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Reining in Expectations in "The Horse-Dealer's Daughter": A New Version of the Pastoral

Shirley Bricout

- 1 "The Horse-Dealer's Daughter" introduces siblings on the brink of profound disruptions in their financial situation. Owing to their father's mismanagement of his fortune, three brothers are at a crossroads, each resolving to face the new life set before them which involves leaving the family farmhouse and their occupation as horse-dealers. At odds with their resignation, their sister's transgressive behaviour emphasizes her plea for a freely chosen future even if it implies taking her own life. Eventually becoming further acquainted with the local doctor, who saves her from drowning in a pond, offers the young woman an alternative to suicide.
- 2 Originally entitled "The Miracle," the short story was revised several times over the years which led up to its publication under its present title in *The English Review* in April 1922. Later the same year, it was included in the collection *England, my England* which was published in the United States. Written against the backdrop of the war, several short stories in the collection address both the personal and social upheaval brought about by the conflict while all disclose nostalgia for a by-gone England, "the myth of Britain as it was before industry came to change it" (Delany 78). Formally the short story genre befitted Lawrence's interest in depicting the moment of crisis and its resolution by foregrounding the characters' coming to awareness and self-discovery. Crisis in the short story, as Pierre Tibi explains, "is located at the junction of two temporal segments – the circumstances which lead to it and the consequences which may derive from it."¹ The stories zero in on the tensions that the characters are confronted with when they struggle to achieve self-fulfillment.
- 3 My contention is that in "The Horse-Dealer's Daughter" Lawrence explores the dynamic potentialities of the pastoral in order to fashion a modernist version of the mode which suits his views on self-fulfillment in a changing world. He ventures to conjure up the rural myth which combines idealized country life with a sense of

Englishness without actually thematizing it as he does in his novel *The Rainbow* for instance. From the outset of the short story, the crisis is thus pitted against a subtly intimated pastoral ideal, "each only-just-vanished period [having] its pastoral values located in an idyllic recent past when things were less problematic than in the present" (Gifford 9). Pointing to the ties between conventional pastoral and the past in his seminal study, Raymond Williams analyses eighteenth and nineteenth century works from the period of enclosures where "an ordered and happier past [is] set against the disturbance and disorder of the present" (45). Parliamentary enclosures were introduced on arable land, between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, to delineate fields so that they were managed by landowners throughout the year. Before this policy, the land was communal and fields were entrusted to individual cultivators during the growing and harvesting seasons. Therefore the fields or portions of land were enclosed with hedges or fences to trace the limits of legal rights and to prevent common grazing. Though the practice had started in the twelfth century and peaked in the sixteenth, "parliamentary procedure," as Williams puts it, "made this process at once more public and more recorded" (97) and was felt to shape a modern England. Williams notes:

there is a sense in which the idea of the enclosures [...can] become an element of that very powerful myth of modern England in which the transition from a rural to an industrial society is seen as a kind of fall, the true cause and origin of our social suffering and disorder. (96)

- 4 Inequalities and also, as Williams arrestingly shows, the weakening of a genuine sense of community (102-103) fostered nostalgia. Consequently, the pastoral literature of the time, for example George Crabbe's *The Village* (1783), was a means to focus on "the recognition, even the idealisation, of 'humble' characters, in sympathy, in charity and in community" (130). Indeed, the pastoral mode conveys "an idealisation, based on a temporary situation and on a deep desire for stability" (45).
- 5 To begin my study of "The Horse-Dealer's Daughter" in this respect, I would like to argue that a pastoral ideal lying beyond the boundaries of the text is repeatedly conjured up through the introduction of the characters in order to fashion tensions which denounce the siblings' unsought circumstances. Thus the characters' loss of agency is aestheticized thanks to the dialectics set to work between an idealized former rural world and present conditions. I would like to focus on how pastoral conventions are formally subverted when oppositions and hierarchies are upset to convey the brothers' subservient acceptance of change. Then I intend to show how, conversely, the sister's attempts to gain control over her life imply drawing new borderlines. A few key features of the landscape apprehended through modernist shifts in point of view contribute to drawing such personal and somewhat symbolic boundaries. Finally looking at other narrative forms of transgression, such as parody, I intend to examine how the doctor's intervention disrupts these personal boundaries and inscribes the characters' new expectations founded on budding love in a shifting territory mapped out in Lawrence's own version of the pastoral.
- 6 The short story's beginning *in medias res* strongly conjures up an unmentioned past during which economic and industrial transformations brought about painful personal mutations. Since the characters are caught in the middle of a desultory conversation about their plans, the opening of the unframed story "points to a 'pre-text,' simultaneously negating itself as a beginning and redefining the opening as an intrusion into an already fictional world" (Reynier 52). The *incipit* of "The Horse-

Dealer's Daughter," which briefly states the situation ("The morning post had given the final tap to the family fortunes, and all was over" 137), introduces the crisis to be resolved while the circumstances which lead to it are first confined to the "pre-text" before being eventually alluded to in a brief analepsis recounting the farm's decline (142).

