

D. H. Lawrence's *THE LOST GIRL* as a Transitional Work

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After Lawrence had finished *Sons and Lovers* (1913), he wrote two hundred pages of *The Lost Girl*, originally titled *The Insurrection of Miss Houghton*, which was soon left behind in Germany. After the war, the manuscript was recovered in January 1920 when Lawrence was self-exiled to Italy, and finally published in November. Critics as well as readers have paid little attention to *The Lost Girl* (1920), which belongs neither to Lawrence's early major novels such as *The Rainbow* (1915) and *Women in Love* (1920) nor to his late "leadership" novels. However, as Jeffrey Meyers points out that critics have ignored the crucial importance of *The Lost Girl* as a transitional novel (95), it seems to me that *The Lost Girl* (1920) deserves more attention as a transitional novel in terms of national (and racial) identity and the Lawrentian sense of place.¹ With her transgression against what English culture has represented, Alvina Houghton, the protagonist of *The Lost Girl*, becomes "lost" to her civilized world and comes to stand on the threshold of the "uncertain" world, turning from a stable status as a British citizen to an uprooted wanderer, from her attachment to England to her search for a new place. In short, this novel reflects Lawrence's physical and emotional changes as a self-

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¹ To understand Lawrence's sensitive response to place, we need to take notice of his notion of "spirit of place." In *Studies in Classic American Literature* (1923), Lawrence says "[e]very continent has its own great spirit of place" (12). This sentence strongly conveys his belief in the "local" and "indigenous" spirit of a place. My reading of *The Lost Girl* is based on Lawrence's notion of "spirit of place" and his resistance to the imperial and industrial expansions of Europe.

exiled wanderer—a destiny that his painful experiences of the war drove him to.²

Graham Hough rightly points to the significance of Italy as a new place for Lawrence around the time when Lawrence had written *The Lost Girl*: "What really interested Lawrence at this time, what was really making him live anew, was Italy and the fresh possibilities of life he had discovered there"(93). This novel certainly explores those possibilities of Italy as a new place and a new way of life before Lawrence's exploration of the spirit of Italy is, to use Phillip Herring's words, "soon eclipsed by a new preoccupation: the 'primitive' mind and America" (19). Keeping in mind that *The Lost Girl* features a transitional phase moving from the European mode of life to the "primitive" way of life (ultimately moving to the world of *The Plumed Serpent*), this paper examines the importance of Italy as an alternative locale to industrialized Europe. Particularly focusing on the way in which Alvina's sense of disorientation her sense of being "lost"—is related to the different spirits of England and Italy, this paper will show how the spirit of each place shapes and determines the meaning of Alvina's self-exile.

This novel, written in 1920 when Lawrence was preparing for departure to America, significantly marks his dissociation from a European mode of life while anticipating the burgeoning American life. For Lawrence, Italy was like a stepping-stone to the New World, where he ambitiously planned to explore the possibility of an ideal society, what he called Rananim. But this does not mean that Italy as an alternative place to Europe was insignificant in comparison to the American continent. As a literary background of Lawrence's works,

² Lawrence's physical self-exile had happened between October 1917 and November 1919; since Lawrence was suspected of a German spy when he stayed in Cornwall, he was ordered to leave Cornwall within three days on October 12, 1917. But it took almost two years for Lawrence to go into self-exile to Italy. On November 1919, he left England forever except for several temporary visits.

Italy was related to most of Lawrence's writing career throughout his lifetime, and during his frequent stays in Italy he produced three travel books—*Twilight in Italy* (1916), *Sea and Sardinia* (1921), and *Etruscan Places* (1932)—and two novels—*The Lost Girl* and *Aaron's Rod*—as well as a lot of essays and poems published in *Birds, Beasts and Flowers* (1923). Despite the fact that Italy is geographically part of Europe, it has significance in Lawrence's texts as the cultural opposite to England.

If exile signifies at once a voluntary and a forced absence from one's native land (*Webster's Dictionary* 406), Alvina's exile to Italy, triggered by the "repressive" English culture, can be differentiated from exile usually enforced by political tyranny. This voluntary absence from her country makes the meaning of "exile" presented in this novel different from other cases of exile, especially in her relationship with native place. "Exile is predicated," as Edward Said defines it in *Culture and Imperialism*, "on the existence of, love for, and a real bond with one's native place; the universal truth of exile is not that one has lost that love or home, but that inherent in each is an unexpected, unwelcome loss" (407). But "the universal truth of exile" of Said is not true of Alvina's relationship with her native country. On the one hand, she considers her exile not as "an unexpected, unwelcome loss" but as a transitional and welcome status that one necessarily faces in the search for a different way of life. On the other hand, despite her voluntary displacement from her native place, Alvina's lingering superiority as an English woman reveals that Lawrence's heroine, like Lawrence himself, hardly frees herself from her Englishness.

