A Narratological Approach to D.H. Lawrence’s “Daughters of the Vicar”

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Abstract

Originally titled “Two Marriages,” D.H. Lawrence’s “Daughters of the Vicar” received numerous additions and changes until it was finally included in a collection of Lawrence’s short stories. The revisions resulted in significant developments in character portrayal and narrative coherence. More specifically, the textual amendment led to more perceptive descriptions of Mary, Louisa, and Alfred as well as a more extensive focus on the relationship of Louisa and Alfred. The purpose of this paper is to consider these revised features of “Daughters of the Vicar” from a narratological perspective. Although narratology is applicable to different kinds of genres, we employ it as a means for literary analysis in order to explore the climactic moments of Lawrence’s story, involving Mary, Louisa, and Alfred. The discussion consists of three sections. The first section identifies the revised material closely related to the representations of the main events. The second and third sections highlight the effects of narrative devices such as anachorony, (literary) functions, and focalization to consider Mary’s ordeal regarding her marriage, Louisa and Alfred’s revelatory experiences, and their eventual union as well as the overall structure of the story. By emphasizing the ways in which the narrative devices dramatize the most intense moments of “Daughters of the Vicar,” this paper demonstrates the relevance of narrative theory to Lawrence’s short story.

Keywords

D.H. Lawrence, short story, narratology, anachrony, function, focalization
Introduction

In literary studies, narratology is often recognized as a set of narrative concepts that encourage the reader to pay special attention to the “form” of a literary work, that is, how the events are represented in order to enhance the understanding of the story. In this respect, we see narratology as a heuristic tool for exploring how the narrative framework serves to illustrate the overall development of the story as well as the subject matter. If we read D.H. Lawrence’s “Daughters of the Vicar” (1914)\(^1\) from a narratological perspective, the main focus will be on the kind of framework employed to depict the core action, in this case, the two contrasting relationships involving two elder daughters of the Lindleys, a needy, clerical family. The purpose of this paper is to narratologically consider the most intense moments of the story (Mary’s inner conflict concerning her fateful marriage with Mr Massey as well as Louisa and Alfred’s mysterious encounters and the forging of their bond of unity) while focusing extensively on the effects of narrative devices such as anachrony (temporal distortion of events), functions (narrative units having [in]direct impact on the story), and focalization (the problems of perspective/perception in narration)\(^2\) in the tale. Our discussion consists of three parts. The first section considers the revisions of the story, specifically factors directly concerned with the representations of the main events. The second section considers the representation of Mary’s feelings in terms of “prolepsis,” a form of anachrony. The third section examines the characterization of Louisa and Alfred in relation to “analepsis,” another form of anachrony, as well as the use of functions, and focalization.
1. The Literary Development of “Daughters of the Vicar”

“Daughters of the Vicar” is Lawrence’s novella-length story that was revised from an earlier work titled “Two Marriages.” The story followed a difficult path until its final version was included in a collection of Lawrence’s short stories titled *The Prussian Officer and Other Stories* (1914). In the process, the story underwent numerous revisions. Its compositional history consists of three stages. Based on Martin F. Kearney’s outline, we briefly review the writing history of the tale with particular interest in the modifications to narrative structures.

