combinations of visual and visceral imagery with abstract vocabulary bearing special meanings, such as 'darkness' referring to the unconscious. The oxymoron is a specific tool that gives expression to the underlying principle of Lawrence's thought, that is dynamic polarity, or opposition, where the tension of opposites, for example, body/mind, male/female, Law/Love, creation/corruption, works as the creative source of the universal being. This is the reason why 'oxymoronic dynamics' is a characteristic and greatly productive feature of Lawrence's texts (Becket, 1997, p.9). In his metaphysic, opposites can, and ideally do, achieve perfect equilibrium, defined as a state of primordial oneness, in which the individual being merges with the impersonal, transcendental being. For Lawrence, the priority of sensuous experience in the body and sexual consummation preconditions what he sees as the state of equilibrium between man and woman, and the male and female principles. Through this gender equilibrium, Lawrence suggests that oneness with the transcendental being can be attained. Marriage as a relationship that facilitates such fusion acquires a practically sacred status.

The obliteration of the complexities of Lawrence's thought and its relation to his creative endeavour was one of the reasons why his work was misunderstood by readers and critics. The misinterpretations of his accentuation of and explicitness in describing sexual experience culminated with Lawrence's ethical and linguistic experiment in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Lawrence's creative style depends on his 'vision of life' in terms of his belief that it is possible to translate the described experience into language and his efforts to reinvent it for that purpose. This awareness is essential for the understanding of why many of the criticised features occur at all. In

her attempt to ‘explain’ Lawrence in the *Quartet*, Byatt disregards this aspect by trying to keep ‘man’ and ‘art’ apart, too forcefully. Chapter 5 looks closely at her, partly inevitable, simplification of the problem, and the reasons why her Lawrence rehabilitation scheme is not entirely successful.

Vision and Beyond

The preoccupation with different modes of vision and imagination, their interrelations and the challenge of the verbal expression of sensory experience can be found in most of Byatt’s novels and informs Byatt’s appreciation of Lawrence’s writing. While visual experience is important for a great number of writers, the direct link between Lawrence and Byatt is justified by the fact that Byatt’s creativity was substantially shaped by her negotiation of Lawrence’s art. Their creative approach to the visual is very similar: they are both vigorously stimulated by visual impulses – hence their fascination with visual art – and both driven to create or re-create visual objects and scenes in language. Byatt associates the sensual captivation by a visual image with a painter’s experience and claims that it stimulates her literary creativity (Byatt, 1994c, p.66). Her imagination is primarily visual; she claims that she ‘*think[s]* with mental imagery’ (PM, p.13). She imagines her novels in the form of visual images: colours such as purple and yellow in the case of *Still Life*, geometrical patterns, or complex visual images – ‘ruling’ metaphors (P, p.10) – such as the paradise garden in the case of *The Virgin in the Garden* and *Possession* (Byatt, 1994c, p.65). As a result, imagery, and particularly metaphor, are central to her work. The same is true of Lawrence, who, according to Becket (1997, p.2) also ‘*think[s]* metaphorically” and to whom metaphor is ‘a new mode of understanding’. Even when painting, ‘the visionary image’ becomes more important for Lawrence than the depicted physical object (Lawrence, 2004b,

p.230). He claims that he can only paint an object if it is turned into a ‘visionary image’, that is processed by the imagination, and therefore he learned painting by copying pictures drawn by others. In his opinion, one’s ‘visionary awareness’ can be cultivated only through a close negotiation of the vision itself (Lawrence, 2004b, p.230). It is through this vision that the object, in turn, can be fully approached, and its essence grasped. According to Lawrence, ‘[a]rt is a form of supremely delicate awareness and atonement – meaning at-one-ness, the state of being with the object’ (2004b, pp.230-231). He seems to suggest that art can, and does, overcome and heal the phenomenological and ontological split between subject and object, and mind and matter, inflicted by Cartesian dualism. The ‘visionary awareness’ is thus essential to all art forms, including literature.

Like Lawrence, Byatt attempted to synthesise vision and technique in her writing. As she puts it, ideally, ‘your technique changes your vision, and your vision creates your technique’ (Byatt, 1994d, p.151). ‘Heliotropic imagination’ (Campbell, 2004, p.2) is a key shared factor that has a major impact on their creative practice.

Scenes framed significantly by artistic representations of sunlight and moonlight are central to a number of Lawrence’s and Byatt’s texts. Van Gogh’s representation of intense light and colour, Cézanne’s combinations of strong colours with shapes and structures and Matisse’s bright-coloured surfaces inform Lawrence’s and Byatt’s linguistic representations of scenes dominated by solar or lunar light, most importantly in *The Rainbow*, *Women in Love*, *The Shadow of the Sun*, *The Virgin in the Garden*, and *Still Life*. As demonstrated below, there are strong affinities between Van Gogh’s and Edward Munch’s nocturnal scenes and Lawrence’s depictions of moonlight in *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*. Samuel Palmer’s *Cornfield with the Evening Star* (1830), linked with Van Gogh’s paintings of wheat fields, particularly *The Reaper* (1889), was a

vital imaginative stimulus for Byatt's depiction of sun- and moon-lit landscapes in *The Shadow of the Sun* (SS, p.xv). The affinity between the deep, saturated colours in Gauguin's paintings of exotic places and people and Lawrence's visual language is recognizable particularly in his scenes from New Mexico, most notably in *The Plumed Serpent* (cf. Stewart, 1999, p.191).

Frederica's selection of the lantern scene from *Women in Love* to explain the relationship between language, meaning and vision to her art students in *Babel Tower* (discussed in Chapter 1, pp.76-78), is evidence of Byatt's admiration of Lawrence's visual and symbolic writing and it also manifests Byatt's intellectual interest in both conceptual and practical aspects of his verbal-visual art.

Lawrence's influence on Byatt's visual and visceral writing is, therefore, crucial for Byatt's creative development. Jack Stewart's monograph *Color, Space, and Creativity: Art and Ontology in Five British Writers* (2008) argues that there are close affinities between Byatt's and Lawrence's use of visual art in their writing. The book is a study of five authors whose creativity has been boosted by a 'cross-fertilisation' with painting, most particularly by 'interactions of color and sensations of space' (Stewart, 2008, p.15). Contemplated as 'painter[s] in words', he argues that they 'shape language to appeal more strongly to the sensory imagination' (Stewart, 2008, pp.17, 19). Stewart demonstrates that Lawrence and Byatt have been inspired by similar painters and have thus developed similar painterly styles. He argues that Cézanne and Van Gogh, and additionally Matisse, in Byatt's case, captured the authors' imaginations with their use of vibrant colour schemes and plasticity in their paintings, the effect of which is recreated through 'magic suggestiveness of imagery and style' (Stewart, 2008, p.16). He sees them both as 'pioneer[s] in sensory expression' with a 'desire for color and space as components of imagined worlds' (pp.282, 19). Lawrence is discussed with reference

to his letters and travel writing whereas Byatt is treated as a fiction writer. The four chapters dedicated to the novels *The Shadow of the Sun*, *The Virgin in the Garden*, *Still Life*, and a collection of short stories directly inspired by paintings, *The Matisse Stories*, examine Byatt's explorations of visionary forms and experiences in detail, and I shall return to them later.

Stewart's examinations of the affinities between Lawrence's and Byatt's painterly styles build on the findings of his earlier study *The Vital Art of D.H Lawrence: Vision and Expression* (1999), which focused on the complex relation between expressionist painting, Lawrence's visual art and his ontological vision. Stewart (1999, p.50) claims that the innovative force in Lawrence's writing, particularly in *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, is sustained by his use of painterly styles and that insufficient attention to the visual properties of Lawrence's language hampers a full understanding of his vision and art. Reading Lawrence's major novels chronologically from *The White Peacock* (1911) to *The Plumed Serpent* (1926), Stewart tracks the development of Lawrence's writing and his engagement with visual art. He explains which styles are used, how they mix and interact, and how they help implant Lawrence's thought within his novels. Most importantly, his detailed and comprehensive work provides a valuable framework for the present discussion of Lawrence's visual writing.

From all the great variety of visual styles examined by Stewart, expressionist painting emerges as the most prominent and prevalent style in Lawrence's major novels. The main reason is that, ontologically and methodologically, it best matches Lawrence's own vision and the prophetic nature of his art (Stewart, 1999, p.52). The expressionist interest in capturing unconscious and inner tensions and conflicts, sensations and desires accorded with Lawrence's literary aesthetic (Stewart, 1999, p.46). Extreme

states of consciousness, typically linked with suffering and pain, visual distortions, and painterly depersonalisation and abstraction, uniting the personal with the archetypal are transferred onto the canvas (Stewart, 1999, pp.48, 62).

Stewart (1999, pp.65, 70) draws particular attention to plasticity in expressionist paintings, perceived as ‘oscillation between surface and depth’. Created through the volume, colour and texture of the paint, the resultant ‘plastic rhythms’ (Cheney, cited in Stewart, 1999, p.70) are particularly significant in relation to Lawrence’s language.

The analysis of the barn episode in *The Rainbow* (Chapter 2, p.108-109) has already indicated how sensual rhythms are created in Lawrence’s prose, even though the visual dimension there was minimal. One of the major examples chosen by Stewart to demonstrate Lawrence’s writing is informed by expressionist art in the moonlit harvest scene with Anna and Will in *The Rainbow*. It is interpreted as another version of the archetypal rite of courting, previously represented in the novel by Tom Brangwen’s courting episode (Stewart, 1999, p.149). Moreover, the scene is also significant for being remembered by Byatt as ‘the magical scene in *The Rainbow*’ (SS, p.xvi) and rewritten in *The Shadow of the Sun*.

The passage captures the couple collecting straw in a moonlit harvest field. The characters, immersed in a flood of moonlight, perform a silent, repetitive mechanical activity while their movements turn the moonlight into a mesmeric play of light and shadow. Inside, the characters are experiencing powerful emotions. The spell-binding rhythm puts them in a trance-like state and, gradually they acquire ‘a pulse and a steadied purpose’ (R, p.116), which carries them towards a climax. Kinetic and aural rhythms are expressed using repetition and onomatopoeia:

Ever with increasing closeness he lifted the sheaves and swung striding to the centre with them, ever he drove her more nearly to the meeting, ever he did his share, and drew towards her, overtaking her. There was only the moving to and fro in the moonlight, engrossed, the swinging in the silence, that was marked

only by the splash of sheaves, and silence, and a splash of sheaves. And ever the splash of his sheaves broke swifter, beating up to hers, and ever the splash of her sheaves recurred monotonously, unchanging, and ever the splash of his sheaves beat nearer. (R, p.116)

Verbs of rhythmic movement (especially in the present participle form that foregrounds immediacy), such as ‘striding’, ‘overtaking’, ‘moving’, ‘swinging’, and ‘beating’ are combined with the repetition of words and phrases, most notably ‘ever’, ‘splash of sheaves’ and ‘silence’, culminating with the triple repetition in the closing phrase. Alliteration contributes significantly to the rhythm while the repetition of sibilants onomatopoeically imitates the sound of the sheaves. The characters’ silence, accentuated by the narrator, plays an important role, as it allows the hissing and swishing noises of the corn stand out. Visual rhythms created by the reflections of moonlight dynamized by the characters’ movements, allowing surfaces to emerge from and return to the darkness, are central to the scene, as they are directly linked to the characters’ emotions: ‘[Anna] broke away and turned to the moon, which laid bare her bosom, so she felt as if her bosom were heaving and panting with moonlight’ (R, p.115). Anna, powerfully attracted by the ‘flaring moon’ that made her ‘drift and ebb like a wave’ (R, p.115), cannot resist turning her sight to it while working in the field, and enters into a hypnotic kind of communication with it. Will, however, remains shut out of the communication and, catching only superficial reflections on his face, he feels intimidated by the mystery of female power symbolised by ‘all the moonlight upon her, all the darkness within her!’ (R, p.116). The scene is marked with high intensity and urgency, typical of expressionist projection. The transfixed state of consciousness makes the characters hypersensitive to their environment, particularly to the light that saturates the space and seems to cast a spell on the place and the people in it. The rhythm is the dominant feature of the passage as it leads the protagonists to an emotional and sensual union but also connects them with the larger, universal forces in

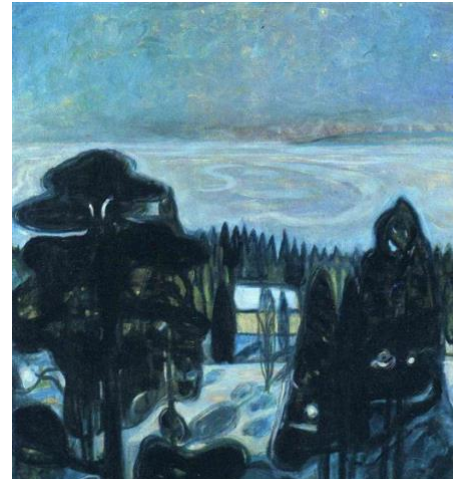
nature. In Lawrence's ontological scheme, pulsing is the principle of being that governs the living world. His essay 'The Reality of Peace' (1917) epitomises his ontological vision at the time of finishing *Women in Love* and provides the referential framework for the ontological thought employed in the novel. It explains the polarized unity of corruption and creation as two inescapable complementary forces that inform all of life. Attaining peace, and achieving balance in being, entails accepting the element of corruption in oneself and yielding to the unknown, that is unconscious impulses and desires (Lawrence, 1988a, p.34). It is the only way for an individual to achieve being in a state of 'pure understanding' with the unity of 'flesh and blood and bone, and mind and soul and spirit' (Lawrence, 1988a, p.38). This is the equilibrium sought by Birkin in *Women in Love* and proposed to Ursula in the piece of text from *Women in Love*, reproduced and rewritten by Byatt in *Babel Tower*. The eternal exchange, or pulsation, of creative and destructive energies, 'a great systole diastole of the universe' as Lawrence puts it (1988a, p.27), is the universal rhythm perceived in the cycles of nature and life (birth-death, changing of the seasons) as well as in the relationship between man and woman and their fusion in the sexual act and subsequent return to singleness. Lawrence's rhythmic, plastic language thus embodies his ambition of uniting vision and form. In the 'Foreword to *Women in Love*', he defends his technique of 'the continual, slightly modified repetition', precisely in this sense, arguing that 'every natural crisis in emotion or passion or understanding comes from this pulsing, frictional to-and-fro, which works up to culmination' (WL, p.486). Expressionist art, with its plasticity and rhythmic dynamism provides ideal inspiration for Lawrence's creative ambition.

Stewart (1999, p.62) regards the moonlit harvest scene as an example of 'visionary expressionism that merges human and cosmic' and a typical situation in which Lawrence uses expressionist language. These include, in his view, situations

when Lawrence needs to express preverbal and transpersonal experiences (Stewart, 1999, pp.47, 63) and allotropic states, characterized by ‘rhythmic fluctuations of consciousness and the unconscious’ (Stewart, 1999, p.65). Lawrence’s rendering of the harvest scene is compared to Van Gogh’s *Starry Night* (1889) and Edvard Munch’s *White Night* (1901).



1. Vincent Van Gogh: *The Starry Night* (1889)



2. Edvard Munch: *White Night* (1901)

At first glance, the two painters’ styles look fairly different. This, nevertheless, reflects the fact that Lawrence’s use of painterly styles or techniques is very fluid, he mixes styles to gain the best solution for his creative purpose. In his analyses, Stewart shows that the blending of styles is very frequent in Lawrence’s visual writing across all studied novels. In *Sons and Lovers*, for example ‘graphic realism’ is mixed with impressionism, symbolism and expressionism (Stewart, 1999, p.50) whereas ‘Renaissance art, English landscape painting, French impressionism, German expressionism, and Italian futurism’ co-exist in *The Rainbow* (Stewart, 1999, p.51). Van Gogh’s painting pre-dates Munch’s and lacks its level of abstraction. For Van Gogh (1853-1890), as Gombrich argues (1979, p.438), works of art were meant to express the

artist's feelings in their full intensity, and vibrant colour and form were the means to achieve this. Compared to Munch's painting, *The Starry Night* still contains some of the Impressionist shiver which is, nevertheless, overrun by the massive swirling atmospheric waves. There is a strong sense of horizontal and vertical dynamics created by the combination of the concentric movement in the sky with the oscillation between foreground and background. Influenced by Van Gogh, Munch's *White Night* looks like an exaggeration of Van Gogh's image: the moonlight has grown so luminous that forms become simplified and schematic. The combined vertical and horizontal dynamic in Van Gogh's painting is replaced by a vigorous vertical movement between surface/foreground and depth/background.

In the harvest scene, Stewart argues that Lawrence combines impressionist and expressionist techniques in a way that resembles the imaginative and stylistic shift from *The Starry Night* to *White Night*. The field is introduced as an 'impressionist space' (Stewart, 1999, p.62), filled with 'silver' air with shapes only 'vaguely' discernible in 'the haze of moonlight and of dusk' (R, p.114). Gradually, however, the intensifying glow of the moon and the growing emotional excitement of the characters projected onto their surroundings add expressionist intensity and dynamism to the scene. Stewart (1999, p.63) likens the wave-like rhythms, enacted by Lawrence's language, to Van Gogh's brushstrokes in paintings such as *The Starry Night*, and he also finds affinities in the lunar symbolism of both artists. As the darkness deepens, the haziness of the twilight vanishes, and surfaces become more diagrammatic and resemble those in Munch's painting.

Women in Love is, according to Stewart (1999, pp.73, 82), one of the greatest achievements of literary expressionism, especially in its attempt to verbalize suppressed sensations and emotions, including frustrated sexuality. In addition to landscapes, or

spaces being projected on the characters' psychic states, the characters' actions become manifestations of their subconscious drives and desires (Stewart, 1999, p.74). The chapters 'Moony' and 'Water-Party' contain passages that are highlighted by Stewart as major examples of Lawrence's painterly style, but they are also rewritten by Byatt in the *Quartet*.

The key scene in 'Moony' captures Ursula accidentally witnessing Birkin stoning the reflection of the moon on a lake. The dark place is both peaceful, and 'mysterious' (WL, p.245), saturated with the light of the nearly full moon. The tension suggested by the landscape mirrors Ursula's tension in her relationship with Birkin. Her unconscious, dominated by '[a] terrible desire for pure love' and 'constant essential suffering' (WL, p.245), is projected onto the landscape through her extreme sensitivity to image and sound. Ursula feels haunted by the 'triumphant and radiant' moon, its 'sinister face' with a 'deathly smile' (WL, p.245). The tense stillness and 'moon-brilliant hardness' of the night is disturbed by the occasional stirring of rabbits and alien-sounding noises such as 'a distant coughing of a sheep' or 'the hoarse rustle of the sluice' (WL, p.245) that betray some hidden energies and potential threats. This seemingly frozen image of a landscape deformed by lunar floodlight and saturated with suppressed tension has clearly expressionist features.

Birkin, as becomes apparent from his violent action, is suffering agony comparable to Ursula's. The central part of the chapter is the rendition of the rhythmic process of fracturing and reassembling of the moon's reflection on the water:

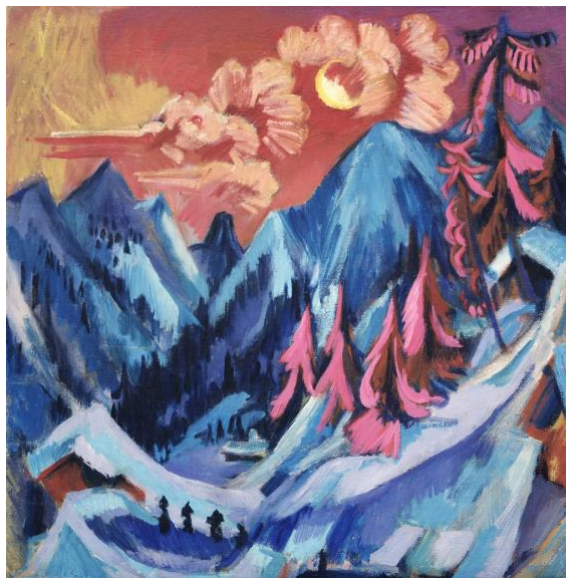
Then again there was a burst of sound, and a burst of brilliant light, the moon had exploded on the water, and was flying asunder in flakes of white and dangerous fire. Rapidly, like white birds, the fires all broken rose across the pond, fleeing in clamorous confusion, battling with the flock of dark waves that were forcing their way in. The furthest waves of light, fleeing out, seemed to be clamouring against the shore for escape, the waves of darkness came in heavily, running under towards the centre. (WL, p.247)

Stewart (1999, p.86) refers to the scene as a 'watery kaleidoscope', drawing attention to what Lawrence (1985c, p.75) describes as 'centrifugal and centripetal' pulsations that represent the archetypal ritual of bonding of man and woman, imagined by Lawrence as a part of the universal process of destruction and renewal that, according to him, underpins all processes in nature. Lawrence creates expressionist effects by using techniques of repetition with variation of words and phrases, dichotomous imagery and syntactic condensation to denote struggle, disfiguration and tension. The rhythmic language enacts a multi-sensory experience of vision, hearing and tactile perception through the evocation of plasticity using the contrast between implicitly light and rapid light, and heavy darkness, moving in opposite directions.

Similarly to the harvest scene, the moon is put forward as a symbol of female power, specifically through Birkin's explicit references to Cybelle, the Asiatic Mother of Gods. Given Lawrence's familiarity with James Frazer's *The Golden Bough* and ancient mythology, further associations can be drawn to Diana, as Goddess of Heaven, as well as of fertility and harvest, allegedly conceived as the moon, who later indeed replaced Luna as the moon divinity. The notion of 'Diana's mirror' comes to mind in relation to the moon's mirror image on the surface of the lake.² Mesmerised by Birkin's violent cataclysmic action, Ursula undergoes a process of spiritual annihilation and regeneration parallel to the distortion and restoration of the moon's reflection on the lake. All the time, there is a sense of empathy with the moon on her part and, eventually, she expresses allegiance to the moon by pledging Birkin to desist from stoning it.

² Cf. Sir James Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* (1993, pp.141, 711).

Stewart (1999, p.87) finds the painting *Winter Moon Landscape* (1919) by the German expressionist painter Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (1880-1938) as the nearest visual analogy to Lawrence's text, mainly for its apocalyptic symbolism.



3. Ernst Ludwig Kirchner: *Winter Moon Landscape* (1919)

In *The Vital Art of D.H. Lawrence*, Stewart demonstrates that thanks to their sensual intensity and emotional urgency, expressionist techniques prevail in Lawrence's writing as they help turn Lawrence's text into 'a verbal forcefield' in his quest to express the unconscious contents of the human psyche (1999, p.69). The painterly style of expression thus plays a major role in Lawrence's search for a new language of the unconscious.

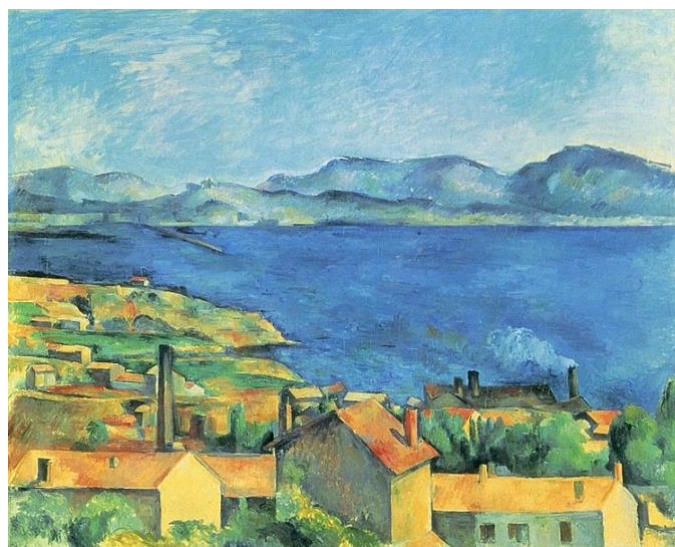
Descriptions of places and landscapes are usually viewed as strengths in Lawrence's writing for their vividness, 'freshness' (Stewart, 2008, p.72), and evocative power. Lawrence's view on landscape painting sounds, therefore, rather conservative. He says that 'landscape is always waiting for something to occupy it. Landscape seems to be meant as a background to an intenser vision of life, so to my feeling painted

landscape is background with the real subject left out' (Lawrence, 2004c, p.194). He claims further that, on its own, 'it doesn't call up the more powerful responses of the human imagination, the sensual passionate responses' (Lawrence, 2004c, p.195). In the visual passages analysed above, it is indeed people who charge landscapes with drama and dynamism. With regard to visual art, Lawrence (2004c, p.195) says that he prefers landscape without people 'to be rather quiet and unexplosive', compared to 'Van Gogh's surging earth and Cézanne's explosive or rattling planes'. Lawrence (2004c, p.198) argues that in the work of post-impressionist painters such as Van Gogh and Cézanne, 'landscape exploded, and came tumbling back on to canvases of artists in lumps.' He blames Cézanne for turning landscapes into 'cubes, cones, pyramids and so forth' (Lawrence, 2004c, p.199). Yet he has great admiration for Cézanne's later landscape paintings, which would include his paintings of L'Estaque from the 1880s, and many of Lawrence's depictions of the Mediterranean countryside in his travel writings bear much resemblance with Cézanne's Mediterranean imagery.

Cézanne occupies a special place among visual artists who influenced Lawrence. In his essay 'Introduction to These Paintings' (1929), Lawrence proclaims him '[t]he most interesting figure in modern art, and the only really interesting figure' (2004c, p.204). Cézanne dominates the essay as 'a revolutionary artist who found the courage to break away from old conventions, and at the same time, recognized a void and self-delusion in similar efforts of his impressionist contemporaries (Lawrence, 2004c, p.197). Cézanne's response to impressionism was similar to Lawrence's: Lawrence valued it for its 'discovery of light and "free" colour' (Lawrence, 2004c, p.197). To Lawrence (2004c, p.197), the impressionist 'escape from the body' was a dead end. Cézanne made, in Lawrence's view, the revolutionary and pioneering step of recognising and striving to express the true substance of an object – 'painting the

appleyness' (Lawrence, 2004c, p.212) of the apple – and doing so 'without transfusing it with personal emotion' (p.201). This self-less, impersonal feeling for an object in its autonomous existence is, in Lawrence's view, only possible by breaking out of one's mental consciousness, or, in Lawrence's words, 'the blue-sky prison' of one's ego (Lawrence, 2004c, p.201) and allowing intuitive consciousness to work. Cézanne's effort to visually express the intuitively apprehended substance of the painted object is, according to Lawrence, a radical and truly revolutionary act (2004c, p.212). The most successful works in this respect are reportedly Cézanne's still-lives and, in addition, some of his portraits and later landscapes. Lawrence (2004c, p.213) notes an exceptional quality in Cézanne's landscapes: a certain non-static stillness; forms that are '[m]obile but come to rest'. In these landscapes this creates a 'mysterious *shiftiness* of the scene' which makes it look as if 'it shifts about as we watch it' (Lawrence, 2004c, p.214).

A fitting example of such a landscape is *The Bay of Marseilles, Seen from L'Estaque* (ca. 1885), one of a series of vistas capturing the village of L'Estaque near Marseille, France, painted in the 1880s.



4. Paul Cézanne: *The Bay of Marseilles, Seen from L'Estaque* (c. 1885)

Contrast in colour, form and depth controls the painting. The canvas is structured into four main planes – the shoreline with the village in the forefront, painted in strong, earthy colours; the brilliantly blue sea filling the middle space; the hazy mountain range on the opposite shore and, finally, the luminous sky in the far background. The village architecture is strictly geometrical, with minimum detail and reduced border lines: the shapes are defined overwhelmingly by colour. The houses thus look both solid and elusive. The vegetation and the buildings and fields behind the village are also painted with short, sketchy brushstrokes, increasing the sense of abstraction. The painting is dominated by the strong dynamic contrast between the warm, earthy colours and geometrical shapes in the forefront and the shapeless mass of deep-blue water in the middle of the painting. The unrefined outlines of the mountains on the far shore, rounded in contrast to the angular architecture, and the luminescent sky, retain some impressionist shimmer and add a sense of restlessness. The intensive sunlight permeates the luminously clear air, energizes the landscape and intensifies colours. Finally, the contrasts between the planes tempts the eye to travel between them, which almost generates an optical illusion of moving forms. This may be the ‘*shiftiness*’ that Lawrence admired in Cézanne’s landscapes.

The following extract from the chapter ‘The Spinner and the Monks’ in *Twilight in Italy* (1916) is a manifestation of Lawrence’s supremely painterly style and its affinity with Cézanne’s painting techniques. It demonstrates the descriptive bravura of his cinematic shifts of focus, precise attention to light and colour and selection of detail in order to create a dynamic that makes the portrayal feel alive. The viewer has just entered the sunlit platform of the San Tommaso church from a labyrinth of dark, narrow lanes:

It was another world, the world of the eagle, the world of fierce abstraction. It was all clear, overwhelming sunshine, a platform hung in the light. Just below were the confused, tiled roofs of the village, and beyond them the pale blue water, down below; and opposite, opposite my face and breast, the clear, luminous snow of the mountain across the lake, level with me apparently, though really much above.

[...]

Across, the heavy mountain crouched along the side of the lake, the upper half brilliantly white, belonging to the sky, the lower half dark and grim. So then, that is where heaven and earth are divided. From behind me, on the left, the headland swept down out of a great, pale-grey, arid height, through a rush of russet and crimson, to the olive smoke and the water of the level earth. And between, like a blade of the sky cleaving the earth asunder, went the pale blue lake, cleaving mountain from mountain with the triumph of the sky. (Lawrence, 2002b, pp.104, 105)

Lawrence's description of the view overlooking a village and a lake surrounded with mountains uses similar imagery to Cézanne's *The Bay of Marseille*, with its strong, intense colours and clear outlines. Like Cézanne's painting, the brightness of the sunlight does not blind the viewer but, on the contrary, increases lucidity and intensifies the colours. Lawrence's colours are similar to Cézanne's: they are mixed hues, such as pale grey, olive green or russet. Described as they are, they fill the scene in separate patches, creating clear patterns. Lawrence's landscape contains geometrical, diagrammatic shapes, especially in surfaces such as 'tiled roofs' and 'blade of sky' that are analogical to Cézanne's geometrical patterns. The stylisation also gives an impression of weight and texture, using a contrast between the solid, or even 'heavy' earth, featuring earthy colours and hard surfaces such as the 'tiled roofs', and the luminous air space of the sky, in which the viewer's standpoint feels like 'a platform hung in the light'. The viewer thus seems to be suspended between two worlds. This detachment, comparable to a painter's detachment from canvas and paints, creates a sense of abstraction foregrounded in Lawrence's text and also perceptible in Cézanne's paintings.

Lawrence's scene contains a very particular dynamic created by the contrast between the expansive luminousness of the light-filled air space, 'cleaving the earth asunder', and the concentric movements of the 'headland sweep[ing] down through the rush of the russet and crimson' (Lawrence, 2002b, p.105). The use of the names of pigments as metonyms for coloured physical surfaces indeed shows Lawrence creating a verbal image. The dynamic words 'sweep' and 'rush' even suggest an imitation of brushstrokes. As in Cézanne's painting, it is a picture of harmony – a place at rest, and yet full of energy and vitality. Lawrence's description lures the reader into visualising the scene and recreating the viewer's impression. The ultimate watcher is the reader who is invited to participate imaginatively in the narrator's intimate encounter with the environment.