Alvina's exile is also different from the Italians' massive emigration to the highly industrialized world, vividly described in Lawrence's travel book *Twilight in Italy* (403). Whereas Italians at the turn of the century were forced to leave their country because of their poverty,

Alvina chooses a voluntary dislocation from her native place, moving in the reverse direction from Italian emigrants, from England to Italy; Alvina's journey to Italy signifies that she goes against the mainstream of this industrialized era. Although critics have paid little attention to the relevance of colonialism to Alvina's exile, her transgression against the English culture can be read as a challenge against the dominance of industrial/imperial culture. That is, Alvina's exile to the marginal territory from the metropolis, opposed to third-world people's massive migration to the industrialized center, deals with a postcolonial situation in which this protagonist attempts to redefine cultural hierarchies set between metropolis and periphery.

The "repressive" aspects of the English culture, represented by Alvina's "gloomy and a little sinister" (*LG* 20) Manchester House, pervade the novel. With the absence of a proper relationship between Mr. and Mrs. Houghton and Alvina as parents and a child, the Manchester House is actually run by Miss Frost, the governess, and Miss Pinnegar, the manager of James Houghton's work-girls. The influence of these women who have embodied Victorian morality and sensibility is formidable in shaping not only Alvina's British womanhood but also her resistance against it. This repressive mood of Woodhouse, a small mining town of the Midlands where Manchester House is located, represents the restrictive culture of England, which is particularly restraining for middle-class women like Alvina. The often-quoted passage of the chapter "The Journey Across" captures Alvina's (Lawrence's) complicated feeling about England and reveals what England represented by Woodhouse meant to her: "England, like a long, ash-grey coffin slowly submerging. She watched it, fascinated and terrified. It seemed to repudiate the sunshine, to remain unilluminated, long and ash-grey and dead, with streaks of snow like cerements. That was England! Her thoughts flew to Woodhouse, the grey center of it all. Home!" (*LG* 294).

Lawrence in this novel explores how an individual self challenges the "restrictive" culture of a society and to what extent it would be possible to transform oneself from a western way of life to another to a primitive mode of being as exemplified in Alvina's transition into the hinterlands of Italy. Alvina's desire to reach a new sense of self, not distorted by Christian, middle-class English morals, is deeply related to the spirit of place, that is, the different spirits of England and Italy. Her physical and psychological dislocation from England is not irrelevant to the fact that the spirit of England is charged with actually "caged in"—rigid normative heterosexuality and racially discriminatory cultural assumptions. Alvina's marriage to Ciccio and her border crossing into Italy expose the problems that the English culture has embodied in terms of sexuality, class, and race.

Despite general agreement about the necessity of a new place for Alvina to replace Woodhouse, many critics have thought of Pescocalascio, the Italian mountain village for which Alvina escapes from Woodhouse, as a negative place. Denying any possibility of this Italian village as a new place, Herring defines it as being as sterile and dead as Woodhouse: "In its own way, Pescocalascio is as dead as Woodhouse.... Pescocalascio is bleak, the local people, hospitable to strangers, are mean-spirited and slanderous with each other" (16-7). Even Julian Moynahan, whom Herring calls "one of the novel's principal defenders"(9), does not consider the mountain village as much of an alternative place to England: "In fact, Italy proves to be no more than another part of Europe; and Califano, apart from its oppressive natural beauty, another Woodhouse without certain civilized conveniences" (139). Moynahan, rather, values Lawrence's realistic use of the Italian village as something positive in the novel: "The final strength and honesty of *The Lost Girl* when compared to a novel like *The Plumed Serpent* lies just in Lawrence's willingness to

permit Italy to become actual, to permit the real world to break in upon a visionary and symbolic drama of salvation in the flesh" (139).