First, Lawrence wrote “Two Marriages” in July 1911, the year identified as the first stage of the published story’s eventual composition. In October of the same year, Lawrence sent the manuscript to an American publisher that refused to include the work in their literary magazine. During that process, the story received additional changes and corrections. As a result, it was divided into three parts and its length stretched to about 15,000 words. The original 1911 version already showed a sharp contrast between the two elder sisters’ relationships, but the reasons for Louisa and Alfred’s bond with each other as well as their overall character portraiture was rather superficial. The ending featuring a happy marriage and joyful life thereafter between the two sounded like a fairy tale. These characteristics may have been inconsistent with the artistic principles of a young, ambitious writer who, under the influences of Hardy, Gorky and Maupassant, was more engaged in the burgeoning school of realism featuring the real plight of the working class in provincial areas, including detailed accounts of sexual repression and intense human passion without the Victorian gentility and prudishness.
The second phase of the story’s composition surfaced during the summer of 1913 when Lawrence returned once again to “Two Marriages” and changed its title to “Daughters of the Vicar.” This version saw additional development in the treatment of themes, structure and language. Still, the story concluded on a positive note with the peaceful life of Louisa and Alfred after their marriage. What was remarkable about the 1913 edition in terms of its form was its treatment of Alfred’s state of mind. Lawrence reinforced his representation of Alfred by adding new segments illustrating the young miner’s psychological dependence on his mother and his acute sexual naivete. This elaboration of Alfred’s problem makes the 1913 edition distinct from the 1911 version, and these modifications remain in the final edition as a notable example of analepsis.

The third and final phase of the composition was completed in 1914 as Lawrence revised the 1913 version in preparation for its inclusion in a short story collection titled *The Prussian Officer and Other Stories*, compiled by Duckworth Publishing. After passing through several final corrections in October of that year, “Daughters of the Vicar” was finally released in print with a final length of approximately 21,000 words. In the published version, the evolving psychological states of the characters—especially those of Mary, Louisa, and Alfred—became much more complex and subtly nuanced. The final version also reveals the development of literary style. After the revisions, the edition contained stylistic experiments in revelatory scenes that suggest Lawrence’s increasing interest in capturing a human’s “intense personal feeling[,] which is, paradoxically, […] beyond the individual”.5)

In brief, the reworking of “Two Marriages” into “Daughters of the Vicar” centered on the psychological development of Mary, Louisa, and Alfred as
well as an increased focus on the relationship between Louisa and Alfred. These features can be examined through narratological concepts such as anachrony, functions, and focalization. The following discussion adopts these heuristic concepts to weigh the possible goals and effects of the revised material in the final version.

2. The Effect of Prolepsis: A Discourse that Predicts Mary’s Fate

In this section, we analyze a literary device known as “prolepsis” that is associated with Mary’s decision to marry Massey in Chapter V.

Before examining the chapter in question, it would be helpful for us to briefly review the basics of anachrony.

Anachrony is a term given to a narrative method that manipulates, in varying degrees, the order of events in a given story. To use Gérard Genette’s taxonomy, anachrony generally consists of two devices, analepsis and prolepsis:

[...] [W]e will eliminate these terms [anticipation and retrospection] most of the time in favor of two others that are more natural, designating as prolepsis any narrative maneuver that consists of narrating or evoking in advance an event that will take place later, [and] designating as analepsis any evocation after the fact of an event that took place earlier than the point in the story where we are at any given moment [...].

Genette’s explanation suggests that he wanted to draw a clear distinction between prolepsis/analepsis and anticipation/retrospection. He prefers the
former pair to the latter pair which can carry subjective nuances. Thus, by choosing to use the terms of his own creation, Genette limits their meanings to narrative techniques concerning the arrangement of events rather than as part of a character’s subjective experience. We follow his model in our discussion below.

Returning to our main argument, we find a prolepsis at the beginning of Chapter V that describes Massey’s awkward proposal to Mary and the couple’s unfulfilling marital life: “In six months’ time Miss Mary had married Mr Massey. There had been no love-making, nobody had made any remark. But everybody was tense and callous with expectation”. The first sentence indicates that Massey and Mary get married, six months after the episode of the previous chapter where Louisa is bewildered by Alfred’s feigned humility. Interestingly, an overt use of prolepsis like this is the only case found in the story. Indeed, this prolepsis strikes the reader as rather surprising. Until this chapter the story has progressed chronologically except for a few small analepses: one explaining the development of Mr Lindley’s rigid class consciousness, another Mrs Durant’s struggles with her lazy husband and child rearing, and still another detailing Louisa’s cherished memory of Alfred as a boy. Inconspicuous as it may sound, the prolepsis in Chapter V serves to create a narrative effect. In the following, we reflect on the effects a prolepsis can have on the plot, comparing the fifth chapter with that of the original version, the latter being available as an appendix to the Cambridge edition of *The Prussian Officer and Other Stories*.8)

