CHAPTER III

THE WILFUL WOMEN:
WHERE SHALL WE GO THIS SUMMER? &
"SCHOLAR AND GYPSY"
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"SCHOLAR AND GYPSY"

Referring to Anita Desai's novel Where Shall We Go This Summer?¹, Madhusudan Prasad observes in his book Anita Desai, The Novelist: "In spirit, this novel is indubitably reminiscent of D.H. Lawrence's long tale, "The woman Who Rode Away", although the locale, milieu and the protagonist's predicament in the former are entirely different from those in the latter. Besides, Anita Desai and Lawrence have written these pieces with altogether different ends in view. Needless to mention that she is much more effective than Lawrence and very powerfully conveys the angst and agony of her heroine."² As the critic's words suggest, there are so many differences between the above mentioned works that we have to look elsewhere in Lawrence for a more rewarding comparison. And a Lawrentian piece that might be more fruitfully compared with Where Shall We Go This Summer? is "The Wilful Woman", an unfinished short story published in The Princess and Other Stories, a collection published first in 1925.³

A feminist approaching the middle age, making a hysterical attempt at a tour de force and finally

1. Desai, A. Where Shall We Go his summer?, Delhi Orient Paperbacks, 1982.
settling for a course of compromise in marriage rather than reconciliation based on penitence forms the common theme for both "The Wilful Woman" and Where Shall We Go This Summer?

Each of these gyno-centric works portrays a sensitive – at times bordering on the hypersensitive, surely! – married woman in her forties who sets an extremely absurd, illogical condition of hers to be met, making an attempt to escape from her mundane duties and responsibilities. And the woman finally decides to resume her routine in her mundane role as a housewife, beating an equally hasty retreat from her belligerent course, recognising nothing but the call of her existentialist demands. Though Lawrence's short story is found in an unfinished form, there are adequate pointers within the piece that suggest a 'happy' resolution to her conflict. In a way, the denouement in Anita Desai's novel is also suggested by Lawrence in his poem "End of Another Home Holiday", which mirrors vividly the existentialist plight of the human individual, yet subtly suggests the necessity of 'acceptance'.

Sybil, the protagonist of "The Wilful Woman" is a "sturdy woman with a round face, Like an obstinate girl of fourteen, she sat there devouring her unease, her heavy, muscular fore-arms inert in her lap". (TP, p.15). "So child-like – yet a woman approaching forty". In another context, her age is given as forty: "Sybil
at forty was heavy with energy like a small bison, ..." (TP, p.19) "And curiously heart-broken at being alone, travelling alone" (TP, p.15). In short, sybil is a highly disturbed woman, and she does show marks of her wear and tear in body and mind: ... "with her body lashed and bruised, her soul sat crying and ominous." (TP, p.19).

Sita, the protagonist of Where Shall We Go This Summer? is "a woman now in her forties". (WSWG, p.32). It is indeed shocking to see her "behave with such a total lack of control. Control was an accomplishment that had slipped out of her hold... over the years, till now she had no more than an infant has before he has begun the process of acquiring it, and so she wept and flung herself about, over-forty, grey and ageing." (WSWG, p.32)

The singularity which marks the hysteria of Lawrence's protagonist Sybil in "The Wilful Woman" is her absolutely illogical hypothesis, defying the inevitable connection between cause and effect. Again and again, she ends up with the ridiculous assertion that the train in which she travels towards southwest "would never arrive. There was no end. It could not arrive. She could not bear it." (TP, p.15). Her mood is stormy and volcanic: "Volts of distracted impatience and heart-brokenness surged out of her... . . . Frustration, and a painful volcanic pressure of impatience. The train would not arrive, could not
arrive. That was it". (TP, p.15).

The peculiarity of the nature of Sita's hysteria in *Where Shall We Go This Summer*? bears a remarkable similarity to that of Sybil in that, Sita too hangs on to her own absurd assertion, that she would not have the baby if she stays in the 'magic' island. Becoming pregnant for the fifth time in her life, she is sure that this child would not be born. The suggestion is bewildering to Raman, her husband, as Sita is vehemently opposed to the idea of abortion. Sita simply wants to retain the baby safely in her womb, as she finds the world too inhospitable for the child: "I want to keep it, don't you understand?" (WSWG, p.35). "I mean I want to keep it - I don't want it to be born. .." "She was on the island, in order to achieve the miracle of not giving birth."

"(WSWG, p.31). "She had come on a pilgrimage, to beg for the miracle of keeping her baby unborn." (WSWG, p.31). Both the authors use italics to denote the emphasis of their protagonists' illogical assertions.

The very name Sybil, suggests associations of magic and sorcery in Lawrence's "The Wilful Woman", Sybil being a well-known name in Greek mythology:

"Why did she feel that the train would never arrive, could never arrive, with her in it. Who knows? But that was how she did feel. The train would never arrive. Simple fate. Perhaps she felt that some power of her will would at last neutralize altogether the power of the engines, and there would come an end to motion, so there they would sit forever the train and she, at a deadlock on the Santa Fe Line..." (TP, p.16).
In a curiously similar fashion, Sita too feels that there "could" be no more forward 'motion' of time, for herself and her seven-month old foetus in the island of "miracles":

"Wasn't this Manori, The Island of miracles? Her father had made it an island of magic once, worked miracles of a kind. His legend was still here... he might work another miracle, posthumously" (WSWG, p.31)

in a sort of frenzy" she saw the island as a piece of magic, a magic mirror... This magic, too, cast shadows..." (WSWG, p.63).

Both the women retreat from the 'modern' world to the 'primitive', seeking protection. Both flee from a busy urban life to the quiet, slow routine of a remote village. Sybil in "The Wilful Woman" runs away from the maddening metropolis of New York City travelling westward, to the Rockies. Interestingly enough, Sita, also runs westward from the sprawling city of Bombay to the small deserted island of Manori. Sybil and Sita end up in places that cannot boast of even the basic modern comforts like the supply of electricity. It is almost travelling in Time backward, towards the Dark Ages.

Lawrence and Anita Desai openly suggest that their protagonists suffer from an acute form of hysteria bordering on 'madness'. For Sybil "the thing getting had been unbearable". After reaching the Rockies, "the fatality had as good as happened... And she would never get there. This train would never bring her
there. Her head was one mass of thoughts and frenzied ideas almost to madness." (TP, p.16). Sita's mental condition too is not far different from that of Sybil. "The fifth time she told him she was pregnant, she did so with a quite, paranoid show of rage, fear, and revolt..." (WSWG, p.32). "'Mad' he breathed in relief, understanding all... the intensity of that attitude was now explained. 'You've gone mad'". (WSWG, p.35). Moses dismisses Sita from his mind easily at the end, with a callous remark: "Mad people are like that, Huh" (WSWG, p.157). For that matter, Sita herself expresses her desire to run away to a place in order to recover her sanity: "What I'm doing is trying to escape from the madness here, escape to a place where it might be possible to be sane again." (WSWG, p.35).

Sybil's inner rage is visible in her eyes,

"made up all of devilish grey and yellow bits, as opals are, and the bright candour of youth resolving into something dangerous as the headlights of a great machine coming full at you in the night." (TP, p.16).

And she has intimidating "serpent-blazing eyes."(TP, p.16). She is referred to as "this seductive serpent of loneliness." (TP, p.16). Sita's eyes can also "flare" and "glow." "'What do you know about my condition ? she flared." (WSWG, p.33). "She stabbed him between the temples with a short, ferocious glare". (WSWG p.36)

Sybil's short-tempered disposition is conveyed through the imagery of the volcano: "... She raged with painful impatience" and "Volts of distracted italics mine"
impatience and heart-brokenness surged out of her" (TP, p.15). "Frustration and a painful volcanic pressure of impatience." (TP, p.15). In one context, Lawrence refers to her as "this one highly-explosive daughter." (TP, p.19). Sita's nature too is described in similar terms by Anita Desai:

"It was as though for seven months she had collected inside her all her resentments, her fears, her rages, and now she flung them outward, flung them from her." (WSWG, p.33).

Sita's children notice "their mother, who continually broke apart into violent eruptions of emotions." (WSWG, p.19).

Sybil's hysterical, wilful nature reveals, itself in the momentaneousness of her decisions. When it is just a few hours for her destination, she springs out of her pullman, and throws herself headlong on her next 'whirl': "She must have an automobile, she would have an automobile". (TP, p.17). Sita's decisions are instantaneous. After waiting patiently for the first seven long months of her pregnancy, she launches herself on her hysterical escapade, taking Raman and all her children totally by surprise: "The plan to escape boiled up in her with such suddenness..." (WSWG, p.57).

The alienation that the protagonist feels in "The Wilful Woman" is suggested by Lawrence by the wide gulf that she maintains between herself and the members of her family, especially by making sudden independent decisions. Sybil "kept unpleasant surprises still in
store for her family." (TP, p.19). While referring to her mother's eccentric behaviour in the pop-gun episode, where Sita was seen using the toy to dismiss "the furious band of crows; Menaka is highly critical: "her mother had before arranged, created wilfully such acts of drama purely, Menaka maintained, to embarrass her family." (WSWG, pp.40-41).

Both the protagonists show symptoms of extreme aggressiveness and find almost a vicarious sense of fulfilment in sending 'men' — other than their husbands! — on their errands, by paying them liberally:

"'Put my bags out', she said to the negro, and he... silently obeyed. Yet with her mouth she smiled a little and was cajoling, and his tip was reckless. Man must needs be mollified." (TP, p.16).

Sybil shows the same attitude towards the boy driving the old Dodge: "The boy had never travelled that trail, didn't know the way. No matter, she would go... And the boy would get twenty-six dollars. Good enough!" (TP, p.17). Sita too treats Moses as a mercenary. We find Moses in Where Shall We Go This Summer? excited over the money he receives from Sita: "Moses gave the lungi a careless flick. Its checks of rose and maroon had about them the glow of square-cut gems — therefore it was not only a careless but also a proud flick."

'I was sent twenty rupees' he admitted 'I had to spend it on something.' (WSWG, p.8). On her arrival Sita too orders Moses about: "'Bring the luggage in', she ordered..." (WSWG, p.29). The bag and
baggage accompanying Sybil and Sita on their journeys indicate that these women do intend to 'travel' for a long time, carrying their own atmosphere with them. The Drawing-Room of the railway carriage is filled with Sybil's luggage: "She had the place to herself and her bags."* (TP, p.15).