The Art of 'Verbal Forms'

Stewart (2008, p.19) sees Lawrence as 'a precursor of her own vitalist vision' in his scrutiny of Byatt's writing in *Color, Space, and Creativity*. In Stewart's chapter on *The Shadow of the Sun*, he finds several analogies between Lawrence's thought and writing and Byatt's portrayals of visionary experience and the creative process where he emphasises the role of Van Gogh as a vital link between the two writers. Further two chapters address numerous aspects of vision and visuality in the first volumes of the *Quartet*, specifically the geometrical visions of Marcus Potter and the visualisation of poetic form by Stephanie Potter in *The Virgin in the Garden*, or the relation between verbal and visual representations of the physical world in *Still Life*. They are frequently juxtaposed with other kinds of vision that arouse Byatt's interest, for example scientific (DNA-inspired or computational) or religious visions. Byatt's curiosity and interest in ideas drive her to enter those spheres theoretically where Lawrence operates mainly

creatively – the borderland between verbal and visual realms, the realm of imagination. Her dual analytical-creative method allows her to use and explore various creative practices and, at the same time, to subject them, and additional issues of interest, to critical exploration. One example is the chapter ‘On the Interpretation of Dreams’ in *The Virgin in the Garden*, which can be read as a lesson in literary interpretation that combines Freudian analysis of the dream imagery and the literary technique of ‘close reading’. Another example, relevant for the present discussion, is the first half of the chapter tellingly titled ‘Ode on a Grecian Urn’, which gives an account of an actual exercise in literary interpretation as a part of Stephanie’s lesson on Keats. Following the discussion in the classroom, the narrator makes the teacher raise intriguing questions about verbal and non-verbal imagination and visualisation. The central idea of ‘a verbal *thing*’ as something ‘formed to be “seen” by language alone’ (VG, p.100) draws attention to the ability of mental imaging without full visualisation, of ‘see[ing] the unseen’ and the peculiar attractiveness of ‘making unreal verbal forms’ (VG, p.101). In addition, it presents a notion about what an author’s task may be, which is then put to the test throughout the novel and the whole quartet, most noticeably in the descriptive passages of places (pre-Christmas supermarket overflowing with people and goods), works of art (especially in *Still Life*) or visionary states (e.g. Marcus’s transformed visions of his surroundings). The following excerpt shows that, similarly to Lawrence, the (re-) creation of imagined sensory experience is achieved by the generation of intensity and immediacy, with particular attention to spatial dynamics and saturation with light and colour. It is the description of a butcher’s shop in *The Virgin in the Garden*, which, placed in a chapter immediately following the ‘verbal *thing*’ section, makes the imagined place feel very material, almost palpable. The description of the objects is designed to raise an emotional as well as visual response, and possibly even

create visceral sensations that guide the reader towards imagining, and to an extent sharing, the observing character's feelings. The extremely naturalist passage is particularly evocative, thanks to Byatt's method of ekphrasis, presenting the scene as a work of art, which not only renders the scene in very graphic, painterly, detail but also exploits the contrast between object and method and the consequent aesthetic expectations:

On the next layer, white marble below the brilliant green, were enamelled dishes of more recondite goods, alternating in colour and texture. A block of waxy suet, a platter of white, involuted, honeycombed and feathery tripe. Vitals: kidneys both stiff and limp, some wrapped still in their caul of fat, the slippery bluish surface of meat shining through slits in the metal blanket, the cords dangling; iridescent liver; a monumental ox heart, tubes standing out above it, a huge gash on one side, darkening yellow fat drying on the shoulders. (VG, p.120)

The most striking quality of the text is the expressionist saturation with colours, shapes, textures and even smells, conveyed through an accumulation of adjectival phrases that increase the naturalist precision of the description. The inner dynamic of the text that plays a significant role in raising the emotional and visceral response is created by a careful distribution of contrast and analogy while the alternating attention to depths and surfaces facilitates vivid three-dimensional visualisation. For example, the adjective 'waxy' implies both colour and consistency of a rather dull, compact material of indistinctive colour whereas the adjectives describing the 'tripe' create a sense of a complex three-dimensional shape of a very particular texture, contrasting with the implied flatness of the 'platter'. Further examples of contrast in consistency and texture are the 'stiff' and 'limp' quality of the kidneys, and the metallic, hence strong and durable, appearance of the meat juxtaposed with 'cords dangling'.

Byatt's painterly style of layering images, colours and textures aim at the evocation of a very specific visual impression. The convolution and colour contrast evoke Henri Matisse's or Paul Gauguin's still life paintings. Similarly to Matisse's

pictures, Byatt's verbal still life lacks the serenity of Lawrence's San Tommaso, and, on the contrary, conveys interior tension and energy. The layering effect is achieved verbally not only by means of spatial reference, but also by switching between registers or using words with different connotations. The term 'involved', for example, associated with scientific discourse, contrasts with the metaphorical expressions 'honeycombed' and 'feathery'. 'Waxy' in the sense of *pallid* alongside 'white' also immediately introduces an alternative level of reading to the ekphrastic visualisation; a forensic one that keeps the reader aware of the parts of dead bodies and yet implicitly demands withholding an emotional response. The condensed syntax of the passage, dominated by parataxis, with predication limited to non-finite verb forms, produces a business-like enumeration of objects on offer, which brings in yet another type of discourse, very different in function to an artistic description and a forensic report, namely the domain of business where feelings and emotions are expected to be tempered again for different reasons. The expressionist force is achieved through exaggeration in the reporting of colours and shapes using words such as 'brilliant', 'iridescent', 'huge' and 'monumental' as well as by creating a sense of distortion, as in 'involved', 'slits' or 'gash'. Byatt's play with the various registers and associations, using the tensions of contrasts and analogies and expressionist techniques, is designed to raise comparably mixed feelings, oscillating from the artistic appreciation of the visual richness, towards revulsion, which is the effect of the scene on the observing character of Marcus. The complex effect of the passage relies on both visualisation and non-visual imagination, including that of feelings and physical sensations.

Lawrence's visceral writing is, of course, different, mainly due to his effort to point beyond consciousness to reveal forces that he believes determine human behaviour and experience. The following account of the ritualistic wrestle of Birkin and

Gerald, two naked men in the fire-heated library, in the chapter 'Gladiatorial' in *Women in Love* is an extremely concentrated, similarly expressionist piece of text designed to produce a very particular and strongly sensuous image.

So they wrestled swiftly, rapturously, intent and mindless at last, two essential white figures ever working into a tighter, closer oneness of struggle, with a strange, octopus-like knotting and flashing of limbs in the subdued light of the room; a tense white know of flesh gripped in silence between the walls of old brown books. Now and again came a sharp gasp of breath, or a sound like a sigh, then the rapid thudding of movement on the thickly-carpeted floor, then the strange sound of flesh escaping under flesh. Often, in the white interlaced knot of violent living being that swayed silently, there was no head to be seen, only the swift, tight limbs, the solid white backs, the physical junction of two bodies clinched into oneness. (WL, p.270)

Concentrating on the energized dynamic of the scene, Lawrence does not give as much visual detail as Byatt, whose image is by comparison static, but the visualisation also relies on contrast, in this case between the pale young bodies and the dark background of 'old brown books'. The presence of the open fire in the room is significant for the creation of a complex image of the space. Imagined with 'the subdued light', the room has relatively dark corners and a well-lit area in front of the fire where the men are wrestling. The flickering firelight illuminates the bodies irregularly and emphasises the 'flashing' of the limbs and muscle surfaces. Temperature and texture are important parts of the image of the cooler, smooth bodies on the (by implication) soft, thick carpet in a hot, closed space. The expressionist tools of exaggeration, distortion, intensity and movement dominate the image. In the centre is a fire-lit tight knot of white naked bodies, cast against the dark background, while the flashing firelight makes the outlines of the illuminated body parts sharp and clear in the forefront. Despite the emphasis on the whiteness of the bodies, the image is not monochrome. The background is dark, but brown rather than black, and by the nature of firelight, one can imagine its flashes to colour the skin surfaces yellowy orange. Fire is the symbol of life and the scene is a celebration of life and the body. Even though a substantial part of the text is spent on

describing the movements and sounds, the visualisation is a key part of the reader's experience. Nevertheless, it is also important to recognize the element of abstraction and impersonality: the bodies seem to be soulless. Rather than standing for concrete human beings, they seem to symbolize two antithetical elements, fusing into one. Stewart (1999, pp.88-89) also draws attention to the mechanical element of the combat that introduces 'futuristic overtones' into the text. The 'silence' in the scene signifies the elimination of language and mental thought in favour of 'physical intelligence' (WL, p.270), interrupted only by inarticulate sounds such as gasps of breath, sighs, thuds, and friction of flesh. Equally, it could be an aspect of the mechanized process which turns the tangled human figures into a piece of machinery as Stewart, and Wigman suggest (Stewart & Wigman, cited in Stewart, 1999, p.88). The scene is filled with force and energy, but it is prevalently positive, a vital energy in contrast to the arrested gruesome tension of the dead meat in Byatt's text above. The attention to visual detail, especially colour, light and texture, as well as the effort to capture and reproduce the inner dynamic of the space and the moment are things that Byatt shares, and possibly she learned to some extent from Lawrence.

Englishness and the Painterly Eye

The central position of nature in Lawrence's metaphysic makes nature mysticism one of the major features of his writing and links it with the English Romantic tradition. Dramatized in *The Shadow of the Sun*, Byatt pictures Henry Severell as a *quasi* Romantic visionary genius, an exceptional, self-centred individual, whose creative impulse and energy comes from a visionary experience of the sublime. Presented as a mentally and physically painful struggle, Henry's transcendent experience of nature is represented as a radical one, requiring radical form. Henry, we

are told, has ‘attacks’ of vision of oneness, when ‘everything connected, all meanings were a network, and his coming experience the master-knot’ so that he feels compelled ‘to write a very violent, stylized action, remote on the whole from the way most people lived, most of the time’ (SS, p.59). Endowed with an extraordinary sensibility, he views himself as part of the tradition of Blake and Coleridge (SS, p.59). Hayfield (2009, p.76) argues that ‘Henry seems to have been constructed as an amalgamation of Romantic views of the Artist rather than a representation of any particular figure or school’ in contrast to Oliver Canning’s postmodernist sensibility and his wife’s Margaret’s realist perception. According to Montgomery (1994, pp.6, 7), Lawrence, too, is a direct inheritor of the English Romantic tradition and, in his striving for unity in ‘life, art, and thought, [he] is thus a pure Romantic, perhaps the last.’

Lawrence’s keen scientific and aesthetic interest in fauna and flora, and his eye for detail also contribute to the acclaimed quality of his descriptions of the natural world in his fiction. Due to his sensitivity to the natural environment and the ‘spirit of place’, nature and countryside also play key parts in his vision of England and Englishness, which, essentially pastoral as it is, is also characterised by a deep, organic bond between people and the rural landscape. An example is his identification of ‘old England’ with a centuries-old cottage garden, aflame with traditional flowers and surrounded by savage ancient countryside in the short story ‘England, My England’ (1922).³ People raised in the environment are portrayed in a similar manner, ‘ruddy, strong, with a certain crude,

³ The nostalgic representation of England and Englishness through rural landscape was by no means unusual for the first few decades of the twentieth century. In ‘England, my England’, Lawrence chose the Hampshire topography, rather than the Midlands, where he grew up. As Katherine Brace (1999, p.92) concludes from her inquiry into late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century sources and related research, the southern counties like Kent, Sussex, Dorset or Hampshire, were often considered as the ideal image of ‘old England’ for their gentle, rolling landscape with features considered typically English, such as half-timbered cottages, village greens and hedgerows.

passionate quiescence and a hawthorn robustness' (Lawrence, 1990, p.6). The historical aspect is of paramount importance; the thousands of years of history of the place seem to be a guarantee of purity and solidity but also a source of primeval mystic energy. Lawrence's portrayals of rural places in 'England, My England' and a majority of his novels and stories set in England, are often openly idealized and nostalgic in order to contrast with the encroaching destruction of this landscape and vision of England by industrialism and the war, critiqued in Lawrence's works.

Most significant pastoral settings in Lawrence's novels and short stories, particularly the Marsh Farm in *The Rainbow* and the Willey Farm in *Sons and Lovers*, are situated in the countryside of his childhood and adolescence in the Midlands and modelled on the Higgs farm occupied by Jessie Chambers' family. They are mythologized visions of places that Lawrence associated with his youth, a family idyll and a life in harmony with nature. The countryside surrounding the farm is depicted as unspoilt and romantic, nonetheless, it is a cultured landscape, looked after lovingly by generations of farmers, like the *semi-wild* woodland in the Chatterley estate in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. As demonstrated below, his depictions of rural landscapes profit from his knowledge of plants and animals, his eye for detail and his painterly way of seeing, including his attention to light, colours and contrast.

As the references to Lawrence's images of the English landscape in *The Virgin in the Garden* demonstrate, Lawrence's vision of rural England plays a part in how Byatt imagines it. Her own constructions of the pastoral and the mystic in relation to English landscape and the notion of Englishness bear some similarities to Lawrence's: she sets most of her stories in her childhood countryside of North Yorkshire, but also employs the associations of the English countryside with southern counties. Byatt claims that the 'landscapes of your childhood become the archetypal landscapes in the

depth of yourself, like Wordsworth and the lakes, Coleridge and Nether Stowey, and the Brontës and those moors' (Byatt, 1994d, p.162). North Yorkshire is not only a location she knows well but it also gratifies her fascination with language and preoccupation with myth. She feels that:

language and the earth are really intertwined there. There are these wonderful words like the Boggle Hole, Jugger Howe, Ugglebarnby. It's a sort of image of a paradisaical state as in our idea, Foucault's idea of a sixteenth century, in which words denote things. (Byatt, 1994c, p.65)

Antiquity and mystery are the characteristic attributes of the landscape, imagined as a primeval, mythical place where one loses one's 'sense of time and place' (P, p.265). In the *Quartet* but also in *Possession*, the image of the rough ancient landscape of the North Yorkshire moors is both combined and contrasted with the vision of a magical English countryside imagined as an Edenic garden, overflowing with flowers (Byatt, 1994c, p.65). Yorkshire moorland hills 'clotted with bracken, heathen and thistles' (VG, p.308) and hiding ancient mounds and barrows (VG, p.308; BT, p.359) are interspersed with grassy areas filled with wildflowers such as 'buttercups, cow parsley and speedwell' (VG, p.399). References to 'neolithic stones and barrows' (BT, p.359) as well as wasteland plants such as thistle, bracken or brambles evoke a distant ancient past whereas the grazing sheep and field flowers are associated with the cultured landscapes of a less distant, and in the context of *The Virgin in the Garden*, Tudor history. The English Renaissance garden, remembered through a reference to Francis Bacon's essay 'Of Garden's' (1625), is pictured as a floral paradise filled with scent and colour (VG, p.167). In *Possession*, the moors outside Goathland, Yorkshire, also frequented by the *Quartet* characters, are described as 'moorland, scrambling down again to riversides' with 'magical patches of greensward between rocks, mown by the incessant attention of nibbling sheep, surrounded by standing stones and mysterious clumps of spotted purple foxgloves' (P, p.264). The ancient landscape is imagined as a

space not quite tamed by centuries of human activity and laden with memories and meanings ‘inscribed’ by previous generations to be ‘read’ by their descendants.

When choosing a quintessentially English rural setting for her last novel *The Children’s Book*, Byatt picked, like Lawrence did for ‘England, My England’, a southern county; in this case Kent, traditionally nicknamed the ‘Garden of England’ – an association of which the novel’s characters are aware (ChB, p.186). A ‘very English piece of semi-wildness’ (ChB, p.65), with traditional English plants such as ferns, bracken, hawthorn, ash, and oak, it provides an ideal ‘magical fairy-land’ backdrop for her writer character Olive Wellwood’s fairy stories.

Similarly to Lawrence, Byatt’s pastoral scenes are partly informed by a self-confessed nostalgia for the disappearing world we knew as children (Byatt, 2011b, no page). At the same time, she is aware of this idealisation and that our visions of (archetypal) landscapes are parts of our cultural inheritance. She shows how her latecomer characters’ own sensibilities are already influenced by their exposure to their predecessors’ ideas and imagery. Lawrence’s is a major predecessor, and becomes, in this sense, a fictional filter that helps the characters to develop their own vision and understanding of the past.

The inherited vision of the English landscape is addressed and ironized in *The Virgin in the Garden* in particular. The image of England at the time of the coronation of the new Queen in 1953, pursued by Byatt’s fictive playwright Alexander Wedderburn and the local estate owner Matthew Crowe and characterized by pastoral nostalgia for ‘old sweetness and loveliness’, also presents the country as an ‘Elizabethan’ garden filled with ‘[c]olour and light and movement and sound and sweet airs’ (VG, p.84). The envisaged flora includes ‘real old flowers, the sweet-smelling ones, lavender, wallflowers, lad’s-love, clove gillyflower and matted pink’ while ‘real

old English recipes' (VG, p.84) are sought after. The coronation festivities interpreted as a national revival are expected to rejuvenate and re-energize the country at the dawn of a new Elizabethan era. The slight mocking twist that accompanies the narrative, and the sense of exaggeration, however, destabilize the image. The narrator devotes several paragraphs to the listing of things and actions in preparation for the festivities and reports on Crowe's over-determination:

There was something in his manner as absolute as that of Lord Beaverbrook requiring women at war to hurl aluminium, zinc baths and iron railings onto scrap mountains for national munitions, or Savonarola calling the ladies of Florence to repent, save their souls, and cast their false jewels into his bonfire. (VG, p.83)

[...]

Later in the year, Crowe told Alexander, he would see to it that mock Tudor houses in suburbs of Calverley and Blesford would be decked with mock Tudor scented hedges and bunting with mock Tudor roses and odds and sods on. (p.84)

The association with Lawrence's fiction becomes explicit in the scene a few chapters later, when an English vision and sensibility are contrasted with the presentation of a Classical eroticised mythological theme of Cynthia and Endymion on the ceiling in Crowe's stately home. One of the commentators concludes that:

[i]t was an Italian artist. That's not English flesh, nor English light. The shadows are too sharp, the light's too thin and intense, those browns and pinks aren't part of our landscape. English eroticism isn't rich blue and terra cotta. Or carne rotta. It's sylvan and aqueous. We expect to look through mists into depths. The English Arcadia is brakes and thickets and watery obscurity. Ho for the greenwood and the midnight clearing in *Women in Love*, or Lady Chatterley's naked lover rushing around in the pelting rain in the forest. (VG, p.182)

Lawrence's Edenic mysticism is, with a clear hint of irony, generalized as the 'English' way of seeing and painting. Like his Hampshire countryside above, it combines notions of solid earthiness, metaphorized by 'brakes and thickets', and untouchable mystery, pictured as 'mists' and 'watery obscurity'. The commentator makes a point about the English way of seeing and the artistic representation of landscape contrasting with the Classical model. The inbuilt irony as well as the immediate dismissal of the claim by

Frederica, who quickly tosses in, as is her habit in this part of her journey, a jeering remark on Lawrence, does not invalidate the assertion. Rather, it is a part of Byatt's dialogic strategy in the presentation of his legacy, explained further in the next chapter.

The juxtaposition of the two ways of representation draws attention to the question of the influence of the environment on people's sensibility. Byatt feels that her Midlands roots are something that she shares with Lawrence and points out this 'blood' affinity in contrast to other writers (SS, p.xii). She mentions Proust for comparison here but equally, Woolf and Joyce come to mind again, whose upper-class English and an urban intellectual Irish backgrounds, respectively, could not be more different than Lawrence's. Her use of the word 'blood' adds a deliberate Lawrentian twist and highlights the subconscious element in the sensitivity to one's origins and environment. The difference between Lawrence and Proust is seen in terms of subtlety and focus: Lawrence 'is violent and savage, as Proust is not, and coercive as Proust is not, and altogether Proust has more to teach on every page, but is not close to my blood, as Lawrence is' (p.xii). Byatt suggests the shared background works as a passport to a better understanding of the author's work and she asserts that Lawrence's

background is something I know, better than Leavis did, having been brought up in the north midlands as he was, of mixed working-class and intellectual lower-middle-class stock, with low church Christianity for myth and morality, with a terrible desire for something *more*. (SS, p.xii)

Her native Yorkshire is another mining county where modern industrialisation meets with ancient landscape, filled with prehistoric mystery and mythological meaning, as shown most abundantly in *Possession*. In contrast with the Classical myth, Byatt foregrounds the identification of myth with (low church) Christianity as a feature shared with Lawrence. The affinities between Byatt and Lawrence in terms of religious background include the renunciation of their religions, and their interest in science, which neither of them believes to be fit to replace religion. While Lawrence is and

remains a religious person and develops his own metaphysic, Byatt (2003b, no page) proclaims herself 'an agnostic'. Their thoughts and works are, nevertheless, significantly influenced by their nonconformist backgrounds, albeit in different ways. An example is their preoccupation with revelation and an individualistic attitude to worship. As Byatt remarks, individual striving for spiritual and social betterment was an aspect of both her and Lawrence's class and religion, and the common sentiment with which they both grew up.

As with language, much of Lawrence's characters' engagements with the surrounding world happens on the unconscious level and becomes a matter of cognizance and expression, whereas in Byatt, it is problematized by her extremely self-conscious characters' intellectual, literary or scientific knowledge, and analysed either by characters themselves, or by the narrator. This thematization is a part of Byatt's overall metafictional scheme, which integrates critical commentaries and analyses into the texts, but also opens a stage for explicit discussions about how language works. An example is Frederica's contemplation concerning landscape and art during her day trip to the Yorkshire moors in *The Virgin in the Garden* when she muses about responsiveness to the natural world and its relation to a person's place of origin. She theorises that:

[t]here was art without landscape, before it, maybe after it. [...] If you lived up here, you supposed landscape was of the essence, you had a Brontesque sense of using it to think and perceive with but at the same time it was in the way. You could neither see it nor through it, it was thickened with too many associations. (VG, p.266)

Frederica realizes that a viewer's response to the landscape is far from straightforward and is complicated, or 'thickened', by not only literary and historical associations, which a literary person like her would gladly admit, but also personal memories and associations. Landscape can thus be seen as a part of our personal and cultural memory,

which reciprocally affects how we see it. The debate is continued in *Still Life*, where Frederica, having just decided to become a writer, is again provoked into thought about artists' perceptions of the surrounding world. As if over-excited by the theoretical challenge, the impatient narrator enters the narrative using a robust first-person address to explain to the reader what he/she is trying to do: 'Frederica will do as an example to illustrate the difficulties of writing about strangeness' (SL, p.72). The main point the narrator makes is the distinction between painters and writers and the impact of culture on verbal expression in relation to sensory perception, observing that, in contrast to pigments and colours, 'words, acquired slowly over a lifetime, are part of a different set of perceptions of the world, they have grown with us, they restrict what we see and how we see it' (SL, p.72). Our perception of landscape, and the world in general, is thus primarily limited by inherited semantic and grammatical structures. The narrator indirectly presents a theory of language, which is very close to the author's own. Byatt visualizes language as 'a great net of flowers on top of the surface of things' (Byatt, 1994c, p.66) that controls how we perceive the surrounding world. Her *vision* of language has been inspired by Ludwig Wittgenstein's idea of a 'mesh', or 'a sufficiently fine square network' covering a seen, or imagined, surface (Wittgenstein, 1922, p.84). As a 'system of describing the world', the network provides a description of the surface that is arbitrary to the object. Byatt also admits that language structures the world for us but also claims that 'if you can make the meshes fine enough, the net is so beautiful that all the bumps and humps of things under it are so, yes, so accessible, you can actually sort of see them under the net' (Byatt, 1994c, p.66). Like language in general, acquired vocabularies and other inherited cultural structures work in a similar way. In *Still Life*, the narrator tells us that 'Frederica's tradition of looking at landscape was deeply Wordsworthian' and that due to this metaphorical filter, she 'saw these new [to her]

things, paradoxically, in old clichés' (SL, p.72). This takes us back to Lawrence, who criticised the tiredness of language and strived to recuperate language in order to force new meanings out of old words.

Byatt's balancing between a nostalgia for an 'innocent language' where 'words denote things' (1994c, p.61) and her awareness about the impossibility to cleanse our perception and cognition of linguistic, cultural and personal influences is expressed again later in the novel. When the narrative 'I' speaks out again, it happens explicitly on behalf of the author and the detailed explanation of her position demonstrates the same theoretical bent. Byatt explains how she had to abandon

the idea that this novel could be written *innocently*, without recourse to reference to other people's thoughts, without, as far as possible, recourse to simile or metaphor. This turned out to be impossible: one cannot think at all without a recognition and realignment of ways of thinking and seeing we have learned over time. We all remake the world as we see it. [...]
Communication is a partial and incomplete business: I know that for some readers these words will call up clear images on an inner eye, they will in some sense 'see' purple and gold, whereas others will not. (SL, p.131)

This commentary is situated in the context of the description of Stephanie's newborn son William's very first, that is preverbal, perception. The word *innocent* refers to a hypothetical purely referential language devoid of subsequently acquired social and cultural additions. However, this is, in Byatt's eyes, impossible for '[e]ven the innocent eye does not simply receive light: it acts and orders. And we always put something of ourselves – however passive we are as observers, however we believe in the impersonality of the poet, into our descriptions of our world, our mapping of our vision.' (SL, p.131) Therefore,

[a]rt is not the recovery of the innocent eye, which is inaccessible. 'Make it new' cannot mean, see it free of all learned frames and names, for paradoxically it is only a precise use of learned comparison and the signs we have made to distinguish things seen or recognised that can give the illusion of newness. (SL, p.131)

Byatt takes Pound's modernist dictum 'Make it new' and argues that it cannot mean an attempt to purge language of its associations, which is unattainable, but a careful manipulation of comparisons. Her focus on the use of words rather than static meanings recalls Wittgenstein's later emphasis on studying the functions and uses of words for our understanding of language. Comparison is proposed as the key method of learning about language, which takes the form of surveying units of human communication, the so-called 'language games' (Wittgenstein, 2009, p.56).

Byatt's stance is informed by her belief in the inherent metaphoricity of language and thought, which, in Alexander's voice, is responsible for the '[g]iddiness of words and things' (VG, p.417). In his ruminations about the challenges of the staging of his play, 'things' refer to the incarnation of ideas that fail to match the author's design rather than the physical objects. Nevertheless, his anxiety contains an epistemological implication that our perception and cognition are affected by both linguistic and cultural factors. Just as the script text is left with 'airy spaces' (VG, p.417) for the actors and directors to fill with their vision, meanings of words become shaped by their uses and acquired associations, and this is where cultural and other influences step in and 'newness' is made possible. That our processing of experience depends to a significant extent on language in terms of both structure and vocabulary is implied in the narrator's assertion that '[t]he language with which I might try to order Frederica's hectic and somewhat varied sexual life in 1954-5 was not available to Frederica then' (VG, p.153). The proposition that Frederica may have been making sense of her experience differently from the reader due to (also) linguistic apparatus is interesting, considering that her logocentric thinking is used, in the context of her teenage radicalism, as an opportunity to stretch the linguistic and cultural relativism to the determinist assertion that '[w]ords are primary' (VG, p.89). Despite her obsession with language, however,

verbal communication and art are not given preference over other forms of expression; on the contrary, its competence is questioned in juxtaposition with non-verbal types of expression and art as well as alternative forms of coding (mathematical, computational, DNA), especially in the latter half of the *Quartet*.

CHAPTER 5

Rewriting Lawrence

The 'Lawrence Style'

The identification of an idiosyncratic 'Lawrence' style is vital because Byatt herself uses the term 'Lawrentian' repeatedly to refer either to a specific writing style that she identifies with Lawrence, as in 'Lawrentian forms' (SL, p.74) or 'Lawrentian hyperbolic' (VG, p.460), or ideas or concepts associated with his thought and art, for instance the 'Lawrentian woman' (SS, p.157). Generally speaking, Lawrence is seen as the frontline exponent of themes concerning class and provincialism, particularly in the mining community of the Midlands (cf. Leavis, 1968a; Gindin, 1987; Baldick, 2001; Ruderman, 2003), primitivist preoccupation with myth and nature mysticism (cf. Gutierrez, 1981; Sagar, 1966; Montgomery, 1994; Bell, 2001; Tague, 2003/4), the unconscious and the resurrection of the individual (cf. Ragussis, 1978; Becket, 2001; Bell, 2008), and last but not least, sexual liberation (cf. Meyers, 1987; Baldick, 2001). Byatt is particularly aware of Lawrence's emphasis on the unconscious, calling the vision in Lawrence and Conrad 'urgent with blood and darkness' (PM, p.148), and the body-mind polarity, which, in her interpretation, informs her feminist critique of gender stereotypes in the 1950s and 60s. In this respect, she considers David Storey's *Radcliffe* (1963), focused on the split of body and mind, an analogy with the conflict between the working class and intellectuals, the most 'Lawrentian' novel in recent English literature (PM, p.172). Equally importantly, he is associated with a specific writing style that

makes it recognizable as 'Lawrentian' if imitated elsewhere. Some examples of Lawrence's phraseology such as 'blood-knowledge' (Lawrence, 2002d, p.470) or 'star-equilibrium' (WL, p.319) represent the author's own coinage necessitated by his attempt to express specific kinds and aspects of human experience in their perceived complexity. They are often sustained by 'oxymoronic dynamics' (Becket, 1997, p.9) that helps overcome the inexpressibility of the concepts they seek to convey.

At other times, Lawrence appropriated and reworked existing terms or symbols, such as the Freudian *unconscious* or the mythological *phoenix*. Similarly, the assimilation into his 'metaphysic' endows otherwise fairly neutral words like *poppy*, *flame* or *flux* with highly specific symbolic meanings. They also include *dark/darkness* and *snake*, both of which Byatt uses in *Babel Tower* to call to mind associations with Lawrence's concept of the unconscious (BT, p.359). In general terms, 'serpent' is used as a symbol of deity, eternity, renovation and the healing art (hence life), a guardian spirit, wisdom, and subtlety, respectively (Brewer, 2003). Nevertheless, there is also the negative meaning of evil, or spite, derived from Genesis. It is this duality and associative potential that Lawrence takes advantage of when constructing his symbolic system. His snake is an embodiment of nobility and timelessness but also 'a serpent of secret and shameful desire' (Lawrence, 1988a, p.35), a product of the Freudian subconsciousness. To Lawrence, however, this 'dark' desire, as a demonstration of 'the flux of darkness and lively decomposition' (Lawrence, 1988a, p.34), which runs in every being in opposition to the 'stream of life' (p.35) is an inevitable and creative element of being, and must be embraced and accepted rather than suppressed or eliminated. This is the only road to the 'whole understanding, when the sense and spirit and mind are consummated into pure unison' (Lawrence, 1988a, p.38). The snake itself eventually becomes a symbol of 'unchanging, pure perfection' (Lawrence, 1988a, p.38) as a token

of the reconciliation of the dark powers. In his poem 'Snake' Lawrence presents the animal as a noble, mythical beast, 'a king in exile', and 'lord of life' (Lawrence, 2002c, p.284) as well as 'embodiment of [...] dark mysterious forces of nature' (De Sola Pinto, 1988, p.13). The serpent reappears in Lawrence's later novel *The Plumed Serpent* as the symbol of the 'spirit of the place' (PS, p.50) in New Mexico, described as 'cruel', 'destructive' (p.50), 'potent' (p.55), 'smooth, undeveloped yet vital' (p.67). As the night-time form of the Aztec God Quetzalcoatl (Lawrence's proposed title of the novel), it represents vitality and energy (Dervin, 1984, p.61) as well as 'blood knowledge' (Humma, 1990, p.66).

The words 'dark', or 'darkness' refer primarily to 'dark sensual forces as opposed to puritanical spirituality' in Lawrence's dichotomy of Love and Law, body and mind and represents life rather than death (Chung, 1989, pp.78, 81). The adjectives Chung lists as typically linked with 'the dark god' in Lawrence's writing such as 'deep', 'potent', 'great', 'vital', 'passionate', provide the characteristics of Lawrence's 'dark' in general (1989, p.82). Finally, its defining aspects are its unknowability (Chung, 1989, p.83) and invisibility (Humma, 1990, p.52). The same attributes describe human un- (or sub-) consciousness, or the soul, which Lawrence calls 'a dark forest' where one's 'own self will never be more than a little clearing' (Lawrence, 2003, p.25). In the novel *Kangaroo* (1923), the dark bush is the embodiment of the unconscious, vast and impenetrable, whilst elsewhere, the latter is characterized as the 'dark continent of [one's] self' (Lawrence, 1985d, p.202). In *Women in Love*, too, darkness is repeatedly associated with unconsciousness as well as with the mysteries of the body, including instincts and sexual desire, as opposed to associations with mind and (upper) consciousness.

Another example is the word *blood*, which thanks to connections such as ‘blood knowledge’ or ‘blood consciousness’ acquires a very specific meaning of non-mental, and consequently a special status in Lawrence’s ontological thought. In *The Virgin in the Garden*, Byatt’s intertextual play dethrones the concept by displaying blood as a purely biological matter, placed in contrast with the ritualistic and symbolic uses featured in the novel, in two satirical scenes explicitly linked to Lawrence’s works. The first depicts Marcus’s bleeding teacher, the seducer Simon Lucas, performing a sacrificial ritual in the Bilge Pond in ‘a parody of the comical and magical chapter [Moony] in *Women in Love*’ (SS, p.xv). The second is the aforementioned burlesque rendering of Frederica’s blood-bathed loss of virginity, which the heroine contemplates against ‘Lawrence’s descriptions of Constance Chatterley’s florid spreading circles of satisfaction’ (VG, p.556). Finally, as a result of his effort to create a new erotic language, words like ‘loins’ or the infamous four-letter ones used in *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* inevitably produce ‘Lawrentian’ resonances, as in the reading of the horse yard episode in *The Shadow of the Sun* below. To conclude, Lawrence’s phraseology is made predominantly of key expressions that support the complex metaphorical and symbolic structures in his writing and consequently carry specific meanings that become accentuated and are read as ‘Lawrentian’ when reproduced or imitated.