One artistic effect produced by prolepsis is prediction. As it alludes to an event that will take place later than the primary story-time, prolepsis puts the reader into temporary suspense. This suspense is not about the outcome of
an event, or to use Mieke Bal’s terms, “[…] the question ‘How is it going to end?’".9) We already know that. Still, this does not exhaust the effects of prolepsis. It can affect the reader’s perception in another way. When we read a segment containing a prolepsis, “another kind of suspense—or rather a tension that keeps the reader engaged”—may arise.10) The same holds true for the chapter currently being discussed. The preliminary announcement of Massey and Mary's marriage as a prolepsis at the beginning of Chapter V prompts the reader to continue as they wonder what kind of process the ill-matched pair, particularly Mary, goes through before arriving at that decision.

The corresponding chapter of “Two Marriages” has a similar introduction, and in both editions the story returns to the primary timeline to describe Mary’s decision and the aftermath of the marriage. However, the two versions depict the process differently. “Two Marriages” gives a very brief account of the marriage, treating it only in a few lines as a result of the Lindleys’ implicit demand for their daughter to accept Massey’s offer and her miserable isolation in married life. In contrast, its counterpart in the published edition adds detail to Mary’s plight and anguish over the proposed marriage to Massey.

The increased focus on Mary’s predicament in the published version is closely aligned with another function of prolepsis, that is, a sense of fate derived from the prolepsis’ capacity for prophecy. The concept of fatalism or predestination can be identified as a major reason for the use of prolepsis at the beginning of Chapter V. In this case, the second and third sentences of the excerpt above narrate the disregard for courtship on behalf of the suitor and the family’s tacit hope for Mary’s marriage with an unqualified suitor.11)
Both serve to intensify the oppressive, sinister atmosphere in the Lindley household at the time. In a sense, an increased sense of fatalism prepares the reader for Mary’s climactic moment. Accordingly, we can assume that the detailed descriptions about Mary’s quandary after the opening passage are subsumed under a sense of fatalism overshadowing her marriage.

The Lindleys’ view of Massey’s proposal to their eldest daughter can be considered in this context. When asked by Mary about Massey’s proposal, Mrs Lindley nonchalantly endorses her husband’s general approval and responds to her daughter in a calculating manner. Her art of speech is such that it implicitly leaves her daughter no choice but to accept the offer. It is essential that Mary accept the offer to relieve the family of chronic financial difficulty. The way the parents pitilessly impose their will on Mary makes it possible to see her marriage with Massey as part of her ominous doom.

In addition, the amendment to “Daughters of the Vicar” describes Mary’s acquiescence poignantly. The following excerpt is an oft-discussed segment dealing with an anguished cry from her soul:

She would not feel, and she would not feel. She was a pure will acquiescing to him. She elected a certain kind of fate. She would be good and purely just, she would live in a higher freedom than she had ever known, she would be free of mundane care, she was a pure will towards right. She had sold herself, but had a new freedom. She had got rid of her body. She had sold a lower thing, her body, for a higher thing, her freedom from material things.\(^\text{12}\)

The quotation can be read as Mary’s internal focalization. It depicts her
determination to yield to Massey’s will by quelling her own feelings. Most interesting is how the passage highlights Mary’s vacillation stylistically. Indeed, this excerpt makes use of free indirect speech as the sentences are replete with elements typical of that speech including the use of third-person (she), past tense verbs (was, elected, etc.), and “would.” In free indirect speech, the narrative is syntactically under the control of the narrator while the content carries echoes of the subject/character’s individual elements. The segment above effectively reflects the wavering mind of a woman who forces herself to become subordinate at the expense of her own feelings or body. It would be quite difficult for Mary to think coherently in such a moment. Thus, the use of free indirect speech allows the narrator to speak for an emotionally unstable subject.