Moses too has a hard time, carrying Sita's bags and boxes:

"... Moses came forward and heaved the bags and boxes onto his shoulders and head — he was no city weakling to have to pick them up one by one... He staggered across to the boat, then stopped and shouted to the driver to come and unload him." (WSWG, p.15).

Sybil becomes restless, at an advanced stage of her journey, when it is just" a few hours from her destination," (TP, p.16) she springs out of her Pullman and throws herself headlong on her next 'whirl'. Sita too grows impatient after seven long months of her fifth pregnancy. "The day he remarked, 'Not much longer to go now, Sita, it'll soon be over', the storm broke."(WSWG, p.33).

There is a curious similarity between the hazardous, uncomfortable nature of the adventurous journeys undertaken by Sybil and Sita. What sybil manages to find is "an old worn-out Dodge with no springs left" (TP, p.17), rushing on a "breathless

* Lawrence presents a similar protagonist also in his short story "The Border Line": "KATHERINE FARQUHAR, ... soft, full feminine .... the French porters ran round her, getting a voluptuous pleasure from merely carrying her bags..."
scramble in deep canons... banging itself to bits against boulders...", "out on the lurch and bump of the open white-sage deserts... in the god-forsaken landscape." (TP, p.17). Sita's travel in the bullock cart with her children is much the same in quality:

"It was at once an inspiring and frightening sensation— and the passengers of the car seemed to crouch and droop, clinging to the shifting planks..." (WSWG, p.24).

"The unevenness made the bullock stumble and heave, the cart totter and lurch, so that there were no two movements alike in motion or direction. Each threw them off by its total unexpectedness..." (WSWG, p.21).

Somehow the jagged nerves of the passengers is vividly conveyed through the modes of their travel in both the works.

As for destinations, Sybil at last comes across a 'lost village in the desert', with "houses like brown mud boxes plonked down in the grey wilderness, with a bigger mud box, oblong, which the boy told her was the sort of church place where the Penitentes' scourge and torture themselves, windowless so that no one shall hear their shrieks and groans" (TP, pp.17-18). Sita in Anita Desai's novel, arrives at "the house at the top of the knoll" (WSWG, p.26).

"It was built on a high stone plinth, itself an island lapped by waves of palm and the shorter, quieter, leafier trees... Its white walls gleamed chalkily above the waves..." (WSWG, p.26).

Both the buildings described in "The wilful woman" and Where Shall We Go This Summer? seem distinguished against their sinister backdrops and *italics mine

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instil fear in the minds of the respective protagonists.

Sybil and Sita are plunged into darkness in the new 'worlds' they arrive in, due to the negligence of the thoughtless men they employ. Sybil's 'whirl' in the Dodge ends in disaster: "...the November night fell. The boy hadn't thought to put the lamps on. No headlights! Frustrations, always frustration... her soul sat crying and ominous" (TP, p.19). And the entire place assumes a menacing, threatening look:

"The air was cold in her nostrils, the desert seemed weird and uncanny. But...it was terranova. It was a new world... the world of three altitudes. Strange! - doomful!" (TP, p.19)

Sita, in the company of Menaka and Karan arrives at her island house in utter darkness. Moses who seems to be indifferent to her condition fails to light the lamps. Karan is terrified: "He kicked and twisted and would not let her enter the dark house... She stood helplessly, feeling perspiration creep down her skull..." (WSWG, p.27). And the place suddenly becomes ominous: "The palms reared up in their path, hissing and clattering their dry leaves together harshly, like some disturbed, vigilant animals... There was menace in their warnings..." (WSWG, p.26). The sudden darkness that befalls both the protagonists seems to symbolize their own confused muddled state of mind.

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Similarly, Sybil's 'Drawing Room' and Sita's house in the island of Manori are left 'unswept' by their respective caretakers, though due to different reasons. In "The Wilful Woman" the negro responsible for the cleanliness of the Pullman, "did not dare to come in and sweep her floor with his little brush and dustpan. He left the 'Room' unswept for the afternoon". (TP, p.15). In Where Shall We Go This Summer?, the island house is left unswept and uncared for, due to sheer laziness on the part of Moses: "Dust lay as casually as sand on a beach, spiderwebs spanned the corners of the unfurnished rooms like skeletal palm leaves" Sita's questioning Moses - "Why haven't you cleaned it?" (WSWG, p.28) - evokes only a menacing, contemptuous glance from Moses. Lawrence's comments on Sybil's condition are in a profound sense, applicable to Sita's as well: "It was her destiny she should see it for the first time thus, alone, lost, without light." (TP, p.20).

The impact of Sybil's 'destination' in the desert as described by Lawrence is also quite similar to that of the deserted island house on Sita's mind: "By nightfall she had had a lot of nonsense bumped and bruised out of her, knocked about as if she were a penitente* herself" (TP, p.18). At the end of her dramatic misadventure, Sita too

''felt—tired, dishevelled and vacant... in equal parts saddened and relieved...she had actually been playing the part here of an

*italics mine
actress in a theatrical performance and was now to return to a life of retirement, off-stage." (WSWG, pp.152-53).

Surprisingly enough, Sita's muddled feeling - partly of remorse as well - is conveyed through the imagery of "scourging": "She felt the long, straight, monotonous track of her life whip itself round her in swift circles..." (WSWG, p.154).

The decision to join their husbands taken by both Sybil and Sita is worth some consideration. In Lawrence's story, Sybil herself had sent a message to Mark, her husband: "Luckily, she had telegraphed to Mark, who would be waiting for her at Lamy station." (TP, p.18)

Sybil feels it is the necessity that Destiny has imposed on her that she should join Mark, despite the fact that she does not feel guilty or penitent for her misadventure: "...here was a country that hit her with hard knuckles, right through to the bone." (TP, p.18).

But in her inmost self Sybil is utterly unrepentant: "Not that she was a penitente: not she." (TP, p.18). Nonetheless, there is in Sybil's mind, also a vague sympathetic awareness of the plight of her husband, precipitated by her own intransigent behaviour in the past:

"... Mark alternately torn to atoms and thrown to the four corners of the universe, then rather sketchily gathered up and put together again by a desirous, if still desperate Isis. She had torn him in two and pitched him piecemeal away into the southwestern desert. Now she was after him once more, going to put humpty-dumpty together again with a slam." (TP, p.18).
Seeing Raman's "will to remain upright, straight," despite the severe backache that wracked him. Sita too is 'moved': "she was moved." Like Sybil, she also has a lurking feeling of guilt: "It struck her then that he had suffered...from worry and anxiety about her, the unborn child, Menaka and Karan, living alone on the island in this wild season. His boys at home must have worried him too, while he was at work in the factory which was not without its problems either... He looked worn, much older than his years. Nor could he stay here, resting, as she was doing." (WSW, p.138).

However, there is no definite hint given in both the works to suggest that it is a happy 'reunion' for the couples at the end. In "The Wilful Woman" Sybil, on her own, is going to put "humpty-dumpty together again" (TP, p.18) almost a futile exercise, as suggested by the associations of the nursery rhyme- and that too, "with a slam"! (TP, p.18) Though this is counterbalanced by Lawrence's comment: "With a slam that might finally do for him", (TP, p.18) there is no final unqualified assurance in it, especially when we recall the cyclical statement: "Sybil Hamnett... had been (Sybil Thomas and Sybil Danks before she married) Mark. (TP, pp.18-19).

The precariousness of Sita's marriage with Raman—or at least the tenuousness of her reunion with him—stems from Sita's existential ennui which prevents her from trusting in any kind of relationship,
including the marital relationship: "... what a farce marriage was, all human relationships were" *(WSW, p.144)*. As for any reassurance, "It simply did not exist for her and she could not make it exist" *(WSW, p.144)*. Viewed from such a perspective, "Menaka's betrayal" *(WSW, p.139)* as Sita puts it — is merely incidental. As for Raman's reaction to the crisis, he too does not seem over-enthusiastic or optimistic about the reunion with Sita. For the moment he looks "too tired to move" *(WSW, p.144)*, after having faced so many tides of emotional assaults from Sita. He walks "a little more land-wards where the tide could not assault his shod feet, his dry dignity..." *(WSW, p.142)*

Sybil's marrying Mark, a Jewish artist from Poland has not been kindly viewed by the class-conscious members of her aristocratic family. Mark 'was, in her family's eyes, the anti-climax. But she herself admitted no possibility of anti-climax* for herself..' *(TP, p.19)*. Even Sita feels the same way: "Very hard—this making of compromises when one didn't want to compromise, when one wanted to — to..." *(WSW, p.148)*. But Raman seems to be a man of mettle:

"He seemed to wish only to get on with it — take Menaka, take her back, resume the normal, everyday life of disappointments and anti-climax*, and avoid disasters and climaxes" *(WSW, p.143)*.

Sybil in "A Wilful Woman" and Sita in Anita Desai's novel show some unusual sympathy to 'the foreigners' they meet in their lives. And both the...
foreigners turn out to be also artists. In the case of Lawrence’s Sybil, Mark her third husband himself is a foreigner and an artist (TP, p.18) and both Sybil’s mother and her step-father, a general are outraged at Sybil’s marrying him. In Where Shall We Go This Summer?, Sita comes across a foreigner once, as she returns with her family from the Ajanta caves. Raman lights the cigarettes for Sita and the foreigner with “Sita acutely conscious of this silent link between them of a shared physical act of inner nervousness”. And the foreigner informs them that he is an artist and he plays the flute. Later on, Sita “not only thought again and again of that wanderer... but spoke too often and too much of him”, (WSWG, p.52) and when questioned by Raman, tells him bluntly that she "would have liked to know him better" (WSWG, p. 52)

and if "her infidelity was mental, it was much more immeasurable for that and she still carried its deep scar." (WSWG, p.53)

One of the typical features in the Lawrencean narrative is the animal imagery, often used with a view to throwing light on the inner consciousness of a character, lending colour and force to the scene described or the mood evoked and Lawrence’s "The Wilful Woman" is no exception. Sybil is referred, as mentioned earlier, to "this seductive serpent of loneliness that lay on the western trail". (TP, p.16) and her eyes are described as "serpent-blazing eyes
under those eye-brows like thorn bushes". (IP, p.16)
The animal imagery used here is typical of Lawrence as
it does not simply describe Sybil’s eyes and her mood
but also admirably evokes the desert atmosphere with
its extended reference to the ‘thorn bushes’. If her
suppressed fury suggests the ferocity of a serpent,
"her heavy, muscular" (IP, p.15) build and "highly-
explosive" (IP, p.19) temper invite comparison with
fierce-charging animals:

"Sybil at forty was heavy with energy like a
small bison, and strong and young-looking...
The old colonial vigour had, we repeat,
collected in her as in some final dam, like
the buffalo’s force in his forehead. (IP,
p.19)

Anita Desai too employs animal imagery in the
Lawrentian style. Moses, the housekeeper at Manori is
compared to an ox, through several extended references
to various aspects of his figure and character:"...with
some righteousness in the lift of his heavy
chin"..."leaving his own monumental patience;"
(WSWG, p.7) evoking Lawrence’s description of Susan, his
cow, as he sets about receiving Sita onto the island
of Manori. He continues to drink in the illicit
liquor shop, and

"...suddenly expanded - grew to the size
of two, three Moses’s[sic], each more purple,
wet and gleaming than the other. The whole
cavern reeked of Moses, was choked with
Moses. His long growl was incoherent but not
less threatening for that". (WSWG, p.10)

"...he was like a dusky ox who could be loaded
and trusted". (WSWG, p.15). "He lifted his pendulous
possibly she is lying peacefully in cowy inertia, like a black Hindu
statue among the oak- scrub"
Lawrence, D.H. "Love Was Once a Little Boy"; Phoenix, Vol 8, p.446
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jaw into the air... feeling enlarged and solidified by his renewed duties." (WSWG, p.16). Moses is callous and insensitive

"The young girl glared at him with a ferocity a man would surely feel, as he casually beat the bullock across its jutting hip bones... but Moses did not feel it - his back was broad, his hide was thick, it yielded only perspiration..." (WSWG, p.22).

"Moses curled his lip..." (WSWG, p.21). Moses lifted the corner of his upper lip and snarled, showing teeth like mahjong [Sic] counters made of old bamboo."(WSWG, p.9).

"... his eyeballs rolled like two porpoises making a brief appearance in the thick purple waves of his fleshy face. Then they sank soundlessly out of sight". (WSWG, p.8).

"He rolled his eyeballs drolly. His jaw swung - warningly, she saw - then rigidified into a purple barrier about his face..." (WSWG, p.29).

Moses' domesticated wildness, inertia, drunkenness to camouflage his frailties, basic servility, beastly callousness and hysteria are all driven home powerfully through these images in Where Shall We Go This Summer? The technique employed in this manner is 'Lawrentian' because it was Lawrence who perfected this art of presenting animal imagery through extended references and using multiple perspectives, in order to realize a physical caricature and bring out the latent qualities of a particular character and

* There is a similar description of Tom Brangwen in The Rainbow:
  His face 'distorted, his lips curled back from his teeth in a horrid grin, like an animal which grimaces..."
their significance in the over-all context of the entire work.**

There can be no doubt about the loss of face, at the end, suffered by both the protagonists. They also feel that their vulnerability has been momentarily exposed: "That was destiny that threw her naked* like the black* queen onto this unknown chess-board". (TP, p.20). Sita makes a similar confession in Anita Desai's novel: "Perhaps I am only like the jellyfish washed up by the waves, stranded there on the sand-bar. I was just stranded here by the sea, that's all. I hadn't much to do with it at all", she sadly admitted, with that black*, stripped* truthfulness that she could never colour or coat". (WSWG, p.149). Some interesting verbal echoes can be heard between the pairs of words in italics taken from the two works discussed here.

Both Sybil and Sita recognize the need for a bold confrontation with destiny: "It would need a battle* to gain hold over such a land. It would need a battle*... she sat inwardly motionless, facing destiny again". (TP, p.20) In a way, Sybil can confront her destiny more 'directly' than Sita, since Mark doesn't seem to offer her as much resistance as Raman does in the case of Sita. Hence the gyno-centric vision of Where Shall We Go This Summer? is summarized by Sita in a jargon that sounds more feminist, despite the

**A good example for the employment of this technique of presenting an animal image with extended references can be seen in Lawrence's 'novella' The Fox

* italics mine
underlying, profoundly existential, message: "And so, she felt, as she sat down beside him heavily, it was to be a battle* between his brand of courage and her's. [sic] Or her cowardice and his. But a battle* it would be". (WSWG, p.140)

That it is the existentialist angst that informs the struggle of the protagonists of both the works in question comes to light, when the silent voices of the 'spirits' of the respective 'places' are sufficiently heeded:

"She looked round the night as they emerged from a dark canon out onto a high flat bit of vague desert, with mountains guarding the flatness beyond, shadows beyond the shadows ... No, it was not like desert. Rather like wilderness, the wilderness of the temptation, for example... Strange country - weird - frightening too... She hugged her furs and her fate round her, in the cold, rare air, and was somewhat relieved. Her battle! Her hope!: (TP, p.20)

Sita, in Anita Desai's novel too is undaunted:

"She felt surrounded by presences - the presence of the island itself, of the sea around it, and of the palm trees that spoke to each other and, sometimes, even to her... They were so alive. In the beginning they had seemed harsh, rattling their over-sized, brittle leaves together as if in warning, or disapproval... Yet, for all their stiffness and dryness, she came to see how extraordinarily responsive they were to every nuance of light and air, how alive... they were not stiff at all but so responsive, so alive as to seem birds rather than vegetables... So Sita never felt alone or unsafe... Soothing herself, reassuring herself, she silenced the doubts and walked more slowly till there entered into her mind again those wavering, disconnected line she still could not place or capture: "Even the slumberous egg, as it labours under the shell / Patiently to divide and sub-divide..." (WSWG, pp.126-127).
Lawrence's "The Wilful Woman" is 'Unfinished' (TP, p.21) in form. But its message is clear as Sybil is anxious to get back to the rail tracks after her wandering in the wilderness. And she demonstrates a rare 'courage' in resuming a journey she discarded earlier. Sita too is not very different: "She lowered her head and searched out his footprints so that she could place her feet in them, as a kind of game to make walking back easier, and so her footprints, mingled with his, some times accurately and sometimes not, made a chain of links..." (WSWG, p.150). Sita also wants to share with Raman "how this poem by Lawrence clarified it all for her..." (WSWG, p.151), but Raman who is so supremely oblivious of his wife's existentialist conflict is full of some other practical plans for the future. And in her turn, having resolved her inner conflict "poetically", Sita feels magnanimous enough in allowing Raman to savour his momentary 'triumph': "She thought how nice he really was, how much the nicest man she knew. She allowed him, then, to have his triumph..." (WSWG, p.151).

Even more significant than the imagery of the volcano discussed earlier in this chapter, is the imagery of the pressure exerted by water as we see in the following statement: "The old colonial vigour had, we repeat, collected in her as in some final dam". (TP, p.19) and "Her ponderous storm began to evaporate" (TP, p.20). For, while the images of the volcano and 'the
monsoon' indicate a cyclinal, turn of events, that of
the reservoir filled to the brim and threatening to
burst or that of the 'storm', suggest a are almost
only-once-a-lifetime phenomenon. Hence Sita, in
comparison with Sita, seems to arrive at a more stable
solution.

In *Where Shall We Go This Summer?*, Anita Desai
has deliberately used the elaborate, cyclical imagery
of the monsoon. In an interview the novelist has said

"I wanted the book to follow the pattern of
the monsoon to gather darkly and
threateningly [sic], to pour down wildly and
passionately, then withdraw quietly and
calmly."*

The imagery of the monsoon bears witness to
Anita Desai's conscious craftsmanship and at least
partially suggests that Anita Desai does not totally
rule out the possibility of a relapse in the condition
of Sita.

Critics have commented differently on the
ending of *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* Shyamala
Narayan says: "... Sita is forced to return to Bombay
with no solution in sight". ⁵ R.S. Sharma too says that

4. Ram, Atma

"An Interview with Anita Desai",
*World Literature Written in English*
(Arlington) 16, 1 April 1977, pp 97-98

5. Narayan, Shyamala

"Indian English Novel: Steady Growth"
*LITCRIT* 14, Vol. 5 No. 2
December, 1979 pp. 22-23

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the novel" suggests a lack of finality": 6 Maini also finds fault with the weakness inherent in the conclusion opted by Anita Desai:

"... This sudden decision to go back comes almost as a shock to the reader... If indeed the 'message' of the book is, as the Desai interview seems to suggest that even a life of small, meaningless adjustments and compromises is better than the fiery ideal of insanity (Maya's fate) or of suicide (Monisha's end) then the novelist has somehow failed to dramatize or concretize this transformation". 7

A careful reading of the novel, however, makes it clear that Anita Desai is not for any glib or neat solution. What she states elsewhere, applies to this novel as well:

"I haven’t sentimentalized the characters, or their society, or the world. I have to pursue the truth, and sentimentality is a distortion of truth". 8

On being asked about the fate of the (fifth) child, 9 Anita Desai observed.

"It is born, it lives, it compromises. It accepts dullness, mediocrity, either closes its eyes to or else condones destruction, ugliness, rottenness. In other words, it leads an ordinary life of the kind its mother tried so desperately to change only to find she could not".

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Also, the tone of the ending of the novel substantiates to a considerable extent Anita Desai's contention that the novel does point to an existentialist vision: For she has tried to make the novel

"discover the significance by plunging below the surface and plumbing the depths then illuminating those depths till they become a more lucid, brilliant and explicable reflection of the visible world".10

Apart from these comments on the ending of the novel Where Shall We Go This Summer?, critics have made some remarks pertaining to the structure of the novel which are relevant to the discussion here. Madhusudan Prasad says

"This second section of the novel, appearing to be an interpolation, is in fact a fuddled part which impairs the structural tautness and contributes little to the central narrative of Sita's present spiritual impasse. It would have been much better, had Anita Desai concentrated strictly on Sita's spiritual impasse".11

Atma Ram observes "... the beginning and the ending are kept, laboriously, in somewhat geometrical symmetry".12 At this point, it is interesting to note that, had Anita Desai not included the second section of Where Shall We Go This Summer? in her novel, the structure of the plot of her work would have been more

10. Ram, Atma, "An Interview with Anita Desai", p.98
or last identical with that of Lawrence's short story "The Wilful Woman".