Looking at larger sections of language, the most frequent recognizable feature of a Lawrence text is the distinctive textual rhythm. It typically uses syntactic tools such as coordination of relatively short clauses and phrases, multiple sentence elements and cyclic repetitions of words, phrases or even larger semantic structures, often supported by alliteration. The textual rhythm imitates the cyclicity of the most important organic processes in both nature and human lives, such as reproduction or life cycles, and translates emotions, feelings and visceral sensations, frequently associated with

repetitive actions like ‘wave’ or ‘flood’, into language. The result is a rhythmic synchronisation of the described processes with their verbal rendering. As postulated in the ‘Foreword’ to *Women in Love*, the elemental rhythm is the copulative one, symbolising the fusion of male and female as well as that of man with the non-human universe (WL, pp.485-6). As an example, it may be useful to quote from *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* and show one of Lawrence’s depictions of Lady Chatterley’s revelatory erotic experience, mocked by Frederica in *The Virgin in the Garden*:

She clung to him unconscious in passion, and he never quite slipped from her, and she felt the soft bud of him within her stirring, and strange rhythms flushing up into her with a strange rhythmic growing motion, swelling and swelling till it filled all her cleaving consciousness, and then began again the unspeakable motion that was not really motion, but pure deepening whirlpools of sensation swirling deeper and deeper through all her tissue and consciousness, till she was one perfect concentric fluid of feeling, and she lay there crying in unconscious inarticulate cries. The voice out of the uttermost night, the life! (VG, p.134)

The physical rhythm is re-enacted through repetition of words and phrases, supported by alliteration, with an increasing pace. The experience is presented as one of bodily and spiritual regeneration, with the sexual climax experienced as a spiritual catharsis in the form of momentary dissipation of consciousness. It is Lawrence’s inflated rhetoric and his interpretation of erotic experience as a mystical, quasi-religious event that Frederica ridicules as an unsatisfactory aesthetic and practical model.

The enactment of movements, emotions and physical sensations by (mainly) textual rhythm generates a sense of immediacy and urgency, but it can also have the contrary effect of incantation, for instance in ritual dance scenes, most notably in *The Plumed Serpent* (1926) or in ‘The Woman Who Rode Away’ (1928).

Paradoxically, these typical stylistic features of Lawrence’s texts are, on the one hand, essential building blocks of his experimental method and help achieve the celebrated effects in the best parts of his writing, and yet, on the other hand, alongside

the coercive, acute tone they help set up, they have been often denounced as tedious and over the top (cf. Fernihough, 2001, p.1). Some critics, like David Huddle (cited in Adelman, 2002, p.30) who suggests that 'Lawrence's stylistic "heat" is absurd to our "cool" ear', deem his style simply old-fashioned and outlived. Byatt is also aware of the exaggerated tendency in his writing, voiced in Alexander's reference to 'the Lawrentian hyperbolic' (VG, p.460), as well as of Lawrence's didacticism and his 'intellectual nagging and insistent noise' (PM, p.173) that she detects in David Storey's *Radcliffe* and blames partly for the novel's lack of success.

My choice of the main text for the demonstration of Lawrence's prose, his novel *The Lost Girl* (1920), is somewhat unconventional considering that it is usually regarded as one of the writer's minor works. The key reason is that, in addition to the display of Lawrence's narrative and descriptive craftsmanship, it contains an extraordinary change of style, three quarters of the way through the novel, in terms of a departure from the more conventional and readerly initial narrative, fairly compliant with the nineteenth-century realist tradition, towards the personal idiosyncratic style associated with Lawrence. In his study *D.H. Lawrence and the Idea of the Novel*, John Worthen identifies the last three chapters of the novel that Lawrence himself regarded as utterly different from everything he had written before, as exploratory in style, becoming 'typically Lawrentian' (Worthen, 1979, p.115). The fact that the novel had begun in 1912 might suggest that towards its end Lawrence was working his way through to his major works *The Rainbow* (1915) and *Women in Love* (1920), from which most of the examples so far have been quoted. However, as Worthen (1981, pp.xix-lviii) explains in his introduction to the Cambridge edition of *The Lost Girl*, its history, and hence the explanation of why the last chapters differ so substantially from the rest of the novel, are less straightforward. Persistently aiming to be a popular novel,

it was rewritten over a two months' period in the early 1920s, five years after *The Rainbow* had been published and prosecuted for obscenity and with *Women in Love* still waiting for publication. As Worthen notes, only basic features and a few specific details had remained. Consequently, the contrast between his major body of work and its closing part reflects the gap between what Lawrence considered to be an 'amusing' (Worthen, 1981, p.xxix) book for the public that he had set out to produce in 1912, and the more personal – 'immediate' and 'intimate' (Lawrence, 1984, p.549) – kind of prose that he was compelled to write.

The novel opens in a light, humorous, conversational tone, very 'un-Lawrentian' indeed in light of how his writing style has been outlined above. With the air of a popular tale, the self-confident omniscient narrator delivers an apt social satire that addresses the society's inequality problems, highlights the stereotypical gender assumptions of the day and anticipates the imminent war horrors. The central story about the main heroine's coming-of-age, cast against the decline and fall of her paternal house, with its diversely flawed characters and the narrator's frequent commentaries and addresses to the reader, also recalls the eighteenth-century English *picaresque* novel, most particularly Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones*. Even though the language itself may seem fairly unexceptional, the prose again reveals the author's ability to grasp the essence of the place, society or situation he is depicting and, at the same time, remain attentive to minute details. The combination of both produces vibrant portrayals of places and people as shown in his depiction of the Woodhouse society:

A well-established society is Woodhouse, full of fine shades, ranging from the dark of coal-dust to grit of stonemason and sawdust of timber-merchant, through the lustre of lard and butter and meat, to the perfume of the chemist and the disinfectant of the doctor, on to the serene gold-tarnish of bank-managers, cashiers for the firm, clergymen and such-like, as far as the automotive refulgence of the general-manager of all the collieries. Here the *ne plus ultra*. The general-manager lives in the shrubberied seclusion of the so-called Manor. (LG, p.1)

The light-hearted comical effect is again achieved through the well-selected contrasts between words and images, for example by presenting ‘the dark coal-dust’ or ‘the lustre of lard’ as ‘fine shades,’ or analogizing the latter with ‘the automotive refulgence of the general-manager’. The sentence rhythm is supported by alliteration, as in ‘well-established [...] Woodhouse’, ‘full of fine shades’, or ‘lustre of lard.’ The ‘conventional’ part of the novel thus puts on display Lawrence’s storytelling talent and sense of humour.

Nevertheless, the satirical tone is gradually dropped as the central female heroine Alvina Houghton’s affair with the Italian travelling actor Ciccio unfolds. The last three chapters that describe her journey to and the first weeks spent in the Italian Alps alongside her Italian husband, reveal the strength of the impressions made on Lawrence on his return to Italy in 1919. They clearly brought back memories of his previous times in the Italian and Bavarian Alps and it is not surprising that their landscape descriptions echo his earlier travel writings, most particularly the previously quoted *Twilight in Italy* (1916). The contrasting level of ‘immediacy’ is evident in the text, and Lawrence himself is reported to have claimed that the book is ‘not immediate, not intimate – except for the last bit: all set across a distance’ (Lawrence, 1984, p.549), indicating that he was aware of the changed character of the final part of the book. The evocation of the ‘spirit of the place’, its primitivist bent and, most importantly, the focus on the connectedness of landscape and the human psyche mark the sudden ‘plunge’ below the surface – deep into the characters’ feelings and states of mind, associated with the return into what is considered a primordial world. Advancing into the rural alpine landscape, Alvina grows alert and attentive to her surroundings and becomes aware of an acute sense of mystery. Various aspects of the landscape are portrayed as ‘savage’, ‘glacial’, or ‘pagan’ (LG, pp.305, 308, 315), with attributes that constitute the

meaning of the 'Lawrentian' 'darkness', and the place appears to have 'annihilating' power over humans (LG, p.314). Progress in self-awareness and consciousness is thus associated with the physical progress into the mountains and, at the same time, with an imagined regression into a 'pre-world' (LG, pp.409) state of mind, which both attract and repel Alvina. While the attention to deep psychic processes rendered with abstract or religious vocabulary, such as 'transfiguration', 'transfixed' or 'extinguished', relate to *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, the significance of the 'spirit of the place', with its mythical force and 'ancient gods' (LG, p.315), anticipates later novels such as *Kangaroo* and *The Plumed Serpent*. Necessitated by the narrative focus, Lawrence's style becomes manifest in the vocabulary, for instance phrases like 'dark-lustrous magnificence' (LG, p.333) or an 'unnatural, doomed, unbearable presence' (p.339), as well as in syntactic and semantic structures using short coordinate clauses, multiple appositional attributes, rhythmic repetitions and oxymoronic expressions such as 'flashing darkness' (p.305). The following extract is a typical example of Lawrence's prose written to express the physical rhythm of an activity alongside its emotional impact on the character:

It was icy cold, with a flashing darkness. The moon would not rise till later. And so, without any light but that of the stars, the cart went spanking and rattling downhill, down the pale road which wound down the head of the valley to the gulf or darkness below. Down in the darkness into the darkness they rattled, wildly, and without heed, the young driver making strange noises to his dim horse, cracking a whip and asking endless questions of Pancrazio. (LG, p.305)

The repetitions of 'down' and 'darkness' that describe the rhythm of the night-time descent into the valley also express the heroine's sensation of sinking into the unknown – physically, cognitively and emotionally. The 'darkness' stands also for the unconscious, and the depicted process manifests its expanding share in the character's experience. The section with the tightest repetition and rhythm that opens the

penultimate sentence creates a feeling of eternal – ‘endless’ – doom whereas the double repetition of ‘without’ indicates the sense of absence of things to hold on to and a lack of control. It demonstrates again Lawrence’s expressionist skills to articulate his characters’ feelings and emotions as well as unconscious stirrings through the synchronisation of his language with the processes in both the outer world and the character’s psyche.

Having reached her destination, Alvina’s life seems to be reduced to the day-to-day existence filled with practical activities needed for survival, but on the other hand, under the ‘annihilating’ influence of the place, she grows increasingly conscious of her own ‘psychic being’ (LG, p.314). This is Lawrence’s account of a moment of terror experienced as she wakes up in the middle of her first night in her new home, deep in the Italian mountains, realising the finality of her situation:

Everything seemed electric with horror. She felt she would die instantly, everything was so terrible around her. She could not move. She felt that everything around her was horrific, extinguishing her, putting her out. Her very being was threatened. In another instant she would be transfixed.

Making a violent effort she sat up. The silence of Ciccio in his bed was as horrible as the rest of the night. She had a horror of him also. What would she do, where should she flee? She was lost – lost – lost utterly.

The knowledge sank into her like ice. Then deliberately she got out of bed, and went across to him. He was horrible and frightening, but he was warm. She felt his power and his warmth invade her and extinguish her. The mad and desperate passion that was in him sent her completely unconscious again, completely unconscious. (LG, p.313)

In this passage, repetition and rhythm are used again to express a particular psychic state, but this time the pattern is different to the previous ‘rattling’ ride, or the usual coarser motion of throbbing pulsation. This time, after the initial shock, Alvina is seized by panic and her sense is that her surroundings are charged with an ‘electric’ force, which is compliant with her state of heightened perception. The allusion to electricity also implies intensity and destructiveness as well as a flow of tiny particles, both of which are reflected in the length of the sentences, phrases and clauses. But is also refers

to the invisible forces in the universe that find expression in human sexuality, as explained earlier. The last paragraph manifests Lawrence's body-mind polarity where the 'unconscious', albeit frightening, due to its impenetrability, is identified with 'warmth' and 'life', whereas rational mental knowledge is associated with 'cold' and 'death'. The saturated rhetoric that Lawrence uses to express such extreme semi-conscious physical/psychic states or experiences is, in perhaps a slightly reduced form, the same as in his major novels, most notably *Women in Love* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. It often serves its purpose well; nevertheless, Lawrence's striving for a radical language to express radical experience sometimes slips into excess, or, as Alexander Wedderburn describes it, as 'hyperbolic' (VG, p.460).¹

To conclude, a comparison of the opening passage of *The Lost Girl* with the last two extracts demonstrates the remarkable contrast between the predominantly realist main narrative and the much tenser and emotionally charged closing section, which is signalled through several shorter passages with the distinctly 'Lawrence' touch within the main narrative, most notably Alvina and Ciccio's intimate encounter in Chapter 9. While in the former part, Lawrence allows the jovial all-knowing narrator to explain Alvina's feelings and sensations, he later chooses a more direct expression of her consciousness using a language that enacts rather than flatly describes what she feels. The external world is portrayed in a similarly sensual style. Despite its limited scale, the novel's 'typically Lawrentian' section is a showcase of Lawrence's key techniques that sustain the success of his major novels, from the captivating portrayals of landscapes and people in *The Rainbow* to the climactic encounters in *Women in Love*.

¹ Cf. Stewart, 'Lawrence Through the Lens of A.S Byatt' (2013). Explaining the significance of the relations between language, eros and identity in Byatt's rethinking of Lawrence, Stewart makes a poignant association between Alexander's remark and the most notorious examples of Lawrence's radical erotic rhetoric in the chapter 'Excuse' in *Women in Love*, and the accounts of Constance Chatterley's erotic experience in *Lady's Chatterley's Lover*.

The Shadow of the Sun

Byatt's debut novel manifests her fascination with Lawrence's language and symbolism and demonstrates how her own creativity developed in a close negotiation of his work. In the introduction to the novel, added some twenty years later, she acknowledges her negotiation of Lawrence's art and thought as a major part of the creative process. The 'sun' in her novel is partly Lawrence's 'sun' – a dominating force that is both a source of life and creative power but also a potential cause of destruction and death. Byatt describes how she attempted to resist Lawrence's sexual imagery in his short story 'Sun' (SS, p.xiv). In the context of creative influence and the circumstances that inspired Byatt to write the novel, including Leavis's critical appropriation of Lawrence's work, the 'sun' partly stands for Lawrence himself since it was in his 'shadow' (during lectures on his writing and with him, at least partly, in mind) that the novel was written. Byatt effectively weighs up her artistic position and sentiment against Lawrence's. By so doing, she addresses a range of questions concerning the nature of creativity and vision, the validity and authenticity of art, as well as gender assumptions and social challenges. The novel's symbolic framework is the sun/moon imagery, inspired, as Stewart (2008, p.175) explains, by visual art, most notably by Van Gogh and Samuel Palmer, as well as by Lawrence's work. Stewart also draws attention to heliotropism as the main creative impetus, emphasising the unity of both the creative and destructive forces of the sun. The whole structure of the novel is based around binary opposites such as male/female, creative/critical, body/mind, society/ individual and the problem of a potential synthesis or symbiosis. An analogy is drawn with Lawrence's short story 'The Prussian Officer' where the destructive force of the sun is

amplified and granted symbolic power. Stewart points out their common expressionist inspiration from Van Gogh and makes a distinction between Lawrence's destructive sun and Byatt's portrayal of the mixed nature of (heliotropic) creative energy, both invigorating and potentially destructive, encompassing both 'genius and madness' (Stewart, 2008, p.175), in *The Shadow of the Sun*. Stewart does not elaborate on the link, but his later demonstrations of Byatt's treatment of light and colour manifest a significant affinity in the method and effect to Lawrence's.

A closer look at the short story exposes the interesting criss-crossing of the two authors' presentations of the solar element. The main difference is that Lawrence's sun blaze and his landscape are endowed with their own symbolic meanings, original to the story, whereas Byatt works with existent symbolism and myth, including Lawrence's. Instead of inscribing symbolic meaning onto her countryside, as Lawrence does, she makes her visionary character Henry 'read' inherited, second-hand meanings into it.

In 'The Prussian Officer', the main character, whose view of the landscape is reported, drops gradually into a hallucinatory state, in which the physical surroundings seem to acquire a kind of energized substance and evoke a strangely mingled feeling of separatedness and belonging. The story opens with a description of a Bavarian landscape, through which a regiment of soldiers march:

On either hand, the valley, wide and shallow, glistened with heat; dark green patches of rye, pale young corn, fallow and meadow and black pine-woods spread in a dull, hot diagram under a glistening sky. But right in front the mountains ranged across, pale blue and very still, the snow gleaming gently out of the deep atmosphere. [...] The burnished, dark green rye threw off a suffocating heat, the mountains drew gradually nearer and more distinct. (Lawrence, 1983a, p.1)

The passage is another example of Lawrence's expressionist painterly style, with several features similar to his portrayal of the Italian landscape analysed earlier. The scenery, made up of a pattern of differently coloured patches, is flooded with sunlight

that intensifies its colours, and backed with a range of snow-topped mountains separating the valley from the sky. The word 'diagram' draws a direct analogy with visual art. It prompts the reader to visualise a patterned, geometrical image reminiscent of expressionist or Cubist painting. The layering of coloured surfaces saturated with sunlight is reminiscent of Cézanne's painting of *The Bay of Marseille* discussed earlier. Conveying an implicitly distorted representation of the natural landscape, it brings in a sense of impersonality and detachment since the view described from the soldiers' perspectives is also a reflection of their physical and psychological states. The soldiers are hot and exhausted in the 'suffocating heat', longing not only for cold and rest, but also for mental relief – a peace symbolized by the 'pale blue and very still' mountains, 'gleaming gently out of the deep atmosphere' (Lawrence, 1983a, p.1). The strain distorts their vision so that they see a geometrical pattern of colours in an impersonal landscape, with which they fail to connect. This disconnected vision portends the delirious vision of the dying soldier later in the story. His seeing and thinking then is blurred and the landscape is perceived predominantly through 'sickly' smells (Lawrence, 1983a, p.11).

Like the orderly's delirium, Henry Severell's visionary state in *The Shadow of the Sun* involves a changed state of consciousness, culminating with hallucinations. Henry experiences feelings of both detachment from and immersion in the surrounding natural world. Unlike Lawrence, however, Byatt's narrator interferes in the rendering of Henry's sensations by emphasising the awkwardness of his looks and the clumsiness of his progress through the landscape, including the addition of an external observer's mocking view of Henry, portrayed as a robust alien figure in the countryside. Observed by a terrified young boy, Henry

came down, on a difficult stone, on one foot, balanced all his huge weight on it for a moment, swinging his arms wildly with all the power in them to keep a balance which it suddenly seemed impossible he should lose, took off in a huge leap, and was down the hill again like some enormous animal, an ancient white bull, in full charge. (SS, p.57)

As in Lawrence's short story, Byatt's sun invigorates colours as 'the brilliance of the sun gave an extra sharpness, an extra clarity to everything' (SS, p.3). Compared to her predecessor's suffocating, destructive force, however, Byatt creates a very different state of saturation in the opening passage of her novel.

It was very hot; the air hung rising and shivering in little fountains over the hedges and the gateposts, snaking in busy rivers across the lawns, and curving round past the steps into the shadows, where it suddenly became invisible again. The roses, massed tidily in beds upon and around the lawns, were damp with it, the petals weighed softly against each other where yesterday they had been crisp, standing out as though they were sugared. But the grass, greener here than at the back of the house where it was less shadowed, was violent; it thrust itself into the sun in neat metallic ranks, its blades shorn away and the fine planes of it catching the light, throwing it about on the lawn like crossed threads of spun glass, silver, green and white. (SS, p.3)

By applying, oxymoronicly, the metaphor of streaming water to describe the element of very hot air, she introduces a sense of hidden tension and expectancy into her portrayal of the hot summer afternoon. It is the sunshine that stirs the seemingly arrested atmosphere and endows it with motion and tension, 'rising and shivering in little fountains', 'snaking in busy rivers' and 'curving round past the steps into the shadows' (SS, p.3). Making the most of the metaphorical contrasts by invoking either heaviness or lightness, the '*tidily*' '*massed*' roses are '*damp*' with hot air, like dewdrops, while their petals are '*weighed softly* against each other' as if 'sugared' (italics added). This 'tension in the placidity, the stiffening of the formation before attack' (SS, p.3) represents the same creative energy, or 'the life force' that nurtures Henry's creative visions as opposed to the deathly sun in 'The Prussian Officer' (Stewart, 2008, p.176). The allusion of 'catching' and 'throwing' adds the notion of play, which is absolutely

absent from Lawrence's sun. Byatt's heliotropic figures like Henry and, in a milder form, Anna, profit from the sun's stimulating and energizing effect that works both physically (with Henry 'moving and walking more violently as the temperature increased' [SS, p.44]) and mentally, by heightening perception and responsiveness to external stimuli.

Symbolically, Byatt exploits the binary opposition of sun and moon, rather than sun and earth, the reason being her focus on vision and creativity, which is, in her case, linked to light and transcendence. She moves from the more obvious opposition of the solar/creative versus lunar/intellectual, identified by Stewart in Henry's work pattern, towards a more reciprocal mode that allows the two principles to co-exist and overlap. In the deliberately gendered concept of creativity in *The Shadow of the Sun*, the (male) visionary creativity, represented by the violent and pervasive force of the sun is opposed to a 'milder, darker, colder' (SS, p.xvi) (female) version, the imagination rather than visionary/prophetic one, associated with moonlight. Having said that, these associations are, nevertheless, more fluid for Byatt, who describes her own creativity as heliotropic (SS, p.xiv), and generally tends to overcome boundaries and engage opposites, such as in the creative and critical spheres, in fruitful interaction. Even Henry's creativity is not purely sun-driven and sensual. The spells of intense physical and visual experience are followed by calm, reflective periods of 'craftsman[ship]' (SS, p.84) when the visionary experience is processed with the application of imagination and intellect. Stewart (2008, p.178) uses Lawrence's language when he speaks of 'a systole-diastole pulse of sensual-intellectual, sola-lunar energy in [Henry's] creative being' to indicate the synthetic nature of poetic imagination, emphasised, among others, by Coleridge in *Bibliographia Literaria* (Coleridge, 2004, Chapter XIV, no page). Coleridge is mentioned by Byatt in the introduction to the novel as her most admired thinker at the time of writing *The*

Shadow of the Sun. The association of primary and secondary imagination with sun and moon, respectively, is based on Coleridge's association between moonlight with secondary imagination, linked with poetic creativity, that produces new images by reflecting and refracting reality (SS, p.xiii), as opposed to primary imagination, or 'primary consciousness'. In *The Shadow of the Sun*, Henry represents visionary creativity through his strong sun-centred primary consciousness, which must be, nevertheless, complemented with imaginative activity, symbolized by the moon, to produce art. Anna's primary consciousness, and hence her visionary power, is not as strong as Henry's, and therefore, if she does find her creative voice, it will be sustained by imaginative and intellectual, rather than visionary, creativity.

Lawrence's image of a sun-heated harvest field in moonlight in *The Shadow of the Sun* represents for Byatt 'a kind of creative paradox' (SS, p.xvi) through the conjunction of the two elements. The composition of the midsummer setting had been partly influenced by the '*magical scene*' (SS, p.xvi, italics added) of Will and Anna meeting in the moonlit cornfield in *The Rainbow*; a motif explored and recycled several times in Lawrence's fiction, from the early 'Love Among the Haystacks' (written 1911, revised 1913), to *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*.

Byatt adopted elements of Lawrence's gendered moon imagery because, as she put it, it corresponded with her 'image of women's creativity' at the time of writing *The Shadow of the Sun* (SS, p.xvi). The moon in Lawrence's writing represents the female principle and 'mystery', foregrounded more strongly than in the sun's case, as its prime quality.

The passage in Byatt's *The Shadow of the Sun* inspired by the cornfield scene in *The Rainbow* describes a part of Henry's entranced travel through the rural countryside during his 'attack of vision'. The scene opens suddenly when Henry steps out into the

fields from a track enclosed by trees, at the end of a day spent marching in the heat. As in Lawrence's writing, the moonlight seems to transform the whole place into an enchanted, fantastic world. While the play of light and shadow works in a similar way to produce the magical illusion of the landscape coming to life in both Lawrence and Byatt, there is a major difference in the dynamics. While in Lawrence, the moonlit space is described with erotic vocabulary such as 'prostrate', or 'erect' (SS, p.111) to support the sensuous analogy, as it is gradually brought into a rhythmic, eroticised motion by human activity and remains homogenous, the landscape surrounding Byatt's Henry appears to have its own dynamic regardless of him:

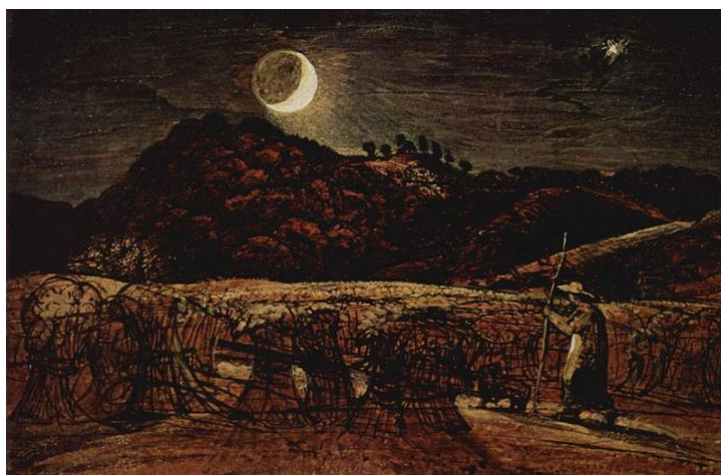
But he came to a track between high banks, on whose top there were tall trees, standing black, but with the moon on their leaves, and at the end of the track he was suddenly in fields in moonlight, fields heavy with hay, smelling warm even in the cold night, fields soft green, and pale gold surrounded by trees.

Henry went along, in the shadows, and the hay moved, in the light, in the square of open land, this way and that, falling heavily against itself and sighing, changing colour from grey, to straw, to gold, to glass as it swayed. (SS, p.63)

Using the same stylistic methods of repetitions and alliteration as Lawrence to create a rhythmic prose, Byatt constructs the text in a way that imitates the swaying movement of the hay. Following Lawrence's model, she creates a complex sensory image including shape, texture, colour/light, smell, temperature and, indeed, motion. The rhythm in the first part relies on the repetition of 'track', 'fields', and 'trees'. In the second part, the main focus is on the hay, but the repetition of 'heavy' and 'gold' link it to the previous section. The image of straw turning into gold prompts an analogy with the Grimms' fairy-tale of 'Rumpelstiltskin' (1812). In the fairy-tale context it becomes a metaphor for falsity and self-delusion, suggesting that there is no prophetic depth to Henry's vision. Byatt's hay has very similar qualities to Lawrence's. Byatt takes over and repeats the idea of hay as 'heavy', which metaphorically refers to its being still

soaked with the daytime heat, but also to its high, potent ripeness, which, in Lawrence, has sexual implications. Similarly, the sound made by the hay is also a part of the rhythm, albeit of a very different nature. Lawrence's sound pattern is made up from rather abrupt noises, such as 'hiss' or 'splash', depending on the handling of the hay, whereas Byatt's is a continuous one, most likely caused by a breeze, which in addition to the same onomatopoeic reasons for 'hiss' and 'splash', made 'sighing' an apt choice. In light of the comparison, the second part of the extract is a Lawrentian image concentrated to a maximum degree and with remarkable economy into a rhythmically elaborate and metaphorically rich single sentence.

The scene described above resembles Samuel Palmer's painting *Cornfield by Moonlight, with the Evening Star* (c. 1830), which according to Byatt, had always been, even unconsciously, the 'visual image' behind the idea of the novel (SS, p. xv).



Samuel Palmer: *Cornfield by Moonlight, with the Evening Star* (c.1830)

The scene, 'nocturnal, warm but bright, lit by a reflected moonlight which nevertheless contains the partial sickle within the possibility of a complete circle of light' (SS, p.xvi), and showing 'the ripeness and the growth of the corn' in 'this milder, darker, colder light' was also 'an image of woman's creativity' (SS, p.xvi) as she conceived it at the

time of writing the novel. Henry, it seems, is only a visitor to, or even intruder in the moonlit landscape and stays detached from it. Although the rhythm of Henry's, and subsequently his illusory companions' walk is gradually synchronised with the movements of the hay, Henry, however, never attains the same degree of unison as Lawrence's characters do, signalled and enacted by Lawrence's erotic phraseology. Byatt's narrative strategy prevents him from becoming one with his vision as in Anna's and Ursula's case. To the contrary, however Henry's rhythmic stride and advance through the countryside may be well in tune with the natural rhythms around him, they never merge. The chimerical figures that soon appear in front of him seem to guide him away from the elements and disrupt his touch with the physical world:

They went ahead of him; he could not count them; and rose over a hedge; he climbed a gate and found himself in much more open country, walking on bright spikes of stubble, amongst corn that had been already harvested, and they marched ahead of him, in line, between the stokes, leaving, it seemed, trails and threads of white light like nets over the heads of corn, or like snail tracks, wherever they had passed or touched. (SS, p.63)

Under the spell of these imaginary walkers, Henry is distracted by this (secondary) light and, with the gradual detachment from the landscape, no climax comparable to that in *The Rainbow* is achieved. In contrast, Henry enters a calmer, more lucid interval in his visionary quest that allows him to intellectualise his experience – possibly under the lunar influence, linked by Stewart with intellectual/critical powers (2008, p.178). During the last, delirious leg of his journey back in the glaring sun the following day, he experiences a climactic mirage where the sun's flaming blaze is again crowded, and eventually blends, with figures and faces, known from before. The figures, however, only appear to be a part of his original heliotropic vision; contrarily, they lead him away from it and distort it. Also, this is a clear departure from Lawrence on Byatt's side as he would very unlikely resort to anthropomorphism in case of a similar metaphysical

experience. As is the case, regarding the meaning of Henry's visions in general, there is no indication as to what, or whom, the figures and faces might signify. In my view, they may be allusions to previous literary (and other) influences as indicated by Alfer and Edwards de Campos, who poignantly emphasize the obvious textuality of Henry's visions and suggest that:

Unknown to Henry, his visions seem doomed to be an imitation – a double [and doubly ironic] imitation, first of textualised versions of his 'visionary' predecessors, and second of an unmediated 'real' posited by precisely these textual predecessors as apprehensible through, but ultimately remaining beyond, textual structure. (Alfer and Edwards de Campos, 2010, p.7)

According to the only one full depiction of his visionary experience, Henry indeed remains on the surface of things, content with a rather blurry, unspecific 'knowing', despite other characters' assurances about his having access to a special kind of knowledge and 'another brighter world' (SS, p.89). The rendering of – mainly in the first part – his vision, is technically an imitation of Lawrence's prophetic discourse; nevertheless, it overtly lacks the prophetic depth – 'prophecy was not [Henry's] country' (SS, p.63) after all – and the Lawrentian invocation of and determination to plunge into the 'unknown'. As said before, the credibility of the visions is repeatedly undermined by narratorial comments about the grotesqueness of Henry's situation and by the lack of specificity in regard to how the visions are actually turned into art. I think that while addressing the central creative problem of the verbalisation of human experience, Byatt also challenges the notion of superiority of (male) visionary/prophetic art glorified by Leavis on Lawrence's model, and prepares the ground for alternative kinds of creativity indicated in Chapter 1 of the thesis. Furthermore, she points at the significance of craftsmanship, without which visions would be wasted, and implicitly warns of the dangers in both Henry's and Anna's cases.

As in Lawrence's writing, Byatt's character Anna, as a woman, responds to the moon with greater alertness and sensitivity. Contrary to the overpowering flood of sunlight in Henry's case, reflection and fragmentation of moonlight are foregrounded as its most dominant aspects, especially in her first visionary episode in the bathroom. As with Lawrence's moon scenes, moonlight turns the space into a kaleidoscopic show:

The shelves were a miracle of green and silver, shadow of transparent shadow, reflected and admitted, block geometry made ideal in light, under the brittle circular shadows of the glasses, which rested on them and through them. Shadows of light, Anna thought, thickness on thickness, all the textures of light, caught and held in glass, spirals and cones and pencil trellises, where the shadow of one shelf overlapped another. She crossed quietly to the basin; the water came out of the tap in little silver spearheads that danced in the glass like quicksilver and settled into a faintly swaying lucidity. (SS, pp.133-134)

In the context of Byatt's feminist critique, moonlight indicates a different, more pluralistic mode of sensibility. It does not flood and dominate the space like the blaze of a searing sun. It does not even light the whole space as the sun does but touches only surfaces that are exposed to it. To be able to perceive and contemplate it requires a different kind of attentiveness than regarding sun-lit landscapes; one that allows the viewer to recognize subtle detail, such as the 'shadow of a shadow', and delicate movements such as the 'dance' of water in the glass. Anna is able to discern complex patterns and 'textures of light' described by tautological or oxymoronic phrases such as 'shadow of transparent shadow', 'shadows of light', or 'thickness on thickness'. Due to dispersion and reflection, lunar light behaves differently to sunlight in Henry's visions; the comparison to 'quicksilver' makes it appear lighter and livelier. The images of geometrical patterns formed by fragmented moonlight invite a comparison with the moon-stoning episode in *Women in Love* (WL, pp.247-248). Anna's spontaneous experiment with a glass filled with water held against the light, which splits and casts concentric patterns on to the bathroom floor, further justifies this analogy. Most

significantly, Anna's 'lovingly' performed action is utterly free of conflict and aggression, and the ritualised observation of the luminous spectacular generates, as in Ursula's case, a feeling of regeneration and spiritual restoration, associated almost identically in terms of wholeness and balance.