Also, the iteration of the auxiliary verb “would” and a series of sentences that begin with “She” without conjunctives or connecting adverbs suggest Mary’s strong desire to justify her decision through autosuggestion. In other words, although the overall tonality of the passage apparently deals with her ecstasy over succumbing to lofty ideals by becoming Massey’s wife, careful attention to its stylistic features reveals that her euphoria mirrors her forced attempt to repress agitation and fear. A later event in the chapter—the awakening of the body or human feelings in Mary upon giving birth to a baby—further emphasizes how difficult it is for her to diminish herself to nothing more than a rational and spiritual being like her peculiar husband-clergyman.

Constructed from a sense of fatalism introduced by prolepsis and complementing scenes, Chapter V dramatizes Mary’s acquiescence to Massey’s offer with considerable emotional turmoil. As discussed above, the relevance
of the additions to the published version, including its stylistic modulations, is deeper insight into the nuances of Mary’s perception about her fate that received only limited attention in “Two Marriages.” Seen from the overall structure of the story, Mary’s doomed marriage with Massey, suggested through prolepsis, forms a sharp contrast to that of Louisa and Alfred as accentuated by analepsis in the rest of the story.

3. The Effect of Analepsis: A Focus on Alfred’s Stigma

In addition to the effective use of a prolepsis regarding Mary’s fateful marriage, we also see in “Daughters of the Vicar” a conspicuous case of analepsis. The corresponding segments of “Two Marriages” also contain analepsis, but the relevant amendment in the final version presents more profound characterization by elaborating upon Alfred’s problems while omitting superfluous details from the original edition.

An analepsis is utilized in a later stage of Chapter VIII that includes a passage about Louisa. Upset by Mary’s mechanical submission to the insensitive Massey during their holiday visit to Lindley’s humble vicarage, Louisa involuntarily walks to Mrs Durant’s house where she finds and cares for the injured elderly woman. The analepsis begins after Louisa wins Mrs Durant’s approval to prepare an early dinner for her son Alfred as well as attending to the old woman for the day. Comprising Mrs Durant’s view of Alfred and his self-observation, the text covered by the analepsis explains the son’s psychological dependence and idealization of his mother as well as his spiritual impotence, the latter derived from his gynophobia, especially for real women.

The description of Alfred’s sexual naivete, originally absent in “Two
Marriages,” offers more plausible grounds for Alfred’s attraction to Louisa. In contrast, the corresponding section of “Two Marriages” attributes Alfred’s disinterest in having a lover to his heavy dependence on his mother. He does not intend to get married while his mother is alive. This rather filial explanation differs from the personal reason—his psychological withdrawal from real women—that is stated in “Daughters of the Vicar.” The filial reason in the earlier version would not seem to account for Alfred’s need for a woman like Louisa, thereby making the eventual relationship between the two less convincing. On the other hand, the personal reason in the final edition provides a basis for his fascination with Louisa. Alfred implicitly longs to overcome his diffidence towards real women.

In terms of narratology, Alfred’s sexual inhibition works as a literary function. Function is a term first used by Vladimir Propp to refer to an event that further develops the plot in a story. Roland Barthes extends the scope of function beyond events to also include actions by characters; he also introduces the concept of “cardinal functions” to refer to functions that are “of direct consequence for the subsequent development of the story.”¹³ He explains that a cardinal function occurs when an event or action generates two alternatives that will lead to the next event. In addition to the cardinal function, Barthes, probably after analyzing many modern novels, presents another term called “indices” which are not “a complementary and consequential act” but instead are “necessary to the meaning of the story: psychological indices concerning the characters, data regarding their identity, notations of ‘atmosphere,’ and so on.”¹⁴ In this regard, the description of Alfred’s psychological stigma can be regarded as an index (or indice) because it appears in the segment dealing with his past and thus does
not contribute to forward development of the story. At the same time, the passage under consideration can also play the role of a cardinal function as it is a significant factor in Alfred’s acceptance of Louisa as a real woman to love rather than as an imaginary woman. Thus, the revision dealing with Alfred’s past belongs concurrently to “two different classes”, namely, it is both an index and a cardinal function.