There are certain other ideas and images in Lawrence whose associations are evoked by some features of Anita Desai's novel. For example, Effie in The Lost Girl asks Alvisa a question which is pertinent to Sita's situation "I believe I shall be like... the woman in the 'Cent Nouvellas' and carry my child for five years. Do you know that story?" 13

As in Anita Desai's novel, a wilful woman is likened to a snake by Lawrence: "... there was her terrible will, like a flat cold snake round his soul and squeezing him to death." 14 "... strong as a diabolical cold grey snake that presses and presses and cannot relax" 15 "... the cold and snake-like tension of her will" 16 Sita's existentialist quest is dealt with, in detail in the closing section of the novel. On one occasion she says to Raman: "I thought I could live with you and travel alone - mentally, emotionally. But, after that day, that wasn't enough. I had to stay whole, I had to" (WSWB, p.148)

15. Ibid., p.196
16. Ibid., p.196
* italics mine
As for Sita's reference to "aloneness", and "wholeness" there are plenty of references to this existential thematic motif in Lawrence including the following:

"and yet knew that one is alone? Essentially, alone. And choosing to be alone... Not sentimental or lonely... because by one's own nature one is alone".

"...every man is a sacred and holy individual, never to be violated". "You've got to develop it, and the the only phoenix... Your own single oneness is your destiny." "Thanked God he was alone... sanctity of his own isolation... Nelson died proper"

"The beauty, the beauty of fate, which decrees that in our supremacy we are single and alone, like peaks that finish off in their perfect isolation... The ultimate perfection of being alone".

"This achieved self, which we are, is absolute, and universal... the greatest conceit of all is the cry of loneliness".

"Perfect relationships cannot be. Each soul is alone, and the aloneness of a soul is a double barrier to perfect relationship between two beings... Each soul should be alone... the desire for a 'perfect relationship' is just a vicious, unmanly craving... " "...man is man and has a soul of his own. Alone, alone, with his own soul

18. ibid. p.328
19. ibid. p.343
23. __________, Studies in Classic American Literature, Penguin,1987 p.15
alone. The man by himself, alone with his soul."

In his poem "Delight of Being Alone" Lawrence writes: "I know no greater delight than the sheer delight of being alone... the delicious pleasure of the moon... in travelling by herself... the splendid growing of an ash-tree/alone, on a hillside...".

Birkin speaks for Lawrence when he says: "Best bear one’s soul in patience and in fullness".

Even the most striking images in *Where Shall We Go This Summer* seem to be echoes from Lawrence. Sita’s hysteria in the novel is sparked off by the shocking incident involving the carrion crows, eating the wounded eagle described vividly in the closing section of "Part One/Monsoon '67". (WSWG, pp.38-39). Lawrence has observed how the suffering of a hurt animal can cause depression in sensitive minds, especially those of women, and used this idea in his short stories and novels. For example, in "The Princess" he writes: "The thought of a hurt animal always put her into a sort of hysteric."

It is even more pertinent here to recall what Lawrence has got to say about the "carrion birds". Commenting on "this

obscenity which holds the great carrion birds and carrion dogs", Lawrence draws a clear line of distinction for them from

"The tiger, the hawk, the weasel, are beautiful things to me; and as they strike the dove and the hare, that is the will of God, it is a consummation, a bringing together of two extremes, a making perfect one from the duality. (But the baboon, and the hyena, the vulture, the condor, and the carrion crow, these fill me with fear and horror... These are the highly developed life forms, now arrested, petrified, frozen falsely, timeless... and these obscene beasts are not ashamed"

Lawrence uses the image of the carrion crow in The Trespasser too: "Body and soul she was out of tune... ashen grey and black, Fate, like a carrion crow had her in its shadow... It was the her turn to suffer sickening detachment... after moments of intense living."^29 In sharp contrast to the "carrion crows", the eagle is treated with unalloyed admiration by Lawrence in his writings. For example, in his poem "Eagle in New Mexico",

"Sits an eagle erect and scorch-breasted... Issuing like a great cloven candle-flame/With its own aura, /Towards the sun.../ Staring two ways at once, to right and left/Masked-one, /Dark-wedged/Sickle-masked/With iron between your two eyes, /You feather-gloved/Down to the feet/You foot-flint/Erect one/With the God-thrust threshing you silent from below"^30

The 'wounded eagle' which belongs to a superior order according to the Lawrentian perspective

30. Pinto, Vivian de Sola ed. The Complete Poems, pp. 780-81
is being attacked by "the obscene" carrion crows in Anita Desai’s novel and hence this incident highlights the novelist’s conscious craftsmanship and her probable debt to the Lawrentian insights.

There are numerous instances in Lawrence where he employs the imagery of the volcano, to suggest the increasing anxiety, gloom or anger approaching the point of explosion in the minds of women. For example, in his poem "Volcanic Venus", Lawrence writes:

"...The women are like little volcanoes/all more or less in eruption. | It is very unnerving, moving in a world of smouldering volcanoes". 31

In another poem "What does She want?", he writes,

"What does she want, volcanic Venus, as she goes fuming round? ...She says she wants a lover/She’s seething like a volcano.../...volcano of rage?..." 32

In "Wonderful Spiritual Women", he says women "...are only sitting tight on the craters of their volcano, and spreading their skirts..." 33 There are several instances where the same imagery is used in The Plumed Serpent. For example, the following words refer to Kate, the protagonist"...He looked at her in a black flare of apprehension. The volcano was rousing". 34 In The Boy In The Bush, the imagery is even more vividly visualized:

33. Ibid., p.539
34. Lawrence, D.H. The Plumed Serpent. Selected Novels and Stories London: Hamlyn, 1964, 156 p.536
"Her little face remained... like a shut-up bud... the strange volcano of anger... crater of anger which churned its deep hot lava invisible..." 35

In "Mother and Daughter", Mrs. Bodoin is described by Lawrence thus:

"...One thought: What a calm woman! Just as one may look at the snowy summit of a quiescent volcano, in the evening light, and think: What peace!..." 36 Again, Sita likens herself to a "helpless jelly fish" (WSWG, p.149) in Where Shall We Go This Summer?

This is comparable to the image of 'a mollusc' employed in Lawrence's short story "The Blind Man" with reference to Bertie, who "was like a mollusc whose shell is broken..." 37

In Lawrence we come across several instances where the 'masses' are referred to contemptuously through the imagery of 'sheep' or 'goats'. For example, in "The Reality of Peace" Lawrence writes: "But there is a ghastly multitude of obscene nullity, flocks of hide sheep with blind mouths..." 38 And he also writes: "the malignant, null sheep... the persistent, purblind, bug-like sheep". 39 Anita Desai uses the image of the 'goats' for the gullible, rustic crowd of Manori:

Ibid., p.685
"Not us, not us," neighed the goats, wagging about the table ... Moses questioned them, the goats neighed their replies and all seemed to sing, to hum together some mysterious, not wholly intelligible chant..." (WSWG, p.11)

"...Joseph and Ali and several others, nodding their heads briskly up and down like so many goats neighing about the table" (WSWG, p.11). "It is sweet water", they neighed" (WSWG, p.12).

Critics have also taken note of the biblical imagery employed in Where Shall We Go This Summer?

"The garden, which in the earlier two novels, has almost a Christian meaning and is associated either directly or inferentially with the Garden of Eden, and at times even ironically with the state of innocence, acquires in Where Shall We Go This Summer? a Hindu openness"...

"The Christian consciousness is perceptible at another level, when Raman refers to Sita's desire not to give birth as an 'immaculate conception in reverse' (p.36)."But Moses, the boat-carrier who has now after twenty years grown old and decrepit, is no more capable of leading her to this Promised land than Sita is capable of rejuvenating the innocence and purity of the past". All such images and references in the novel are used only in the ironic sense and they cannot be said to function particularly in the Lawrencean style. In Lawrence, biblical imagery is handled with a far more

profoundly integral artistic sense so as to illuminate the novelist's own perception and philosophy in an eclectic context and meaning.

The cardinal image of the "ponderous storm" in Lawrence's "The Wilful Woman" has been exploited as the 'monsoon' in Anita Desai's novel not merely for tropicalization of the imagery. It is used to lend a more imaginative, artistic structure to the entire plot as well as to provide room for a flashback section which, in a pronounced Anita Desai-like fashion probes the psychological factors that have contributed to the schizophrenic, hysterical disposition of the protagonist. Moreover, the images, especially the animal imagery and the portrayal of hysteria and existentialist motif in the novel bring in unmistakable Lawrentian associations.

Even if one may claim that Lawrence has influenced Anita Desai in writing this novel, the influence of Lawrence's short story on Anita Desai's novel can only be called "seminal" at best. Lawrence's "The Wilful Woman" remains merely a fragment - though a magnificent fragment at that! - whereas Anita Desai's novel has an exemplary unity of form. The psychological probe into the symptoms of hysteria seen in Sita and the entire presentation of the sequence of events leading to the present plight of the protagonist dealt with in the second section of the novel, have all been totally Anita Desai's own. Also one finds a
pronounced qualitative difference in the treatment of almost identical themes between Lawrence and Anita Desai. The former, through his extremely taut prose and poetic logic, has attempted to create a work which somehow is to be felt in the 'blood', whereas the latter self-consciously directs her intellectual, scientific probe into the personal and social causes responsible for the malady described in her novel. Once again, with regard to form or content, it cannot be claimed that Lawrence was exclusively responsible for the flowering of Anita Desai's novel, as some critics have established beyond any doubt the debt Anita Desai owes, to writers like Virginia Woolf and Henry James in at least some respects. Yet in spite of the tradition she has inherited, Anita Desai proves herself to be a great artist in the rich imaginative craftsmanship with which she has transformed an 'unfinished' skeletal sketch into a successful, full-fledged novel.

Anita Desai's "Scholar and Gypsy", the longest short story in her collection *Games at Twilight*, first published in 1978, has several Lawrentian features present in *The Lost Girl* and other works of Lawrence. The hysterical traits associated with Pat in "Scholar and Gypsy"; the alienage of the inner self of the protagonist driving her eventually towards complete alienation; her betrayal of the society to which she belongs; her seeking refuge in a new kind of life in a mountainous terrain; her extraordinary love for the
hills and flowers and curious surrender to a yet-to-be-
assimilated paganism—all these features recall
significant parallels from Lawrence's novel, The Lost
Girl.