- 7 The depiction of the Pervin brothers' demise draws heavily on their former trade as horse-dealers. The title of the short story which names the family's occupation orients the reader's expectations towards an orderly structure where the animal realm is submitted to man thereby ensuring a dichotomy between subject and nature. Labor establishes man's power over land and animals while enforcing pastoral stability. However, intent on portraying the "queer jumble of the old England and the new" that he expands on in his essay "Nottingham and the Mining Countryside" (289), Lawrence upsets such conventional hierarchies in order to narrate checked personal expectations and the loss of agency.
- 8 The brothers' subjection to the outcome of their financial mishaps, also linked to intrusive mechanization, is articulated through pervasive animal imagery. Joe's prospect is "to marry and go into harness. His life was over, he would be a subject animal now" ("The Horse-Dealer's Daughter" 138). He moves about "in a real horsy fashion" (139). But he desperately attempts to retain some command over an animal by contemptuously throwing a scrap of bacon-rind to his cowering dog. His brother Fred Henry faces a distressing truth knowing that "he was an animal which controls, not one which is controlled. He was master of any horse, and he carried himself with a well-tempered air of mastery. But he was not master of the situations of life" (138). And the youngest brother, Malcolm is "a young man of twenty-two, with a fresh, jaunty *muséau*" (139).
- 9 The animal, in Lawrentian vocabulary, often carries laudatory undertones of primitivism and a return to the unspoiled spontaneity of life. Lawrence's novella *St Mawr* is a case in point. Indeed, the eponymous stallion, though domesticated, is nevertheless endowed with the cosmic vitality that men have lost to modernity. Lou, on seeing *St Mawr*, experiences an epiphany because of such potency: "But now, as if that mysterious fire of the horse's body had split some rock in her, she went home and hid herself in her room, and just cried" (30). Similarly, Lawrence celebrates the horse in his essay *Apocalypse* stating that "far, far back in our dark soul the horse prances. He is a dominant symbol: he gives us lordship: he links us, the first palpable and throbbing link with the ruddy-glowing Almighty of potency" (101).
- 10 By contrast in "The Horse-Dealer's Daughter" the tied-up draught-horses lack such vitality; their haunches swing and rock "in a motion like sleep" (138). Just as the movement of the farm horses led off up the lane is said to show "a massive, slumbrous strength, and a stupidity which held them in subjection" (138), the term "stupidity" is also used to qualify the brothers: Joe's bearing is "stupid" and Malcolm grins "fatuously" (137, 139). Although Fred Henry is pictured as "an animal which controls," the primitive impulse which is suggested by the comparison loses much of its agency when the character has to submit to his fate. Therefore the animal imagery resorted to in these portrayals acquires a depreciative value when it is set against conventional pastoral hierarchy. Owing to this dialectic mode of writing, the equine imagery turns into an organizing motif which unsettles pastoral stability. In this way, for the Pervins, the loss of their job goes hand in hand with their loss of agency. No longer subjects,

they have become the objects of their economic times. Their overall sense of dispossession and loss of maleness as well as self is further conveyed through the way household belongings that they are about to lose are endowed with anthropomorphic traits. Indeed, the breakfast table is "desolate," the mahogany furniture "looks as if it were waiting" (137). In addition to the human-animal hybridity embedded in the text, anthropomorphism mirrors the reification of the men.