The problem is that those critics, who see Pescocalascio as either "no more than another part of Europe" (Moynahan 139) or "as dead as Woodhouse" (Herring 16), risk dismissing the geographical, cultural differences implied in the distinct spirits of England and Italy and thus blurring the significance of Alvina's and Aaron's self-exile. In spite of the "mixed marriage" of Alvina and Ciccio,³ the geographical continuance between England and Italy as part of Europe keeps critics from relating the racial conflict embedded in this novel to the issue of colonialism. For instance, Michael Ross, seeing Italy as an extended part of the British metropolis, argues, "*The Lost Girl* designedly exhausts the possibilities of escaping the moral confines of Imperial Britain while remaining within the 'metropolitan' bounds of the European continent" (12). But, as I will argue, it is hard to understand the way Lawrence presents the Italian mountain village and local peasants without the perspective of a colonial hierarchy existing between metropolis and periphery. In other words, Italy is described in Lawrence's texts at once as an alternative place to the industrialized northern Europe and as a periphery of metropolitan England, a periphery which has been considered, wittingly or unwittingly, as something marginal and inferior. In consequence, Lawrence's ambivalence embedded in the complicated relationship to Englishness characterizes his description of the mountain village as a "primitive" yet "confined" world in *The Lost Girl*, particularly in the last chapters of the novel. In relation to the topic of this study examining the

³ Herring in his essay explains that Lawrence considered other titles for *The Lost Girl*: "Lawrence considered three titles before *The Lost Girl* finally stuck: 'The Insurrection of Miss Houghton,' 'Mixed Marriage,' and 'The Bitter Cherry.' The final title having been selected, some titular ambiguity still remained, for the novel is about a woman who becomes 'lost' to stodgy bourgeois society by finding a new life with an exotic mate below her station." (9-10)

relation between Lawrence's sense of place and colonialism, these last chapters are significant in that they foreground Alvina's conflicting sense of identity in the contact with primitive others.⁴

When Herring says that "[a]t the novel's end, however, she [Alvina] seems lost again, but in a way Lawrence could hardly have foreseen in 1913" (10), he seems to recognize the significance of the last few chapters in the novel. If we imagined Lawrence finishing this novel in 1913, when his notion of "spirit of place" was not yet fully developed, "Lawrence might," as Herring points out, "have ended *The Lost Girl* in 'The Journey Across' chapter" (16). Given that the novel consists of two parts—Alvina as a British middle-class woman and Alvina's marriage to Ciccio as a head-on challenge to the British bourgeois culture—the second part would have been much less specific and convincing without the extended description of the Italian village. Meyers argues, "the novel becomes more lively, intimate, immediate in the last three chapters" (102). John Worthen further points out that during her journey across Europe, "the narrator vanishes, the experience becomes that of Alvina at first hand," which means "Alvina is allowed to see and to experience with the acuteness of the narrator himself" (114).

The last chapters of the novel, which describe Alvina's journey from England to Italy and her encounter with a primitive world, also add another symbolic meaning to her status as a "lost" woman. If the early half of the novel is about the story that Alvina becomes "lost" to England, the rest of it deals with how she also becomes "lost" to Italy; as Herring points out, "Alvina, having survived several definitions of 'lost,' now appears most truly lost when Ciccio leaves her with child to become a soldier" (17). The last chapter hints that Alvina will become "literally" lost in the middle of the Italian village even without Ciccio,

⁴ The last three chapters of the novel consist of chapter XIV titled "The Journey Across," chapter XV "The Place called Califano," and chapter XVI "Suspense."

who is leaving for the impending war. Consequently, the meaning of being "lost" in the last chapters becomes different from the previous usages, which usually mark her transgression against the English norms of sex, class, and race. That is, Alvina becomes suspended between the civilized and primitive world, actually belonging to neither side. Her circumstance in this Italian village, displaced from England but not fully adapted to the new place, completes the meaning of the title *The Lost Girl*.

In a letter written in Capri, Lawrence describes Picinisco, the original of Pescocalascio, as "beautiful beyond words, but *so* primitive, and *so* cold, that I thought we should die" (*Letters* III 442). The Lawrences had stayed in Picinisco only nine days and moved to Capri because of the cold and the lack of civilized convenience. In spite of their fleeting stay in the mountain village, the primitiveness of the place offered Lawrence a model for an alternative place to Europe. As opposed to the critical underestimation of the Italian village as a new place, Lawrence gives the place a symbolic significance in the chapter titled "The Place Called Califano":

At Pescocalascio it was the mysterious influence of the mountains and valleys themselves which seemed always to be annihilating the Englishwoman: nay, not only her, but the very natives themselves. . . .