The central plot in The Lost Girl revolves on
Alvina, the protagonist, betraying her class, country
and culture by running away with Cicio, a penniless,
nomadic Italian artist, ending up in a 'savage'
mountainous terrain in the Alps, in order to try a new
way of life. Anita Desai's "Scholar and Gypsy" too
presents the story of the sudden capitulation of Pat, a
hysterical, middle-class American tourist wife in
India, taking to the nomadic life among the hippies in
the Himalayas, thereby betraying her class, country and
culture.

At the outset, the society presented in The
Lost Girl is very class-conscious. For example, even
the subject of the "odd women" (LG, p.11) in society is
debated in the novel with particular reference to
classes:

"Do the middle-classes, particularly the
lower middle-classes, give birth to more
girls than boys? Or do the lower middle-
class men assiduously climb up or down, in
marriage, thus leaving their true partners
stranded? Or are middle-class women very
squeamish in their choice of husbands?" (LG, p.12)

"In his palmy days, James Houghton was crème de
la crème of Woodhouse society". (LG, p.12) Pat in
Anita Desai's "Scholar and Gypsy" reveals her class-
consciousness by the sociological labels she tags onto
everything she comes across in India. For example, she finds her husband David shining by contrast against the Indians they meet, with his superior manners, culture and grace: "He looked so right, so fitting on the Bombay streets, striding over the coconut shells and betel-stained papers and the fish scales and lepers' stumps..." (GAT, p.108). "David attracted people like a magnet— with his charm, his nonchalance, his grace, he did it so well, so smoothly, his qualities worked more efficiently than any visiting card system..." (GAT, p.109).

But David feels that the parties they attend have all the elan, glamour and grace that they could come across anywhere in the world: "...We've only been seeing the modern and up-to-date. These people would be at home at any New York cocktail party—" (GAT, p.110)

"...Here was I, disappointed at finding them so westernized. I would have liked them a bit more primitive — at least for the sake of my thesis..." (GAT, p.110).

The alienage of the female protagonist in Lawrence's The Lost Girl is conveyed through the utter contempt she bears towards the masses or crowds, inherited from her fashion-designer father, James Houghton: "...the crowd hated excellence... wanted a series of vulgar little thrills, as one tawdry mediocrity was imported from Nottingham or Birmingham to take the place of some tawdry mediocrity which Nottingham and Birmingham had already discarded "...(LG, p.16) "His goods were in excellent taste: but his
customers were in as bad taste as possible"... (LG, pp.15-16) Pat in "Scholar and Gypsy" too, judges the people she meets only by their tastes and manners. "They haven't the polish, the smoothness, the softness. David, they are not civilized. They're still a primitive people..." (GAT, p.110). At one point, Pat applies the same yardstick to herself, comparing her own background against David's:

"I'm just not sophisticated enough for you... I expect you knew about such things — you must have learnt them in college. You know I only went to high school and stayed home after that..." (GAT, p.113)

Lawrence in The Lost Girl also takes pains to suggest that it is not so much the external factors like society, tastes and manners that eventually lead to the alienation of Alvina, as her own mysterious, perverse and inscrutable disposition that impels her on an impulsive, illogical course of action. Alvina's oddity of temperament is conveyed through images relating to her intense self-absorption. Even as a very young girl she had "that odd ironic tilt of the eyelids which gave her a look as if she were hanging back in mockery..." (LG, p.33) "...the girl's strange face, that could take on a gargoyle look... the eyes rolling strangely under the sardonic lids" (LG, p.34).

Pat's self-absorption in Anita Desai's "Scholar and Gypsy" is suggested through her "glazed" eye (GAT, p.108): She looked at him dumbly with her fading eyes...". Lawrence uses the image of the
'glazed eyes' in several of his works including The Lost Girl, in order to denote the self-absorption of characters. For example, Cicio's uncle Pancrazio has "slightly glazed eyes": "... the eyelids dropped in a curious, heavy way, the eyes looked dulled... He glanced at Alvina with slow, impersonal glances, not at all a stare" (LG, pp.357-58). Later, in the course of the novel, Lawrence reveals to the readers how Pancrazio was totally absorbed in his own past sufferings as a model in England, his own crucifixion, "for the sake of late Victorian art". (LG, p.385). Pat's gestures like "folding her arms about her" (GAT, p.109) and "hugging herself tightly" (GAT, p.110) also stress further her self-absorption in "Scholar and Gypsy".

Alvina is hysterical and her hysteria is presented through her weird sense of perception in The Lost Girl. Alvina senses a yawning gulf between herself and others: "...the girl's strange face... so utterly alien, and incomprehensible and unsympathetic". (LG, p.34) After encouraging the Australian Alexander Graham in his courtship, "owing to her change of heart" (LG, p.37), Alvina begins to look upon him as "a terrible outsider, an inferior" (LG, p.38). In fact Alvina has a tendency to generalize her contempt for all the young men of Woodhouse:

"They all seemed like blank sheets of paper... There was a curious pale surface — look in the faces of the young men of Woodhouse: or, if there was some underneath suggestive power, it was a little abject or humiliating, inferior, common..." (LG, p.41)
Pat's hysteria is also depicted in a similar fashion in "Scholar and Gypsy". Being highly self-conscious of her American cultural heritage, Pat has an overweening sense of superiority over the Indians. She tells David, "I never expected them to be so primitive. I thought it would all be modern, up-to-date. Not this—this wild jungle stuff". (GAT, p.109) "When I see their eyes I see how primitive they are". (GAT, p.110)

Alvina's hysteria affects her visual sense and baffles her with a series of oppressive, magnified images: "She found herself in a night where the little man loomed large, terribly large, potent and magical..." (LG, p.38) "She felt the dark, passionate receptivity of Alexander overwhelmed her, enveloped her even from the Antipodes. She felt herself going distracted—she felt she was going out of her mind. For she could not act" (LG, p.38). Pat is also dominated by an oppressive, unknown fear caused by magnified images. The Indians, she meets though smaller in size compared to her compatriots, appear in her eyes, intimidatingly large: "...the bar in the hotel was so crowded, the people there were so large and vital and forceful in their brilliant clothes... that she felt crushed rather than revived." (GAT, pp.108-109).

Alvina is extremely allergic to men touching her and she summons all her wiles and will to resist men's subterfugeous attempts to paw her. Her reaction
to Headley’s repeated attempts shows her innate suspicion and wariness:

"...he treacherous suddenness of his attack - for he was treachery itself - had to be met by the voltaic suddenness of her resistance and counter-attack. It was nothing less than magical the way the soft, slumbering body of the woman could leap in one jet into terrible, overwhelming voltaic force, something strange and massive, at the first treacherous touch of the man’s determined hand". (LG, p.53).

Pat in Anita Desai’s short story feels a sense of fear when men try to touch her: "when they touch me, I feel frightened. I feel I’m in danger" (GAT, p.110). She feels men’s attempts to touch her almost repugnant:

"...Gidwani with a face like an amiable baboon’s, immediately sliding a soft hand across her back..." (GAT, p.111). But there are occasions when her fear stems out of her hysterical imagination:

"their eyes and teeth flashed with such primitive lust as they eyed her slim, white-sheathed blonde self, that the sensation of being caught up and crushed, crowded in and choked sent her into corners where their knees pushed into her, their hands slid over her back..." (GAT, p.109)

There is something suggestive of evil or the likelihood of imminent misfortune about Alvina’s disposition and behaviour in The Lost Girl" "She kept her look of arch, half-derisive recklessness... It was a strange look in a refined, really virgin girl - oddly sinister." (LG, p.36-37) "...she looked out on the ghastly dilapidated flat facades of Islington, and still she smiled brightly, as if there were some charm in it all. Perhaps...it acted like a tonic on the little
devil in her breast." (LG, p.45). Pat senses something foreboding evil about the Indian scenario:

"...such poverty, such disease, such filth, and that out of it boiled so much vitality, such irrepressible life, seemed to her unnatural and sinister". (GAT, p.109).

"...the gods they showed her, named for her, with their flurry of arms, their stamping feet, their blazing, angered eyes and flying locks, all thunder and lightning, revenge and menace". (GAT, p.113)

Alvina is a wilful woman who makes strong decisions in the teeth of the conservative Woodhouse society and her well-wishers, paying scant regard to the commotion she causes all around. Her most rebellious action is her decision to leave Woodhouse in order to become a nurse. The answer she gives Miss.Frost who asks her where she wants to go is typical of her character: "I don’t know. I don’t care’, said Alvina. ‘Anywhere, if I can get out of Woodhouse’." (LG, p.42); "I want to go away" (LG, p.42)

This is the first occasion when her inveterate wanderlust is laid bare in the novel. Pat also is thoroughly independent and highly wilful, despite the symptoms of suffering she shows on landing in India. She is perfectly capable of snatching certain moments for herself, despite her dizzy social life: "But she seemed launched in some other direction, she was going alone and he did not want to be drawn into her deep wake". (GAT, p.110). After her collapse at the Gidwani’s dinner, David is left with no other option:
"We'd better leave", he said sadly." (GAT, p.111)

Alvina is also a victim of a certain existentialist horror, which plagues her throughout. Even her married life with Cicio in Italy does not rescue her totally from her occasional fits of experiencing this 'horror':

"Everything seemed electric with horror. She felt she would die instantly, everything was so terrible around her. She could not move. She felt that everything around her was horrific, extinguishing her, putting her out... The silence of Cicio in his bed was as horrible as the rest of the night. She had a horror of him also." (LB, p.370)

Pat in "Scholar and Gypsy" too exhibits a similar existentialist 'horror', roused in her by the mere sight of the 'menacing' postures of the strange gods:

"She left the shopping arcade after an hour, horror rising in her throat like vomit. She felt pursued by the primitive, the elemental and barbaric, recalling those great heavy bosoms of bronze and stone, the hips rounded and full as water-pots, the flirtatious little belles on ankles and bellies, the long, sly eyes that curved out of the voluptuous stone faces." (GAT, p.113).

Another peculiar trait of Alvina's hysteria is her proneness to sudden fits of hilarity:

"Sometimes, however, she would have fits of boisterous hilarity, not quite natural, with a strange note half pathetic, half jeering... In Vina there is a similar description of 'stone faces' in The Rainbow: '... She caught sight of the wicked, odd little faces carved in stone... They winked and leered... the little faces mocked... She pointed him to a plump, sly, malicious little face carved in stone." The Rainbow, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981, p.246"
it came out in mad bursts of hilarious jeering. This made Miss. Frost uneasy..." (LG, p.34).