The idea that a certain event or action can serve as an index and also as a cardinal function can be useful when considering a series of scenes initiated by an analepsis that span Chapters VIII to X where we see psychological transformations in both Alfred and Louisa.

4. Two Revelatory Scenes as Hybrid Functions

In his paper analyzing Lawrence’s short stories, J. Temple emphasizes the importance of seemingly small events. One example is “Hadrian” [“You Touched Me”] (1920) when Matilda accidentally awakens Hadrian, ten years her younger, by touching him half caressingly, thereby changing their relationship decisively. The action eventually leads to her unwilling marriage with her brother-in-law. Temple argues how a seemingly trivial event can cause an abrupt turn in the course of the story: “[...] [I]n the more constricted form of the short story, both conversation and episode have to be charged, in order to compensate for two things [:] for the lack of discursive analysis that cannot be supported by the shorter form, but also for the larger schematic use of images possible in a novel.”

Temple claims that the limited-length of a short story is not suited for speculative examination and expansive use of images as one might over hundreds of pages. In other words, he thinks that conversations and
episodes in a short story will considerably outweigh those in a novel. In this case, Temple is most likely referring to an episode as an event of some significance rather than a mere event deemed to be unrelated to the main plot. If so, from a narratological perspective, conversations and episodes can play similar roles to that of a cardinal function by moving the story forward. Temple’s idea of an episode working as a function allows us to examine particular episodes in segments introduced by an explicit use of an analepsis.

The revelatory moments that come to Louisa and Alfred respectively in the course of shifting time initiated by an analepsis in Chapter VIII can be seen as significant episodes in Temple’s terms. Louisa’s epiphany comes when she helps Alfred wash the dirt off his body, while Alfred’s arises when he becomes enraptured by the quasi-seraphic figure of Louisa writing a letter to her family under candle-light. Although they do not confirm mutual feelings in Chapter X, it is significant that they become aware of a mysterious side in each other, albeit vaguely, because it represents a turning point in the overall development of the story. Their attraction to each other improves the structural drawbacks in “Two Marriages” by replacing Louisa’s vague acceptance of Alfred in response to his dying mother’s plea, as well as Alfred’s equally ambiguous need for Louisa with an inkling of personal magnetism.

Touching upon Lawrence’s later story “Glad Ghosts” (1926), Temple points out that in Lawrence’s work, a sudden surge of emotion temporarily causes one to depart from the rational self and bring back innocence, thereby prompting a new stage of life: “It is clear that virginity for him [Lawrence] is a condition which can return to a woman who allows herself to be ‘reborn’ in the sense that the characters of ‘Glad Ghosts’ are reborn”. The virginity in
this case is spiritual rather than sexual, thereby representing the sense of enrapturement when the subject encounters someone else who can guide her to a new phase of being. In other words, virginity as discussed by Temple is akin to innocence.

This is what Louisa experiences while helping Alfred wash his body. Her encounter with a male body (Alfred’s back) effects significant changes in her:

His skin was beautifully white and unblemished, of an opaque, solid whiteness. Gradually Louisa saw it: this also was what he was. It fascinated her. Her feeling of separateness passed away: she ceased to draw back from contact with him and his mother. There was this living centre. Her heart ran hot. She had reached some goal in this beautiful, clear, male body. She loved him in a white, impersonal heat.\(^{18}\)