At first she did not realize. She was only stunned with the strangeness of it all: startled, half-enraptured with the terrific beauty of the place, half-horrified by its savage annihilation of her. But she was stunned. The days went by.

It seems there are places which resist us, which have the power to overthrow our psychic being. It seems as if every country had its potent negative centers, localities which savagely and triumphantly refuse our living culture. And Alvina had struck one of these, here on the edge of the Abruzzi. (*LG* 314)

Although this is a very short chapter, the power of "savage annihilation" that this Italian village has seems essential to Alvina's physical and psychological transformation from a civilized English woman to a part of the primitive world. Just as the spirit of the Indian village in Lawrence's short fiction *The Woman Who Rode Away* (1928) makes possible the dissolution of the (unnamed) woman's white self-consciousness, the spirit of Pescocalascio enables Alvina to undergo her transition from the "civilized" world to the "savage" world.

Many critics have questioned whether Ciccio is the right counterpart to Alvina and whether her abrupt sexual submission to Ciccio is understandable, and most of them have agreed with Meyers: "The great weakness of *The Lost Girl* is that Lawrence does not make Alvina's love for Ciccio convincing or persuade us that Ciccio, though better than her five unsatisfactory lovers, is the right man for her" (101). Without the power of the "savage annihilation" that threatens to "overthrow" Alvina's [un]consciousness as a British woman, her relationship with Ciccio does not really make sense as does the relationship of Kate and Cipriano in *The Plumed Serpent*. As Hough points out, Ciccio embodies the opposing world to what Alvina's Woodhouse presents, rather than being described as a whole character: "He [Ciccio] is not individually very sympathetic or very convincing, but as soon as he and Alvina leave England his background becomes superb" (93). Ciccio's "lovely, rich darkness of his southern nature, so different from her own" (*LG* 291) partly explains and even justifies Alvina's sudden, incomprehensible submission to him. The spirit of Pescocalascio that Ciccio represents, as Lawrence says in a letter, is essential to Alvina's "reunion with the dark half of humanity" (*Letters* III 521). In short, what is at issue in this novel is not Ciccio himself but the spirit of Pescocalascio, the power of savage annihilation which dissolves Alvina's white consciousness.

Dealing with the different spirits of Italy and England in the contrast of southern and northern Europe, Lawrence employs a number of cultural indications related to colonial hierarchy and metaphor. In order to see how this novel is involved with colonial discourses of the time, we need to examine carefully the way in which Lawrence presents the spirit of the mountain village and local people—especially, Pancrazio, Ciccio's uncle, since he is a major figure, in addition to Alvina and Ciccio, in the last chapters. Pancrazio is an interesting figure in that he had lived for many years in England as a model for a British painter, and thus he knows both Italy and England well. Although Italy has always been outside the jurisdiction of the British Empire, the narrator takes for granted that Pancrazio as well as other Italian peasants think of Alvina as a superior being. A sense of superiority as a white northern European strongly lingers in Alvina's voice. It is thus no accident that the narrative voice renders Pancrazio as a typical colonized other who submissively follows the hierarchical relationship of England and Italy as center and periphery:

Alvina felt the curious passion in Pancrazio's voice, the passion of a man who has lived for many years in England and known the social confidence of England, and who, coming back, is deeply injured by the ancient malevolence of the remote, somewhat gloomy hill-peasantry. She understood also why he was so glad to have her in his house, so proud, why he loved serving her. He seemed to see a fairness, a luminousness in the northern soul, something free, touched with divinity such as "these people here" lacked entirely. (LG 324-25)

This passage reveals how Alvina feels about herself among local Italian peasants while hardly giving up her sense of superiority as a British woman.

Further, by borrowing Ciccio's and Pancrazio's voices, the natives of the place, Alvina juxtaposes "the social confidence of England"

(*LG* 325) with "the deep, bed-rock distrust which all the hill-peasants seemed to have of one another" (*LG* 324). This contrast between fair Englishness and malevolent hill-peasantry directly undermines the significance of this mountain village as a testing place for a new mode of life. This also denigrates the meaning of Alvina's self-exile: she came to Italy following Ciccio in order to explore her desire and her self, which have been repressed by English bourgeois culture. Alvina's remaining superiority as a northerner keeps her from intermingling with local life, and instead she keeps asking Ciccio to take her either back to England or to America. Her ambivalence about the primitive Italian village reflects her "ongoing" conflict in redefining what she is; she was a middle-class English woman and now an English Italian by getting married to Ciccio.