In "Scholar and Gypsy," Pat is excited over the mountain people of the Himalayas. David asks her whether she feels one of them herself and he is "startled by the positive quality of the laugh that rang out of her, by the way she threw out her arms in an open embrace. 'Why sure', she cried, explosively..." (GAT, p.121).

Alvina and Cicio travel by train through France to Italy in The Lost Girl. The journey offers some interesting details which invite parallels from Anita Desai’s "Scholar and Gypsy":

"The train was now so hot that the iron plate on the floor burnt Alvina’s feet. Outside she saw glimpses of snow... In the next carriage a child was screaming. It screamed all the night – all the way from Paris to Chambèry it screamed. The train came to sudden halts and stood still... Alvina became almost comatose, in the burning heat of the carriage. And again the train rolled on... When morning came... people pulled the curtains... It was beautiful... Alvina, thrilled by the country, was smiling excitedly". (LG, pp.350-51).

Fat and David travel by bus from Delhi to Manali in Anita Desai’s short story, and their journey is described thus:

"The sun burnt up the tin body of the bus till it was a great deal hotter inside than out in the sun. Pat sat stone-still, as though she had been beaten unconscious... The woman in the seat behind his was sick all the way up the low hills to Bilaspur. In front of him a small child wailed without stop... The bus... rattled, roared, shook and vibrated all the way through the desert... to Manali where it stopped for a
tea-break in a rest house... She turned to him her excited face..." (GAT, pp.115-16).

Lawrence describes the changes that gradually come over the "frail, pallid, diffident" Alvina in the following terms:

"...never once did she feel anything but exhilarated and in full swing. It seemed to her she had not a moment's time to brood or reflect about things - she was too much in the swing. Every moment, in the swing, living, or active in full swing... Her voice had the right twang, her eyes the right roll, her haunches the right swing..." (LG, p.47)

... "warm-coloured young woman, strapping and strong-looking, and with a certain bounce" (LG, p.49) Pat's transformation in "Scholar and Gypsy" is also described with reference to the swing of her hips, her voice and her eyes:

"... she stood at the window with something strong and active in the swing of her hips, and a fervour in her newly pink and washed face..." (GAT, p.120).

"He was startled by the positive quality of the laugh that rang out of her, by the way she threw out her arms in an open embrace..." (GAT, p.121) "... for a walk she would take him, she said with that new positivism in her jaw-line and swing of her arms that he rather feared..." (GAT, p.126) "... her movements were marked by rough angles that jarred on him, her voice, when she bothered at all to reply to his vague questions, was brusque and abrupt." (GAT, p.130).

Lawrence says that once Alvina decides to rebel she will rather have it as an open confrontation: "She looked strangely, even outrageously, at her governess."
"Her whole state was perhaps largely the result of shock: a sort of play-acting* based on hysteria." (LG, p.47). Pat also makes no bones of her rebellion. She does not make any effort to hide her new associations with the hippies:

"... she was playing a rôle* he had not engaged her to play... she was embarrassing him, she was absolutely outrageous." (GAT, p.130).

Lawrence's Alvina is not totally bereft of nostalgia for England and her home:

"Alvina's heart suddenly contracted ... England, beyond the water, rising with ash-grey, corpse-grey cliffs, and streaks of snow on the downs above ... She watched it, fascinated and terrified ... That was England! Her thoughts flew to Woodhouse, the grey centre of it all. Home!" (LG, p.347).

Once, when she looks unhappy in the "savage hole of a house" in Italy, Cicio senses the nostalgic feeling surging in her and asks: "Do you wish you were back in England?" (LG, p.376). In another context, Alvina feels "she could never endure it for a life-time.... Cicio must take her to America, or England..." (LG, p.378). Prior to her capitulation, Pat too experiences heart-rending pangs of nostalgia for home:

"Back on her bed, she wept into her pillow for the lost home*, for apple trees and cows, for red barns and swallows, for icecream sodas and drive-in movies..." (GAT, p.113). "She never spoke of apple trees or barns, of popcorn or drug stores, but he saw them in her eyes, more remote and faint every day." (GAT, p.113).

*italics mine
Alvina's perversity is highlighted in *The Lost Girl* through the peculiarities of her tastes and preferences. For example, she is attracted by Graham who has "a strong mouthful of cruel, compact teeth." (LG, p.35). "And she was not sure whether she hated the repulsive element, or whether she rather gloried in it" (LG, p.36). She is later on infatuated with Arthur Witham, the plumber, who is "sly and slow and uneducated" (LG, p.76), all for the sake of his "blue eyes and tight figure" (LG, p.77). She has "a serious flirtation with a man who played a flute and piccolo... about fifty years old" (LG, p.147).

"Alvina was more fascinated by the odd fish... She wished she could jump across the distance. Particularly with the Jap, who was almost quite naked, but clothed with the most exquisite tattooing... his tattooing was blue, with pickings of brilliant vermilion: as for instance round the nipples, and in a strange red serpent's - jaws over the navel. A serpent went round his loins and haunches ..." (LG, p.148).

Pat's tastes also seem outrageous when compared to the conservative responses of her sober husband. Arriving at Manali with his wife, David is alarmed at the sight of the countless hippies living there:

"'Why', she said, watching one woman with a child approach an Indian couple with her empty hand outstretched, 'they might be Americans!'. David shuddered and turned up a dusty path ...." (GAT, p.119)
And Pat is terribly, unaccountably excited:

"Americans, Europeans, here in Manali, at the end of the world - what were they doing? she wondered. Well, what was she doing? Ah, she'd come to try and live again. She threw back her shoulders and took in lungfuls of the clear, cold air and it washed through her like water, cleansing and pure... 'But David', she coaxed, 'it's going to be lovely.' (GAT, p.119). She feels at home in Manali for the life there, is "innocent and open" (GAT, p.123)

"... open and sunlit, small and easy" (GAT, p.124). It is precisely this growing 'openness' about Pat, that alarms David: "He was startled... by the way she threw out her arms in an open embrace" (GAT, p.121). Her fascination for the hippies grows more and more irresistible:

"She stopped at the baker's for ginger biscuits and to smile, somewhat tentitively [sic], at the hippies who stood barefoot at the door, begging for loaves of bread from Indian tourists who seemed as embarrassed as stupefied...." (GAT, p.124).

More and more surprises, are in store for David. Slowly he begins to understand the extent to which Pat has got herself involved in the life of the hippies: "To his horror, she even waved and beamed at the drug-struck, meditative hippies as they swung past the Happy Café..." (GAT, p.125), a joint known for "its shadowy, macrocultural bliss." (GAT, p.126). David calls the whites, taken to the life of the hippies, wearing gypsy clothes, "Damn Vagabonds", whereas Pat asks: "Aren't they charming?" (GAT, p.126) Eventually David comes to know that Pat has taken up with a Californian couple in favour of communal life, vegetarianism and
bhang "a smooth and gentle path to earthly nirvana" (GAT, p.131). David once catches a glimpse of Pat, sitting cross-legged before an Indian guru along with "this central core of seekers of nirvana and bliss-through-bhang" (GAT, p.132), much to the amusement of the Indian tourists. When questioned on this, Pat "tired and vague, mumbles: 'Yes, that's Guru Dina Nath. He's so sweet - so gay - so..." (GAT, p.132).

Both Alvina and Pat feel a sense of freedom and emancipation at the end, for both consider themselves in terms of having succeeded in an adventure, an escape: "And for the first time she realized what it was to escape from the smallish imperfection of England, into the grander perfection of a great continent." (LG, p.351). Pat describes her sense of 'escape' to David thus:

"I'd gotten to think of India as one horrible temple, bursting, crawling with people - people on their knees, hopeless people ... and then, to walk through the forest and come upon this - this little shrine - it's like escaping from all those Hindu horrors - it's like coming out into the open and breathing naturally again, without fear." (GAT, p.128).

Both the protagonists come under the powerful spell of the beautiful places they arrive at in the respective works, discussed here. As the train moves on the edge of the Mediterranean, round bays and between dark rocks and under castles, "She watched spell-bound: spell-bound by the magic of the world itself. And she thought to herself:
"Whatever life may be, and whatever horror men have made of it, the world is a lovely place, a *magical* place, something to marvel over. The world is an amazing place."

(EG, p.353).

Even the "ancient (shaggy, and savage" (EG, p.356) mountainous Italian terrain, on a moon-lit night seems to cast a spell on Alvina: "It was a wonder-world: the moon over the snow heights, the pallid valley-bed away below .... Magical it all was — .." (EG, p.369) Pat in Anita Desai’s work expresses her sense of wonder and delight for the place where she finds enlightenment: "even as kulu temples went, this one in Nasogi was a pearl ... She glowed. ‘I think it’s ... most *magical* spot on earth, if you’d like to know" (GAT, p.127).

Both Alvina and Pat are intensely susceptible to the charms of the hills and are exceptionally alive to the subtle play of chiaroscuro over the peaks. Alvina is momentarily lost in the brilliant splendour of a colourful sunset:

"High overhead, as the sun went down, was the curious icy radiance of snow mountains, and a pinkness, while shadow deepened in the valley." (EG, p.358).

The dawns are in no way less magical:

"She saw the golden dawn, a golden coming out of level country" (EG, p.364); "She looked at the rocky slopes, the glistening peaks of snow in the blue heaven, the hollow valleys with fir trees..."(EG,p.352)

Pat gets entranced in a similar vision in the Himalayas:

"Above the tips of the immense deodars the sky was a clear turquoise, an evening colour,"
without heat although still distilled with sunlight..." (GAT, p.119) "...far below the snow-streaked black ridges of the mountain pass, still pale and luminous against the darkening sky, at once threatening and protective in its attitude, like an Indian god." (GAT, p.123).

It is interesting to note that both the heroines register their delight in the visual treat of the slanting sunlight dancing on a snow-covered hillscape.

Lawrence evokes the primitiveness of the savage residence at Califano in which Alvina lives by a few masterstrokes including a graphic description of the droppings of the ass reared by Pancrazio: "...the ass left his pile of droppings to steam in the winter air on the threshold..." (LG, p.374). The mountain life in the remote, rural Manali is evoked by Anita Desai by her casual reference to a similar detail in "Scholar and Gypsy", when Pat takes David to the temple of Nazogi. David follows his wife"... stepping gingerly over the goat droppings and puddles in the yard, out onto the dusty road." (GAT, p.125). Pat describes her place of living as "a big attic over a cow-shed actually" (GAT, p.133). They also wait in an old man's courtyard after commissioning him to pluck some apricots for them: "They waited in his courtyard, amongst dung pats and milk pails, standing close to the stone wall to let a herd of mountain goats go by ..." (GAT, p.127).