Interrupted by Oliver's entry, Anna's experience remains a mere inconclusive indication of a vision. It is similar to the outcome on two other occasions so that despite her growing awareness, she is left with serious doubts about the authenticity and relevance of her experience and it is only a concluding moment of insight that seems to license her intuition and indicate a path to the future. Byatt uses the imitation of Lawrence to question his construction of gender difference by showing her characters energized by and yet remaining separate from the identifying elements. Herewith she dissolves the binary opposition between the genders, to a certain extent, and hence the necessity of a heterosexual union as the only way of achieving individual fulfilment. As for Lawrence's striving for oneness, Byatt indicates, through Anna, that detachment and insight, whether personal or critical, are equally acceptable modes of relationship.

I would like to close my examination of Byatt's debut novel by pointing out one more 'Lawrentian' touch in a passage of Chapter 4 that portrays Anna brushing a horse. In Lawrence's fiction, particularly in his novella *St Mawr*, the horse is the embodiment of 'a world beyond our world', 'dark fire', dark vitality, or 'another sort of wisdom' (SM, p.41) and represents elemental power, permanence and internal freedom in contrast to a cast of acutely displaced modern-time characters. Deliberately, the chief protagonist Lou Witt's first encounter with the horse in *St Mawr* is staged on a hot, sunny day in order to enable, and foreground the significance of the fusion of the heat and the (primordial) energy of the sun and of the animal itself. Somewhat later, Lou watches, and intuitively commends, the 'ritualistic' (SM, p.33) absorption of the groom

brushing the horse. Moreover, the rhythmic movements of riders and horses, or people attending to horses, are ritualised on numerous other occasions throughout Lawrence's fiction, for instance, in the chapter 'Coal-Dust' in *Women in Love* (WL, pp.110-113), or in 'Marriage by Quetzalcoatl' in *The Plumed Serpent* (PS, pp.324-325). In *The Shadow of the Sun*, Byatt rewrites a ritualised contact between horse and human as follows:

Anna stood alone in the yard for a moment, looking across at the Wizard, and then went back into the saddle room and fetched his brush. She began to work on him slowly, pressing her face against his side, smelling his warm smell, moving her hands, one with the brush, one naked against him, in little circular movements over his haunches and flanks. The horse, who was used to her, and enjoyed being groomed, pushed at her with his nose, and then stood relaxed, nearly leaning against her. Little by little the hot sun, and the warm smell of the animal and the rhythmic movement overcame her; she relaxed and dreamed, and closed her eyes. She was awakened by the horse, who suddenly pulled away from her, and gave a little ruffle of sound. (SS, p.73)

Byatt skilfully exploits the same stylistic tools as Lawrence to create textual rhythm through the layering of clauses and a regular word stress pattern, as in 'pressing her face against his side', and cyclic repetition – as if to enact the 'circular movement', using once again short words and phrases and brief coordinated indefinite clauses, and repetitions of words like, 'little', 'warm', 'smell', 'relax' and 'move'. Moreover, prompted by the words 'haunches' and 'flanks' at the end of the second sentence, and the affinities between the texts, the passage can be read as an imitation of Lawrence's sex scene in the chapter 'Excuse' in *Women in Love*. In Lawrence's text, Ursula is kneeling before Birkin, with 'her arms around his loins' and 'her face against his thighs' (WL, p.313).

Unconsciously, with her sensitive finger-tips, she was tracing the back of his thighs, following some mysterious life-flow there. She had discovered something, something more than wonderful, more wonderful than life itself. It was the strange mystery of his life-motion, there, at the back of the thighs, down the flanks. [...]

She traced with her hands the line of his loins and things, at the back, and a living fire ran through her, from him, darkly. (WL, p.315)

Among the most obvious parallels are the physical closeness between the woman and horse, and woman and man, respectively, and the intensity of visceral, especially tactile, sensations experienced by the female characters. Both Anna and Ursula seem to be in a kind of trance. References to heat and radiance are central to both scenes, presented as significant qualities of place: Anna and the horse in the hot, sun-drenched yard; and Anna and Birkin in a fire-heated room. The heat arising from the external sources of the sun and fire, is connected with the heat that is figured as life energy, as well as associated emotions of desire, passion and excitement. Heat is also important to Lawrence's descriptions of sexual interaction and connection: the fire that runs 'through her, from him'. Byatt also uses 'Lawrentian' words such as 'dark', 'black' and 'flame' (SS, p.73) to describe Anna's vision blurred by the sun and her feeling of oblivion after she opens her eyes. Ursula feels transfixed too, with her face described as 'one dazzle of released, golden light' (WL, p.313) – a parallel to the 'golden' (SS, p.73) sunlight in *The Shadow of the Sun*. The focus on hands and the sense of touch is another strong analogy. Ursula's sexual consummation as 'a dark flood of electric passion' (WL, p.313) is an example of Lawrence's use of electricity as a metaphor for sexual energy coined in his *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* (cf. Chapter 5, p.169). However, there is an anti-climax in Byatt's text where Anna relaxes and drifts away into daydreaming, instead of sexual consummation as in Ursula's case. There is, though, an analogy with *St Mawr* where Lou instinctively feels the horse's power to bring the desired 'relief' (SM, p.137) and 'stillness' (p.139). In 'Excuse', Lawrence uses radical language for radical experience (cf. Doherty, 1992, pp.60, 61), with disputable success. F.R. Leavis (1968a, p.154), for example, exceptionally agrees with Murry's criticism and regards the text as overwritten and over-explicit. Considering the excessive repetition of the sexualized body parts and references to darkness, this text may belong

to those which annoy Byatt with 'his insistent sawing noise, his making a point over and over' (Byatt, 2002b, p.112). Byatt mocks Lawrence's exaggerated ritualization of sexual experience by constructing a similar scene where the man is replaced with a horse and the erotic climax is denied.

Anna's sudden awakening at the end of the quote from *The Shadow of the Sun* is caused by the arrival of Michael, a young man whom Anna meets at the stables and for whom feels considerable attraction, described, as Stewart (2008, p.174) also points out, as the sun God Apollo emerging in the sunlit yard with 'gold head erect on the golden neck' (SS, p.73). Yet the sunlight also links Michael with the horse: at this moment he belongs to the same 'world' as the animal – the physical world of the body as opposed to the world of the mind, represented by his new rival, Oliver. Anna's powerful attraction to Michael is mainly sensuous and reveals her yearning for animalistic simplicity and stability, as she can imagine 'walking, and riding' with him but not 'talking' (SS, p.75). Hence, she is repelled by any hint of anxiety or another 'complicated' emotion on his part; he is desired as 'carefree', 'self-assured' and easy to admire (SS, p.74).

The above selection of passages from *The Shadow of the Sun* demonstrate the degree of Lawrence's linguistic and stylistic influence on Byatt's first novel, but is by no means exhaustive. The scrutiny of the passages demonstrate that Byatt not only borrows or re-uses certain elements of Lawrence's writing but also challenges his writing by a kind of subtle rewriting. Compared with the novels of the *Quartet*, *The Shadow of the Sun* contains no explicit links to particular texts and less obvious clues that would prompt an intertextual reading, so that without her additional introduction, many of the analogies might be lost. I would argue that although Lawrence's presence throughout the novel is as robust as in the *Quartet*, his role as a 'creative antagonist',

suggested by Preston, is more concealed. And yet, the novel focuses on Lawrence's ideas about the nature of creativity. Byatt's gendered critique of the type of male mysticism drawn from Lawrence and represented by Henry, nonetheless, does not condemn the traditional visionary creativity, as such, but shows its lack of compatibility with the specific personal and social challenges faced by women. Byatt puts forward the verbalisation of experience as the key creative problem, irrespective of gender, but indicates that the process may run along different lines as required by alternative modes of vision and imagination.

The Quartet

Byatt's response to Lawrence's fiction and thought in the *Quartet* is different from her first book. The Lawrence in *The Virgin in the Garden* and its sequels is much less a mystic and visionary; instead his status in relation to the literary canon, his authority and the historical and social relevance of his work come into the spotlight. While the opening novel is rich with intertextual references to Lawrence's texts, his ideas and works are explicitly discussed by the characters. The intertextual presence, however, declines significantly in the following novels and Lawrence and his work become discussed as 'subjects' in predominantly educational contexts. His role as a prophet or mystic is questioned in relation to his post-mortem idolisation.

Lawrence's texts are rewritten once more. Jack Stewart's 'Lawrence Through the Lens of A.S. Byatt' provides an exhaustive outline of analogies in *The Virgin in the Garden*, with a more detailed focus on the use of myth and symbolism. Therefore, my discussion here concentrates on a detailed analysis of the chapter 'Women in Love' in *The Virgin in the Garden*, which receives only a limited space in Stewart's essay. I also

return briefly to the theme of ‘sisters’, which is a crucial structural component of the *Quartet*. I regard Byatt’s negotiation of Lawrence’s legacy from *The Virgin in the Garden* through to *Babel Tower* as a build-up towards her most radical, even subversive, undertaking, that is the rewriting of the passage from *Women in Love* in *Babel Tower*, addressed separately in the last chapter.

‘Women in Love’

The ‘Women in Love’ chapter in *The Virgin in the Garden* is one of a number of chapters, the titles of which are borrowed from influential works of literature and science and play significant parts in their reading. They include Freudian ‘On the Interpretation of Dreams’, ‘Ode on a Grecian Urn’ or ‘Much Ado’. ‘Women in Love’ stands out because of its wider relevance to the narrative but also because Byatt literally rewrites a part of the original text to which the title refers.

The opening part of the first chapter of *Women in Love* called ‘Sisters’ captures two grown-up sisters sitting in solitude in their father’s house, engaged in an intimate conversation about love and marriage.

Ursula and Gudrun Brangwen sat one morning in the window-bay of their father’s house in Beldover, working and talking. Ursula was stitching a piece of brightly-coloured embroidery, and Gudrun was drawing upon a board which she held on her knee. They were mostly silent, talking as their thoughts strayed through their minds.

‘Ursula,’ Gudrun said, ‘don’t you really want to get married?’

Ursula laid her embroidery in her lap and looked up. Her face was calm and considerate.

‘I don’t know,’ she replied. ‘It depends how you mean.’ (WL, p.7)

The reference to the sisters’ activities already give a clue about the difference between them. Ursula’s stitching is a more traditional domestic task compared to Gudrun’s drawing. She looks ‘calm and considerate’ and more settled. Gudrun is the more progressive and restless of the two sisters.

Byatt's sisters in *The Virgin in the Garden* are in a very similar position, except for their age (they are both younger) and their affections for the same person, their (former) teacher Alexander.

The sisters sat by Stephanie's electric fire in nightclothes. Stephanie was dripping, injecting milk into the increasingly bedraggled but still living kittens. She wore striped Marks and Spencer's boys' pyjamas, rather large, inside which her rounded body seemed formless and elusively bulky. Frederica affected a long white nightdress with full sleeves, and a yoke of broderie anglaise threaded with black ribbon. She liked to imagine this garment falling about her in folds of fine white lawn. It was in fact made of nylon, the only available kind of nightdress, except for vulgar shiny rayon, in Blesford or Calverley. It did not fall, it clung to Frederica's stick-like and knobby limbs, and she disliked its slippery feel. She was always too easily seduced, when buying clothes, by some Platonic ideal garment possibly, though not necessarily, also envisaged by the makers of the *cheap imitations* she could afford to buy. She would have had a Yorkshire sense of quality in cloth, if she'd had the money to go with it. Lacking money, she refused to be shrewd about the second-rate.

They talked about Alexander, and about their lives. There was no rivalry, only a curious complicity, about their love for him, probably because both in different ways were convinced that the love was hopeless. (VG, p.58, italics added)

Byatt's narrator also mentions an activity that defines one of the sisters: Stephanie, feeding orphaned kittens, is introduced as an emphatic carer whereas her self-conscious sister is watching her. There are many further analogies as well as differences between the passages.

Lawrence opens his book with an extremely brief introduction to the time, setting and current activities of the protagonists, immediately followed by a dialogue which starts *in medias res*. A more detailed description of the characters is inserted in the middle of the dialogue, with the narrator seemingly using the opportunity of a prolonged spell of silence to provide the information. The distribution of the information is of great significance: the short introductory paragraph completely disregards their appearance in favour of an indication of their social status. Halfway through the conversation, the silent gap is filled in with information about their age and current appearance, which seems to concentrate on features that tell more about their personalities than their physical looks. The main focus is centred upon Gudrun, whose reactions and feelings during the conversation are conveyed in detail. As

on other occasions in the novel and elsewhere, clothes, and their colours in particular, are described in remarkable detail as tokens of a certain social status. Later in the chapter, their modern attire is contrasted with the ‘shapeless[ness]’ and ‘ugliness’ (WL, p.11) of their native colliery town.

The sisters were women, Ursula twenty-six and Gudrun twenty-five. But both had the remote, virgin look of modern girls, sisters of Artemis rather than of Hebe. Gudrun was very beautiful, passive, soft-skinned, soft-limbed. She wore a dress of dark-blue silky stuff, with ruches of blue and green linen lace in the neck and sleeves; and she had emerald-green stockings. Her look of confidence and diffidence contrasted with Ursula’s sensitive expectancy. The provincial people, intimidated by Gudrun’s perfect sang froid and exclusive bareness of manner, said of her: ‘She is a smart woman.’ She had just come back from London, where she had spent several years, working at an art school, as a student, and living a studio life. (WL, p.8)

Lawrence’s description highlights the young women’s differences from ‘the provincial people’ in their surroundings, hinting at their social advancement. The reference to their ‘modernity’ combined with classical analogy links their modern female emancipation to sublimity. The difference between the sisters rests particularly in the level of their social self-consciousness and self-presentation, with Gudrun making a bold, self-conscious statement through her clothes. Lawrence uses classical mythology to metaphorically characterise the sisters. Associated with the goddess of the hunt and wilderness, Artemis, who refused to marry, rather than with the gentle divine cupbearer Hebe, goddess of youth and rejuvenation, wife of Heracles, they are introduced as emancipated unconventional young women.

Byatt’s chapter begins almost identically with ‘The sisters sat [...]’ followed by the specification of time and place. Nevertheless, her narrator does not venture into transcribing the dialogue immediately, as Lawrence’s does, instead he/she provides a lengthy and very precise description of the sisters’ clothes. As in Lawrence, the depiction conveys an inherent message about their social situation and their personalities. While Stephanie is described as a gentle carer in a bulky ‘*Marks and*

Spencer's boys pyjamas' (VG, p.58, italics added), Frederica's self-conscious attitude to clothes and social status is explained in excessive detail. Through overstatement and irony, Byatt mocks Lawrence's indulgent attention to clothing and his high-flown rhetoric. Her description of Frederica's clothes is comparably exaggerated but at the same time, the 'cheap' quality and pretentiousness of her clothes are emphasised. Byatt also makes a classical allusion: her reference to Plato reinforces the idea of illusion and imitation. The reference to the 'cheap imitations' and making do with 'second-rate' is, at the same time, a metafictional pointer at Byatt's parody of Lawrence, playfully suggesting to the reader to approach this chapter as an 'imitation', a 'second-rate' text, of the original. In this light, Byatt's counterpart to Gudrun, the extremely self-conscious Frederica, who would love to make the same impression of an emancipated and 'smart' woman as Gudrun does, but lacks the funds, makes only a 'second-rate' version of Gudrun.

As for their conversation, Ursula's indecisive reply to Gudrun's enquiry about her desire to marry manifests a less obvious but significant implication contained in both conversations, namely a feared clash between imagined experience based on personal desire, and society-imposed, convention-driven expectations. The repeated italicised '*really*' and similarly exposed words in both texts seemingly extend the feeling of uncertainty on to language itself.

'You don't think one needs the *experience* of having been married?' she asked.

'Do you think it need *be* an experience?' replied Ursula.

'Bound to be, in some way or other,' said Gudrun, coolly. 'Possibly undesirable, but bound to be an experience of some sort.'

'Not really,' said Ursula. 'More likely to be the end of experience.'

Gudrun sat very still, to attend to this.

'Of course,' she said, 'there's *that* to consider.' (WL, p.7)

Nevertheless, however vague the statements may sound, they actually point

towards whole sets of complex issues that the characters, each in their way, face and engage with, their interaction being the awareness about the conventional position of women in Western patriarchal society, that is their expected roles as wife and mother. The elliptical character of the dialogue, with its refined touch of irony, thus becomes a remarkable critique of the *status quo* that is presented, or rather implied, as so firmly given that it requires no closer specification whatsoever. As such, the passage makes a strong feminist statement that displays an extraordinary insight and empathy as well as tight formal grasp on the author's part.

Byatt's dialogue, staged differently, as described above, is much less provocative and ambitious in itself while it builds on intertextual analogies with its predecessor. Albeit much less elliptical than Lawrence's texts, it also creates the impression that much is left unsaid.

'Perhaps his play is *really* good.'

'Can you imagine what it might feel like, to be *really* good, and know it?'

'No. No, I can't. Terrifying.'

'I mean, Steph, Shakespeare must have *known* he was different from other men...'

'He isn't Shakespeare.'

'You don't know.'

'I was only offering an opinion. Perhaps Shakespeare didn't know.'

'He must've.' (VG, pp.59-60)

This time, however, the sisters, despite sharing a part of their experience, appear much less in unison than Ursula and Gudrun. Their conversation 'about Alexander, and about their lives' (VG, p.58) seems to reveal much more about Alexander's life than about theirs, and the idea of 'marriage', dominant in 'Sisters', emerges only in a rather marginal and impersonal remark. Nevertheless, the message about the conflict between women's personal aspirations and their expected marital roles is firmly embedded in Byatt's text, and is accentuated

exactly by the link to its model text. In fact, the relationship between the texts actually reveals a striking similarity in the women's circumstances despite the distance in time. Provinciality, problematized as both a social factor and a way of thinking in Lawrence, is pointed out in relation to the imbalance in opportunities between men and women, such as 'male mobility as opposed to female provincial rootedness' and 'the possibility of metropolitan glamour' (VG, p.59) in Byatt's chapter. While Lawrence's 'modern woman', Gudrun, is from a similar background to the Potter sisters, she manages to elevate herself from 'provincial people' and makes some success in 'London, where she had spent several years, working at an art school, as a student, and living a studio life' (WL, p.8). Her complaint that '*Nothing materialises!*' (WL, p.8) is a universal expression of the frustration experienced by both sisterly couples.

Byatt rewrites Lawrence by approximating, on a different scale, both parts of content and context, and of form. Similarly to the descriptive passages discussed above, the talk can be read, in terms of style, as a parody of Lawrence's text. Whilst formerly, Byatt's parody was a response to Lawrence's overstatement in his effort to inscribe a sense of *noblesse* into his description of the sisters, this time it is a reaction to the seeming inconclusiveness and pointlessness of the conversation. However, while Lawrence's sisters' discussion, however fragmented and inconclusive, concerns things that can and will most likely have a vast impact on their lives, Stephanie and Frederica, despite its intellectual air, only chat about their teacher idol. The Potter sisters' conversation thus sounds as a 'second-rate' 'imitation' of the Lawrence one. Whereas the contents of the conversations differ significantly, the style of the quick exchange of brief, often syntactically, and at times semantically incomplete utterances, follows the same

pattern. A reader familiar with the model text can detect mildly mocking imitation in the repetition of '*really*', the italicized emphasis of which follows the original text but also captures the reader's attention, and in the use of italics that foreground several other words in the text, such as 'known', 'work' (VG, p.59) and 'you' (p.60). The emphasis on 'knowing' and 'working' in relation to their male idols, Shakespeare and Alexander, respectively, highlights those two activities traditionally regarded as primarily men's occupations as something almost out of the sisters' reach. 'You' refers to Stephanie, who possesses, in Frederica's eyes, the capacity to break social ties and achieve her intellectual ambitions. The fact that Byatt's parody targets the strategic inexplicitness of Lawrence's text, which is a significant factor of its success, does not mean a debasement of Lawrence's achievement. On the contrary, it is a part of Byatt's critical negotiation of Lawrence's legacy, in which mimicking and parody play a central role. Imitation and parody presuppose a full grasp of the model text – its subject and, most importantly, its technique. Imitation and rewriting is in a way the closest contact with another writer's text. Byatt's imitation and playful rewriting of Lawrence's texts is thus a way of exploring and grasping his creative strategies, and consequently forging her own.

The fact that Lawrence's novel enters Byatt's book, and indeed the whole Potter series, in such a robust way and at such an early stage, establishes a basic framework into which Byatt's characters and narratives are set and makes Lawrence a key point of reference. The reader is thus invited to cast Byatt's characters against a 'Lawrentian' background, whatever their familiarity with or attitude to Lawrence may be. Her narrator's introductory remark before the dialogue that '[t]he talk was an intensified version of earlier talk' (VG, p.59) can

thus be read as an intertextual reference to the Lawrence dialogue as much as an allusion to a previous conversation on the same topic in the sisters' untold pasts.

Another reference to the talks with Stephanie about Alexander comes later in *The Virgin in the Garden* when Frederica confesses to Alexander:

Well, I'm having another go at *Women in Love*. I was suddenly afraid I might be Gudrun. I mean, I saw the house as an awful trap, like the red-brick Brangwen house in that book, and Daddy was really beastly to me, and I thought of how Steph and I used to talk about you, and thought Steph was Ursula, and then I got really put out because that only left Gudrun, and I don't want to have to be her. (VG, p.460)

One of the chats she refers to is the one delivered through the rewrite of Lawrence's text in the chapter called 'Women in Love'. The remark acts as a metafictional device that ties into the intertextual net through which the Potter sisters' story is constructed. The central pattern, the polarised relationship between the sisters, is one of the guiding motives in the *Quartet* and also one of the key links to Lawrence's work.

The theme of sisters of opposing temperaments, the contrast and consequent tensions of which generate the narrative dynamic and energy, places Byatt's novel in a tradition outlined by Masako Hirai in *Sisters in Literature: Female Sexuality in Antigone, Middlemarch, Howards End and Women in Love* (1998), which draws a basic line from Sophocles via Eliot to Lawrence by demonstrating the thematic and structural links between the studied works. The sisterly couples represent a range of oppositions, such as emotion vs. reason, language/art vs. reality, private life vs. society, individual conscience vs. official law, or compatibility vs. rebellion— that form the conceptual frameworks of the books. In this context, Byatt can be viewed as successor of the tradition that could also include Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*, for example. Most significantly, some of the lesser elements in *Women in Love* pointed out by Hirai, such as Gudrun's use of colours as a social act, the symbolic meaning of light/golden light,

and the characters' passion for argumentation re-emerge in the 'Frederica novels' and place them clearly among the same legacy.

Byatt's engagement with *Women in Love* goes, however, far beyond the sisterly opposition pattern. The Potter sisters are modelled in terms of their basic features on Ursula and Gudrun Brangwen, and even more importantly, are made aware of it. For example, Frederica, while worrying about being Gudrun, identifies Stephanie with Ursula, including some of the qualities admired by Gudrun in her sister (VG, p.460). Stephanie and Ursula are perceived as more emotionally balanced, much less egotistic and self-conscious than their sisters. They are both portrayed as empathetic and charitable persons. Peacefulness is one of their shared characteristics: Ursula is described as 'peaceful and sufficient unto herself, [...] strong and unquestioned at the centre of her own universe' (WL, p.165) while Stephanie's mind is reported to proceed 'peaceably, reorganising priorities' (SL, p.285). This is related to the fact that they are both better settled in womanhood and do not regard men as opponents, on the contrary, they feel protective, or even motherly towards them: 'Ursula saw her men as sons, pitied their yearning and admired their courage, and wondered over them as a mother wonders over her child, with a certain delight in their novelty' (WL, p.262). In a similar manner, Stephanie caressed Daniel like a mother caresses her child on the occasion of their first close physical contact (VG, p.147). Their relationships with men are not without challenges, they are able to define their own positions without a complete loss of autonomy. Frederica and Gudrun are both extremely self-conscious and restless. Frederica appears as if 'possessed by a demon' (VG, p.41) while Gudrun is 'profoundly restless' (WL, p.211). Their outward determination and aggression is, however, only a protective shield. Underneath these 'defences' (WL, p.377) they were both 'afraid of defeat' (S, p.59). While Ursula and Stephanie resemble 'earth and water', Gudrun and

Frederica long to be 'fire and air' (SL, p.336). Interestingly, after Stephanie's death at the end of *Still Life*, Frederica, as she matures emotionally and intellectually, grows gradually away from Gudrun and starts to resemble Ursula/Stephanie. Growing less hot-headed, and more sensitive and patient, she learns to listen to instinct and intuition, and becomes a more agreeable person in general.

As in the case of Frederica's and Gudrun's male counterparts (Frederica's husband Nigel and Gudrun's lover Gerald), Stephanie's and Ursula's men share some key features. The most significant is that their lives are built on an ideology, Christianity in Daniel's case, one's own philosophy in Birkin's, and both women question their ideologies. The striking resemblances between the couples indicate that Byatt not only modelled her sisterly pair on Lawrence's characters but also took over and revised the relationship set-up.

Finally, one major incident in a Byatt novel was reportedly provoked directly by Lawrence, or rather by a claim voiced in his novel *Women in Love*. It was Birkin's disbelief 'that there was any such thing as accident. It all hung together, in the deepest sense' (WL, p.26). By having one of her main characters, Stephanie, unexpectedly killed by a faulty refrigerator, Byatt 'wanted, on the one hand, to prove that fate is fate from the moment it's happened, and, on the other hand, to prove that there really are accidents' (Byatt, 2003b, no page).

This and the previous chapters have shown the wide array of aspects of Lawrence's writing that have influenced Byatt's style, as well as a variety of ways in which her response to them finds expression in her prose. Her critical negotiation of Lawrence's legacy is a part of the creative process. Byatt engages with both Lawrence's thought and his fiction and explores it by way of imitation and rewriting. This brings her

into a close intensive contact with his texts, his creative aims and strategies and helps her shape her own formal ambitions and creative voice. Byatt's response has many facets and layers that reflect, on the one hand, her own complex relationship with Lawrence, and, on the other, the complexity of his legacy. Lawrence's ideas and techniques are questioned by characters inside her novels but, at the same time, they are negotiated and employed on the metanarrative level. For example, Lawrence's striving to express the ontological dimension of sexual experience, as he understood it, is problematised by Frederica in *The Virgin in the Garden*, who subjects it to ironic criticism, is supported by Alexander's remark concerning Lawrence's hyperbole. At the same time, Byatt uses Lawrence's techniques and imagery to describe Frederica's sexual adventures, and makes Frederica realize that she processes the experience in Lawrentian terms, with Lawrentian images and language springing to her mind. The texts in these passages are hybrid texts in which Byatt's prose playfully blends with Lawrence's language and imagery. Byatt's creative engagement with Lawrence's texts thus takes the form of a Wittgensteinean language game.

Verbal expression of vision is one of the major areas of Byatt's engagement with Lawrence's art and has a significant influence on Byatt's own painterly style. Her ekphrastic work with shapes, colours and textures, inspired by painting styles similar to Lawrence's favourites, such as Vincent Van Gogh, creates images saturated with colours, light and a particular spatial dynamic. The curves and lines in her verbal images often form geometrical patterns, as in the visions of Marcus Potter in the *Quartet*, or suggest distortion or exaggeration used in expressionist painting, as we have seen in the butcher's window display. Their purpose frequently exceeds a mere visualisation of the scene by the reader: they express her characters' mental and emotional states and/or are designed to evoke particular moods or emotions in the reader as well as to reflect on

verbal forms of representation within the narrative. Visual imagery is thus often combined with sensuous writing that appeals to other senses beyond vision. In addition, Lawrence showed Byatt how to incorporate visual scenes into her narratives in terms of pacing and narrative flow. Significantly, Byatt's visual scenes often represent particular kinds of vision, which are contrasted with other forms. The negotiation and absorption of technical features into Byatt's style is, nevertheless, only one way in which Lawrence's writing practices enter her prose. Another major one is Byatt's rewriting of Lawrence's passages or themes, which includes a critical negotiation and transmutation of his texts, views or imagery. They particularly include those aspects of Lawrence's writing she is critical about, most notably, his problematic gender assumptions and idolisation of erotic experience. Byatt seeks to destabilize the proposed metaphysical polarity between genders and questions his denigration of intellectual activity. Parody and irony are used by Byatt partly as subversive methods to question critiqued elements in her predecessor's work. But they are also tools for playful renegotiations of Lawrence's legacy by a self-conscious and increasingly self-confident writer. Byatt's 'experimental' transformation of a complete passage of Lawrence's text in *Babel Tower* is a playful 'language game' but also a tour-de-force culmination of Byatt's preoccupation with Lawrence's influence on her fiction.

CHAPTER 6

Women in Love in Babel Tower

This chapter focuses on Byatt's rewrite of Lawrence's *Women in Love* in *Babel Tower* (1996), which signifies a major moment in her shifting relationship to Lawrence's legacy and the development of her own independent fictional voice. Not only is it important for her exploration of a language of female sexuality outside the language of the law in *Babel Tower*, it is also an attempt to rewrite the male-focused gendered assumptions of Lawrence's description of extra-legalistic love. Critics have failed to recognize this as a culmination of Byatt's prolonged negotiation of Lawrence's legacy. Richard Todd (1997, p.70) notes that 'passages from Lawrence and Forster that are among the books on the extramural course she is giving' are cut up and pasted in Frederica's scrapbook, *Laminations*. However, there is no closer look at either Lawrence's or Byatt's texts. As a result, the implications of the transformed text for a wider understanding of Byatt's fiction, and relationship to Lawrence and modernism more broadly, have never been closely scrutinized. The pioneers in Lawrence-Byatt research, Jack Stewart and Peter Preston, choose not to examine this particular example of Byatt's rewriting of Lawrence. Byatt's ventriloquism and rewriting of Victorian poets, most notably Tennyson and Browning, has been addressed by other critics, such as Campbell (1991), Bernard (2003) or Fletcher (2016). Nevertheless, no detailed textual analyses of the texts have been completed.

In the textual experiment performed by the central protagonist Frederica at a key moment in *Babel Tower*, sections from Lawrence's *Women in Love* and E. M. Forster's *Howards End* are cut up, dismembered and rearranged to create new texts.

Babel Tower

The cut-up episode is situated in Chapter 10 of *Babel Tower*, roughly in the middle of the novel. Having made a dramatic escape from her marital home with her four-year old son, Frederica starts a new life by moving in with another single mother and working as a literature reviewer and adult evening classes teacher. Her course on *The Modern Novel* includes, among texts, Forster's *Howards End* and Lawrence's *Women in Love* and coincides with the preparations for her divorce hearing. The year is 1965, and such a reading list would have been standard at that time. Dealing with love and marriage, the novels provide an important reference point in Frederica's confrontation with legal discourse and legalistic interpretations of marriage and sexual relationships. These novels, and Lawrence's *Women in Love* in particular, we are told, not only had a formative influence on young Frederica but are also partly blamed for influencing her decision to marry a man, whose background, character and interests were thoroughly different from hers. Frederica suspects that '[s]he may have chosen to lecture on love and marriage in Forster and Lawrence because she is snarled in the death of marriage and the end of love: but the marriage was partly a product of these books' (BT, p.310). She thinks that she may have married Nigel Reiver partly 'because [she] was beglamoured by Margaret Schlegel' of *Howards End* (BT, p.308) and her effort to find a place for 'human passion' in the 'mechanised' modern world (p.306). An independent and liberal-minded young woman, Margaret Schlegel marries a

businessman of a very different temperament and, from her perspective, a problematic morality that leaves a gap between his public and private life. In Frederica's view, Margaret 'has to admit failure' to pursue her ideal to 'only connect' (BT, p.306), and Birkin is trapped in a cul-de-sac of 'a mystical vision of oneness and connectedness, beyond language' (BT, p.306). Byatt suggests that, as in Forster's and Lawrence's texts, Frederica has tried, but failed, to strive for connectedness. Even though she dismisses the notion of making Forster and Lawrence entirely responsible for her personal situation, they come back whenever she tries to figure out how she 'could have got herself into the present mess' (BT, p.382). The later breaking up of their texts is thus partly an act of vengeance against the power their writing has over her. Yet the tearing apart of their words is also a physical enactment of her resistance to Margaret's and Birkin's calls for connectedness. The framing of the literary cut-ups in the legalistic context of Frederica's divorce and her struggle with legal discourse is significant for the novel's form. Frederica resists the legal language that is imposed on her and seeks to find an idiom that would express love between men and women outside the legalistic concept of marriage. Lawrence's writing provides an important framework and form for understanding a non-legalistic love relationship.