- 11 The irony resulting from the liminal position between the human and the animal realms voices a more general critique of spreading mechanization and dramatically changing circumstances of country people. "While," as Susan Reid puts it, "the pastoral genre usually explores and ultimately reinforces difference" (106), such irony may pertain to an anti-pastoral mode in so far as the stark reality of the countryside world is brought to the fore. The disruption of country life together with the loss of rural trades and livelihoods is articulated through the subversion of pastoral conventions. Lawrence was to express this concern about country life in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* when he wrote of the mining industry, "The industrial England blots out the agricultural England. One meaning blots out another. The new England blots out the old England. And the continuity is not organic, it is mechanical" (156). Connie Chatterley is positioned as a reader to whom the pastoral presents an idealized picture of the countryside but she is also made to become aware of its fallacy:

Connie, belonging to the leisured classes, had clung to the remnants of the old England. It had taken her years to realise that it was really blotted out by this terrifying, new and gruesome England, and that the blotting out would go on till it was complete. (156)

- 12 As Paul Delany puts it, "assuming a radical opposition between the 'human' (pastoral) and industrial worlds, [Lawrence] ruled out any evolving mediation between the realms of nature and technique" (87). Thus by transgressing pastoral conventions Lawrence finds an artistic expression to articulate his uncompromising attitude to industrialization. It also enables him to foreground the effects of the new circumstances on the characters while keeping explicit descriptions of their causes beyond the borders of the text and contributing in this way to the economy of the short story.

- 13 That the narrative should focus on the woman's fate underscores the gender issues at stake. The story can be read as the sexual awakening of a young woman who so far has conformed to socially constructed gender roles that resonate also in the pastoral concept of the family as a functional hierarchy. During her brothers' conversation, Mabel is only seen to attend sulkily to household chores. In fact, as far as she is concerned, the family collapsed well before the siblings had to contemplate going their separate ways. Indeed, her mother's death followed by her father's remarriage and bankruptcy brought on what Martin Kearney calls "her life of drudgery" (159).
- 14 In keeping with the equine tropes prompted by the brothers' trade, the imagery used to describe Mabel is restricted to the animal allowed in the house, that is "the classic avatar of fidelity, the domesticated dog, [which epitomizes] 'the appropriate relationship between masters and subordinates'" (Rohman 7). Unlike the equine tropes which are authored by an omniscient narrator in the short story, the canine tropes

originate in the male characters' gaze on the woman; Mabel's impassive face is indeed likened to a bull-dog's "as her brothers called it" (137). This difference in point of view has a bearing on the symbolic potential of the terrier curled up in front of the fireplace. Indeed, though the dog is male ("his haunches"), its subservient cowering triggers the vilifying use of the female "bitch" (138). A further instance makes it clear that Mabel is targeted by the insult:

She folded the white table-cloth, and put on the chenille cloth.
 "The sulkiest bitch that ever trod!" muttered her brother.
 But she finished her task with perfectly impassive face. (*sic* 141)

- 15 Mabel's portrait is therefore also fashioned thanks to the blurring of boundaries between species but the aim here is to highlight the stark realities of the rigid hierarchy at stake. That is why her silence takes on a particular poignancy. Indeed, beyond the borders of the short story lies the violence of silencing as the woman is subjected to social constructs. Under her brother's gaze she is also objectified since they "had talked at her and round her for so many years" (139). She further endures the yoke of poverty, conforming to what is expected of her, "keeping the home together in penury for her ineffectual brothers" (142). In addition to the somber picture of a woman's lot, the subversion of pastoral romance points to more pragmatic realities when the brothers' dealings with the female servants are said to have resulted in the birth of "illegitimate children" (142).
- 16 Mabel's identity formation is central to the short story and to Lawrence's critique of economic interests subjecting the self. She retains the family's former "animal pride" (143) in its primitive and vitalistic sense which endows her with emotional intelligence. Therefore thanks to her stubborn silence she is paradoxically the first sibling to find a means to gain agency since she firmly believes that "she would always hold the keys of her own situation" (143). The "non-verbal ways" in which her emotional intelligence is conveyed illustrate what Elizabeth Wallace celebrates as Lawrence's "skill at portraying the growth of consciousness in inarticulate men and women" (112). Mabel's silence is indeed her means of resistance as she "seeks that invisible and promised territory, that country that does not exist but that [she bears in her] dreams, and that must indeed be called a beyond" (Kristéva 5). In a desperate bid to dismiss the conventional available options, such as going to live with her sister, the resolute but secretive woman believes that this beyond lies in death. Tending her mother's grave, she physically isolates herself from the life she has come to hate: "She felt immune from the world, reserved within the thick churchyard wall as in another country" (143). Indeed, in order to keep control over her fate, Mabel redefines her own new boundaries thanks to a ritual she performs in the graveyard when she reverently undertakes to wash her mother's grave. In his arresting study, Jeffrey Meyers underlines the solemnity of the act writing that "she ritualistically carries shears, sponge and scrubbing brush to the graveyard and prepares for her own death" (347). I would further argue that the ritual defines Mabel's *temenos* – from the Greek τέμενος – a sacred space marked off for communion with her late mother. However, while preparing her future in this holy sanctuary, she is conjuring up images of maternal comfort from the past as "she decides to return to the elemental womb of her mother by drowning herself" (Meyers 347). So although Mabel belongs with "apparently simple and unsophisticated characters of low social status [who] are the vehicle for the writer's exploration of complex ideas about society" in pastoral literature (Gifford 9), her lot and contemplation of suicide fashion her rather as the antithesis of the pastoral female.