This narration creates a sharp contrast between the soot black that makes Louisa almost blind to Alfred’s individuality and the pure whiteness of his back once washed. The narrative focus is evidently on the latter color. For example, the recognition of human traits in his white skin enables her to see him as an approachable human being rather than an unintelligible one when blackened by soot. This realization is associated with her internal transfiguration, that is, the diminution of her class consciousness, characterized by her middle-class uneasiness about mixing with the Durants, a working-class family. More important is that the narration treats her discovery of a “living centre” in his body as a goal in her religious quest. The narration continues by tracing the way Louisa’s consciousness identifies the
mysterious “male body” as that of Alfred’s by noticing personal traits in the man’s unblemished body, including his sunburned neck and ears. The rest of the paragraph indicates that she is experiencing a revelation:

A tenderness rose in her, she loved even his queer ears. A person—an intimate being he was to her. She put down the towel and went upstairs again, troubled in her heart. She had seen only one human being in her life—and that was Mary. All the rest were strangers. Now her soul was going to open, she was going to see another. She felt strange and pregnant.²⁰

Tenderness, which we see arising at this point in Louisa, is one of the concepts that symbolizes “innocence” for Temple. Thus, the use of tenderness in depicting Louisa’s recognition of Alfred as a man of significance to her (after Mary’s demotion from that position) signifies Louisa’s awakening or symbolic rebirth, as discussed earlier. Louisa’s acceptance of Alfred in this way also rounds out the overarching structure of the story by illustrating her moral judgment, that is, “her fixed will to love, to have the man she love[s]”²⁰ as opposed to Mary’s self-abnegating and excessively spiritual love. Furthermore, “troubled in her heart” from the same passage can be read as Louisa’s doubts or confusion as a result of her awakening, while “Now her soul was going to open” is a metaphor of an opening bud often found in Lawrence’s work (cf. Ursula in *The Rainbow*) that alludes to the beginning of a new phase in a character’s life. Equally suggestive of her transfiguration is the last sentence “She felt strange and pregnant.” In particular, the word “pregnant” allows us to further explore
this revelatory scene in comparison with the image of an annunciation as introduced by Michael Black: “Miss Louisa has had a kind of Annunciation. We are by these words [the last phrase of the excerpt] put in touch with the world where ritual washing (for instance, of Christ’s feet by Mary Magdalene, or of the disciples’ feet by Christ himself) expresses love and the desire to minister”.  

By suggesting symbolic actions by Mary Magdalene and Christ in Luke, Louisa’s action of washing can carry mystical, revelatory overtones. This biblical analogy enables us to interpret her washing of Alfred as a ritualistic event or as a moment of her symbolic annunciation. Black’s reading of Louisa’s experience as an annunciation suggests that her transformation has close affinity to Temple’s idea about a female character’s transfiguration upon regaining her innocence/virginity temporarily in Lawrence’s short story. Constructed as an event of great symbolic importance, Louisa’s revelatory experience plays a dual narrative role in the story. On the one hand, it works as an index as it provides a reason for Louisa’s affection towards Alfred, a marked improvement in characterization. On the other hand, Louisa’s symbolic annunciation also plays the role of a cardinal function as it leads to Louisa’s dedication to Alfred “for whom she will soon relinquish her social position and even her native land”, which bears directly on the development of the plot. Therefore, Louisa’s awakening can form a dual-oriented narrative event that is at once an index and a cardinal function.

Alfred’s experience later in the story is as revelatory and replete with narrative ingenuities as Louisa’s. It occurs when Alfred sees Louisa writing a letter to her parents to request an overnight stay in order to attend to Mrs
As she sat writing, he placed another candle near her. The rather dense light fell in two places on the overfoldings of her hair till it glistened heavy and bright, like a dense golden plumage folded up. Then the nape of her neck was very white, with fine down and pointed wisps of gold. He watched it as it were a vision, losing himself. She was all that was beyond him, of revelation and exquisiteness. All that was ideal and beyond him, she was that—and he was lost to himself in looking at her. She had no connection with him. He did not approach her. She was there like a wonderful distance.  