Alvina is an ardent devotee of wild flowers.
Lost in the primitive Alpine village, she finds a tremendous, soothing pleasure in flowers as much as she finds in the splendid landscape:

"It was a great joy to wander looking for flowers. She came upon a banks; side all wide with lavender crocuses. The sun was on them for the moment, and they opened flat, great five-pointed stars, with burning centres, burning with a strange lavender flame... All down the oak-dry banks; side they burned their great exposed stars. And she felt like going down on her knees and bending her forehead to the earth in an oriental submission, they were so royal, so lovely, so supreme..." (LG, p.392).

Pat too finds an immense pleasure in looking out for "small sandy coves where pink oleanders bloomed and banana trees hung their limp green flags" (GAT, p.117). On another occasion she happens to stumble on a breath-taking bed of wild flowers:

"The turf was soft and uneven under their feet, wild iris bloomed in clumps and ferns surrounded rocks that were conspicuously stranded here and there. Pat fell upon the wild straw berries that grew with a careless luxuriance - small, seed-ridden ones she found sweet..." (GAT, p.121).

The wild flowers exercise such an irresistible charm over both Alvina and Pat that they fling themselves in rapturous obeisance almost at their feet.

The motif of 'snake' as the phallic symbol and 'the lord of the underworld' occurs frequently in Lawrence and the underworld itself - often referred to as 'hell', or the home of Dionyses - stands for sensuality in his works. Curiously enough, both the works discussed here make an oblique but quite
unmistakable reference to this typically 'Lawrentian' symbol. And though the import of this symbol is quite relevant and rather obvious in the case of Lawrence's Alvina, who has an innate, inscrutable penchant for the sensual, as we have seen earlier, it comes almost as a revelation in the case of Pat although in hindsight it reinforces in a significant way her earlier hysterical allusions to obscene and promiscuous sensuality:

"There was green hellebore too, a fascinating plant - and one or two little treasures, the last of the rose-coloured Alpine cyclamens, near the earth, with snake-skin leaves, and so rose, so rose, like violets for shadowiness. She sat and cried over the first she found: heaven knows why" (LG, p.392).

This passage is an excellent example for Lawrence's skill of evoking a mood through sensitive, poetic associations, especially when we recall that, within the context of the novel, Cicio is inextricably, associated with a disarming, diabolic dark passion on the one hand and the 'snake' on the other:

"the queer, half-sinister drop of his eyelids was curious... There was in the man a sort of sulphur-yellow flame of passion which would light up in his battered body and give him an almost diabolic look..." (LG, p.386).

"He rustled like a snake among dead foliage" (LG, p.369). In the case of Pat in "Scholar and Gypsy" her explorations in the wilds, lead her once to a breath-taking discovery:

"Look, here's dear old Jack in the pulpit', she cried, darting at some ferns from which protruded that rather sinister gentleman, striped and hooded. David thought, like a
silent cobra. She plucked it and strode on, her hair no longer like string but like drawn toffee, now catching fire in the sunbeams, now darkening in the shade..." (GAT, pp.121-122)

"She laughed, threw the Jack in the pulpit into his lap and flung herself on the grass at his feet..." (GAT, p.122). This passage does seem to suggest Pat's hither-to unrevealed but deep-rooted sensuality. Pat ends up living with "the Californian couple she had taken up with" (GAT, p.131). The very 'openness' of her embrace suggest permissiveness.

Alvina in The Lost Girl has no apologies or repentance for the world or culture she leaves behind, for she feels she has opted for a higher, more ancient civilization with its rich pagan rituals and ceremonies. There is some semblance between the landscape Alvina comes to live in, and that chosen by Pat in Anita Desai's work:

"rivers wandered in the wild, rocky places, it all seemed ancient and shaggy, savage still, under all its remote civilization, this region of the Alban Mountains, south of Rome..." (LG, p.356).

Pat's rough-hewn stone temple is situated "on a slope in the forest..." "with trees rearing about it in the twilight, shaggy and dark, like Himalayan bears" (GAT, p.122).

Both Alvina and Pat are emancipated women, who can rise far beyond the barriers of narrow schisms imposed by their respective backgrounds, and show reverence to the ancient, heathen mysteries they come
across in the regions of their choice. They both have an innate, sublime religious resilience which tends to assimilate what is best even in an alien ritual:

"How unspeakably lovely it was, no one could even tell, the grand, pagan twilight of the valleys, savage, cold, with a sense of ancient gods who knew the right for human sacrifice. It stole away the soul of Alvina. She felt transfigured in it, clairvoyant in another mystery of life"... (LG, pp.371-72).

In another instance, it is the drone of a bagpipe that evokes the mysterious 'heathen past' in the mind of Alvina: "It was a strange, high, rapid, yelling music, the very voice of the mountains. Beautiful, in our musical sense of the word, it was not. But oh, the magic, the nostalgia of the untamed, heathen past which it evoked." (LG, p.381). It is true that in one stance Pat does talk of "Hindu horrors". But it is the thought of "the greasy Indian masses, whining and cajoling and sneering ... crawling, cringing masses" (GAT, pp.128-29), that goads her to use that phrase. Provoked to the extreme, teetering on the very edge of existence and on the point of being rejected by her husband who is lost in self-absorption Pat articulates a vision that is marked with a singular clarity of thought and magnanimity of outlook:

"The idea of you, Dave, when you've never so much as looked, I mean really looked, into the soul, the prana, of the next man-is just too. —. You, you don't even know it's possible to find Buddha in a Hindu temple. Why, you can find him in a church, a forest, anywhere. Do you think he's as narrow-minded as you?" ... (GAT, p.137).
There is also, something similar between the itinerant troupe of Natcha-Kee-tawaras who visit Woodhouse and the hippies whose company Pat joins in "Scholar and Gypsy". To Alvina they represent entirely a type:

"a little frowsty, a little flea-bitten as a rule, indifferent to ordinary morality, ... but she found it amusing to see them all and know them all. It was so different from Woodhouse, where everything was priced and ticketed. These people were nomads. They didn't care a straw who you were or who you weren't... It was most odd to watch them. They weren't very squeamish... and most of them drank... Most of them had an abstracted manner; in ordinary life, they seemed left aside, somehow. Odd, extraneous creatures, often a little depressed, feeling life slip away from them..." (LG, pp.147-48)

The "drug-struck, meditative hippies" in "Scholar and Gypsy" patronize "the Happy Cafe"

"where they invariably gathered to eat, talk, play on flutes and gaze into space in that dim, dusty interior... What hippy had carried his macroculture to Manali, David wondered, pinning it to the wall above the counter where flies circled plates of yellow sweetmeats... the faces of the pale Europeans who gathered there seemed to him distressingly, vacant, their postures defeated and vague..." (GAT, p.125).

Perhaps more than any other single feature, it is in the progressive, self-conscious degradation that sets in the central characters in both these gyno-centric works, that the common ground they share becomes most obvious and irrefutable. Cicciò becomes almost an instrument in Alvina's hands to register her defiance:

"...Alvina, as she sat beside him, was reminded of the woman with the negro husband,
down in Lumley... she herself felt, in the same way, something of an outcast, because of the man at her side. An outcast! And glad to be an outcast. She clung to Cicio's dark, despised foreign nature. She loved it, she worshipped it, she defied all the other world." (LG, p.258).

In fact it is the forbidden aspect of the experience that eats her continually on in her love for Cicio:

"She remained watching him, his strange, smiling face, which she seemed to have known, half-known before, in some far-off, forbidden existence..." (LG, p.279).

There is also an innate quest for freedom that impels her forward:

"Why not do as she wished! she could be quite happy by herself among the lakes. And she would be absolutely free, absolutely free." (LG, p.298)

Viewed from another perspective, Alvina's rebellion can also be seen as a protest against materialism. There is something essentially noble about her rejection of Dr. Mitchell's offer of marriage. But curiously enough, the very spirit of her rebellion and independence contain, on the other side of the coin as it were, her helpless susceptibility before the dark passion she feels for Cicio and which finally enslaves her:

"She felt the strange terror and loveliness of his passion. And she wished she could lie down there by that town gate, in the sun, and swoon for ever unconscious... His yellow, luminous eyes watched her and enveloped her. There was nothing for her but to yield, yield, yield." (LG, p.379).
And the net result of all this is that Alvina ends up as a "lost girl": "There is no mistake about it, Alvina was a lost girl. She was cut off from everything she belonged to..." (LG, p.370). "She was déclassée: she had lost her class altogether... Alvina did not care. She rather liked it. She liked being déclassée. She liked feeling an outsider". (LG, p.146)

"She felt she was quite, quite lost. She had gone out of the world, over the border, into some place of mystery. She was lost to Woodhouse, to Lancaster, to England - all lost." (LG, p.361).

Though one has to make some major qualifications, one can still maintain that an initial position of superiority in rank in the community on the part of a female protagonist, a certain inscrutability of her disposition, an innate quest for freedom, a volteface in her feelings and the ultimate ending up as a déclassée or an outsider—all these are features that Pat shares with Lawrence's Alvina.

Pat's presumption of superiority over the Indians she meets and her inscrutability related to her hysteria have already been mentioned. Her irrepressible quest for freedom can be seen in her wanderlust and her desire to "explore": "she wanted to go out and 'Explore!'" (GAT, p.120), without taking a moment's rest after a long and tiring journey by bus from Delhi to the Kulu valley. In Manali, Pat realizes what it means to be free, for the very spirit of the place exudes with an air of freedom:

* italics mine
"It presented no difficulty, as other Indian towns of her acquaintance had, it was innocent and open and if it did not clamorously and cravenly invite, it did not shut its doors either — it had none to shut."

(GAT, p.123). As for her becoming déclassée, it does not consist in her "walking in sandals" and "her cloth bag" alone or even in her reading from "a ragged copy of the Dhammapada" (GAT, p.130).