- 17 The depiction of her inner turmoil generated by the conflicting prospects between the personal and the social also disrupts at one point the chronological narration. A brief nostalgic summary of the family's past circumstances is conveyed from Mabel's point of view and gives the reader some insight into the "pre-text" by conjuring up an irretrievable affluent life. The text reads: "The stables had been full of horses, there was a great turmoil and come-and-go of horses and of dealers and grooms. Then the kitchen was full of servants. But of late things had declined" (142). The very name of the Pervins' house, called "Oldmeadow," hints at tradition and stability. This on-going transgression of the borders of the short story becomes the aesthetic means by which to narrate conflicting expectations. What remains to be assessed is how a return to the pastoral is negotiated.
- 18 Though most critical studies of the story focus on the rescue from the pond, the scene in the graveyard marks in many respects a first turning point in the short story. Indeed, it focuses solely on Mabel and the doctor called Fergusson, the brothers' fate being already dealt with. Furthermore, the reader's expectations about Mabel's fate appear to be confirmed in so far as death is the way out she contemplates. However some features of the landscape already harbour suggestions of a different outcome. The churchyard wall which stands as a protective boundary for Mabel is in fact quite low and anybody tending a tomb is in full view of passers-by, therefore Mabel's endeavor is entirely symbolic and personal; indeed, privately mapping out her own *temenos* is a means to fulfill her individual self. At this point a dramatic shift in point of view gives prominence to the doctor whose house stands nearby. This agent of an alternative to suicide casts his eyes on the young woman and in doing so undermines the stability of the boundaries she has drawn. Parallel to such formal disruptions in point of view, the semantic field of the eyes and gaze develops. The text reads:
- "glancing across the graveyard with *his quick eye* he *saw* the girl at the task at the grave. She seemed so intent and remote, it was like *looking into* another world [...]
He slowed down as he walked, *watching* her as if spellbound.
She lifted *her eyes*, feeling him *looking*. Their eyes met. And each *looked away* again at once. (142-143, my emphasis).
- 19 The occurrences will be repeated, thus, as Meyers has noted, the "four eye-meetings – in house, graveyard, pond and house – [...] provide a thematic structure and mark the progress in their love" (346). The semantic field of eyes and gaze conveys a rhythmic attraction-repulsion pattern throughout the second part of the short story (see McCabe 67). The formal experiments with point of view are thus thematized semantically while Mabel's efforts at defining new boundaries are dramatically linked to such shifts.
- 20 A brief portrayal of the young doctor positions him as similarly leading a miserable life. "Nothing but work, drudgery, constant hastening from dwelling to dwelling among the colliers and the iron-workers. It wore him out, but at the same time he had a craving for it," the short story reads (144); he is "a slave to the countryside" (143). The doctor's rounds concerned with workers in the mines and factories bear witness to "the new England." On this particular day, he too has crossed a boundary linked to his vocation. Indeed, he is his own patient since he is suffering from a cold. One of the Pervin brothers makes fun of the doctor's liminal position: "'It's a knock-out, isn't it,' said Joe, boisterously, 'if a doctor goes round croaking with a cold. Looks bad for the patients, doesn't it?'" (140). The doctor's vulnerability which momentarily divests him of his professional status heralds his eventual role as a lover.