What is striking in this novel, however, is that Alvina does not entirely dismiss the chance to see the English people, including herself, through racial others' eyes. By introducing Pancrazio's experience of working as a model for English painters, Alvina makes the character of Pancrazio a metaphor of the colonized other. An English painter asks him to take a very difficult posture of the crucified Christ; in this episode, the relation of a cruel, domineering English painter and an exploited foreign model embodies a hierarchy between the white colonizer and the colonized other:

Well he [an English painter] kept me tied up, hanging you know forwards naked on this cross, for four hours. And then it was luncheon. And after luncheon he would tie me again. Well, I suffered. I suffered so much, that I must lean against the wall to support me to walk home. And in the night I could not sleep, I could cry with the pains in my arms and my ribs, I had no sleep. (*LG* 326-27)

The mock-crucifixion of Pancrazio, as a metaphor, symbolizes the pain and the grief that a colonized victim has to endure in his/her

relationship with a white master. Pancrazio's experience in England also indicates that the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized does not exclusively exist in the official relation of the metropolis and the colony. In other words, the British, whether it is their colony or not, have tended to subordinate all racial (and national) others even inside Europe as their colonized others.⁵

More significantly, Alvina does not ignore the possibility of rebellion by colonized others through her symbolic reading of Pancrazio's "almost diabolic look": "Alvina felt that if she were left much alone with him [Pancrazio] she would need all her English ascendancy not to be afraid of him" (*LG* 327). In the moment when Alvina recognizes Pancrazio as an object of fear, she comes to have an anxiety of losing her identity as an English woman. But Alvina's fear of this Italian man as a racial other is not great enough to threaten her Englishness, not as threatening as what Kate in *The Plumed Serpent* feels about the primitive power of Cipriano, a Mexican Indian.

Alvina's conflicting feelings about Pancrazio—sympathy and fear—do not survive long, and the latter is rather described as a timid and generous Italian peasant. It is nevertheless worthwhile to notice that Alvina in Italy has the chance to see the privileged world of wealthy, English painters through Pancrazio's story, that is, through a racial other's point of view: "It was strange to look at the battered figure of Pancrazio, and think how much he had been crucified through the long years in London, for the sake of late Victorian art. It was strangest of all to see through his yellow, often dull, red-rimmed eyes these blithe

⁵ In the introduction to *The Lost Girl*, Carol Siegel accounts for the social status of Italian immigrants in England in the early twentieth century: "By the end of the nineteenth century the population increase in Italy was the highest in Europe, resulting in massive emigration of labourers. By Lawrence's time record numbers were leaving: for instance 530,000 in 1910. However, even in the early Victorian period there had been so many Italian immigrants in England that the Italian became the figure for the immigrant outsider." (xxi)

and well-conditioned painters" (*LG* 326). For Alvina, this is at once an uncanny experience and a process of self-awakening which makes possible a reciprocal understanding between the British and the racial others. But her relationship with Pancrazio does not reach the point of breaking down the wall of hierarchy set in between the southerner and the northerner inside Europe. Alvina stays in the mountain village mainly as an outsider and a traveling English woman.

Alvina's repulsion to the inside of an Italian church located in Casa Latina, the neighboring village of Pescocalascio, also reveals her fear of "primitive" others. In the introduction to *The Lost Girl*, Carol Siegel accounts for Alvina's response to the inside of the church in terms of friction between English Protestantism and Italian Catholicism: "Until the English Ecumenical movement of the nineteenth century was well under way, English authors often expressed suspicion of and even horrified revulsion at Italian Catholicism" (xxi). But Alvina's recoil from the inside of the church has rather something to do, beyond a matter of religious sensitivity, with her repulsion to the inside of local culture and life in general:

Enough of Casa Latina. She [Alvina] would never go *there* again. She was beginning to feel that, if she lived in this part of the world at all, she must avoid the *inside* of it. She must never, if she could help it, enter into any interior but her own—neither into house nor Church nor even shop or post-office, if she could help it. The moment she went through a door the sense of dark repulsiveness came over her. If she was to save her sanity she must keep to the open air, and avoid any contact with human interiors. When she thought of the insides of the native people she shuddered with repulsion, as in the great, degraded church of Casa Latina. They were horrible.