There are several reasons for the inclusion of complete extracts from Forster's and Lawrence's novels. Two of them are mainly practical. Firstly, the texts help the reader follow the literary discussions in Frederica's class, most of which deal with Lawrence's writing. Secondly, the inclusion of both original and transformed texts clearly exposes Frederica's rearrangement of Lawrence's words.

The quotations also affect the form of the novel. They are stylistically active elements in the polyphonic structure of the novel, as well as being thematically involved in the novel's main polemic. They create a linguistic collage which reflects the novel's

broader structure of fragmentation and distortion, such as the splitting of reality through the unavoidable variety of interpretations, or narratives, fragmentation and defamiliarization of language, as experienced by Frederica. At the same time, these modes of writing are questioned in contrast with more traditional ways of storytelling. Byatt seems to suggest that fragmented forms of writing have their function in expressing states and feelings of confusion and discontinuity. Nevertheless, they have their limits as, in the end, the need to make sense of things requires a certain degree of coherence. In *Babel Tower*, fragmented forms of writing represent, on the one hand, the excited disarray of the 1960s counterculture and the new avantgarde art, and, on the other, Frederica's private experience of bewilderment and loss of articulacy. Her writing project of *Laminations*, where the cut-up is pasted and which mimics such a fragmentary style of writing, is, nevertheless, only a temporary survival strategy (Byatt, 1994c, p.69).

Laminations

After Frederica's lecture on Lawrence and Forster, their novels are set aside, to be recovered on an impulse to form a part of what she calls her 'nonsense-diary' (BT, p.382) called *Laminations*. The concept of 'laminations' is inherited from *The Virgin in the Garden*, where the teenager Frederica imagined it as a possible 'model of conduct and an aesthetic' (VG, p.275) that would keep what she experienced as conflicting elements of life, most particularly intellectual and sexual lives, separate. In *Babel Tower*, with the divorce pressures mounting, she feels increasingly powerless and threatened. The sensation of being caught between a legal and a literary narrative (BT, p.320) increases as more interpretations of her marriage and related events emerge in the trial scene. She feels trapped by the law 'as a caged or netted beast' (BT, p.324). Her

sensation that '[t]he net is made by words which do not describe what she feels is happening' (BT, p.324) produces an opposition between legal language and the language of feeling. She is forced to acknowledge the existence of different language systems, and most importantly, that these systems are often parts of social or ideological structures.

Frederica's situation is presented as an example of the institutionalized disenfranchisement of women, in which a patriarchal legal language distorts the perception of reality or, even, by the act of naming, manipulates reality itself. Interestingly, as Frederica questions the competence and reliability of legal language, its power seems to grow. Her recourse to 'laminations' is her response to a situation in which the boundaries of what makes or does not make sense become increasingly blurred and compromised. Losing her grip on language, and hence on reality, undermines Frederica's sense of identity and brings her to ask: 'who is she, does she exist?' (BT, p.519). The metaphor of a caged animal, with its implication for the inability to use (human) language, demonstrates Frederica's helplessness and anticipates repeated future occasions in which Frederica is left (nearly) speechless. Faced with juristic jargon, she finds that '[t]here *are no words* [...] to explain her relations with [her current lover] John Ottokar' to her solicitor (BT, pp.377-8). Words also fail her during the divorce hearing later (cf. BT, pp.493, 495). She is unable to answer a seemingly straightforward yes/no question about whether she loves John Ottokar: 'I don't know what that word means, any more' (BT, p.512). Her response is an echo of Birkin's questioning of the meaningfulness of the word *love* in *Women in Love* (WL, pp.130, 145-6, 186) and touches on the problems of the hollowing impact of repetitive, mechanistic language. Finally, as we will see in the cut-up experiment, the problem of identity is closely linked to that of discourse and both are necessarily gendered.

‘Laminations’ as a response to Lawrence

The vision of ‘laminations’ as ‘a thought about her own separateness and the power that was possibly inherent in keeping things *separated*’ (BT, p.358) is revived along with Frederica’s memories of her first sexual experience on the Yorkshire moors over a decade previously, which she now re-visits with John Ottokar. The previous incident, rendered in *The Virgin in the Garden* (VG, pp.269-270) was already linked with Lawrence, whose portrayals of sexual experience in *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* and *Women in Love* were contrasted with Frederica’s experience. In *Babel Tower*, there are also explicit references to *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* as the book previously read by John Ottokar, and also read by another guest in the hotel restaurant where Frederica and Ottokar are staying. The situation is highly erotically charged, with a lot of physical contact described. The moment in Goathland when the idea of ‘laminations’ recurs, is conveyed through Lawrence’s snake imagery. The description of Frederica’s mind as ‘a dark snake burrowing in darkness’ (BT, p.359), recalls Lawrence’s poem ‘Snake’, and its images of the snake in the ‘burning bowels of the earth’, and the ‘horrid black hole’ (Lawrence, 2002c, pp.282, 283).

Byatt’s invocation of Lawrence’s snake imagery creates a means with which to capture the unconscious processes that operate in Frederica’s conscious memories and thoughts, which she is generally reluctant to acknowledge. The ‘darkness’ is the realm of the unconscious and her forgotten memories from where ‘her word comes back again, more insistently’ (BT, p.359). The process presents ‘the first vague premonition of an art-form of fragments, juxtaposed not interwoven, not “organically” spiralling up like a tree or a shell, but constructed brick by brick, layer by layer, like the Post Office Tower’ (BT, p.359). The Post Office Tower simile highlights the contrast between the

organic metaphors of artistic creation, which often feature in Lawrence's comments on artistic construction, and more industrial and utilitarian architectural metaphors. In the context of artistic creation, the activity of 'burrowing' can be seen as a metaphor for intuitive creativity (Frederica 'is feeling for something and doesn't know what it is, cannot *push* the thought further' (BT, p.359, italics added), and indicates the future nature of *Laminations* as a product of this kind of activity. However, such modes of writing require turning the subject's attention on to itself, which 'fills [Frederica] with a dreadful nausea' (BT, p.381). (In the last part of the *Quartet* we learn that *Laminations* had been a project of dubious success, which is not particularly surprising given that Frederica's mind is, in the light of previous discussions, critical rather than creative). The double 'dark' in the metaphor reinforces the notion of the invisibility of the processes (cf. Humma, 1990, p.66) lying beyond the control of the will but it also works as an ironic exaggeration of the Lawrentian note. The association between Lawrence's symbolism of the unconscious with the working of the extremely self-conscious Frederica's mind is partly an acknowledgment of not only the undeniable role of the unconscious in the psyche, alongside conscious mental processes, but also of the limits of human knowledge and understanding. This ambiguity resurfaces in Frederica's thoughts, following her intimate experience with John, a description which also adopts and adapts features of Lawrence's writing style:

You might think, she thinks, as their bodies join, that there are two beings striving to lose themselves in each other, to become one. The growing heat, the wetness, the rhythmic movements, the hot breath, the slippery skins, inside and out, are one, are part of one thing. But we both need to be separate, she thinks. *I lend myself* to this, the language in her head goes on, with its own rhythm, *I lose myself*, it remarks with gleeful breathlessness, *I am not*, I come, I come to the point of crossing over, of not being, and then I fall away, I am myself again, only more so, more so. (BT, p.360)

This passage shows not only Lawrence's relevance for the character of Frederica, but also the creative influence of his writing on Byatt. By joining Frederica in challenging

Lawrence's theory of 'oneness', she openly mimics Lawrence's language used, especially in his renderings of the sexual act where language recreates the coital rhythm. The phrase 'two beings striving to lose themselves in each other, to become one' is a direct response to Lawrence's text, specifically to the language used by Birkin in *Women in Love* which is mocked by Halliday in the chapter 'Gudrun in the Pompadour'. By 'intoning like a clergyman', Halliday ridicules Birkin's preacherly theorising:

using sex as a great reducing agent, by friction between the two great elements of male and female obtaining a frenzy of sensual satisfaction – reducing the old ideas, going back to the savages for our sensations, always seeking to *lose* ourselves in some ultimate black sensation, mindless and infinite [...]. (WL, p.384)

During the sex act, Frederica enters into a dialogue with Lawrence: she '*lend[s]*' (BT, p.360) herself to experiencing sex in the way envisioned by Lawrence in *Women in Love* but does not quite succeed. In Byatt's paragraph, the rhythm and flow of the text and the line of thought are broken by the narrator's reporting clauses. It appears as if Frederica, with her mind working throughout the event, was testing Lawrence's and Birkin's theory. Her thoughts, which represent 'her chatty linguistic self', remain separate and detached, flowing 'with [their] own rhythm' and 'with gleeful breathlessness' (BT, p.360) parallel to the physical activity, and verbalizing it at the same time. However great her sensational and emotional involvement is, she remains intellectually detached and observes the process like a scientific experiment. The outcome that negates Birkin's paradigm is viewed by Frederica in positive terms, as a natural, and appropriate, state of things. Moreover, Byatt's parody of Lawrence's language mimics his rhythmic prose yet denies it a climax of 'infinite' 'mindless' self-obliteration. Instead, it produces an anti-climax by not only returning the subject to the initial state of being oneself but enhancing that state.

Byatt's embedding of the origins of *Laminations* in Lawrentian language and contexts indicates the significance of her consideration of Lawrence's understanding of sexual experience as a spiritual union that overcomes the body-mind polarity. Her concept of 'laminations' is a separation of physical/sexual experience from the cerebral. Byatt uses Frederica to explore these questions and experiences against the framework of Lawrence's thought while she herself tests his stylistic devices. Frederica's failure to 'tune in' to the Lawrentian mind-silencing eroticism represents Byatt's ambivalence regarding Lawrence's endeavour to express femininity, which provokes her to direct confrontation and a rewriting of his text.

Laminations eventually begins to take shape in one of those speechless moments of despair and abandonment mentioned above. Overwhelmed by the legal diction of her husband's solicitor's letter, Frederica, feeling 'wild and oppressed' (BT, p.378), takes to spontaneous action. She cuts up the letter and, by rearranging it 'into a kind of consequential structure' (BT, p.378), achieves 'a satisfactory representation of her confusion' (BT, p.379). The whole project starts from a need to come to terms with her difficult situation and has a therapeutic function, as a way of 'controlling, or venting [...] her pains' (BT, p.380).

Planted in a notepad, with cover design and pattern symbolically envisaging its contents-to-be, *Laminations* evolves into a collage work consisting of a series of 'abortive beginnings' (BT, p 381), personal statements and commentaries, cut-ups of various texts, and eventually a sequence of, mainly, quotations. Whereas in the initial section, Frederica is present and active, as the author of personal entries and cut-ups, she soon discovers quotations and her work becomes increasingly more impersonal. Impersonality appears desirable, as Frederica herself remarks: 'This is a distinct improvement on "I went to the bathroom": it has no "I" although it is a true story, and a

story about Frederica' (BT, p.389). Similarly, the narrator gradually abandons commentary on Frederica's undertakings and retreats to introducing new items by brief phrases such as 'That week, she adds' and 'To this, she adds' (BT, p.385). For a group of subsequent additions, a mere 'And' is used (BT, pp.386-7). Eventually, several chapters onwards, all contributions but one are simply pasted in under the heading of *Laminations*, with no further commentary, except for basic source information provided by the narrator (BT, pp.445-51, 465-6, 478-82). The result of this strategy is that it underlines the montage effect and highlights the constructedness of the text. But it also allows the texts to speak for themselves; without narratorial remarks and other explicit links with the main narrative, they create meanings through juxtaposition and context. According to Frederica, the clichés encompassed in quotations are made 'admissible, contained, laminated' (BT, p.385) by pure quoting. 'Rustl[ing] with uneasy energies' (BT, p.387), the quotes become enriched by 'being next to, but not part of' the other texts (BT, p.389). The described process of allowing texts, or language, to speak for themselves gives them, in Frederica's eyes, 'a kind of papery vitality and independence' (BT, p.385) which could be read as a joke about Barthes' 'Death of the Author' (Barthes, 2008, p.314). Frederica's subsequent idea to place the texts on cards and 'shuffle' them (BT, p.285) instead of planting them into a notebook would additionally release them from linearity into what Barthes calls 'a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash' (2008, p.315). William Burroughs' claim that '[a]ll writing is in fact cut-ups. A collage of words overheard' is contemplated by Frederica in *Babel Tower* (BT, p.384) in the process of compiling *Laminations*, and destabilizes the traditional notion of literary originality in a similar way.

The texts in *Laminations* illustrate themes discussed in the novel, help to link characters, events and other aspects of the story as well as provide some historical background (contraception pill, Moors Murders trial etc.). As Boccardi asserts, like other texts in *Babel Tower*, and in the other novels of the *Quartet* alike, they are ‘tools to interpreting the main action by analogy, difference, or even just coincidence and contingency’ (2013, p.43).

The selection and placing of *Laminations* within the novel are not random. The cut-ups of Lawrence’s and Forster’s texts and the solicitor’s letter are the first to enter as they represent the structure and the methodology of (the ‘pretend’) randomness of the exercise. But they also turn attention to the problem of language and perception of the self and the other. Other texts grouped together and reproduced, including the Pill instructions, and a record of a part of the Moors Murders hearing, deal with physicality, blood, and violence. Pairing corresponding allusions and representations in the surrounding text (violence in the initial psychologist’s letter and some works of art presented at the Dip Show; naked bodies [Jude’s act, Frederica and John’s ‘joined bloody bodies’ – BT, p.444]), they work as a stylistic tool that helps develop a sense of tension and threat until the chapter reaches its climax in Paul/Zag’s peculiar happening with the burning of Frederica’s books outside her flat. The performance is extremely physical, with naked Paul, sexually excited and covered only in bright plastic attire and body paint – attributes of sado-masochistic practices. Similarly, another part of the *Laminations* text (BT, pp.478-82) deals with childhood, innocence and education, in the context of discussions of teaching, Frederica’s concerns about her son Leo in relation to her husband’s propositions regarding his education, and the imminence of the divorce hearing centred around their child’s interests.

The quotations, arranged principally in thematic clusters as shown above, include excerpts from:

- Thomas Mann's *Die Entstehung des Dr Faustus* (1949; edition unknown), R.D. Laing's *Divided Self* (1960), F. Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872; edition unknown), a part of the collective stream-of-consciousness work referred to as 'Invocation to First International Poetry Incarnation at Albert Hall' (1965); S. Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1956; source unknown), W. Blake's *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1793; edition unknown) – reproduced in BT, pp.384-87
- 'Instructions for Use' (of the Pill), 'Cinderella, or The Glass Slipper' (neither source known), Elisabeth I's response to Parliament regarding the proposed execution of Mary Queen of Scots (1586; source unknown) and 'The Trial: Day 11' (report from the Moors Murders trial, source unknown), an article from the *Observer*, May 8th, 1966, on the same trial –reproduced in BT, pp.445-50
- fictive scientific article on snails, mixed with extracts from Timothy Leary's 'The Molecular Revolution' (1968a) and 'Soul Session' (1968b) – reproduced in BT, pp.464-466.
- W. Blake's *Songs of Experience* (1789; edition unknown), a fictive education committee report on English language teaching, N.O. Brown's 'Death and Childhood' in *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History* (1959), T.S. Eliot's 'Burnt Norton' from *Four Quartets* (1943; edition unknown), W. Wordsworth's 'Ode: Intimations of Immortality' (1807; edition unknown), R.D. Laing's *The Politics of the Family* (1969), a newspaper report on the Aberfan disaster (source

unknown), and W.H. Auden: 'Death' s Echo' (source unknown) – reproduced in BT, pp.478-482.

Taking into account the polyvocal character of *Babel Tower*, *Laminations* is, first, and foremost, a mixture of voices that places Lawrence's work in a new historical context. Lawrence's work, once considered extravagant and obscene for displaying unrestrained, extramarital sex and naked bodies, does not appear contentious in the 1960s. What steers the contemporary mind is the use of birth control, with its ambivalent moral implications, the use of psychedelic drugs, or DNA manipulation. In the context of *Laminations*, the cut-up experiment appears to be an interesting move to make Lawrence's (and Forster's) texts a better fit for the turbulent present.

Struggle with Language

The lawyers' letters received by Frederica contain legal interpretations of her marriage and her current circumstances, which clash with her perception of the situation. In stark contrast to the concepts of marriage conveyed by the Forster and Lawrence quotes, they fail to acknowledge any emotional and/or spiritual dimension of marriage and turn it into a cold, impersonal legal institution. Feeling 'wild and oppressed' (BT, p.378), Frederica responds by the dismemberment and rearrangement of the legal letters. Confronted with the scattered pieces of text, she remembers her students' excitement over William Burroughs' cut-ups. No further explanation about his method is given at this moment. Instead, the text created by the rearrangement of the previously quoted letter follows. The result, composed from what is considered as an unequivocal, connotation-free idiom, is reported to deliver 'a satisfactory representation of her confusion, of her distress, of her sense that the apparent irrefutable clarity of the arguments of Nigel's solicitor is a nonsense in her world' (BT, p.379). It is also noted

that the new text has ‘less beauty than a cut-up of some richer text might have’ (BT, p.379); a thought that draws attention to the aesthetic qualities of language and hints at the possibilities of experimenting with an aesthetically richer form of language, materialized later in the novel. The seemingly nonsensical text parodies what Frederica perceives as a violent misinterpretation of reality by legal language. It delivers another contorted picture of the situation by creating new, farcical meanings and images, such as ‘the small child who was extremely concerned and distressed by their complete attention without consulting him’, or ‘my client is informed return to the matrimonial home, a deprived and socially unstable environment, suggests that it will be best that you inhabit a basement, the most beneficial arrangement a near-slum’ (BT, p.378). The action is a response to the limits of legalistic understanding of the relationship between men and women and the failure of legal language to describe it, which constructs a concept of marriage that contradicts Frederica’s experience. It is here that the reader learns more about Burroughs and the cut-up method in order to better understand Frederica’s later experiment with Lawrence’s and Forster’s texts as well as the writing project of *Laminations*.

The Cut-Up Technique in *Babel Tower*

William S. Burroughs (1914-1997) and his cut-up method are introduced into the story by Frederica’s art students, who themselves, apart from John Ottokar, are only marginal figures. Several contextual aspects make Burroughs’ work and thoughts particularly relevant to some of the novel’s concerns and make them slip naturally into the novel’s complex web of relationships and analogies. One of these aspects is Burroughs’ preoccupation with language as a means of power and control, but also his desire to understand its transgressive effects, which are also central issues in *Babel*

Tower, and generally persistent topics in Byatt's *oeuvre*. Another significant link is the fact that Burroughs' work, like D.H. Lawrence's, was tried for obscenity, and an obscenity trial is central to *Babel Tower*. There is also a key resemblance between Burroughs' works and the writings of Jude Mason, whose *Babbletower* is tried for obscenity in *Babel Tower*. They both deal with power, control and verbal manipulation in an unconventional way, depicting extreme violence and sexual abuse. The escalation of *Babbletower*'s anti-hero Culvert's sadistic fascination into ritual torture and execution echoes Burroughs' interest in those phenomena and their frequent representation in his novels. Finally, Frederica, like Burroughs, tries to use writing as a transgressive method of battling with law and power. At the same time, it is, like in Burroughs' case, a political statement of dissent, a form of defence against the institutional abuse represented by the malign narratives of her marriage and the recent catalytic events.

The source of the quotations that would have been available to Frederica's students in the late 1960s would have been texts on and by William Burroughs published in *A Casebook on the Beat* in 1961, and in *The Moderns: An Anthology of New Writing in America*, published in 1963. The latter contains a fuller version of Burroughs' article on the cut-up method (Burroughs, 1963, pp.345-348) and was most likely the source of the quotations reproduced in *Babel Tower*. Frederica was clearly stimulated by Burroughs' ideas, especially his assertion that '[a]ll writing is in fact cut-ups. A collage of words read heard overhead' (Burroughs, 1963, p.347), reproduced with a slight alteration in *Babel Tower* (BT, p.384). Her ambivalent feeling about the claim as being 'both attractive and repellent as a way of seeing, as a way of acting' reflects precisely the conflict between her temperament and way of thinking, based essentially on relating things and ideas, and adverse external forces that are affecting

her life and sense of security. The implications of the two sentences lead her to a fascinating, italicized, conclusion that *'[t]he point of words is that they have to have already been used, they have not to be new, they have to be only re-arrangements in order to have meaning'* (BT, p.384). The inevitable assumption is that all writing is in fact re-writing, which, for an author, can be both a liberating and an inhibiting idea, especially due to the risk of becoming trapped in clichés. Frederica is aware of the risk. When tackling Lawrence's and Forster's texts, she approaches their central ideas of oneness and connectedness as clichés that need to be undone and rewritten. Byatt's play with Lawrence's text, disguised as Frederica's experiment, tries to give new meanings to Lawrence's words and phrases, which is something that Lawrence himself sought to do by inventing his own language for love and the erotic bond. It is an attempt to re-imagine and re-define the man-woman relationship in a language that would extricate it from the existing male-centred conceptualisation structures.

The 'approved Burroughs mode' (BT, p.382), as Frederica labels it, is reportedly derived from Burroughs' quotes used by her students. Even though elements of the cut-up technique had been used earlier, the creative method was developed and defined by the American painter Brion Gysin in the 1950s. In close collaboration with Gysin, it was further developed and established in the literary field by Burroughs in the late 1950s and early 1960s. It was therefore available at the time portrayed in *Babel Tower*. Burroughs (1963, p.346) explains his technique of cutting a page into four sections and rearranging them in order to create 'a new page'. The methodology is sustained by Burroughs's belief, contemplated by Frederica, that all texts are 'in fact cut-ups' and that '[c]utting and rearranging a page of written words introduces a new dimension into writing enabling the writer to turn images in cineramic variation' (Burroughs, 1963, p.347). The idea of 'multi-dimensional' freedom resounds with Barthes's notion of the

‘multi-dimensional space’ (Barthes, 2008, p.315) where texts achieve autonomy. Burroughs’s basic procedure was further extended to folding pages rather than cutting them, which allowed the author to move forwards and backwards and eventually produce ‘new combinations that are quite valid new images’ (Burroughs, 1999a, p.66). According to Burroughs, the repeated manipulation with words facilitates the understanding of ‘what the word actually is’ (1999a, p.79).

However accidental the resultant word and phrase arrangements may seem, the process itself is, in Burroughs’ case, no haphazard, automatic activity. The author does not know what the result of his undertaking will be, yet he controls the process through selection and editing (Burroughs, 1999b, p.92). This method was used to produce new, fresh ideas and images as a creative endeavour in its own right. But it could be also applied as an auxiliary instrument for overcoming writing difficulties. This was Frederica’s case in *Babel Tower*.

Women in Love: The Quest for the Perfect Union

Babel Tower reproduces two quotes from *Women in Love* and one quote from *Howards End*. They come after a series of Frederica’s sentences in which she tries, as advised by her divorce solicitor, to describe her marriage experience. Frederica struggles to find appropriate language and, disconcerted by her inarticulacy, turns to the preparation of her lecture on Forster and Lawrence. Byatt clearly identifies the novels and chapter references, and all three quotations relate to the issue of marriage or sexual union.

The first text that Byatt quotes from is a passage from Chapter 22 of *Howards End*, which elucidates Margaret Schlegel’s ‘Only connect’ principle. The quoted passage follows Margaret’s train of thought when she first contemplates Mr Wilcox as a

husband and lover. Love between a man and a woman is construed as a spiritual experience that can bring ‘salvation’ (Forster, 1992, p.148) to the human soul:

Howards End, Ch. 22

Margaret greeted her lord with peculiar tenderness on the morrow. Mature as he was, she might yet be able to help him to the building of the rainbow bridge that should connect the prose in us with the passion. [...]

It did not seem so difficult. She need trouble him with no gift of her own. She would only point out the salvation that was latent in his soul, and in the soul of every man. Only connect! That was the whole of her sermon. Only connect the prose and the passion and both will be exalted, and human love will be seen to be at its height. Live in fragments no longer. Only connect and the beast and the monk, robbed of the isolation that is life to either, will die... [...] (BT, p.309)

Narrated from Margaret’s point of view, the theory is conveyed using archaic and religious language to underscore Margaret’s (and Forster’s) ‘sermon’ about bodily, emotional and spiritual ‘wholeness’ as the condition of achieving a full love and marriage relationship. The use of religious language foregrounds the spiritual and emotional dimensions of love as an antithesis to Margaret’s husband’s stiff pragmatism, and emotional inhibitions. Her ceremonial rhetoric embodies the passion she wants to awake in her husband and her own devotion to it.

Secondly, there is a quotation from Chapter 13 of *Women in Love*, which witnesses Birkin trying to disclose to Ursula the idiosyncratic nature of the relationship he desires and its metaphysical implications. This section is narrated from the addressee’s – Ursula’s – perspective and reveals her doubts and hesitation about love.

Women in Love, Ch. 13

‘What I want is a strange conjunction with you – ‘he said quietly; ‘– not meeting and mingling – you are quite right – but an equilibrium, a pure balance of two single beings – as the stars balance each other.’

She looked at him. He was very earnest, and earnestness was always rather ridiculous, commonplace, to her. It made her feel unfree and uncomfortable. But why drag in the stars. (BT, p.309)

This short extract is neither commented on nor cut up and its main significance is the introduction of Lawrence's concept, vocalised through Birkin's voice, of an ideal relationship between the sexes, and Ursula's sceptical response to it.

The above quote is immediately followed by the main passage from Chapter 27 of *Women in Love*, which becomes the central text of Frederica's cut-up experiment.

It describes Birkin's thoughts immediately preceding Ursula and Birkin's civil registry ceremony and concludes a train of ruminations concerning the nature of his relationship with Ursula. It verbalizes the novel's central concept of marriage as an ultimate consummation for a man and a woman, and their transcendence into a new state of being, a theory that occupied D.H. Lawrence during a significant part of his literary career. Even more importantly, the free indirect discourse represents, through Birkin's questions, the novel's as well as the author's principal ambition to find an efficient mode for the verbalisation of consciousness as well as of impulses coming from outside, or beyond consciousness.

It starts rather abruptly with what is the last sentence of the preceding paragraph, which reports Birkin's ruminations about his feelings for Ursula:

This marriage with her was his resurrection and his life.

All this she could not know. She wanted to be made much of, to be adored. There were infinite distances of silence between them. How could he tell her of the immanence of her beauty, that was not form, or weight, or colour, but something like a strange golden light! How could he know himself what her beauty lay in, for him. He said 'Your nose is beautiful, your chin is adorable.' But it sounded like lies, and she was disappointed, hurt. Even when he said, whispering with truth, 'I love you, I love you,' it was not the real truth. It was something beyond love, such a gladness of having surpassed oneself, of having transcended the old existence. How could he say 'I' when he was

something new and unknown, not himself at all? This I, this old formula of the age, was a dead letter.¹

In the new, superfine bliss, a peace superseding knowledge, there was no I and you, there was only the third, unrealised wonder, the wonder of existing not as oneself, but in a consummation of my being and her being in a new one, a new paradisaal unit regained from the duality. Nor can I say 'I love you' when I have ceased to be, and you have ceased to be: we are both caught up and transcended into a new oneness where everything is silent, because there is nothing to answer, all is perfect and at one. Speech travels between the separate parts. But in the perfect One there is perfect silence of bliss.

They were married by law on the next day, and she did as he bade her, she wrote to her mother and father. (BT, pp.309-10)

The foregrounding of the word marriage in the first sentence draws attention to the existence of different meanings of the word in this passage. The conventional meaning of a legal contract between a man and a woman is contrasted with its meaning as a sexual and spiritual union. In Lawrence's texts, the latter becomes the primary significance of the word. Lawrence treats the sexual consummation in marriage, understood as a close intimate bond between man and woman, irrespective of its legal status, as a method of the fulfilment of one's self and the transcendence into a different mode of being, characterized by the reunion with God, or the Source, out of which the self is born (Lawrence, 1988b, p.267). In the quoted passage, Birkin tries to articulate the experience but struggles with the limits of language, perceived mostly as a matter of grammatical and legal categories. In the second part of the quote, he proposes the abandonment of static oppositional categories and paradigms in favour of a 'new' language that would express the sexual and spiritual union more adequately.

¹ The wording of the reproduced text is different from the current standardized texts based on the Cambridge edition (1987). The editors restored the word 'ego' from Lawrence's manuscript to replace 'age' that had appeared in the second typescript (TSII) in the sentence 'This I, this old formula of the age, was a dead letter' (WL, p.369). Byatt's use of the earlier wording is appropriate as the Cambridge edition text would not have been available to Frederica in the late 1960s.

The use of religious vocabulary and rhythms of the ‘resurrection and his life’ (according to John (11:25), Jesus said ‘I am the resurrection, and the life’) in the first sentence lifts the discourse from the conventional legalistic use of the word to a metaphysical level. The register is maintained in the rest of the text, using traditional features of religious discourse, such as abstract nouns ‘love’, ‘existence’, ‘wonder’, ‘peace’, and ‘consummation’; absolute adjectives (‘superfine’, ‘paradisal’, ‘perfect’), and repetition and incantation, frequently used in sermons. The following extract from an Easter sermon gives an example of this kind of discourse:

But only the witness of a changed person can point to resurrection, so all may see. Only a vision of justice and hope can be adequate to the resurrection. It is the love of Christ risen and encountered today, as then, that can so fill us with love that it flows, as does that of Jean Vanier, into our world and nation, bringing forgiveness and the new start we so need. (Welby, 2019, no page)

The text contains abstract nouns referring to Christian virtues, such as ‘love’, ‘hope’, and ‘forgiveness’ and repetitions of words, such as ‘resurrection’, and ‘love’, as well as syntactic structures, such the coordinate phrases ‘justice and hope’, ‘our world and nation’, ‘forgiveness and the new start’, or sentence patterns as in ‘only [...] can point to resurrection’ and ‘only [...] can be adequate to the resurrection’. These means of expression create the same effect as in Birkin’s soliloquy: they rhythmize the text and increase the sense of urgency for the reader/listener.

Lawrence’s text that conveys Birkin’s train of thought is constructed in a similar way. However, Birkin stays outside the religious contract by personifying the Christian phraseology and imagery. His ‘resurrection’, as a gate to a transformed mode of being, is, moreover, an antithesis to the concept of ‘mechanical death’ (WL, p.369), one of the central themes of *Women in Love*.

After the male-centred first sentence, the next paragraph shifts the focus to the speaker’s female counterpart. ‘Counterpart’ is indeed the appropriate term since by

declaring the woman's incapability of sharing her partner's knowledge, the sentence establishes a polarity between the couple, which is immediately re-confirmed by ascribing to her different, even adverse, desires from his in the sentence which follows it. The disparity between their attitudes and wishes disturbs the intellectual and emotional closeness as well as generates a communication gap between them, expressed by the metaphor 'infinite distances of silence'. This silence is, of course, entirely different from the 'perfect silence of bliss' near the end of the quote that is a desirable state achieved through the fusion of two beings. The present silence is both a cause and an effect of the lack of mutual understanding and, more importantly, of the failure to find an appropriate language to express the new 'reality' – the new way of viewing the world by a transformed self. The metaphor thus moves the focus again, this time to the central problem of articulation, which is explored in the remaining part of the monologue.

The exploration is split into two interlinked parts. Whereas the first section contains a series of questions and underlining examples, the following paragraph responds by offering an explanation with illustrations. With the questioner being the same person as the responder (the exclusive participant of the interior monologue), the enquiry is staged as an interior dialogue. In the first, questioning, part, the third-person narrative prevails, and the character's thoughts are rendered largely via free indirect thought. Moving the attention to 'I' at the end of the paragraph signals a shift that marks the second, responding half of the dialogue, where the third-person narrative is suspended and replaced by a first-person one. The he-she polarity is, consequently, substituted with that of I-you (or I-she) to be eventually nullified by the two selves ideally merging into a 'new paradisaal unit' and transcending into a 'perfect silence of

bliss'. However, (conventional) language itself is not undone but merely transcended and so it remains intact and latent by the side.