- 21 Both the suicide attempt and the rescue are entirely depicted from the doctor's point of view. Indeed, Mabel's intentions are only guessed at thanks to this witness's vantage point from the path:
- Roving across the landscape, the doctor's quick eye detected a figure in black passing through the gates of the field, down towards the pond. He looked again. It would be Mabel Pervin. His mind suddenly became alive and attentive.
Why was she going down there? He pulled up on the path and stood staring. (145)
- 22 When he reaches the pond though, he is fully aware of the border between life and death that this expanse of water forms and that Mabel is in the process of crossing. His entering the water is depicted with an accumulation of terms from the semantic field of decay and death ("dead cold," "rotten clay" 145) later elaborated on when he reaches the house ("smell of the dead, clayey water," "was mortally afraid" 147). Also, the doctor watches as the surface of the water seems to reach up over different parts of his body as if it were coming to meet him, rising about him rather than the other way round: "The cold water rose over his thighs, over his loins, upon his abdomen" (145). So he too risks crossing into death. Such shifts in perspective together with the evocation of murky waters and foul smells fashion a parody of a rescue scene; indeed, the prosaic features undermine the portrait of the hero since they enhance the doctor's reluctance to enter the pond. Pragmatic considerations – the fact that he can't swim and that he is afraid of falling into the water – further undercut the intimation of conventional pastoral romance.
- 23 Nevertheless, the doctor becomes the one agent who reverses Mabel's fate. As George H. Ford argues, the scene "involves first a descent, a figurative dying [...] and afterwards an ascent or resurrection in which the man and woman discover a new strength and a fresh appreciation of life's joys" (107). After experiencing a near death, Mabel crosses borders back from "water to firm land, from death to life, from isolation to conjunction, from despair to delight, from indifference to passion" (Meyers 349). Thus, when the doctor saves Mabel, he alters her expectations, transforming the end into a beginning, her symbolic death and subsequent resurrection opening new prospects. The reader is also led to adjust his expectations since the resuscitation scene followed by the revelation of sensual attraction and love all point to romance. Thomas McCabe suggests that the rhythm of the short story accelerates in the final fireside scene: "The long rhythm of the story line is progressive, moving forward into closer and closer relationship. But a dynamic to-and-fro rhythm, defining the struggle between death and life, will and desire, man and woman, pulses within that larger rhythm" (68). While attraction and repulsion alternate, again the semantic field of the eyes and gaze develops as the lovers draw together: "Eyes are the dominant image bearing new life," writes McCabe. "From the graveyard [Mabel's eyes] sent fresh strength into the doctor, who left with a vision of those portentous eyes to fascinate him. After the rescue her eyes again touched life in him, as they put mind and will to sleep" (68).
- 24 Yet, the reader's own expectations are flouted since his experience of pastoral romance is on the verge of breaking down again when realistic descriptions of smelly wet clothes and matted hair together with insights of the doctor's doubts undermine the traditional pastoral mode. Answering the question "Did you dive into the pond for me?" (147) the doctor owns up to the fact that he unintentionally fell into the water, casting himself more as an anti-hero, indeed as a parody of a hero. In this way, the meeting of the antithesis of the hero and heroine parodies conventional pastoral

romance in order to pave the way for a more modernist stance which articulates Lawrence's view on the relationship between a man and a woman confronted with an evolving society. "The parodic and interrogative registers that would later epitomize the tenor of late modernist dissent" (Reid 101) build a new narrative space where Lawrence can explore his ideal relationship between the sexes. Transgressions of conventional norms carried out through parody together with irony are the linguistic means to articulate such a non-verbal experience. The apparently banal verbal exchange about the rescue, which participates in such parody, reconfigures the relationship in a new sacred territory, a newly mapped out *temenos* where the balance between the sexes that Lawrence so firmly believed in can be achieved.

- 25 Thanks to the doctor, Mabel has experienced spiritual rebirth, an awakening of her essential self ready for love. Reciprocating the move, she tries to save Fergusson and bring him to join her in sacred communion. Just as he was drawn into the pond, so is he drawn into a relationship which transgresses his professional approach to the rescue: "He had crossed over the gulf to her, and all that he had left behind had shrivelled and become void" (150). Internal point of view reveals that he is bewildered and even terrified at being involved in a love affair. However this paradox pertains to Lawrence's endeavour to depict a return to the primeval. As the doctor stands on the brink of a new relationship, he becomes aware of his deep pure self and thus learns to discard his existence devoid of primitive impulses. In his essay "Morality and the Novel" Lawrence argues that struggle and pain are part of the process and are necessary for the sacred relationship to flourish:

Each time we strive to a new relation, with anyone or anything, it is bound to hurt somewhat. Because it means the struggle with and the displacing of old connexions, and this is never pleasant. [...] Each must be true to himself, herself, his own manhood, her own womanhood, and let the relationship work out of itself" (174).