This excerpt consists of different types of focalization. Reporting Alfred’s movement, the first sentence suggests some distance in perspective between the narrator and Alfred. This is a case of external focalization. In contrast, the subsequent sentences employ internal focalization in which the narrator depicts the situation from within Alfred’s consciousness. For instance, the narration traces the way Alfred is carried away by the ethereal beauty of Louisa’s golden hair flowing down her nape. Just as Louisa undergoes a symbolic annunciation through discovering Alfred’s male body and its individual traits, Alfred is enraptured by finding an ideal woman in Louisa who evokes imagery of a saint or goddess in religious paintings. Given that Alfred is in a trance that evades lucid thinking, Lawrence exploits the narrator’s role beyond mere reflection; the elaboration of Alfred’s state of wonder expounds upon the man’s visionary experience void of any rational
thought and consciousness.

The next four sentences in the middle of the paragraph detail Alfred’s gradual recovery from his dream state. Most interesting is the use of words like “treat,” “wonder,” and “awe,” terms denoting the discovery of Louisa’s attraction as a miracle and good grace for Alfred. At this point, we must remember that the series of events that began in Chapter VII when an indignant Louisa leaves the vicarage and continued until Chapter X when the present scene takes place—including the interruption of the story time by an analepsis—all happen in one day, on Christmas. This holy date provides a symbolic significance to Alfred’s revelation, and Louisa’s as well.

As mentioned earlier, the couple’s intimate relationship is not established until later in Chapter XIII, but at least Alfred’s awakening illustrates how Louisa appears as a benefactor while Alfred agonizes over his dying mother. Louisa’s emergence can therefore be considered another functional event propelling the plot as it indicates her supportive role during the period of Alfred’s breakdown following his mother’s death and thereafter. In other words, Louisa’s image as a benefactor provides an alternative possibility for Alfred in finding new meaning in life. Even though the final segment of this long paragraph depicts Alfred’s temporary disorientation due partly to his apprehension about his mother’s imminent death, the reader identifies Louisa’s new role as having a broader significance for the rest of the story until their eventual departure to seek a new life in Canada.

5. A Narrative Experiment in Louisa and Alfred’s Union

A narratological perspective remains valid when we consider another intense moment of the story when Louisa and Alfred come closer to each
other through the former’s initiative. The confession scene is covered in Chapter XIII as Louisa visits Alfred with hidden determination. In the scene, the slow-tempo narration contrasts a casual dialogue with an undercurrent of tension. Louisa’s wavering mind is faced with Alfred’s vague future prospects to which her own future is also tethered. Alfred’s increased agitation is prompted by her enthusiasm. It is her sudden change that shifts the tension to the following stage: “Then suddenly a sharp pang, like lighting, seared her from head to foot, and she was beyond herself. ‘Do you want me to go?’ she asked, […] as if words were spoken from her without her intervention”.

There is no equivalent to this surge of emotion in “Two Marriages.” The added passage enables us to regard Louisa’s initiative as an additional quality she gains in the final version. Also, the “pang” that pierces her body like thunder generally has a negative connotation, but here it carries a positive connotation in that it forces her innermost voice and desire to come to the fore.

The subsequent excerpt focuses on the emotionally-charged embrace between them. Together with the peculiar language used in this passage, both can be read as the author’s experimental attempt to capture “the process of reaching a new phase of their own being.” The relevant segment reads as follows:

Then, gradually, as he held her gripped, and his brain reeled round, and he felt himself falling, falling from himself, and whilst she, yielded up, swooned to a kind of death of herself, a moment of utter darkness came over him, and they began to wake up again as if from a long sleep. He was himself.
After a while his arms slackened, she loosened herself a little, and put her arms round him, as he held her. So they held each other close, and hid each against the other for assurance, helpless in speech. And it was ever her hands that trembled more closely upon him, drawing him nearer into her, with love.