The dialogue form consisting of merely rhetorical questions constructs a complex epistemological riddle, with each of the questions pointing to one of three elementary constituents – medium, object and subject. The first, beginning with '[h]ow could he *tell*' concerns language and its capacity to describe things that exist outside the material world, and lack physical parameters and visible qualities ('form', 'weight' or 'colour') that could be measured or relatively unambiguously described. The second question: 'How could he *know*' draws attention to the evasiveness of the object, which, originating and existing in human consciousness, primarily on a non-verbal, intuitive level, escapes ordinary cognition. Consequently, the habitual idiom can no more convey 'the real truth' and therefore, formerly valid utterances 'sound [...] like lies'. The absence of any fresh, uncompromised medium to produce new meanings thus requires original creative usage of the existing one. By using figurative language and other linguistic means in a new, exploratory way, the author seeks to put in practice what the text implies as a possible solution to the outlined problem, and that is the elimination of the 'old formula[s]' and moulding the existing (and only available) medium to produce new meanings. As Stewart (1996, pp.95, 96) emphasizes in his article on 'Linguistic Incantation and Parody in *Women in Love*', 'Lawrence foregrounds language' and 'puts words to point beyond words'. The last, third segment of the epistemological and linguistic predicament is the subject itself. The transformed self, created through their 'having transcended the old existence', was 'something new and unknown', for which the previous, conventional, ways of seeing and understanding were no more applicable.

Cohesion inside the two inner paragraphs is generated on the semantic level by the shifts of focus described above that allow the line of thought to flow from 'marriage

with her' via 'she' and the established polarity, and distance, to problems of articulation and cognition, and to head eventually towards the visionary overcoming of polarity and achieving of oneness as the consummation of the marriage. Repetition, including the recurrent oppositions of he-she, I-you, or old-new, and parallelism increase the cohesion in the passage. In the first section, for instance, the repetition of 'beauty' and 'truth', respectively, draws the attention to the words themselves, relativizes their meanings, and reinforces the self-referentiality of the text. Similar effects are produced by parallelism located in the question forms of '[h]ow could he tell/know/say', the phrases containing 'something' ('something like strange golden light', 'something beyond love', 'something new and unknown') and, finally, the participle structures 'of having surpassed oneself' and 'of having transcended the old existence'.

Repetition and parallelism are essential tools for generating rhythm, which plays a vital part in Lawrence's writing. Linguistic rhythm in his texts imitates the universal rhythm that Lawrence perceives in nature and interprets as the pulsation of being or, in his words, the 'great systole diastole of the universe' (Lawrence, 1988a, p.27). In the analysed text, the repetition of 'How could he' followed by the rest of the sentence (or more, where applicable) creates a sense of strong rise and fall, with the attention of the reader reclaimed with each repetition. In the next paragraph the pulsating rhythm shifts from the syntactic to the lexical level, and from clauses or longer phrases to the repetition of single words or short phrases. The pulsation amplitude seems to decrease and the movement heads towards culmination; as suggested in the 'Foreword to *Women in Love*' (WL, p.486). The climax, i.e. the reaching of 'the perfect One', is linguistically expressed precisely by the repetition of the words 'perfect' and 'one'. The climactic character of the achieved status is further accentuated by the sudden ending of both the

paragraph and the interior monologue section and a return to the plot in the final sentence of the quote.

The analysed passage from *Women in Love* is an example of how, in Lawrence's writing, '[l]anguage achieves a kind of "presence" through repetition, incantation, and refraction, evoking for the reader more meaning than is actually conveyed in the text' (Stewart, 1996, p.95). It demonstrates an attempt to invent a new language for a new experience – one that moves outside and beyond the conventional understanding of the male-female relationship. At the same time, it embodies the very problem of our understanding and thought as being limited by existing linguistic categories and assumptions. The passage formulates some of the fundamental concerns about language, knowledge and identity that belong to the main themes of *Women in Love* and are shared with the whole of the *Quartet*. What Byatt does with her cut-up 'experiment' is to take Lawrence's project that one step further by breaking away from language rules and conventions while, at the same time, re-imagining the problem from the opposite gender position.

Analysis of the *Women in Love* Cut-Up in *Babel Tower*

After the spontaneous cut-up of the lawyer's letter, Frederica decides to try 'controlling, or venting (both contradictory words are appropriate) her pains by writing' (BT, p.380). Her intention is, however, thwarted by her struggle for suitable vocabulary and her feeling that writing is artificial and only takes her further away from reality. At this point she remembers cut-ups and 'the quotations about wholeness from Forster and Lawrence' (BT, p.382). Her present action is not as spontaneous as the cut-up of the lawyers' letters. It is meant to be a creative experiment to be pasted in her *Laminations* book. 'She cuts [the quotations] away from her text and slices them up in approved

Burroughs mode. A vertical snip, a horizontal snip, re-arrange.’ Accompanied with a remark that ‘[t]his method produces something interesting and loosely rhapsodic from the Lawrence’, the rearranged text follows immediately:

She wanted to be made much of the age, was a dead distance of silence between the immanence of her peace superseding knowledge, height or colour, but something was only the third, unrealized could he know himself what not as oneself, but said ‘Your nose is beautiful being in a new one, a new, sounded like lies, and she was the duality. How can I say “I”, he said, whispering with truth to be, and you have ceased to the real truth. It was transcended into a new oneness of having surpassed one because there is nothing to answer, old existence. How could travels between the separate new and unknown, not him, there is perfect silence of self at all. This I, this old letter.

In the new, superfine bliss she could not know there was no I and you, there to be adored. There were wonder, the wonder of existing between them. How could he tell summation of my being and of beauty, that was not form, or paradisaic unit regained from the strange golden light. How love you, when I have ceased, her beauty lay in, for him. We are both caught up and your chin is adorable. But where everything is silent, disappointed, hurt. Even when all is perfect and at one. Speech ‘I love you, I love you,’ it was parts. But in the perfect Oneself, of having transcended the bliss. (BT, pp.382-3)

Frederica does not examine the new text very closely. She thinks that it ‘says more or less what it was originally saying, with more or less the same rhythm, as though all the breathings of all the words were interchangeable’ (BT, p.383). Her assessment is based on intuition and her feelings for the text rather than on careful analysis. She is sensitive to the rhythm as an essential component of the text and uses an original and suggestive metaphor to describe her impression. The word ‘breathings’ suggests a certain volatility, or arbitrariness of language, the effects of which Frederica experienced in confrontation with the legal idiom and its twisting of meanings. Neither she nor the narrator makes any more comments on the text. Instead, the Forster cut-up follows, with a brief remark about its difference from Lawrence’s text in regard to its deconstruction. No more information is given, apart from that Frederica ‘pastes the three cut-ups, the solicitor’s letter, the adjuration to connect, the ode to Oneness, next to each other in the notebook’ (BT, p.383).

The following analysis demonstrates that what is, on one hand, an entertaining intertextual play with words and ideas, is also a careful textual experiment that subverts, transfigures and eventually outperforms the original text.

Starting with the overall organisation of the text, it is worth noting that the basic segmentation of the analysed passage has been preserved. The new text consists of two paragraphs of comparable length, ending with the same, only condensed, sentence, as the original. Furthermore, the distribution of sentences in terms of length corresponds in both texts, longer sentences tend to be at the beginning and in the middle of the paragraphs whilst they finish with comparatively simple, short sentences. This too contributes significantly to the impression of affinity between the texts. The structural arrangement, elucidated above, strengthens the effect and prepares the ground for the narrator to point out Frederica's focus on, and conclusion about, rhythm as a central and persisting feature of the text.

Examining the text more closely, what becomes apparent is the omission of what I have previously recognized as a frame for the two main paragraphs – the first and the closing sentence, respectively, of the original quote from *Women in Love*. By selecting only the two inner paragraphs for her experiment, Frederica/Byatt significantly leaves out the references to legal marriage altogether.

Byatt's rewrite of Lawrence is dominated by changes in the gendered use of pronouns. Byatt's cut-up focuses on the personal pronoun 'she'. This causes a major shift in the perspective whereby the female, rather than the male, becomes the subject and the speaker. This reversal is further reinforced, and foregrounded, in the rest of the text in several ways. First and foremost, being the subject of the opening sentence, the pronoun 'she' establishes the female centrality in the text. Secondly, the frequency of personal deixis in the third person singular becomes generally reduced and serves to

foreground the feminine. Whereas all three cases of ‘she’ in subject positions remain preserved in both the original and rearranged texts, five cases of ‘he’ are reduced to three. Lastly, in Lawrence’s text, the female is presented and observed as the object of the speaker’s feelings, and thereby is made passive. The notion of female submissiveness is supported by the established polarity between male and female, in which the man represents the active pole, including the appropriation of the speaker role, and woman the passive one. This condition corresponds with Lawrence’s concept of the relationship between a man and a woman, seen primarily in terms of opposition, with female subordination resulting from the woman’s natural and desirable acceptance of male dominance. In Byatt’s rewrite, on the other hand, the gender polarity dissipates into a state of flux caused by the collapse of conventional grammatical and epistemological structures. A useful example is the sentence ‘How can I say “I”, he said, whispering with truth to be, and you have ceased to the real truth.’ (BT, p.382) The accumulation and referential ambiguity of the pronouns in the sentence foregrounds the instability of the categories, which is further emphasised by the fluidisation of the notion of ‘truth’. Birkin’s theorised resistance to the pronoun ‘I’, which correlates with Frederica’s own identity-related struggle with language and expression, is put into action by blurring the boundaries between both the signifiers and the signified, and the loss of the whole referential framework. It is an affirmation of Birkin-*cum*-Lawrence’s call for a new way of thinking and a new language, which is found useful by Frederica, and Byatt, but which they take in a new direction.

Despite the blurred boundaries, it is obvious that the male centrality in the original is replaced by the female perspective and textual prevalence. For example, the phrase ‘How could *he* know *himself* what her beauty lay in, for *him*’ (italics added) turned into ‘How could *he* tell summation of *my* being’ (italics added) demonstrates the

new role distribution. Significantly, the opening phrase ‘she wanted to be made much of the age’ links the idea of female being to ‘the age’; to the historical moment. This link devalues the close focus on the male-female relationship outside time and space in Lawrence’s text. His statement that ‘[s]he wanted to be made much of, to be adored’ (BT, p.309), which foregrounds female passivity but which is also Birkin’s sneer at what he interprets as vanity and narrow-mindedness compared with his ‘noble’ vision of a love relationship, is overturned into an assertion of female aspiration to be an actor in historical time, as opposed to being a non-entity ‘caught up’ in a blissful union outside of it, as proposed by Lawrence. In Byatt’s text the ‘duality’ that survives (at least) on the female part is sustained by this aspiration to engage with ‘the third’ as something ‘other’ and separate from herself. In addition, the duality does not dwell in gender opposition but in the plurality of the self. In Frederica’s case, it also expresses the wish to extricate herself from her marriage, which, due to her husband’s inarticulacy and their failing communication, appears as ‘a dead distance of silence’ (BT, p.382) The acknowledgement of the female ambition exceeding love and marriage recalls *The Rainbow*, and the Brangwen women’s gaze beyond the boundaries of the Marsh Farm ‘blood-intimacy’ ‘to the spoken world beyond’ (R, p.10). Ursula is one of the women, and it is interesting to see the sympathy for female desire ‘to enlarge their own scope and range of freedom’ (R, p.11), implicit in *The Rainbow*, dissipate and be replaced with a proposal of self-obliteration in *Women in Love*.

While Lawrence’s challenge to the ‘old’ notion of the self is affirmed in the cut-up, with the conventional ‘I’ rendered obsolete, Lawrence’s proposition of the ‘new’ state of being is disputed as ‘his’ ‘new’ and suspected as ‘lies’. The ‘new’ in Frederica’s text points away from monistic singularity towards boundary-free plurality. In her text, the state of bliss is not a final state but a state of passage, which reaffirms the autonomy

of the self as ‘the perfect Oneself, of having transcended the bliss.’ (BT, p.383) In this sense, the cut-up reiterates Frederica’s erotic experience with John Ottokar, in which she feels to ‘come to the point of crossing over, of not being, and then I fall away, I am myself again, only more so’ (BT, p.360).

The cut-up also moves away from religious discourse, the elements of which Lawrence and Forster use for the development of their language of love. The *Women in Love* rearrangement drops the word ‘resurrection’ and replaces the notion of Edenic hegemony with fluid, heterogeneous disarray. It conveys a futuristic idea of the male-female relationship that does not require religious language and religious concepts.

The rewrite fragments and defamiliarises the language as well as the social structures that depend upon it. Most significantly, the re-arrangement expresses a subtle feminist statement through the re-appropriation of the discourse, with the female becoming the subject instead of the object. A male-formulated text about marriage as a male-controlled fusion of separate beings is turned into an attempt to pin down a female identity that reflects the sense of estrangement and confusion of the female subject locked in patriarchal structures. Hence, the ‘new’ mode of being indicated in the later text is essentially pluralistic – it depends, like in Lawrence’s case, on the dissolution of the male-female polarity, however, this is achieved by the abolishment of boundaries as opposed to the Lawrentian fusion into oneness. Whereas the original quote contains a clear definition of oneness as a ‘consummation of [his] being and her being in a new one, a new paradisal unit regained from the duality’ (BT, p.310), no merging of the selves into one is made either explicit or implicit in the cut-up. Byatt’s ‘new oneness’ is ‘the duality’ – a product of the discontinuation of the ordinary individual being and the birth of a ‘new’, boundary-less (‘not form’) self, which, however, remains separate and autonomous despite transformation, as in ‘perfect

silence of self' and 'perfect Oneself'. The transformation implies liberation from the former male-centred forms of contact and communication as the collapse of polarity abolishes bilateral concepts of adoration and love. The cut-up is, itself, a critique of the masculine assumptions within Lawrence's literary language, and the patriarchal presuppositions fuelling the divorce proceedings in *Babel Tower*.

The transfiguration of the passage is, therefore, significant in several ways. Firstly, the choice of the passage itself demonstrates Byatt's appreciation of Lawrence's attempt to imagine and formulate the male-female relationship outside the conceptual framework and language of the law. Frederica uses Lawrence's words positively to imagine individual identity and autonomy and a different, liberating relation between the sexes. The language of the cut-up is, like Lawrence's text, specifically positioned outside the language of the law, which is equated with patriarchal power in *Babel Tower*. It suggests that literary, as opposed to legal language has a better potential to communicate the complex realities of marriage, love and sexuality. At the same time, it reveals, nevertheless, that Lawrence's language, outsourced from religious discourse, is still heavily gendered and propagates androcentric assumptions and power structures. Therefore, Byatt grasps this as an opportunity to emancipate herself from her predecessor's legacy, to forge her own voice and formulate her own position in relation to gender politics, patriarchal power, and legal power. The new text signals the possibility of avoiding both legalistic and religious language while trying to find a new language for love. The abandoning of linguistic conventions allows Byatt to bypass the difficulties posed by the interdependence of language and thought, addressed by Lawrence via Birkin's struggle to explain his ideas to Ursula, particularly in the chapter 'Mino' of *Women in Love*. Most importantly, the rewrite destabilizes the traditional male-female dichotomy that Lawrence fails to disentangle in his text and, along with the

transformation of Forster's text, represents the shattering of the patriarchal narrative of women's place in society and the liberation from oppressive linguistic, social and legal structures.

The cut-up is thus a statement of female independence, which takes a radical subversive form by tearing asunder masculine texts and androcentric gender assumptions. The liberation from the 'old', which is represented by male-centred, patriarchal structures is now represented by the transfiguration of the original 'I' into a free, boundary-less self. The dissolution of grammatical and legal categories is, moreover, accompanied with and enacted in the disintegration of the texts and (conventional) language themselves – a process that is merely envisaged but never carried through in Lawrence's text. Byatt's text merges with the proposed new state of being as they both become a free space where the formless yet separate selves, as well as words, float free from desire. The cut-up thus presents a much more fully realised new linguistic vision of spiritual union than the original text, and, as a matter of fact, any other of Lawrence's texts. It is a linguistic realization of the communion that Lawrence prophesies to extend beyond language. Byatt's act is, in this sense, more radical and avant-garde than her predecessor's innovatory effort.

The female 'self' not only stays but becomes more autonomous and re-defines the image of the 'Lawrentian woman' Byatt was confronted with in the 1950s. Lawrence's archetypal woman, however socially independent and sexually liberated, would always be defined as an antithesis to the male. Byatt, and her heroines, resist such a cast. On behalf of her female characters, Byatt follows in the footsteps of Ursula Brangwen, who questioned Birkin's theory of the relationship as a 'star-equilibrium' (WL, p.319) and mistrusts his proclamation of selfishness and his concept of freedom in 'a pure unison' with the other (WL, p.152). In the cut-up, Byatt presents her own vision

of an androgynous and utterly autonomous female self as an option for Ursula and her own heroines.

Despite her disagreement concerning his gender assumptions, Byatt responds positively to Lawrence's prose in the passage and turns his semi-religious writing into a playful parody. She replaces Lawrence's use of religious language to describe secular love; and instead adopts a futuristic language, with a focus on 'the new'. The cut-up serves to dismantle Lawrence's modernist language in the service of a new female-centred language of desire. Byatt apparently likes Lawrence's phrases such as 'strange golden light', 'paradisal unit', or 'your chin is adorable' and creates even more rhapsodic lines such as: 'In the new superfine bliss she could not know there was no I and you, there to be adored.' (BT, p.383) Phrases bringing together incongruous elements, such as 'peace superseding knowledge, height or colour', or 'We are both caught up and your chin is adorable' increase the comic effect. The authoritative touch that Lawrence adds, particularly, to the second paragraph, by allowing it to sound like a sermon, is dispelled by the process of dismantling the text and turning it into a play on words while maintaining the general tenor of the utterance.

The cut-up episode, of course, only pretends to be an 'experiment'. It is a process strictly controlled by Byatt, who holds the reigns and steers the text towards where she wishes it to go. It is yet another version of a Byatt language game. But it has also theoretical and metafictional implications for the critique of a modern, fragmented style of writing and authorial agency in *Babel Tower*. The 'experiment' pretends to set words free and allow linguistic play to produce new meanings and new images. It does indeed; nevertheless, the author is never entirely eliminated from the process and, as a result, cannot be completely detached from the text, as proposed by Barthes (in the 'Death of the Author'). Frederica notes, for example, that Forster's text, 'more tightly

constructed, will not deconstruct until cut into considerably smaller segments, when a certain effective contrast of high and low, abstract and solid words, begins to work' (BT, p.383), which implies that she manipulates the process in order to achieve a satisfactory result. In fact, the disengagement from grammatical and semantic conventions may eventually call for more authorial manipulation of linguistic material in the convention-free space to allow signification and communication to happen at all. Frederica's feeling is that:

[w]here the cut-ups go wrong is in an over-valuation of the purely random, a too great reliance on the human capacity to insist on finding meaning in the trivial, the flotsam and jetsam of the brain's tick and tock, messages on scraps of paper with one word on. Anything is a message if you are looking for a message. But the glare of an eye looking for a message anywhere and everywhere can be a mad glare, a pointless glare. (BT, p.384)

This is why mere sequential arrangement of quotes as they arrive in *Laminations* is found unsatisfactory, whereas shuffling them is seen as capable of producing more meaningful combinations. This, however, entails external, authorial intervention. The dismissal of absolute randomness also implies a rejection of the Barthesian notion of the temporality of signification: as Frederica puts it, words need to '*have already been used, they have not to be new [...] in order to have meaning*' (BT, p.384) In this sense, Frederica's 'experiment' is a part of Byatt's critique of fragmented modes of writing in *Babel Tower*.

As for its place in Byatt's 'Lawrence scheme', the 'game' element takes the edge off the transgressional nature of Frederica's act, indicating that like her heroine, after years of wrestling with Lawrence's legacy, Byatt takes the liberty to 'play' with her predecessor's work.

The cut-up experiment is the culmination of the long process of Byatt's negotiation of Lawrence's legacy in her fiction. Her critique of Lawrence, initially

shaped by tension and conflict in Frederica's early, mostly very critical, comments and thoughts in *The Virgin in the Garden* and *Still Life*, grows significantly less hostile in *Babel Tower*. Ironic remarks are replaced with insightful discussions and even voiced appreciation of numerous features of his writing, especially its language and imagery (BT, p.213). This particular dynamic in the Frederica-Lawrence relationship reflects Byatt's own critical confrontation of Lawrence, and its fictionalization as a method of revision of their relationship. Hence, Byatt's 'violation' of her predecessor's texts carried out by her character can be read as a climax in her fictionalized negotiation of Lawrence's legacy, a symbolic liberation and declaration of creative independence. The cut-up experiment is her last big intertextual engagement with an original Lawrence text. For this reason, the episode can be regarded as the climax of her most intensive pre-occupation with Lawrence's writing across her fiction.

Considering how much space is devoted to Frederica's teaching of *Women in Love*, the experiment's outcome is reported in a relatively economical way. This suggests several things. Firstly, it indicates that for Frederica, the enterprise was little more than an interesting, partly therapeutic game. It is reported with a dash of irony that the idea of cutting up Forster's and Lawrence's 'quotations about *wholeness*' (BT, p.382, italics added) arrived with a 'little laugh', and the process of snipping and rearranging is depicted as a quick and spontaneous action, with no particular expectations in terms of the results. The word 'interesting' reappears several times in relation to the process, including Frederica's feeling about the cut-up of Lawrence's text itself (BT, p.382). As a way out of her frustration with legal language, it is the temptation of an exciting and playfully subversive game that propels the activity. The reason why Byatt decided not to comment on the experiment and its outcomes in more detail may be her disinclination to politicize her writing. While the re-gendering and

restructuring of the narrative contains an inherent political statement, Byatt herself chooses to avoid open political discussion. This is consistent with the increased focus on Lawrence's art rather than his problematic ideas in *Babel Tower*, compared with the previous volumes of the *Quartet*.

Compared to the many other, and mostly fictive texts accumulated in *Babel Tower*, the act of transformation of original pieces of existing literary works, written by major authors whose reputation is emphasised in the novel, would, in my opinion, profit from more attention and elaboration. Due to this understatement, the cut-up experiment is at risk of being overlooked as a minor gesture of protest rather than a significant statement of dissent and emancipation.

Conclusion

A.S. Byatt has been a dominant figure in English literature for several decades. Known as a polymath and an extremely self-conscious author, she views herself as a writer of ideas, whose narratives are saturated with literary, cultural and scientific questions and discussions, and whose characters are significantly shaped by what and how they read and think. Naturally, literature, reading and writing dominate among her topics. Her literariness is marked with great density and diversity. Byatt's fiction thus becomes a discussion platform and testing ground for a wide range of topics, reaching from literature to philosophy, into education and science.

This is certainly the case regarding her negotiation of the legacy of D.H. Lawrence, her most enticing literary predecessor. As this thesis also manifests, compared to other writers with whom Byatt engaged, such as Milton, Shakespeare, Mallarmé or Proust, Lawrence enjoyed privileged status in her writing. He not only provided creative stimulation by inspiring Byatt to engage with his stylistic techniques or imagery, but also provoked Byatt to continuous renegotiation of Lawrence as a cultural phenomenon. In addition, her affair with Lawrence had a special, personal dimension. Consequently, Lawrence's presence in her fiction was the result of an ongoing and developing relationship that shaped Byatt's creative endeavours as well as her critical thought. This multiple dynamic element in the Byatt-Lawrence relationship, its complexity, and especially the degree to which the dialogue is fictionalised in her work, make Lawrence loom above his literary colleagues across Byatt's *oeuvre*.

Although it has attracted increased attention in recent years, no previous research has been substantial enough to address the relationship in its complexity and with sufficient detail. Until recently, Lawrence's significance in relation to Byatt's texts has gone largely unnoticed. The essays of Peter Preston (2003) and Jack Stewart (2013) have broken ground by recognizing Lawrence's prominent place in Byatt's fiction. Nevertheless, their scope is limited to several selected aspects of the Lawrence-Byatt dialogue. Preston explains how Byatt fictionalizes ethical problems associated with Lawrence's legacy and their relation to the issues of language and verbalisation. He also mentions Byatt's portraiture of Lawrence as a cultural icon and a victim of academic misappropriation. Nevertheless, the essay format prevents him from an in-depth analysis of both the origins and circumstances of Byatt's fascination with Lawrence and the complexities of her representation of Lawrence in her fiction. Jack Stewart, on the other hand, concentrates on the creative exchange, or 'cross-fertilisation', between Byatt and Lawrence by tracking down intertextual links between their texts and he forgoes considerations of Byatt's historicising portrayal of Lawrence.

This PhD is the first comprehensive study that reveals and analyses Byatt's engagement with Lawrence's legacy in detail and explains Lawrence's dominance in Byatt's writing. Equally importantly, it is the first in-depth piece of research that investigates the influence of a particular writer on Byatt, which, considering the significance of literary influences penetrating her fiction, has been long overdue. By revealing the intensity and the depth of Byatt's preoccupation with Lawrence, it shifts the understanding of Byatt's working methods as well as her writing of gender, both of which have been shaped, to some degree, by her dialogue with Lawrence. Byatt explored and experimented with some of Lawrence's writing practices, especially in the earlier part of her career, often in the form of rewriting and parodying, such as his use of

rhythm and incantation. Numerous impulses have been absorbed into her own writing, most notably Lawrence's visual writing, using contrasts and the play of light and colour. While similar assertions can be made about numerous other writers, her preoccupation with Lawrence stands out, due to its range and depth and, most importantly, the measure of its infiltration into her novels.

The thesis has offered a detailed analysis of Lawrence's presence in Byatt's novels and its origins, with a particular focus on the dynamic structure of the literary dialogue and its fictionalisation. The pattern of my argumentation reflects the two key areas of Byatt's preoccupation with Lawrence: her critical negotiation of Lawrence's novelistic legacy, and her revisionary response to his status within British cultural memory and the shifts caused by political and cultural changes in the society and the ramifications of new critical approaches. Lawrence's dramatic rise and fall in the British cultural establishment, made him a very particular figure in British culture. I have shown that Byatt's response to Lawrence was also far from static; on the contrary, she responded to a moving target and chose her narrative strategies accordingly. On the narrative level, this is particularly captured through her character Frederica and her evolving relationship with Lawrence that reflects how Lawrence's status and cultural resonance shifted over time. In Byatt's interpretation, she focuses particularly on the changing significance of his representation of gender identity and female role models. The stories of Frederica and Stephanie in *The Virgin in the Garden* and *Still Life* explore, among other things, the relevance of Lawrence's female characters as role models in confrontation with gender assumptions of the 1950s. My analysis has demonstrated that while considering Lawrence's legacy as a part of British cultural heritage, Byatt further historicises her representation of Lawrence in the *Quartet*, by drawing attention to one of the most interesting features of his cultural afterlife, namely

the co-existence of Lawrence as a member of the English literary establishment and as a countercultural icon. The exposure of the specific dynamic of the Byatt-Lawrence dialogue and of the pattern of Byatt's representation of Lawrence in her novels has confirmed that Byatt's revisionary narrative of Lawrence in the *Quartet* has an additional dimension; a certain cleansing function in relation to Lawrence's reputation. The evidence is the construction of Frederica's confrontation with Lawrence in a way that offers a corrective view of Lawrence, which aims at shaking the popular clichés associating Lawrence with sexual obsession and, most importantly, disagreeing with the claims made by some feminist critics such as Kate Millet or Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar about sexism and misogyny being the defining qualities of Lawrence's writing. The thesis has demonstrated how by exposing through parody the possibility of interpreting Lawrence in often contradictory ways and thereby devaluating politically or ideologically informed interpretations, Byatt accentuates instead his place in the modern European novelistic tradition, by emphasising his artistry and the imaginative power of his writing.

In this thesis I have argued that Lawrence was a particularly strong presence in Byatt's work because of the historical moment of her Cambridge education with F.R. Leavis. This encounter triggered Byatt's preoccupation with Lawrence's legacy but also explains its profound ambivalence. Byatt's doubts about Leavis's critical principles and values as well as his zealous advocacy of Lawrence's work in the 1950s both invigorated her relationship with and critique of Lawrence. Leavis's promotion of Lawrence's work was pivotal to Lawrence's literary canonization; but this very promotion was also problematic for both Lawrence and Byatt. Lawrence's elevation to the literary establishment made him a more obvious target in the later feminist attacks on his writing. This in turn affected Byatt's thinking and writing about Lawrence. More

directly, Leavis's excessive emphasis on moral judgement compromised Byatt's appreciation of her teacher's celebration of Lawrence's merits. The budding writer in Byatt shrank from what she felt as Leavis's appropriation of Lawrence's achievement and from his emphasis on the link between the greatness of Lawrence's art and the 'metaphysic' and morality at the heart of his writing. Her critical response to Leavis was partly responsible for her embracing Lawrence as a mixed challenge rather than as a creative and critical idol. Its ambivalence has also carried over into her dialogue with Lawrence, whom she considers, as much as Leavis did, a great master of prose but whose political views are not compatible with her personal beliefs.

Byatt is aware that Leavis's promotion of Lawrence in the 1950s, meant that Lawrence became associated with a particular literary tradition that matched the spirit of the patriarchal society of the 1950s. Specifically, this meant that women were associated with domestic duties rather than with intellectual or other professional ambitions. The thesis has demonstrated several ways in which the association between Lawrence and political patriarchy is addressed in her fiction. One of the ways is Byatt's linking of Frederica's resistance to the 1950s idealized image of woman as mother and wife, with her mockery of Lawrence's quasi-religious ideas about sex and the female body in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Another major way is Byatt's negotiation of other potential female role models found in Lawrence's fiction, most obviously the Brangwen sisters of *Women in Love*, who are promoted by Frederica's father not only as characters in 'high' literature but also as practical role models. In the novel, he is depicted as promoting these characters as role models against the educational pamphlets about sex and birth, widely distributed and popular in the 1950s. Frederica is represented as also being reluctant to accept Gudrun and Ursula as role models. However, this is mainly due to her revolt against paternal authority. Otherwise, she feels attracted to the

Brangwen sisters and cannot resist some degree of identification with Lawrence's characters. The textual evidence shows that, in Byatt's reading, they represent self-confident individuals who want to have control over their lives rather than women willing subservience and self-abnegation. By juxtaposing her own sisterly pair with Lawrence's, Byatt implicitly compares the (lack of) progress in women's emancipation and their choices across the period of 30 years and criticises the nature of female role models available to post-war young women. Similarly to Millet, and Gilbert and Gubar, she identifies Ursula and Gudrun as representatives of the 1920s' Modern Woman, and concurred with Millet's view that they 'had probably better sexual freedom than in the 1950s' (Millet, 2000, p.63). Nonetheless, unlike the named critics, she does not detect misogyny as a defining feature of Lawrence's narratives. As voiced by Frederica, she identifies 'strength' and 'ambition' in Lawrence's archetypal female characters and appreciates Lawrence's attention to his heroines' desire for intellectual independence. She again disputes Millet's, and Gilbert and Gubar's view of Lawrence as a prime example of patriarchal supremacist culture.

The Potter sisters, especially Frederica, become useful proxies in Byatt's negotiation of Lawrence's view of gender differences, and at the same time, Lawrence's writing of gender provides Byatt with a useful source in developing her own expression. While she appreciates his attempt to render the female experience and speak out for women, her negotiation of Lawrence throughout the *Quartet* identifies the main points of disagreement between the two writers. These include, most importantly, Lawrence's assumption of natural female passivity and male dominance, and his quasi-religious idolization of marriage and sex. Byatt identifies gender imbalance in Lawrence's ideal of a sexual and spiritual union between a man and a woman, and subjects it to criticism in *Babel Tower*, particularly in Frederica's cut-up experiment. The analysis of the cut-

up episode demonstrates its centrality to Byatt's gender critique of Lawrence. It can be read as a statement about the perceived gender bias located in Lawrence's rhetoric. Byatt's re-gendering of Lawrence's text highlights the male prevalence in the original passage, which was designed to proclaim balance and harmony. In response to Lawrence's attempts to speak on behalf of women, Byatt enacts what an actual female voice would do to his proposal; that is, deconstruct and invalidate his false notion of a harmonic unison. Byatt's gendered transformation of Lawrence's text is thus a hint at ontological and linguistic possibilities unsuspected by her predecessor, and in this sense, it transcends and outperforms the model text. Rather than a scathing critique, however, Byatt's 'experiment' is a playful rewriting of Lawrence's language manoeuvres, some of which clearly captured her imagination. As in the case of visual and visceral writing, Byatt's response to the qualities of Lawrence's writing she finds interesting and successful, takes the form of putting her own pen to them.