Yet the outside world was so fair. Corn and maize were growing green and silken, vines were in the small bud. Everywhere little grape hyacinths hung their blue bells. (*LG* 333)

The distinction between the inside and outside of the church becomes more striking in a binaristic form which describes the insides of local people as something malevolent and ugly, whereas the landscape of Pescocalascio is something beneficent and fair. This contrast highlights the influence of the primitive landscape on Alvina, while excluding the significance of her contact with local peasants. Seen from the outside, the landscape of the primitive mountain village and local people, like the church of Casa Latina, are very nice and beautiful. But when Alvina tries to reach the insides of all that, they are all suddenly horribly repulsive and even diabolic. The beauty of the place, for Alvina, is tricky and bewitching, and often compared to the image of "the fangs sheathed in beauty: the beauty first, and then, horribly, inevitably, the fangs" (*LG* 334).

Why is Alvina so afraid of approaching "the insides of the native people" (*LG* 333)? Even though claiming that she "was lost to Woodhouse, to Lancaster, to England,--all lost" (*LG* 306), why does she fear to adapt herself to the spirit of this primitive village? She keeps a distance from these native people and never really tries to intermingle with them, which shows how limitedly Alvina responds to the place, that is, the spirit of the place. The contrast between the beautiful landscape and the repulsive native people is a typical narrative convention often found in Western colonial discourses a juxtaposition of the sublime, grand landscape and the diabolic, treacherous black others. I argued in chapter I that Lawrence's sense of place in his travel books is deeply related to his concern with local people, whereas nineteenth-century Western travel writing tends to dismiss local people as well as white colonizers. Unlike his concern with the "inseparable" relationship between place and people highlighted in his travel writings, Lawrence's usual adoration of the landscape in *The Lost Girl* parallels his estrangement from local

people in the colonialist dogma of the beautiful outside and the repulsive, fearful inside.

Although the meaning of being "lost" in this novel contains a rebellion against certain values, mainly those of English middle-class culture, Alvina's desire for escape from the civilized world does not guarantee her complete transformation into the primitive world. If Alvina tries to escape from her Englishness through her marriage to Ciccio and her border crossing into Italy, the last chapters of the novel show how she becomes "lost" again among primitive local peasants and in this foreign country, which is "savage" and "repulsive" in a different sense from Woodhouse. It seems unlikely that there is any possible way for Alvina to get into the inside of native people and to face "the shadow of the by-gone, pagan world" (LG 333). Alvina's sense of horror revealed in her encounter with the "inside" of the primitive people signifies her anxiety of losing her civilized identity, despite her repudiation of English bourgeois culture. That is, *The Lost Girl* shows how Alvina's difficult position in this "savage" place is different from the traveler's point of view that Lawrence takes in his travel books, which does not demand any responsibility for physical and psychological adjustment to the "foreign" place.

If Alvina's conflicting sense of identity is a major issue in this novel, her sexual relationship with Ciccio is another important issue to be dealt with. For example, Billy Tracy defines *The Lost Girl* as "a novel that celebrates female values" in comparison with *Aaron's Rod* "which praises male companionship" (52). But many critics would be skeptical about this description and ask in what sense *The Lost Girl* celebrates female values. It seems impossible to resolve the debate on the inconsistency between Alvina's sexual submission to Ciccio and Alvina as a "New Woman" revolting against British middle-class culture. Alvina is not a typical Victorian woman; she is rather closer to the "New Woman" with her own will and desire, but, strangely

enough, in her sexual relationship with Ciccio, she becomes suddenly passive and submissive; and we know the author wants to emphasize Alvina's submission to Ciccio. The problem in the novel is, moreover, that Ciccio is not strong enough to make Alvina his slave as described in the text; rather, Alvina leads him in their wedded life. There is a tension between Lawrence's wishful thinking about submissive woman, particularly in her sexual relationship, and his presentation of Alvina as a New Woman. In other words, an Ursula-like modern woman—H. M. Daleski sees Alvina as "an uncanny reincarnation of Ursula" (19)—and a sexually submissive woman are combined in Alvina. Lawrence tries to present a woman who is different at once from the Victorian (sexually insensitive) woman and from the modern woman with strong self-will, but her traits do not combine well together.