- 26 In spite of his pain and terror, Fergusson senses Mabel's own awakening as he looks at, then touches her "wild, bare, animal shoulders" (148). Her shoulders which are exposed despite the blanket she is wrapped in reveal the primitive vitalistic self previously alluded to through her "animal pride" (143). Fergusson, who resuscitated her by the pond, is being rescued in turn as he feels "she had the life of his body in her hands, and he could not extricate himself. Or perhaps he did not want to" (148). Thus as McCabe comments,

the action swings from the world of death to life, from the world of the daily self controlled by the will to the essential self controlled by desire, and climaxes in an ever-adjusting balance between the worlds of the lovers, each separate and other, who touch and draw apart. (68)

- 27 The relationship calls upon what Lawrence acknowledges as the deep centers of the self combined with the ideas of duality and balance between the sexes. In *Women in Love*, Birkin articulates this belief whereby male and female are together and apart, "two single equal stars in balanced conjunction" (151). While love fosters self-fulfilment, the bonding process takes place in a newly mapped out *temenos* which harbors the sacred primeval connections that man and woman had lost. On the level of the narrative, this space is shaped thanks to the tensions between the conventional pastoral mode and its modernist rewriting conveyed through disruptions, parody, irony, and at times an anti-pastoral vein. Therefore, the fashioning of a borderland also heralds a return to an idyllic primitive state where the unspoiled spontaneity of life is retrieved. It is nevertheless a "return in difference, not a repetition in identity" (Barthes 218) for it

introduces a new version of the pastoral where stability is precarious though in a salutary way. Indeed, according to Lawrence, stability stifles the dynamic vital centers of man and woman while precariousness guarantees a constant search for balance; it ensures a dynamic relationship. Again in *Women in Love*, Birkin explains, "One must commit oneself to a conjunction with the other – for ever. But it is not selfless – it is a maintaining of the self in mystic balance and integrity – like a star balanced with another star" (152). Thus, the transgression of narrative norms is the writer's means to unsettle constraining stability and to find new modes of meaning.

- 28 The open ending of the short story is similarly riddled with precarious meanings. It introduces a sense of promise, nevertheless it is the promise of redemption from a former torpid state through the coming together of a man and woman in love. The story seems to be conclusive for the characters are granted self-revelation and fulfilment, however the down-to-earth realities that the dialogue foregrounds at the end still convey both Mabel's and Fergusson's struggle, so the reader remains unresolved as to his conclusions. "And my hair smells so horrible. [...] And I'm so awful, I'm so awful," Mabel cries out. To which he answers "with that terrible intonation which frightened her almost more than her horror lest he should *not* want her" (152). The end is only a beginning for them.

- 29 Taking a firm stance against traditional forms of writing, Lawrence believed that "destruction is part of creation" (*Kangaroo* 150). Accordingly in "The Horse-Dealer's Daughter," his formal experiments which include shifts in point of view, parody and irony all point to a resolutely subversive approach to writing which enables him to convey his modernist vision of a changing world.
- 30 The short story as a genre lends itself to the narration of the fragment of a life positioned at a moment of crisis. As we have seen, the lack of framing of "The Horse-Dealer's Daughter" significantly conjures up a "pre-text" telling of happier circumstances before the crisis. This pre-text pertaining to the pastoral mode "bring[s] a number of assumptions into the mind of the reader" (Gifford 5) that the modernist narrative experiments will unsettle. Thus, the ongoing transgression of borders that the short story features undermines the conventional pastoral in order to find new meanings so as to convey the ineffable experience of redemption through love and desire. The original title "The Miracle" heralded an epiphanic *dénouement* from the start; thanks to the assumptions brought up by profession and kinship mentioned in the present title, the reader's expectations are reined in before being raised again when boundaries are blurred and redefined in order to map out a sacred territory where an authentic relationship between man and woman can flourish according to the Lawrentian ideal.
- 31 The "spareness" of the short story which characterizes the genre (Tibi 45) amplifies the tensions between the conventional and the subversive. Owing to this dialectic mode of writing, a new version of the pastoral is articulated where characters can experience a vital, primeval relationship while the short story itself is turned into a dynamic open space.

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NOTES

1. My translation. The original reads, "[...La crise] est située à la jointure de deux segments temporels – les circonstances qui y conduisent, les conséquences qui, éventuellement, en découlent" (51).

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