Byatt's position in relation to feminism can be best, but also most cryptically, expressed using her own words for *Possession*: it is 'feminist and counter-feminist' at the same time (Byatt, 1994c, p.60). When scanning the feminist landscape, we find Byatt sympathising with the mid-century 'political'¹ feminists such as Betty Friedan, and their calls for better gender equality in society. However, she was critical of the 1970s and 1980s feminist literary criticism. Her comments about it are mostly too generalising to make distinctions between the Anglo-American branch represented by Kate Millet, Elaine Showalter, and the French post-structuralist feminist critics, such as Hélène Cixous and Luce Irigaray. The faults she finds with feminist literary criticism are similar to those that prevent her from appreciating post-structuralist criticism in

¹ In the interview by Laura Miller, Byatt (1996, no page) calls herself a 'political feminist' as opposed to literary feminism, which she is very critical about.

general and she parodies these schools of thought in *The Biographer's Tale* and *Possession*. Here she mocks, above all, the similarity and repetitiveness she detects in post-structuralist critiques caused, in her opinion, by the critics' preoccupation with their theoretical hypotheses to the expense of primary reading. She believes that these readings are restrictive and reductive as they approach texts with pre-conceived conclusions and impose their own meanings on to the texts.

This thesis demonstrates how in respect to Lawrence, her counter-feminism, that is her ambivalence about feminist literary criticism, wins over her own feminist objections to Lawrence's gender assumptions. She regards him as a victim of "the unfortunate gender politics of literary studies" [which] made Lawrence into an embarrassing model' (Byatt, cited in Adelman, 2002, p.117). It apparently happened by ideologically driven readings overriding the kind of innocent reading she proposes in *Possession* and numerous interviews, what she calls 'patient and generous reading' (Byatt, cited in Adelman, 2002, p.117) with all judgement postponed. Such ideal reading, Byatt didactically implies in the *Quartet's* teaching scenes, would allow the reader to arrive at a 'true judgment' (Byatt, cited in Adelman, 2002, p.117) by recognising the proper qualities of a particular work of literature. In Lawrence's case, they would be those appreciated by Byatt and articulated, for example, in her tribute to Lawrence in 'One Bright Book of Life' or her testimony to Gary Adelman and, lastly, in her novels. They include his 'mastery of language' and 'the power of his sentences', the 'formal ambition' of *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, and the art of orchestrating his characters and stories (Byatt, 2002b, pp.111-112). These are the features of Lawrence's writing that Frederica is made to highlight in her readings of Lawrence. As for the controversial content in Lawrence's work, Byatt does not interpret it as an expression of xenophobia and outright hostility towards women. Instead, she reads this content, with a

mildly patronising air at times, as slips of a ‘silly’ or ‘slightly ludicrous prophet’ (Byatt, cited in Adelman, 200, pp.28, 33) in Lawrence. Her revisionary message to her readers is a call for a reevaluation of Lawrence’s work which focuses on the qualities of his writing that would reinstall him in his proper place in the literary landscape, which is the modern European novelistic tradition, alongside other great early twentieth-century writers such as Franz Kafka or Thomas Mann. Implicitly, she guides her readers, just as she would have guided her students, towards approaching any of Lawrence’s novels, and any work of literature for that matter, as ‘not a belief system but a story’ (Byatt, 2002b, p.110). Lawrence is thus rehabilitated as a master of form and a ‘maker’ (Byatt, 2002b, p.112) whilst his problematic political opinions are deliberately downplayed.

Byatt not only negotiates Lawrence as an individual writer who influenced her writing at a significant stage of her career, but she also renegotiates his place in the literary tradition and wider cultural context. As exemplified in her fiction, she reconsiders and, while acknowledging her indebtedness to it, transcends Leavis’s restrictive ‘Great Tradition’ and rereads Lawrence in the context of the modern European novel.

Responding to Lawrence as a modern writer rather than a member of Leavis’s essentially realist tradition, this aspect of her work is interesting in relation to the idea of David James and others about modernist continuities in contemporary fiction. These are seen to a certain extent as a result of dissatisfaction with the possibilities offered by the creative methods and approaches of the post-structuralist era, usually categorised as post-modernism. The notion of the modernist project being extended into contemporary work bears a resemblance to the re-emergence of realism in the 1990s, which is also partly explained as a recoil from post-modernism (Bentley, 2005, p.4). Similarly to James’s view of modernist continuities in contemporary writing, critics such as Andrzej

Gasiorek (1995) and Dominic Head (2002) see realism as a continuously present and evolving force in British literature. Head even proposes approaching postmodernism as 'a reworking of realism, rather than a rejection of it', that is 'a hybrid form of expression that renegotiates tradition' (2002, p.229).

The initiative to trace modernist continuities in contemporary fiction is a part of a wider debate opened with claims that the modernist project is not finished and is carried on by present-day writers. The key premise of the debate(s) is the sense of expansion of the field, in both temporal and geographical terms. It is certainly the main principle of critical cosmopolitanism, theorised most notably by Rebecca Walkowitz (2008), which emphasises transnationalism and interculturalism as defining qualities of both modernist and contemporary writing. Even though the topics of exile and detachment from class, country or culture in Lawrence could be useful material for an enquiry from the perspective of critical cosmopolitanism, it is not a feature of Lawrence's writing that Byatt would address specifically in relation to Lawrence in her fiction. The fact that Byatt presents Lawrence in *Babel Tower* as a writer of the European modern novel, or mentions his exile in New Mexico in *The Shadow of the Sun*, does not necessarily turn Lawrence into a cosmopolitan writer. Due to their regional and class affinities, Byatt addresses Lawrence first and foremost as a great provincial English novelist of significance within the European modernist tradition.

In David James's argument, on the other hand, the key dimension of expansion is temporal: he sees the revitalisation of early twentieth-century creative aspirations as a major feature that characterises the shift in novel writing in the past ten to twenty years. A key feature of this process is the mode of amicable interaction and continuation rather than rupture, which defined the postmodernist attitude to modernism. Another main denominator is the revived conjunction of political and cultural critique and

compositional innovation. According to James (2012, p.17), contemporary writers engage with their modernist predecessors and bypass the postmodernist focus on linguistic play, partly because of a desire 'to reconsolidate fiction's formal integrity and ethical accountability' (2012, p.17). The recuperation of modernist challenges and possibilities takes the form of testing, redesigning and rewriting of modernist texts on both stylistic and thematic levels. Modernist texts thereby work as catalysts for the innovative features of contemporary fiction.

How are James's arguments relevant for the understanding of Byatt's work in relation to the legacy of D.H. Lawrence? In my opinion, James's observations about modernist continuities in contemporary fiction are valid for Byatt's treatment of Lawrence's legacy, even though the chronology of Byatt's work and preoccupation with Lawrence does not entirely match James's time frame. Lawrence's writing has been a powerful catalyst for Byatt and by re-visiting and rewriting his texts and ideas, Byatt reinvigorates his creative endeavour and participates in the continuation, or extension, of modernism as conceived by James. I have shown how Byatt responds, above all, to Lawrence's experimentation with narrative techniques, style and imagery, and how she reimagines events and encounters depicted in his novels. Very often, she uses parody to destabilize Lawrence's ideas from within. By rewriting his texts, she revitalizes his formal ambition, characterized by striving for a totalizing form of expression to render the full human experience. Her re-negotiation of Lawrence's writing is also a revision of modes of writing and themes associated with modernism in a more general sense. The modernist problems of the fragmentation of reality, the sense of alienation and displacement, and the internalisation of experience, for instance, reappear, and are often critically reviewed in her novels. An example is *Babel Tower* where Lawrence's calls for connection as a way of dealing with the threat of disintegration are confronted with

Byatt's idea of 'laminations' as a way of keeping conflicting spheres of life and experience separate. This strategy is contemplated and explored by the novel's main protagonist and informs the scrap-book structure of her literary experiment and the construction of the whole novel. She adopts Burroughs' cut-up method and also parodies and critiques it. The modernist technique of collage is used to reflect Byatt's heroine's sense of displacement and distortion of reality. Byatt also explores various states of consciousness and modes of seeing, particularly religious or mathematical visions, and hints at new ways of communication, such as via computational idiom or genetic coding. Like her predecessors from the previous century, Byatt takes note of new knowledge and technological progress, distils them into her stories with a similar sense of ambivalence that characterized the reception of modern technologies a century ago. Hence, the fact that in the *Quartet* Lawrence is, with only a few exceptions, surrounded by a company of prominent early twentieth-century artists or thinkers, such as Proust, Mallarmé, Van Gogh or Wittgenstein, is no coincidence. While depicting Lawrence's afterlife in the 1950s and 60s, a part of which was his absorption into the Leavisite English tradition known for its antagonism towards modernism, Byatt revives the European modernist tradition and reinstalls Lawrence within it. At the same time, by revisiting Lawrence as a part of modernist legacy, but also by doing so using modernist themes and techniques, she herself participates in the recuperation of modernism. This includes her appreciation of painters associated with the modernist project, such as Vincent Van Gogh, Henri Matisse and Paul Gauguin, whose paintings have influenced the painterly style of her visual writing.

As in Lawrence's case, and in modernist novels in general, Byatt's experimentation with form is linked to a cultural critique. Her heroine's experimentation with Lawrence's text is linked with a negotiation of gender politics and

language; in this case the language of the law which silences women by failing to communicate their experience of love and marriage, and Lawrence's, or Birkin's language that claims to embrace both the female and male experience and enacts the process of merging into a perfectly balanced 'oneness'. The egotistic male discourse exposed by the dismembering and re-gendering of Lawrence's texts is paralleled with the male-centred legal idiom critiqued as a part of the prevailingly patriarchal culture of the 1950s and 1960s. Formally, Byatt extends Lawrence's attempt to challenge linguistic conventions and literally breaks up the grammatical categories that sustain the traditional gender polarity, which Lawrence wanted to release. The homogenising fusion envisioned by Birkin/Lawrence is replaced with a pluralistic abolishment of linguistic and social boundaries.

Summarised above, these significant affinities between Byatt's approach to Lawrence and the modes of modernist revitalisation observed by James in contemporary authors, show a degree of relevance of James's model for the examination of Byatt's dialogue with Lawrence. At the same time, her work does not entirely conform to James's theory, especially in terms of chronology. The origins of the relationship go back to the 1960s and her preoccupation with Lawrence peaked in the 1980s and 1990s. This precedes the more recent time frame of the 'modernism now' debate that shapes James's argument about the pro-modernist shifts being the principal characteristic of today's novels. Nevertheless, while the principal aim is to describe the developments of the novel over the past decade or so, James acknowledges, and his contributors in *The Legacies of Modernism*, including Peter Preston on Lawrence and Byatt, demonstrate, that 'modernist continuities' occur already in the works of late twentieth-century authors. Byatt is recognized as being one of them. Having said that, we ought to acknowledge the fact that Byatt is a rather specific figure who not only wishes to stay

outside categories, like most artists, but whose work indeed seems to blur the boundaries between categories and classifications. Her fiction has been regularly seen as oscillating between realism and postmodernism, but it is not usually associated with a modernist tradition. Byatt herself defines her preferred mode of writing as ‘self-conscious realism’ (PM, p.4) while she refers to *Possession* as a self-consciously ‘postmodern, poststructural novel’ (Byatt, 1994c, p.62). Even though it is not as experimental as for example novels by Thomas Pynchon or Salman Rushdie, *Possession*, is an oddity among her novels; a deviation from her usual storytelling practice and critique of the postmodern aesthetic that Byatt is doubtful about. She challenges the postmodernist licence, claiming that deconstructing authors ‘make[s] them more themselves’ (Byatt, 2011c, p.80) instead of detaching them from their work. As opposed to postmodernism, she claims affinity with modernism, especially as defined by Wallace Stevens’s ‘Notes Towards a Supreme Fiction’, admitting that at times she ‘believed’ that good fiction ‘must be abstract, it must give pleasure, it must change’ (Byatt, 2011c, p.80).

The intensity and duration of her interaction with Lawrence, exposed in this thesis, and the fact that through it, Byatt also engages with the modernist legacy also demonstrates that her work is more embedded in the modernist than the postmodernist tradition and creates a bridge connecting realism, modernism and contemporary writing. Where Byatt also deviates from James’s concept of modernist continuities is the weight of the political in Byatt’s rewriting of Lawrence. While it is inherent and unavoidable, Byatt’s principal focus is on language and style in Lawrence’s work. Consequently, her rewrites are playful and often lightly ironic. This is particularly obvious in *Babel Tower*, with its cut-up experiment and multifaceted representation of Lawrence, that partly rides on the postmodernist wave of *Possession*.

Byatt's rewriting of Lawrence is a part of her deeply personal negotiation of her literary ancestry, informed by her awareness of Lawrence's influence on her development as a writer and a critic and her admiration of his artistry, complicated, nevertheless, by disagreements over gender issues and the quasi-religious dimension of his writing in particular. It takes the form of critical rereading and discussions of some of her favourite features of his prose, such as the rich imagery and symbolism in *Women in Love* and *The Rainbow*. Most significantly, this personal debate stirs Byatt to creative action which takes the form of rewriting his scenes, characters and, eventually a subversive transformation of his actual text.

The second area of Byatt's negotiation of Lawrence's legacy, outlined in the introduction, is her response to the changes in his critical standing and cultural significance. This thesis has provided evidence of the detail and complexity of their fictionalization in her work and of Byatt's ambition to rehabilitate Lawrence as a major modern novelist in an adverse critical environment. In order to achieve that, Byatt made use of some of the most contentious aspects of his legacy, especially associations with unrestrained sexual behaviour and breaches of social conventions.

The analysis of Byatt's historicising portrayal of Lawrence proves that his depiction in Byatt's fiction is fairly accurate. Even though her narrative choices are channelled towards producing a positive overall picture of Lawrence, the dialogic method used to introduce varied aspects and views of Lawrence's legacy, works well in showing Lawrence as a challenging figure and a constantly moving target. Byatt brings in standard views of Lawrence in the 1950s and 1960s but destabilizes them using irony or different voices. Extending the existing scholarship, my reading of Byatt's novels endorses the significance of the 1960 trial of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* as a watershed moment in Byatt's rendering of Lawrence's legacy. The analysis in Chapter 1

demonstrates that it is used as a major structural and narrative tool in *Babel Tower*, which delivers the most concentrated Lawrence lesson among Byatt's novels. Most importantly, it confirms that the major paradox of the trial – the confusion between the novel and its main character, as the subject tried – informs the thematic and narrative structure of the whole novel. The historical trial is split into two cases – a divorce trial and a libel case; a trial of a woman prosecuted for obscene behaviour and a trial of an allegedly obscene book. The different attitudes of the court to the key question that links all trials, as to whether literature and reading can corrupt, reveal a heavy gender bias on the part of the contemporary patriarchal establishment. Lawrence's part in this debate is of utmost significance: the contradictions in the argumentation of the divorce and obscenity courts in relation to the literary and moral valuation of his writing reveal gender-related double standards embedded in the patriarchal society. Moreover, they show Lawrence as a victim of misrepresentation and abuse by the patriarchal establishment of the 1950s and 1960s. The notion of Lawrence as a political victim equally informs Byatt's opinions of the feminist criticism of Lawrence. The adequate defence proposed and lodged in the novel is a return to an apolitical reading focused on the texts' literary qualities, which means reading novels as 'stories' as opposed to 'belief-systems'. Didactically demonstrated by Frederica in *Women in Love*, such reading rehabilitates Lawrence as a master of form and a modern novelist of European stature.

The dynamic character of Byatt's negotiation and fictionalisation of Lawrence's legacy generated by the double shifting between Lawrence's changing status and Byatt's response to it, as well as the shifting between the representational and the intertextual planes, depends on her historicizing narrative method and helps open up many different layers of critical context. Last but not least, it makes Byatt transcend

James's understanding of continuity based on a notion of linearity running from a more or less static point of departure.

In regard to the chronology of Lawrence's presence in Byatt's fiction, it is apparent that the *Quartet* was the centre stage for the fictionalized renegotiation of the relationship. Considering the absence of further critical negotiations of Lawrence in the rest of her work to date, it can be interpreted as a sort of clearance between Byatt and Lawrence. Still, it is necessary to bear in mind that the period in which Lawrence was one of the key components of her narratives and hence a recurrently active agent in Byatt's thought, spanned over forty years and most of her writing career. This alone is fairly remarkable. And even if her public dialogue with Lawrence on the pages of her books has come to an end, Lawrence remains a hidden presence in her creative habits.

Instead of taking the abundance of literary allusions and references in Byatt's fiction for granted, my thesis not only validates Lawrence's prominent place in her writing but also provides a new insight into Byatt's creative practices. It has put forth a new way of looking at Byatt's work through the dialogue with another writer, which revealed that nearly a half of her novels written across four decades have been informed by this deep, sustained critical negotiation of another writer's legacy. Its analysis improves the understanding of the critical and creative choices Byatt has made in the process of incorporating the negotiations of Lawrence's legacy into her fiction. It shows, among other things, that Byatt rethought her preferences in regard to literary tradition so that she approached Lawrence as an important European modernist novelist and thereby claimed her own allegiance to the European modernist tradition. What has also become apparent is that the Lawrence-Byatt influence is not a straightforward linear process but a more complicated mechanism with different layers of critical context, such as gender, association with specific literary traditions, or cultural memory

crisscrossing. The binary pattern of influence, as outlined by Hassan (1955) and developed into the Freudian model of literary relationship by Bloom (1973), continues to inform studies of literary influence, such as Journey, 2007; Pocock, 2007; Ailwood and Harvey, 2015; Tintner, 2015, and others. My approach adds an extra layer to the studies of literary influence, usually conceived as a static linear response of an author to a literary predecessor and/or their work. Necessitated by the strong external influences on Byatt's engagement with Lawrence, my approach expands the binary pattern into a four-dimensional space. The third dimension encapsulates the external factors, most notably Leavis's criticism of Lawrence, his treatment by post-structuralist and feminist critics, and his popular image. The fourth dimension is the time factor that encompasses the developments in literary criticism, the shifts in Lawrence's literary and cultural status and his public image, and Byatt's response to them. In this way, it shows how fruitful it can be to examine in detail the interaction of an author's writing with another writer's work over a long period of time and to consider the shifts in the wider historical, socio-cultural and critical climate.

This thesis is the first of its kind in Byatt scholarship that has undertaken such a project. As a possibility for further research, I would suggest a detailed examination of Marcel Proust's influence on Byatt's writing as a similarly valuable project.

Considering Byatt's comparison of her attachment to Lawrence to her relationship with Proust, it would be useful to start by looking again at the origins and development of the personal relationship, as has been done with Lawrence in this thesis. One potential area of influence could be the treatment of time and memory in Proust and Byatt. Last but not least, the enquiry could contribute to the discussion of Byatt's participation in the modernist continuities considered in here.

Reference List

- Aberdeen Evening Express (1956) 'Lady Chatterley's Lover', *Aberdeen Evening Express*, 25 October, p.2.
- Adams, A.M. (2003) 'Dead Authors, Born Readers, and Defunct Critics: Investigating Ambiguous Critical Identities in A.S. Byatt's *Possession*', *Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association*, 36(1/Spring), pp.107-124. doi: 10.2307/1315402.
- (2008a) 'Defending "Identity and the Writer": A.S. Byatt's Delineation of the Proper Function of Criticism at the Present Time', *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 49(4), p.339-356. doi: 10.3200/CRIT.49.4.339-356.
- (2008b) 'Reader, I Memorialized Him: A.S. Byatt's Representation of Alfred Lord Tennyson in "The Conjugal Angel"', *Lit: Literature Interpretation Theory*, 19(1/Jan-Mar), pp.26-46. doi: 10.1080/10436920701884696.
- Adelman, G. (2002) *Reclaiming D.H. Lawrence: Contemporary Writers Speak Out*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press.
- Ailwood, S. and Harvey, M. (2015) *Katherine Mansfield and Literary Influence*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Alban, G.M.E. (2010) 'Melusinian Intertextuality in A.S. Byatt's Metaphorical Metamorphosing Tales', in Gonzalez, M. and Pittin-Hédon, M. (eds.) *Generic Instability and Identity in the Contemporary Novel*. Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp.63-79.
- Aldington, R. (1950) *D.H. Lawrence 1885-1930: An Appreciation*. London: Penguin Books.
- Alfer, A. and Edwards de Campos, A.J. (2010) *A.S. Byatt: Critical Storytelling*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Allen, M. et al. (2006) 'Literary Criticism and Fantasy Literature: Is Anyone Taking This Seriously?', *Yahotline*, 76, pp.69-70. Available at: <https://ojs.library.dal.ca/YAHS/article/view/420/405>. (Accessed: 25 November 2019).
- Allsop, K. (1960a) 'I invite you to compare D.H. Lawrence and Denise Robins.' *The Daily Mail*, 4 May, p.10.
- (1960b) 'Easter Readers Will be on a Paperback Chase,' *The Daily Mail*, 14 April, p.8.
- Altieri, C. (2012) 'Afterword How the "New Modernist Studies" fails the Old Modernism', *Textual Practice* 26(4), pp.763-782. doi:10.1080/0950236X.2012.696494.
- L'Amant de Lady Chatterley* (1955). [Film] Directed by Marc Allégret. France: Orsay Film, Regie du Film.

- Anon. (1965) 'Invocation to First International Poetry Incarnation', London, 11 June 1965, reproduced in Horovitz, M. (2007) *Pot!: Poetry Olympics Twenty 05*. London: New Departures.
- Arnold, M. (1970) *Culture and Anarchy: An Essay in Political and Social Criticism*. New York: Ams Press.
- (1865a) 'The Function of Criticism at the Present Time', in *Essays in Criticism*. New York: A.L. Burt Company, pp.1-30. Available at: www.archive.org/details/cu31924013206754. (Accessed: 3 April 2018).
- (1865b) 'The Study of Poetry', in *Essays in Criticism*. New York: A.L. Burt Company, pp.279-307. Available at: www.archive.org/details/cu31924013206754. (Accessed: 3 April 2018).
- (1865c) 'Wordsworth', in *Essays in Criticism*. New York: A.L. Burt Company, pp.343-363. Available at: www.archive.org/details/cu31924013206754. (Accessed: 3 April 2018).
- Ashworth, A. (1994) 'Fairy Tales in A.S. Byatt's Possession', *Journal of Evolutionary Psychology*, 15(1-2), pp.93-94.
- Baldick, C. (2001) 'Post-Mortem: Lawrence's Critical and Cultural Legacy', in Fernihough, A. (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to D.H. Lawrence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.253-269.
- Barthes, R. (1998) *The Pleasure of the Text*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- (2002) *S/Z*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- (2008) 'The Death of the Author', in Lodge, D. and Wood, N. (eds.) *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*. Harlow: Pearson Longman, pp.313-316.
- Baudelaire, Ch. (1993) *The Flowers of Evil*. Translated by James McGowan. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Becket, F. (1997) *D.H. Lawrence: The Thinker as Poet*. Basingstoke and London: Macmillan Press.
- (2001) 'Lawrence and Psychoanalysis', in Fernihough, A. (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to D.H. Lawrence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.217-233.
- Bell, M. (2001) 'Lawrence and Modernism', in Fernihough, A. (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to D.H. Lawrence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.179-196.
- (2008) *D.H. Lawrence: Language and Being*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bentley, N. (2005) *British Fiction in the 1990s*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Bernard, C. (1999) 'The Cultural Agenda of Parody in Some Contemporary English Novels', *European Journal of English Studies*, 3(2), pp.167-189. doi: 10.1080/13825579908574437.
- (2003) 'Forgery, Dis/Possession, Ventriloquism in the Works of A.S. Byatt and Peter Ackroyd', *Miscelánea: A Journal of English and American Studies*, 28, pp.11-24.

- Bloom, Harold. *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973.
- Boccardi, M. (2004) 'A Romance of the Past: Postmodernism, Representation and Historical Fiction', *Etudes Britanniques Contemporaines: Revue de la Société d'Etudes Anglaises Contemporaines*, 26, pp.1-14.
- (2013) A.S. Byatt. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Børch, M. (2013) 'Byatt versus Bloom; or Poetic Influence—a Case of Anxiety or Desire?: Byatt mod Bloom; eller foregår traditionens videreførelse gennem fadermord eller kærlighedsakt?', *Aktuel forskning ved Institut for Litteratur, Kultur og Medier – Særnummer*, pp.149-158. Available at: <http://static.sdu.dk/mediafiles/D/E/8/%7BDE8B4215-59EF-4B31-AFB2-499144D72E29%7DOK%20-%20Dines%20-%20Marianne%20B.pdf>. (Accessed: 10 September 2015).
- Bourdarot, E. (2013) 'The Quest for the "Thing Itself" in A.S. Byatt's *Still Life*', in Pedri, N. and Petit, L. (eds.) *Picturing the Language of Images*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp.87-97.
- Brace, K. (1999) 'Finding England Everywhere: Regional Identity and the Construction of National Identity, 1890-1940', *Ecumene* 6(1), pp.91-109. doi:10.1177/096746089900600105.
- Brewer (2003) *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*. 16th ed. Revised by Adrian Room. London: Cassell.
- Bristow, J. (2012) 'A.S. Byatt's *The Children's Book*', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 17(1/March), pp.64-95. doi:10.1080/13555502.2012.662007.
- Brown, N.O. (1959) 'Death and Childhood', in *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History*. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, pp.110-134.
- Burroughs, W.S. (1963) 'Talking with William S. Burroughs'. Interviewed by William Bates, in Hibbard, A. (ed.) *Conversations with William S. Burroughs*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, pp.90-94.
- (1999a) 'The Cut-Up Method', in Jones, L. (ed.) *The Moderns: An Anthology of New Writing in America*. New York: Corinth Books, pp.345-348.
- (1992b) 'William Burroughs: *Rolling Stones* Interview'. Interviewed by Robert Palmer, in Hibbard, A. (ed.) *Conversations with William S. Burroughs*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, pp.51-79.
- Buxton, J. (1996) "What's Love Got to Do With It?": Postmodernism and *Possession*', *ESC: English Studies in Canada* 22(2/June), pp.199-219. doi:10.1353/esc.1996.0042.
- Byatt, A.S. (1972) 'A Peculiar Condition of Our Time', *The Times*, 13 July, p.10.
- (1976a) 'Choice and Verdict', *The Times*, 27 May, p.10.
- (1976b) 'Why There Should Be No Limit on a Student's Curiosity', *The Times*, 9 June, p.8.

- (1982) 'Wild and Wingeing'. Review of *The Letters of D.H. Lawrence*, Vol. 2, by D.H. Lawrence. *The Times*, 3 June, p.26.
- (1983) 'Life as English Literature'. Review of *The Critic as Anti-Philosopher*, by F.R. Leavis. *The Times*, 10 February, p.8.
- (1987) 'Identity and the Writer', in Appignanesi, L. (ed.) *The Real Me: Post-Modernism and the Question of Identity*. ICA Documents 6. London: Institute for Contemporary Arts, pp.23-26.
- (1988) 'Writing and Feeling', *The Times Literary Supplement*, 18 November, p.1278.
- (1989) 'A.S. Byatt'. Interviewed by George Greenfield, in Greenfield, G. *Scribblers for Bread: Aspects of the English Novel Since 1945*. London: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd, pp.42-49.
- (1991a) *Possession: A Romance*. London: Vintage.
- (1991b) *The Shadow of the Sun*. London: Vintage.
- (1992a) *The Game*. London: Vintage.
- (1992b) 'A.S. Byatt', in Fraser, A. (ed.) *The Pleasure of Reading*. London: Bloomsbury, pp.127-132.
- (1992c) 'A.S. Byatt'. Interviewed by Olga Kenyon, in Kenyon, O. (ed.) *The Writer's Imagination: Interviews with Major International Women Novelists*. Bradford: University of Bradford Print Unit, pp.9-21.
- (1992d) *Possession – Renowned author A.S. Byatt reveals the aesthetic theory behind her fiction*. Interviewed by Michael Silverblatt. [Podcast] KCRW, 9 March. Available at: <http://www.kcrw.com/news-culture/shows/bookworm/a-s-byatt-1>. (Accessed: 26 March 2015).
- (1993a) *Passions of the Mind: Selected Writings*. London: Vintage.
- (1993b) 'Reading, Writing, Studying: Some Questions about Changing Conditions for Writers and Readers', *Critical Quarterly*, 35(4), pp.3-7.
- (1994a) *The Matisse Stories*. London: Vintage.
- (1994b) *The Virgin in the Garden*. London: Vintage.
- (1994c) 'A.S. Byatt'. Interviewed by Nicholas Tredell, in Tredell, N. (ed.) *Conversations with Critics*. Manchester: Carcanet, pp.58-74.
- (1994d) 'The Long Shadow of the Nineteenth Century: An Interview with A.S. Byatt'. Interviewed by Mireia Aragay i Sastre, *Barcelona English language and literature studies* 5, pp.151-164. Available at: <https://www.raco.cat/index.php/bells/article/viewFile/102724/149114%20156>. (Accessed: 26 March 2015).
- (1995a) *Sugar and Other Stories*. London: Vintage.

- (1995b) *Still Life*. London: Vintage.
- (1995c) *A.S. Byatt: The Matisse Stories*. Interviewed by Michael Silverblatt. [Podcast] KCRW, 26 June. Available at: <https://www.kcrw.com/@@search?q=byatt>. (Accessed: 26 March 2015).
- (1996) 'A.S. Byatt'. Interviewed by Laura Miller, *Salon*, 17 June. Available at: http://www.salon.com/1996/06/17/interview_10. (Accessed: 13 October 2015).
- (1997) *Babel Tower*. London: Vintage.
- (2001a) *The Biographer's Tale*. London: Chatto & Windus.
- (2001b) *On Histories and Stories: Selected Essays*. London: Vintage.
- (2001c) 'The Art of Fiction No. 168'. Interviewed by Philip Hensher, *The Paris Review* 159 (Fall). [online]. Available at: <http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/481/the-art-of-fiction-no-168-a-s-byatt>. (Accessed: 23 April 2015).
- (2002a) *The Whistling Woman*. London: QPD.
- (2002b) 'The One Bright Book of Life', *New Statesman*, 16-30 December, pp.110-112.
- (2003a) 'Harry Potter and the Childish Adult', *The New York Times*, 7 July, p.13.
- (2003b) 'An Interview with A.S. Byatt'. Interviewed by Jenny Newman and James Friel, *Cercles: An Interdisciplinary Journal of English Studies*. [online]. Available at: <http://www.cercles.com/interviews/byatt.html>. (Accessed: 26 March 2015).
- (2004) 'Conversation between A.S. Byatt and Stephen Frosh', *Psychology and Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice*, 77, pp.145-159.
- (2006a) 'Observe the Neurones', *The Times Literary Supplement*, 22 September, pp.13-15.
- (2006b) *A.S. Byatt, with Michael Silverblatt*. Interviewed by Michael Silverblatt. [Online Video] Lannan, 15 March. Available at: <http://www.lannan.org/events/a-s-byatt-with-michael-silverblatt>. (Accessed: 26 March 2015).
- (2006c) 'An Interview with A.S. Byatt and Lawrence Norfolk'. Interviewed by Jonathan Walker, *Contemporary Literature* 47(3/Fall), pp.319-342.
- (2009) *A.S. Byatt's The Children's Book*. Interviewed by Ramona Koval. [Podcast] ABC Radio National, 24 April. Available at: <https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/archived/bookshow/as-byatts-the-childrens-book/3134044#transcript>. (Accessed: 26 March 2015).
- (2010) *The Children's Book*. London: Vintage.
- (2011a) *Ragnarök: The End of the Gods*. Edinburgh: Canongate.
- (2011b) 'Ragnarök: The Doom of the Gods', *Guardian Online*, [online] 5 August. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2011/aug/05/as-byatt-ragnarok-myth>. (Accessed: 13 April 2015).