While most critics have considered Alvina's sexual submission to Ciccio as unconvincing and offensive, Siegel rather emphasizes that Lawrence's characterization of Ciccio is outside the conventional track of masculinity:

What makes Lawrence's description of the triumphant male so original in both the poem and the novel is his insistence that seductive male power should come not from the traditional sources, masculine intellect or strength of character and body, but from a man's beauty, grace and closeness to the natural world. . . . Despite the male chauvinism of some of his views, Ciccio is more like one of the flowers Persephone stoops to pick than he is like a patriarch. . . . Lawrence juxtaposes Ciccio's subtle, flower-like embodiment of Italy's seductive beauty with the conventional patriarchal power exemplified by Ciccio's rival, Dr Mitchell, who offers Alvina 'Honorable Engagement', as the eleventh chapter is entitled. (xxv-vi)

Beyond the conventional code of masculinity, Siegel relates Ciccio's maleness to the characteristics of the ancient Etruscan culture, which

Lawrence in *Etruscan Places* (1932) describes as "small and dainty in proportion, and fresh, somehow charming instead of impressive" (26). As Siegel suggests, Ciccio and Dr. Mitchell, whom Alvina was engaged to before she is married to Ciccio, have each inherited the opposite traditions of the Etruscan society, which embodied, respectively, "the natural flowering of life" (*Etruscan* 49) and the "imposing" and "patriarchal" Roman Empire. Alvina's choice of Ciccio signifies her psychological dissociation from Imperial Britain that has followed the cultural tradition of the Roman Empire.

Nonetheless, it is hard to find enough examples to argue for the relevance of the issue of colonialism in *The Lost Girl* in comparison with *Kangaroo* (1923) and *The Plumed Serpent* (1926) Alvina's transformation is limited, compared with Kate's in *The Plumed Serpent*. Still, Alvina's self-exile in itself signifies her "insurrection" against the "unconscious assumption of priority" (*Rod* 106) of the English culture. Since her desertion of England as her native place was still emotionally unacceptable for the British people at that time, Alvina's act of exile disturbs and undermines cultural hierarchies set in the distinction between northern and southern Europe.

Through Alvina's limited and incomplete attempt to be a part of the "primitive" society, Lawrence shows in this transitional novel how hard full achievement of the transformation of the old self into the new one could be: Alvina ventures into an interracial marriage with an Italian man and leaves her native place, but she becomes "lost" to both worlds, the old and new place. The novel hints that Alvina will keep moving to other places, either back to England or forward to America or an unexpected place like Australia. Alvina's border crossing from England to Italy and her attempt to be a member of the "primitive" Italian society -- reflects Lawrence's ongoing search for a new world, untouched by European civilization. Given that the period when Lawrence wrote *The Lost Girl* is featured by his sense of instability

existing between the end of a European mode of life and the beginning of American life, the novel as a transitional work foreshadows his "leadership" period of the 1920s, charged with his apocalyptic vision and his continuous search for a new society.

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Abstract

D. H. Lawrence's *THE LOST GIRL* as a Transitional Work

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This paper pays attention to the transitional aspects of D. H. Lawrence's *The Lost Girl* in terms of national (and racial) identity and the Lawrentian sense of place. I mean by "transition" Lawrence's temporary stay in Italy from February 1920 to May 1921 when he waited for departure to America. This period is featured by instability (in other words, Lawrence's sense of "being lost" as seen in *The Lost Girl* and *Aaron's Rod*, both written in Italy) and by his sense of confusion existing between the end of a European mode of life and the beginning of American life. In this transitional novel, Lawrence explores the possibilities of Italy as a new place and a new way of life before he launches out his journey to Australia, America, and Mexico. Alvina Houghton's self-exile to Italy reflects Lawrence's determination to end the European mode of life, which reached the peak after the war, and foreshadows his "leadership" period characterized as his ongoing search for a new society. Keeping in mind that *The Lost Girl* features a transitional phase moving from the European mode of life to the "primitive" way of life, this paper examines the importance of Italy as an alternative locale to industrialized Europe. Particularly focusing on the way in which Alvina's sense of disorientation her sense of being "lost"—is related to the different spirits of England and Italy, this paper will show how the spirit of each place shapes and determines the meaning of Alvina's self-exile.

Keywords: "spirit of place", self-exile, sense of being "lost",
colonialism, border crossing