And at last she drew back her face and looked up at him, her eyes wet, and shining with light. His heart, which saw, was silent with fear. He was with her. She saw his face all sombre and inscrutable, and he seemed eternal to her. And all the echo of pain came back into the rarity of bliss, and all her tears came up” 26)

Consisting of a combination of external and internal focalizations of Louisa and Alfred, this excerpt subtly describes the ways they break through their former selves and enter “a new phase of their own being.” First, the images of descent, death, and dark (“fall,” “death,” and “darkness”) characterize the first paragraph. Rather than conveying a negative interpretation, these images constitute the necessary conditions for the characters’ eventual awakening or spiritual rebirth while emphasizing the process of their transfiguration. This forms a variant of Lawrence’s preferred metaphor concerning the indivisibility of death and birth, suggesting “the paradox of a death which is also a birth, a natural continuous process of life”. 27) Moreover, Mara Kalnins noticed the incantatory biblical rhythm of Lawrence’s language here, including a repetition of “And” as a conjunctive adverb, and she regards it as a means for representing “intense personal feeling” which reflects Lawrence’s “commitment to something eternal and beyond the rational understanding of the individual human consciousness”. 28)
Lawrence’s interest in such a suprapersonal state of mind seems to go hand-in-hand with his attempt to capture Louisa and Alfred’s mysterious, emotive experiences: “They were silent for a long time, too much mixed up with passion and grief and death to do anything but hold each other in pain and kiss with long, hurting kisses wherein fear was transfused into desire”\(^{29}\). The mixture of passion, grief, and death suggests the multilayered nature of the couple’s intense experience. “Passion” can derive from their immersion in mutual love as well as their incipient desire for each other. The other two ideas are more elusive to fathom. If the confession scene is a thematic sequel to the washing scene in its visionary tonality, “death” can denote their departure from their former selves by opening themselves to “the other,” and “grief” signifies a fear of their transformation into different beings hitherto unknown. Additionally, the last phrase “hurting kisses wherein fear was transfused into desire” echoes the biblical tone of the entire scene with its emphasis on the gradual replacement of fear with desire or passion. In brief, the creative image given to the couple’s union indicates their entrance into “a new phase of their own being,” thereby completing the far-reaching development from their separate awakenings to “the magical attraction of the other”\(^{30}\) and their eventual meeting as such in the two revelatory events.

**Conclusion**

In summary, a narratological perspective can enhance our critical appraisal of “Daughters of the Vicar” by drawing attention to the narrative devices behind the climactic moments of the sisters’ different relationships. The use of a prolepsis and analepses produces a doomed atmosphere that underscores Mary’s ordeal and provides the basis for rendering Louisa and
Alfred’s relationship more intelligible and coherent than that of the earlier version, respectively. The extensive use of analepsis in Chapter VIII, combined with the idea of narrative functions, allows us to acknowledge the significance of Louisa and Alfred’s discoveries of the “mysterious other” in each other afresh from the overall structure of the story. When we shift the focus to the effects of focalization and styles of narration or speech, these narratological elements spotlight Mary’s desperate attempt to subordinate spontaneous feelings to her will, and they also highlight the author’s growing interest in the suprapersonal, affective state of mind by tracing Louisa and Alfred’s eventual union. By using these methods to facilitate our understanding of the story’s development from its original version in both character portrayal and narrative coherence, our narratological approach displays the potential of narrative concepts as a heuristic means for analyzing narrative text.

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**Notes**

1）In the text, the date in parentheses after a title refers to the year of publication.

2）In Gérard Genette’s taxonomy, focalization is divided into three subcategories: zero focalization, external focalization and internal focalization. Zero focalization corresponds to the unrestricted perspective of the so-called omniscient narrator. Internal focalization means a situation narrated through the consciousness or perception of a particular character, including his/her thoughts, while external focalization signifies a narrative situation that only reports the object/character’s behavior or appearance. We touch upon the internal/external focalizations later. For further information on the development of this realm of narratology, including Mieke Bal’s model of


11) Ironically, Louisa is kept in the dark about Massey’s proposal and Mary’s acceptance of it until later. This makes her feel betrayed and exasperated with Mary, leading to an estrangement between the two sisters.


26) Lawrence, D.H., “Daughters of the Vicar”, p. 82.

**Works Cited**