- (2011c) 'Interview with A.S. Byatt'. Interviewed by Tanya Harrod and Glenn Adamson, *The Journal of Modern Craft* 4(1/March), pp.65-82. doi:10.2752/174967811X12949160068857.
- (2013) 'On Becoming a Writer'. Interviewed by Peter Endicott, *ISIS*, 5 June. [online] Available at: <http://isismagazine.org.uk/2013/06/an-interview-with-as-byatt>. (Accessed: 2 October 2014).
- (2015) *English and German Cultural Encounters: A.S. Byatt in Conversation with Martin Swales and Godela Weiss-Sussex*. [YouTube video] School of Advanced Study/University of London, 15 October. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YAgqPEfp4so>. (Accessed: 26 March 2015).
- Byatt, A.S. and Sodré, I. (1995) *Imagining Characters: Six Conversations about Women Writers*. London: Vintage.
- Cambiaghi, M. (2006) 'The Gendered Memories of Frederica Potter: A.S. Byatt's *A Whistling Woman*', *Freiburger FrauenStudien*, 19, pp.225-44.
- Campbell, J. (1991) "'The Somehow May Be Thishow": Fact, Fiction, and Intertextuality in Antonia Byatt's "Precipice-Encurled"', *Studies in Short Fiction*, 28(2), pp.115-123.
- (2004) *A.S. Byatt and the Heliotropic Imagination*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- Chambers, J. (1935) *D.H. Lawrence: A Personal Record by E.T.* London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd.
- Cheira, A. (2017) 'Neo-Victorian Sexual De[f/v]iance: Incest, Adultery, Breaking the Virginity Taboo and Female Sexual Agency in A.S. Byatt's "Morpho Eugenia"', *Neo-Victorian Studies*, 9(2), pp.126-153. Available at: <http://www.neovictorianstudies.com>. (Accessed: 22 October 2019).
- Chinn, N. (2001) 'I Am My Own Riddle' – A.S. Byatt's Christabel LaMotte: Emily Dickinson and Melusina', *Papers on Language and Literature: A Journal for Scholars and Critics of Language and Literature*, 37(2/Spring), pp.179-204.
- Chung, C. (1989) 'In Search of the Dark God: Lawrence's Dualism', in Preston, P. and Haare, P. (eds.) *D.H. Lawrence in the Modern World*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, pp.69-89.
- Coleridge, S.T. (2004) *Biographia Literaria*. Available at: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/6081/6081-h/6081-h.htm>. (Accessed: 15 February 2020).
- Corbett, M.J. (2014) 'No Second Friend?: Perpetual Maidenhood and Second Marriage in "In Memoriam" and "The Conjugal Angel"', *ELH: English Literary History*, 81(1/Spring), pp.299–323. doi:10.1353/elh.2014.0009.
- Cuder Domínguez, P. (1995) 'Romance Forms in A.S. Byatt's *Possession*', *Revista Alicantina de Estudios Ingleses*, 8, pp.79-89. doi:10.14198/raei.1995.8.07.
- Cushman, K. and Jackson, D. (eds.) (1991) *D.H. Lawrence's Literary Inheritors*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Daily Mail* Reporter (1960a) 'Drink and Driving', *The Daily Mail*, 19 January, p.1.

- (1960b) 'Girls Aged 10 Know the 4-letter Words in Lady C', *The Daily Mirror*, 29 October, p.12.
- (1961) 'Lady C's Sales Have Topped 3,000,500', *The Daily Mail*, 17 November, p.9.
- Daily Mirror* (1960a) 'Critic: Sex not Dragged In', *The Daily Mirror*, 28 October, p.7.
- (1960b) 'Four-Letter Words: Lady Chatterley is Innocent', *The Daily Mirror*, 3 November, p.1.
- (1960c) 'The (Innocent) Lady Chatterley', *The Daily Mirror*, 4 November, p.1.
- Dervin, D. (1984) *A 'Strange Sapience': The Creative Imagination of D.H. Lawrence*. Amhurst: The University of Massachusetts Press.
- De Sola Pinto, V. (1988) 'D.H. Lawrence: Poet Without a Mask', in Lawrence, D.H. *Complete Poems of D.H. Lawrence*. Edited by Vivian De Sola Pinto and Warren Roberts. London: Penguin, pp.1-21.
- Doherty, G. (1992) 'The Art of Leaping: Metaphor Unbound in D.H. Lawrence's *Women in Love*', *Style* 26 (1/Spring – Studies in Fiction), pp.50-65.
- Duncker, P. (2014) 'On Writing Neo-Victorian Fiction', *English: The Journal of the English Association*, 63(243/Winter), pp.253-274. doi:10.1093/english/efu019.
- Eagleton, M. (2014) 'The Anxious Life of Clever Girls: The University Novels of Margaret Drabble, A.S. Byatt and Hilary Mantel', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 33(2/Fall), pp.103-121.
- Ellis, D. (2013) *Memoirs of a Leavisite: The Decline and Fall of Cambridge English*. Liverpool University Press.
- Fielding, H. (2008) *Tom Jones*. Edited by J.B. Bender and S. Stern. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fingleton, D. et al. (1960) 'A Selection of Letters about the "Lady Chatterley's Lover" Verdict', *The Times*, 7 November, p.17.
- Fernandes, I. (2006) 'Matisse and Women: Portraits by A.S. Byatt', in Homem, R.M.G. de C. and Lambert, M. de F. (eds.) *Writing and Seeing: Essays on Word and Image*. Amsterdam: Brill Academic Publishers (Internationale Forschungen Zur Allgemeinen Und Vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft), pp.201-210.
- Fernihough, A. (2001) 'Introduction', in Fernihough, A. (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to D.H. Lawrence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.1-12.
- Fishwick, S. (2004) 'Encounters with Matisse: Space, Art and Intertextuality in A.S. Byatt's *The Matisse Stories* and Marie Redonnet's *Villa Rosa*', *Modern Language Review*, 99(1/Jan), pp.52-64. doi:10.2307/3738865.
- Flegel, M. (1998) 'Enchanted Readings and Fairy Tale Endings in A.S. Byatt's *Possession*', *English Studies in Canada*, 24(4), pp.413-430.

- Fletcher, L.M. (2016) “‘Singing in Her Song She Died’: Form as Heterotopic Mirror in Tennyson and Byatt”, *Studies in the Novel*, 48(3), pp.318-342. doi:10.1353/sdn.2016.0043.
- Forster, E.M. (1992) *Howards End*. New York: Signet.
- Franken, C. (2001) *A.S. Byatt: Art, Authorship, Creativity*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Franklin, O. (1960) ‘She has just missed a fortune from Lady Chatterley’, *The Daily Mail*, 27 January, p.6.
- Frazer, Sir J. (1993) *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*. Ware: Wordsworth Reference.
- Friedan, B. (1963) *Feminine Mystique*. New York: W.W. Norton and Co.
- Frost, D. (1969) ‘David Frost’, *The Daily Mail*, 29 May, p.3.
- Gardam, S. (2013) “‘Sound Apples, Fair Flesh and Sunlight’: A.S. Byatt’s Feminist Critique of Matisse’s Depictions of Women”, in Pedri, N. and Petit, L. (eds.) *Picturing the Language of Images*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp.119-132.
- Gilbert, S. and Gubar, S. (1988) *No Man’s Land: The Place of the Woman in the Twentieth Century: Vol. 1 The War of the Words*. London: Yale University Press.
- (2000) *Mad Woman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth century Literary Imagination*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Gindin, J. (1987) ‘Lawrence and the Contemporary English Novel’, in Meyers, G. (ed.) *The Legacy of D.H. Lawrence*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.30-53.
- Gombrich, E.H. (1979) *The Story of Art*. Oxford: Phaidon.
- Gorodeisky, K. (2016) ‘19th Century Romantic Aesthetics’, in Zalta, E.N. (ed.) *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Available at: <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2016/entries/aesthetics-19th-romantic>. (Accessed: 18 January 2020).
- Granofsky, R. (1999-2000) “‘Jews of the Wrong Sort’: D.H. Lawrence and Race”, *Journal of Modern Literature* 23(2/Winter), pp.209-223. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3831922>. (Accessed: 14 September 2015).
- Greer, G. (1970) *The Female Eunuch*. London: MacGibbon & Kee Ltd.
- Greiff, L.K. (2001) *D.H. Lawrence: Fifty Years on Film*. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Grimm, J. and Grimm, W. (n.d.) ‘Rumpelstiltskin’, in *Grimm’s Fairy Tales*. [e-book]. Available at: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/11027/11027-h/11027-h.htm#rumpelstiltskin>. (Accessed: 25 March 2020).
- Gutierrez, D. (1981) ‘The Ancient Imagination of D.H. Lawrence’, *Twentieth Century Literature* 27(2/Summer), pp.178-196.

- Gutleben, C. and Wolfreys, J. (2010) 'Postmodernism Revisited: The Ethical Drive of Postmodern Trauma in Neo-Victorian Fiction', in Kohlke, M.-L. and Gutleben, C. (eds.) *Neo-Victorian Tropes of Trauma: The Politics of Bearing After-witness to Nineteenth-Century Suffering*. Rodopi (Neo-Victorian series: 1), pp.37-72.
- Hadley, L. (2008) *The Fiction of A.S. Byatt*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- (2011) 'Feminine Endings: Neo-Victorian Transformations of the Victorian', in Tredennick, B. (ed.) *Victorian Transformations: Genre, Nationalism and Desire in Nineteenth-Century Literature*. London: Routledge, pp.181-194.
- (2012) 'Artists as Mothers: A Response to June Sturrock', *Connotations: A Journal for Critical Debate*, 22(1), pp.144-156.
- Harries, E.W. (2008) '3. "Ancient Forms": Myth, Fairy Tale, and Narrative in A.S. Byatt's Fiction', in Benson, S. (ed.) *Contemporary Fiction and the Fairy Tale*. Wayne State University Press (Series in Fairy-Tale Studies), pp.74-97.
- Harrison, W. and McCoy, B. (1992) 'Doctoral Dissertations on D.H. Lawrence: 1977-1993', *The D.H. Lawrence Review*, 24(2), pp.167-180. Available at: www.jstor.org/stable/44235462. (Accessed: 25 January 25, 2020).
- Hassan, I.H. (1955) 'The Problem of Influence in Literary History: Notes towards a Definition', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 14(1/Sep), pp.66-76. doi:10.2307/426642.
- Hirai, M. (1998) *Sisters in Literature: Female Sexuality in Antigone, Middlemarch, Howards End and Women in Love*. Basingstoke and London: Macmillan Press.
- Hayfield, D. (2009) 'Aesthetics of the Sublime: The Romantic Artist in A.S. Byatt's *The Shadow of the Sun*', *Romanticism: The Journal of Romantic Culture and Criticism*, 15(1), pp.75-84. doi: 10.3366/E1354991X09000531.
- Hennelly, M.M. Jr. (2003) "'Repeating Patterns" and Textual Pleasures: Reading (in) A.S. Byatt's *Possession: A Romance*', *Contemporary Literature* 44(3/Autumn), pp.442-471.
- Hough, G. (1956) *The Dark Sun: A Study of D.H. Lawrence*. London: Gerald Duckworth & Co.
- Humma, J.B. (1990) *Metaphor and Meaning in D.H. Lawrence's Later Novels*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press.
- Ingram, A. (1990) *The Language of D.H. Lawrence*. London: Macmillan Press.
- James, D. (2011) 'Introduction: Mapping Modernist Continuities', in James, D. (ed.) *The Legacies of Modernism: Historicising Postwar and Contemporary Fiction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.1-20.
- (2012) 'Introduction: Contemporary Fiction and the Promise of Modernism', in *Modernist Futures: Innovation and Inheritance in the Contemporary Novel*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.1-42.
- Janktová, R. (2015) 'Reshaping Meanings: D.H. Lawrence and the "Lady Chatterley Trial" in A.S. Byatt's *Babel Tower*', in *Brno Studies in English* 41(2), pp.43-56.
- John, 11-25, *Holy Bible: King James Version*. London: British and Foreign Bible Society.

- Johnson, J.A. (2012) 'Beyond Belief: The Crisis of Faith in A.S. Byatt's Fiction', *Journal of English Studies*, 10, pp.81-104.
- Journey, A. (2007) 'Dragon Goes to Bed with Princess: F. Scott Fitzgerald's Influence on Sylvia Plath', *Notes on Contemporary Literature*, 37(4), pp.2-4.
- Karastathi, S. (2015) 'Ekphrasis and the Novel/Narrative Fiction', in Rippl, G. (ed.) *Handbook of Intermediality: Literature – Image – Sound – Music*. Berlin: De Gruyter. (Handbooks of English and American Studies: Text and Theory).
- Kelly, K.C. (1996) *A.S. Byatt*. New York: Twayne Publishers.
- Krasso, N. (1960) 'Letters to the editor', *The Guardian*, 9 November, p.11.
- Lackey, M. (2008) 'A.S. Byatt's "Morpho Eugenia": Prolegomena to Any Future Theory', *College Literature: A Journal of Critical Literary Studies*, 35(1), p.128-147.
- Laing, R.D. (1960) *Divided Self: A Study of Sanity and Madness*. London: Tavistock Publications.
- (1969) *The Politics of the Family and Other Essays*. Toronto: CBC Enterprises.
- Lawrence, D.H. (1981a) *The Lost Girl*. Edited by J. Worthen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (1981b) *The Trespasser*. Edited by E. Mansfield. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (1983a) 'The Prussian Officer', in *The Prussian Officer and Other Stories*. Edited by J. Worthen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.1-21.
- (1983b) *St Mawr and Other Stories*. Edited by B. Finney. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (1983c) *The White Peacock*. Edited by A. Robertson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (1984) 'D.H. Lawrence to Compton Mackenzie', 11 June 1920, in *The Letters of D.H. Lawrence: Vol. 3 1916–1921*. Edited by J.T. Boulton and A. Robertson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (1985a) 'Why the Novel Matters', in *Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays*. Edited by B. Steele. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.191-198.
- (1985b) 'Morality and the Novel', in *Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays*. Edited by B. Steele. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.169-176.
- (1985c) 'Study of Thomas Hardy', in *Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays*. Edited by B. Steele. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.3-132.
- (1985d) 'The Novel and the Feeling', in *Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays*. Edited by B. Steele. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.201-206.

- (1987a) 'Foreword to *Women in Love*'. Appendix to *Women in Love*. Edited by D. Farmer, L. Vasey and J. Worthen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.485-486.
- (1987b) 'Love Among the Haystacks', in *Love Among the Haystacks and Other Stories*. Edited by J. Worthen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.87-122.
- (1987c) *The Plumed Serpent*. Edited by L.D. Clark. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (1987d) *Women in Love*. Edited by D. Farmer, L. Vasey and J. Worthen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (1988a) 'The Reality of Peace', in *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine and Other Essays*. Edited by M. Herbert. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.27-52.
- (1988b) 'The Crown', in *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine*. Edited by M. Herbert. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.251-317.
- (1989) *The Rainbow*. Edited by M. Kinkead-Weekes. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (1990) 'England, My England', in *England, my England and Other Stories*. Edited by B. Steele. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.5-33.
- (1992) *Sons and Lovers*. Edited by H. Baron and C. Baron. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (1993) *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Edited by M. Squires. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (1994) *Kangaroo*. Edited by B. Steele. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (1995a) 'Sun', in *The Woman Who Rode Away and Other Stories*. Edited by D. Mehl and C. Jansohn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.19-38.
- (1995b) 'The Woman Who Rode Away', in *The Woman Who Rode Away and Other Stories*. Edited by D. Mehl and C. Jansohn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.39-71.
- (2002a) 'The Ladybird', in *The Fox, The Captain's Doll, The Ladybird*. Edited by D. Mehl. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.155-221.
- (2002b) *Twilight in Italy and Other Essays*. Edited by P. Eggert. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (2002c) 'Snake', in *The Complete Poems of D.H. Lawrence*. Edited by D. Ellis. Ware: Wordsworth, pp.282-284.
- (2002d) 'D.H. Lawrence to Bertrand Russell', 8 December 1915, in *The Letters of D.H. Lawrence: Vol. 2 1913 -1916*. Edited by G.J. Zytaruk and J.T. Boulton. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (2003) 'The Spirit of Place', in Greenspan, E., Vasey, L. and Worthen, J. (eds.) *Studies in Classic American literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.13-19.

- (2004a) *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious and Fantasia of the Unconscious*. Edited by B. Steele. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (2004b) 'Making Pictures', in *Late Essays and Articles*. Edited by J.T. Boulton. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.225-232.
- (2004c) 'Introduction to These Paintings', in *Late Essays and Articles*. Edited by J.T. Boulton. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.182-215.
- Leary, T. (1968a) 'The Molecular Revolution', in *The Politics of Ecstasy*. New York: Putnam.
- (1968b) 'Soul Session', in *The Politics of Ecstasy*. New York: Putnam.
- Leavis, F.R. (1932) *How to Teach Reading: A Primer for Ezra Pound*. Cambridge: The Minority Press.
- (1965a) 'The Wild Untutored Phoenix', in *The Common Pursuit*. London: Chatto & Windus, pp.233-239.
- (1965b) 'Literary Criticism and Philosophy', in *The Common Pursuit*. London: Chatto & Windus, pp.211-221.
- (1965c) 'The Logic of Christian Discrimination', in *The Common Pursuit*. London: Chatto & Windus, pp.248-254.
- (1965d) 'Tragedy and the Medium: A Note on Mr Santayana's Tragic Philosophy', in *The Common Pursuit*. London: Chatto & Windus, pp.121-135.
- (1967a) 'The Orthodoxy of Enlightenment', in *Anna Karenina and Other Essays*. London: Chatto & Windus, pp.235-241.
- (1967b) 'T.S. Eliot as Critic', in *Anna Karenina and Other Essays*. London: Chatto & Windus, pp.177-196.
- (1968a) *D.H. Lawrence: Novelist*. Hammonds Worth: Penguin Books.
- (1968b) 'D.H. Lawrence', in *For Continuity*. Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, pp.111-148.
- (1968c) 'The Literary Mind,' in *For Continuity*. Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, pp.47-67.
- (1973) *The Great Tradition: George Eliot, Henry James, Joseph Conrad*. London: Chatto & Windus.
- (1976) *Thought, Words and Creativity: Art and Thought in Lawrence*. London: Chatto & Windus.
- (1979) 'Mass Civilisation and Minority Culture', in *Education and the University*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.143-171.
- (1986a) 'D.H. Lawrence', in *Valuation in Criticism and Other Essays*. Edited by G. Singh. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.17-22.

- (1986b) 'Lawrence after Thirty Years', in *Valuation in Criticism and Other Essays*. Edited by G. Singh. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.103-111.
- (1986c) 'T.S. Eliot and the Life of English Literature', in *Valuation in Criticism and Other Essays*. Edited by G. Singh. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.129-150.
- (1986d) 'Standards of Criticism', in *Valuation in Criticism and Other Essays*. Edited by G. Singh. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.244-252.
- (1986e) 'Valuation in Criticism', in *Valuation in Criticism and Other Essays*. Edited by G. Singh. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.276-284.
- (2008) *New Bearings in English Poetry*. London: Faber & Faber.
- Levin, B. (1980) 'Nice to see you again, m'lady', *The Times*, 23 October, p.16.
- Llewellyn, M. (2010) "'Perfectly Innocent, Natural, Playful": Incest in Neo-Victorian Women's Writing', in Kohlke, M.-L. and Gutleben, C. (eds.) *Neo-Victorian Tropes of Trauma: The Politics of Bearing After-Witness to Nineteenth-Century Suffering*. Rodopi (Neo-Victorian Series: 1), pp.133-160.
- Mao, D. and Walkowitz, R.L. (2008) 'The New Modernist Studies', *PMLA* 123(3), pp.737-748. Available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25501895>. (Accessed: 6 February 2019).
- Maltz, D. (2012) 'The Newer New Life: A.S. Byatt, E. Nesbit and Socialist Subculture', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 17(1/March), pp.79-84. doi:10.1080/13555502.2012.662017.
- Mehl, D. and Jansohn, C. (2014) 'The Reception of D.H. Lawrence in the German-Speaking Countries, 1922 – 1945', in Jansohn, C. and Mehl, D. (eds.) *The Reception of D.H. Lawrence in Europe*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, pp.23-52.
- Meyer, M. (2015) 'A.S. Byatt's *Matisse Stories* (1993): Re-framing Pictorial Hypotexts', in Rippl, G. (ed.) *Handbook of Intermediality: Literature-Image-Sound-Music*. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter. (Handbooks of English and American studies: Text and theory: Vol. 1), pp.311-312.
- Meyers, G. (ed.) (1987) *The Legacy of D.H. Lawrence*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Millet K. (2000) *Sexual Politics*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Mitchell, K. (2009) '(Feeling It) as It Actually Happened: History as Sensation in A.S. Byatt's *Possession: A Romance*', in Uhlmann, A. et.al. (eds.) *Literature and Sensation*. Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp.266-279.
- (2010) *History and Cultural Memory in Neo-Victorian Fiction*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Montgomery, R.E. (1994) *The Visionary D.H. Lawrence: Beyond Philosophy and Art*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Moore, H.T. (1951) *The Life and Works of D.H. Lawrence*. New York: Twayne Publishers.
- Nash, R. (1971) 'James Bond kills off poetry', *The Daily Mail*, 22 February, p.3.

- Observer* (1966) 'What is One to Make of the Moors Murders? Maurice Richardson Who Attended the Trial of Ian Brady and Myra Hindley Sums Up His Impressions of the Killers and Their Private World', *The Observer*, 8 May, pp.21.
- O'Connor, E. (2002) 'Reading *The Biographer's Tale*', *Victorian Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Social, Political, and Cultural Studies*, 44(3), pp.379-387.
doi:10.2979/VIC.2002.44.3.379.
- Parkinson, T.F. (1961) *A Casebook on the Beat*. New York, Thomas Y. Crowell.
- Perloff, M. (2006) 'Epilogue: Modernism Now', in Bradshaw, D. and Dettmar, K.J.H (eds.) *A Companion to Modernist Literature and Culture*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp.572-578.
- Petit, L. (2008) 'Inscribing Colors and Coloring Words: A.S. Byatt's "Art Work" as a "Verbal Still Life"', *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, 49(4), pp.395-412.
doi:10.3200/CRIT.49.4.395-412.
- Phillips, P. (1970) 'How they changed and how they changed us', *The Daily Mail*, 11 April, p.5.
- Pocock, S.J. (2007) 'Signs of Authority: Yeatsian Influence and Muldoon's "At the Sign of the Black Horse, September 1999"', *Notes on Contemporary Literature*, 37(1), pp.4-7.
- Pokhrel, A.K. (2015) 'Re-(en)visioning "the Vanishing of the Past": Myth, Art, and Women in A.S. Byatt's "Medusa's Ankles" and "Art Work"', *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 44(3), pp.392-424. doi:10.1080/00497878.2015.1009763.
- Polansky, S. (1981) 'A Family Romance-Northrop Frye and Harold Bloom: A Study of Critical Influence', *boundary 2* 9(2/Winter - A Supplement on Contemporary Poetry), pp.227-246.
Available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/303059>. (Accessed: 14 September 2015).
- Preston, P. (2003) 'I am in a Novel: D.H. Lawrence in Recent British Fiction', in Cushman, K. and Ingersoll, E.G. (eds.) *D.H. Lawrence: New Worlds*. Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, pp.25-49.
- (2012) "'Myths of Desire": D.H. Lawrence, Language and Ethics in A.S. Byatt's Fiction', in James, D. (ed.) *The Legacies of Modernism: Historicising Postwar and Contemporary Fiction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.187-202.
- Ragussis, M. (1978) *The Subterfuge of Art: Language and the Romantic Tradition*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Rippl, G. (2000) 'Visuality and Ekphrasis in A.S. Byatt's *Still Life* and "Art Work"', in Reitz, B. and Rieuwertz, S. (eds.) *Anglistentag 1999 Mainz: Proceedings*. Unknown Publisher; (Proceedings of the Conference of the German Association of University Teachers of English: 21), pp.519-534.
- The Rocking Horse Winner* (1949). [Film] Directed by Anthony Péliissier. UK: Two Cities Film.
- Rodríguez González, C. (2008) 'A Dialogue with Literary Theory: A.S. Byatt's *The Biographer's Tale*', *English Studies*, 89(4/August), pp.447-460.
- Rolph, C.H. (ed.) (1961) *The Lady Chatterley Trial*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

- Rudaitytė, R. (2007) '(De)Construction of the Postmodern in A.S. Byatt's Novel *Possession*', *Literatūra: Vilniaus Universiteto Mokslo Darbai*, 49(5), pp.116-122.
- Ruderman, J. (2003) "'An Englishman at Heart?': Lawrence and the National Identity Debates', in Cushman, K. and Ingersoll, E.G. (eds.) *D.H. Lawrence: New Worlds*. Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, pp.50-67.
- Sagar, K. (1966) *The Art of D.H. Lawrence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sanders, K. (2000) 'Polemical plot-coils: thematising the postmodern in *Possession*', *Sydney Studies in English*, 26, pp.1-22. [Online] Available at: <https://openjournals.library.sydney.edu.au/index.php/SSE/article/viewFile/552/521>. (Accessed 25 October 2019).
- Schumacher, J. (2016) 'Chromatic Darkness: The Color Sequences in A.S. Byatt's *Little Black Book of Stories*', in Paulsen, G., Uusküla, M. and Brindle, J. (eds.) *Color Language and Color Categorization*. Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp.256-268.
- Shakespeare, N. (1985) 'Deep Thought and Domesticity', *The Times*, 22 June, p.20.
- Siegel, C. (1991) *Lawrence Among Women: Wavering Boundaries in Women's Literary Traditions*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia.
- Spinozzi, P. (2006) 'Ekphrasis as Portrait: A.S. Byatt's Fictional and Visual Doppelgänger', in Homem, R.M.G. de C. and Lambert, M. de F. (eds.) *Writing and Seeing: Essays on Word and Image*. Amsterdam: Brill Academic Publishers (Internationale Forschungen Zur Allgemeinen Und Vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft), pp.223-231.
- Steveker, L. (2009) *Identity and Cultural Memory in the Fiction of A.S. Byatt: Knitting the Net of Culture*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Stevens, W. (1997) 'Notes Towards a Supreme Fiction', in *Collected Poetry and Prose*. New York: Library of America, pp.329-352.
- Stewart, J. (1996) 'Linguistic Incantation and Parody in *Women in Love*', *Style*, 30(1), pp.95-112.
- (1999) *The Vital Art of D.H. Lawrence: Vision and Expression*. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press.
- (2008) *Color, Space, and Creativity: Art and Ontology in Five British Writers*. Madison/Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press.
- (2013) 'Lawrence Through the Lens of A.S. Byatt: *The Shadow of the Sun* and *The Virgin in the Garden*', *D.H. Lawrence Review* 38(2), pp.21-44.
- (2017) 'Mixing Colors, Making Designs: A.S. Byatt's "Racine and the Tablecloth," "Rose-Coloured Teacups," and "Sugar"', *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, 58(3), pp.237-247. doi:10.1080/00111619.2016.1211602.
- Storey, D. (1963) *Radcliffe*. London: Longmans.

- Sturrock, J. (2009) 'How Browning and Byatt Bring Back the Dead: "Mr. Sludge, the Medium"' and "The Conjugal Angel"', *Partial Answers: Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas*, 7(1/Jan), pp.19-30.
- (2010/11) 'Artists as Parents in A.S. Byatt's *The Children's Book* and Iris Murdoch's *The Good Apprentice*', *Connotations: A Journal of Critical Debate*, 20(1), pp.108-30. Available at: <https://www.connotations.de/article/june-sturrock-artists-as-parents-in-a-s-byatts-the-childrens-book-and-iris-murdochs-the-good-apprentice>. (Accessed 12 October 2020).
- Tague, G. (2003/2004) 'Metaphysical Consciousness in the Work of D.H. Lawrence', *D.H. Lawrence Review* 32/33, pp.126-139.
- Times (1968) 'Court Season of D.H. Lawrence', *The Times* 7 February, p.6.
- Tintner, A.R. (2015) *Edith Wharton in Context: Essays on Intertextuality*. Tuscaloosa: University Alabama Press.
- Thomas, N. (2013) "'To-night's Big Talking Point is Still That Book": Popular Responses to the *Lady Chatterley Trial*', *Cultural and Social History* 10(4), pp.619-634.
- Tiffin, J. (2006) 'Ice, Glass, Snow: Fairy Tale as Art and Metafiction in the Writings of A.S. Byatt', *Movels & Tales: Journal of Fairy-Tale Studies*, 20(1), p.4.
- Todd, R. (1997) *A.S. Byatt*. Plymouth: Northcote House.
- Turner, N. (2012/2013) 'A Daughter Abandons her Literary Mother: A.S. Byatt's *The Children's Book* and Iris Murdoch's *The Good Apprentice*', *Connotations: A Journal of Critical Debate*, 22(1), pp.162-165. Available at: <https://www.connotations.de/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/turner0221.pdf>. (Accessed: 25 November 2020).
- Tynan, K. (1960) 'Lady Chatterley's Trial', *The Observer*, 6 November, p.21.
- Uhsadel, K. (2012) 'The Continuity of Victorian Traces: A.S. Byatt's *The Children's Book*', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 17(1/March), pp.72-79.
- Wallhead, C. (2003) 'Metaphors for the Self in A.S. Byatt's *The Biographer's Tale*', *Language and Literature: Journal of the Poetics and Linguistics Association*, 12(4/Nov), pp.291-308. doi:10.1177/09639470030124001.
- (2018): 'History in A.S. Byatt: Novelist and Critic', in Fernandes, A.R. (ed.) *Narrative Strategies in the Reconstruction of History*. Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp.5-32.
- Walsh, C. (2000) 'Postmodernist Reflections: A.S. Byatt's *Possession*', in Todd, R. and Flora, L. (eds.) *Theme Parks, Rainforests and Sprouting Wastelands*. Amsterdam-Atlanta: Rodopi, pp.185-194.
- Welby, J. (2019) 'The Archbishop of Canterbury's Easter Sermon 2019', *The Archbishop of Canterbury: Justin Welby*, 21 April. Available at: <https://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/speaking-and-writing/sermons/archbishop-canterburys-easter-sermon-2019>. (Accessed: 25 February 2020).
- Wellek, R. (1937) 'Literature and Philosophy', *Scrutiny* 5(4/March), pp.375-383.

- Wells, L.K. (2002) 'Historical Repetition and Cultural Reflection in A.S. Byatt's *Possession: A Romance*', *MFS Modern Fiction Studies*, 48(3/Fall), pp.668-692.
- Wilhelmus, T. (2001) 'Reading A.S. Byatt Reading', *Hudson Review* 54(3/Autumn), p.507.
- Wilson, C. (1969) 'Forget the Sex Scenes: This Lawrence Film is Simply Beautiful', *The Daily Mail*, 11 November, p.12.
- Wittgenstein, L. (2009) *Philosophische Untersuchungen – Philosophical Investigations*, 4th ed. Edited by P.M.S. Hacker and J. Schulte. Translated by G.E.M. Anscombe, P.M.S. Hacker and J. Schulte. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.
- (1922) *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Edited by B. Russell. Translated by C.K. Ogden. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd.
- Women in Love* (1969). [Film] Directed by Ken Russell. UK: Brandywine Productions.
- Worthen, J. (1979) *D.H. Lawrence and the Idea of the Novel*. London: Macmillan.
- (1981) 'Introduction', in Lawrence, D.H. *The Lost Girl*. Edited by J. Worthen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. xvii-lviii.
- (1992) *D.H. Lawrence: The Early Years 1885 – 1912*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Young, K. (1955) 'The Greatness of D.H. Lawrence: Lorenzo in Search of the Sun', *The Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, 30 March, p.5.
- Young, W. (1960) 'Lawrence Unbound', *The Guardian*, 4 November, p.22.

Illustrations:

- Cézanne, P. (c. 1885) *The Bay of Marseilles, Seen from L'Estaque*. Wiki Commons. Public Domain. Available at: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Baie_de_Marseille,_vue_de_1%27Estaque,_par_Paul_C%C3%A9zanne.jpg. (Accessed: 20 February 2020).
- Kirchner, E.L. (1919) *Winter Landscape in Moonlight*. Wiki Commons. Public Domain. Source/Photographer: The Detroit Institute of Arts. Available: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ernst_Ludwig_Kirchner_-_Winter_Landscape_in_Moonlight,_1919._Detroit_Institute_of_Arts.jpg. (Accessed: 20 February 2020).
- Munch, E. (1901) *White Night*. Wiki Art: Visual Art Encyclopaedia. Public Domain. Available at: <https://www.wikiart.org/en/edvard-munch/white-night-1901>. (Accessed: 20 February 2020).
- Palmer, S. (c. 1830) *Cornfield by Moonlight, with the Evening Star*. Wiki Commonc. Public Domain. Available at: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Samuel_Palmer_-_Kornfeld_im_Mondenschein.jpg. (Accessed: 20 February 2020).

Van Gogh, V. (1889) *The Starry Night*. Wiki Art: Visual Art Encyclopaedia. Public Domain.
Available at: <https://www.wikiart.org/en/vincent-van-gogh/the-starry-night-1889>. (Accessed:
20 February 2020).