But in her finding "a place for herself in the commune at Nasogi" (GAT, p.137). Pat does become a hippy with her drug addiction — "Sure it was coffee?" he snarled" (GAT, p.133) and her wearing the "newly acquired hippy rags that whipped against her legs as she marched off,... with never a backward look, (GAT, p.138) symbolizing her open defiance. Surely there is something of a 'lost girl' about Pat. Earlier in the novel, opposed by the tropical climate and the life in India, Pat suffers from a feeling of being lost and Anita Desai describes her nostalgia in a manner which is ironically relevant for Alvina's condition at the close of the novel as well:

"Back on her bed, she wept into her pillow for the lost home, for apple trees and cows, for red barns and swallows, for ice cream sodas and drive-in movies, all that was innocent and sweet and lost, lost, lost" (GAT, p.113).

The Lawrentian linguistic habit of repetition of the same word for emphasis also deserves special attention here. Alvina in The Lost Girl is fascinated by the charming mountain people of Italy. Once Alvina herself goes to the market in Ossona: "At the highroad, Pancrazio harnessed the ass, and after
endless delay, they jogged off to Osana... along the
roads many peasants were trooping to the market, women
in their best dresses, some of thick heavy silk, with
the white, full-sleeved bodices, dresses green,
lavender, dark - red with gay kerchiefs on the head:
men muffled, in cloaks, treading silently in their
pointed skin sandals [sic]..." (LG, p. 377). Pat too
is drawn to the mountain people of Tibet:

"The few people they passed, village men and
women wrapped in white Kulu blankets with
handsome stripes, had faces that were brown
and russet, calm and pleasant, although they
neither smiled nor greeted Pat and David,
merely observed them in passing." (GAT, p. 121).

However, there is a striking contrast between
Alvina's comments on the attitude of the mountain
people in Italy and those of Pat on the culture of the
mountain people in Tibet. Alvina sympathizes with
Pancrazio "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...

"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, p. 383).

Pat, on the other hand, idealizes the hill
peasantry of Tibet and commends their sense of freedom
and fearlessness. "'That's what I feel here, you
know', she said with a renewed burst of confidence,*
without fear. 'And you can see that's something I
*italics mine
share with, or perhaps have just learnt from, the
mountain people here ... the ones one sees on the
mountain roads. They're upright they're honest,
independent'..." (GAT, p.123). And Pat straightaway
barges into what is almost a religious dialectics,
between Hinduism and Buddhism revealing her
characteristic naivete on the subject:

"They're upright, they're honest, independent. They have such a strong swing
and stride to their walk... And they haven't
those furtive Indian faces either-eyes
sliding this way and that... their faces are
all open, and they laugh and sing... they
laugh and sing and go striding up the
mountains like-lords. I watch them all the
time, I admire them, you know... I feel,
being Buddhists, they're different from the
Hindus, and it must be something in their
belief that gives them this - this
fearlessness..." (GAT, pp.128-129).

And David who is an astute scholar of
sociology asks her at once: "Don't you even know that
the Kulu Valley has a Hindu population, and the shrines
you see here are Hindu shrines?" (GAT, p.129).

There are also other echoes from Lawrence in
Anita Desai's "Scholar and Gypsy", like the word
'extinguish' or 'annihilate'. Lawrence has the habit
of using these words to denote utter powerlessness,
helplessness, despair of being ignored or forgotten and
the feeling of being 'lost'. For example, in The Lost
Girl on a single page alone - page no.370 - Lawrence
uses the variants of the word "extinguish" four times
that
and those of "annihilate" twice: "She felt, everything
around her was horrific, extinguishing her"; "She felt
his power and his warmth invade her and extinguish her": "Cicici and Pancrazio clung to her, essentially, as if she saved them also from extinction;" "the mysterious influence of the mountains and valleys themselves... seemed always to be annihilating the Englishwoman": and "She was... half-horrified by its savage annihilation of her". Thus the phrases used here. more than anything else, describe vividly and express powerfully the inner feeling of a character under extreme pressure or utter despair. We find in the opening paragraph of Anita Desai's "Scholar and Gypsy", this phrase is used, precisely in the same 'Lawrentian', psychological connotation:

"...Once she was back in it, she fell across her bed, as though she had been struck by calamity, was extinguished, and could barely bring herself to believe that she had, after all, survived" (GAT, p.108).

Lawrence makes use of animal imagery liberally in The Lost Girl and Cicici is often associated with the image of a cat. "She was afraid of his long, cat-like look..." (LG, p.173). 'Cicici, sprang like a cat down from the stage..." (LG, p.194). In "Scholar and Gypsy", David snarls at Pat once: "Sure it was coffee?" he snarled..." (GAT, p.133). "Snarl" is also a word liberally employed in the works of Lawrence. For example in Lawrence's Mr. Noon we come across the following sentence: "Snarl! Snarl! Snarl! and went the beastly person—Gilbert's brain turned to
cork."42 "He had found his soul's immi- in-ity. and his
tody's rati- on a steady atter. give him city for
clear. a little. and a true-earl for snarl, a
would
mand an eye for eye."43

The image of the "Little Gretchen" also seems
to be an echo from Lawrence, as it occurs in a few of
his works including the short story "Once".44 where a
lover uses it as a compliment to an irresistible
sensual beauty with childish locks and another short
story "New Eve and Old Adam" where again, a lover feels
"there was something of the Gretchen about her."45
Even in "Scholar and Gypsy" David uses it only in this
sense: "... Little Gretchen you, little Martha, hmm,"
(OAT, p.128).

"Nirvana" is a subject to which Lawrence
turns his attention, often with the intention of
repeating and ridiculing the idea. Gilbert observes
in Mr. Noon:

"No Nirvana, thank you. God is
very good to us. Supposing we were given our
imbecile Nirvanas and heavens, what mugs we
should look. Luckily we get a kick in the
backside from the same deity if we try and sit
too long on our raptures..."*

42. Vasey, Lindeth ed. Mr. Noon, Cambridge: Grafton, 1985, p.231
43. Ibid., pp. 234-35
44. Lawrence, D.H. "Once", The Mortal Coel and Other
45. Ibid., p.167
* Mr. Noon, p.221

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At times the devotees to the Buddha became the butt of Lawrence's ridicule: "They simply hadn't enough Sitz fleisch to squat under a bho-tree and get to Nirvana by contemplating anything, least of all their own navels..." In "Scholar and Gypsy" David is highly contemptuous of his rebel-wife's new Buddhist persuasion: "Nirvana on earth!"

he snorted. 'That's a contradiction in terms. don't you know?" (GAT, p.131).

The archetypal image of "the Buddha" also brings in Lawrentian associations as Lawrence makes frequent references to the Buddha in his writings. In "Scholar and Gypsy" it is the proprietor who sat benignly as a Buddha on a wooden chair"... (GAT, p.119) Lawrence is impatient with the Buddha for his denial of the body and nothing on earth could change his attitude towards the Buddha. Harry T. Moore refers to Lawrence's disapproval of Buddhism in his biography of Lawrence:

"He began to suggest his disapproval of Buddhism - in later years when he and Brewster, were together and would see a statue of the Buddha, Lawrence would say, 'Oh, I wish he would stand up!'. Brewster pointed out that in spite of Lawrence's loss of interest in Buddhism while in Ceylon, his sympathy for other forms of Hindu thought remained."

A Sinhalese writer Martin Wickramasinghe said:

(Lawrence and Mysticism, 1953) "Lawrence had affinities

with the occult form of Indian mysticism known as the 
Tantric..." 47 Lawrence's sympathy for Hinduism as 
seen in his writings, is so pronounced that it 
attracted the attention of Sri Aurobindo:

"I suppose Lawrence was a Yogi who had missed 
his way and come into a European body to work 
out his difficulties... I think Lawrence was 
held back from realizing the light of a 
deeper, greater, truer consciousness, a 
consciousness full of peace, harmony, joy and 
freedom, because he was seeking for the new 
birth in the subconscious vital and taking 
that for the Invisible Within - he mistook 
Life for Spirit, whereas Life can only be 
an expression of the Spirit..."

The virulence with which Pat attacks Hinduism 
- "those Hindu horrors" (BAT, p.128) - and the stoutness 
with which David defends Hinduism and Hindu 
arquitecture:

"What do I mean? Don't you know? You're 
sitting outside a Hindu shrine, this is a 
Hindu temple, and you're making it out to be 
a source of Buddhist strength and 
serenity!..." (BAT, p.129) 

Though biblical imagery, which forms an 
important and integral part of Lawrence's art as a 
whole, does not figure prominently in Anita Desai's 
works, there are some images drawn from the Bible and 
Christianity in "Scholar and Gypsy". Lawrence makes an 
ironic reference to the psalms in Sons and Lovers when 
he talks of "the hills whence no help came". 49* In 
"Scholar and Gypsy" we find an almost oblique reference

47 Moore, Harry T. The Priest of Love. Harmondsworth: 
Penguin, 1980 P 440
48 Aurobindo, Sri. The Future Poetry and Letters on 
Poetry, Literature and Art. Pondicherry: 
49 Lawrence, D.H. Sons and Lovers. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1933 P 208 
* Psalms 121:1 "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from which
to the same verse in the Bible: "David, holding his suitcase in his arms, looked over the top of their heads and at the mountain peaks, as if for succour."

(GAT, p.118).

David calls Pat "little Martha" (GAT, p.128); ironically hinting at the biblical episode - St. Luke:10:41 – 42 – Where Martha fails to choose the portion that is more valuable for her own spirit, and Pat at once challenges him darkly: "Do you think that's all I see in it?", grasping the implication. Lawrence, though not a believer had a great passion for medieval cathedrals. He writes in The Rainbow about William Bragwen:

"Still he loved the church. As a symbol, he loved it. He tended it for what it tried to represent, rather than that it did represent ... It was an old, sacred thing.

In "Scholar and Gypsy" the tall deodar forest visited by Pat and David is compared to "a shadowy cactedral." Pat, after her emancipation turns completely amoral and finds nothing wrong with the life of the hippies. She even compares one of the hippies, to Christ: "Now look at that man in white robes - doesn’t he look like Christ?" (GAT, p.125). Mention is also made of the "Bibical" sandals some hippies wear (GAT, p.127).

Despite their similarities The Lost Girl and "Scholar and Gypsy" differ not only in their genres but

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*Lawrence writes in "The Hills": I lift up mine eyes unto the hills, and there they are, but no strength comes from them to me..." The Complete Poems, p. 660.


**"And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."
in the resolutions they offer to the readers. Their most significant point of departure is an apparently happy ending for the couple of lovers in Lawrence’s novel who strive continually for some kind of fulfilment in love in a world filled with existential horror of loneliness, and a downright rejection of the romantic principle, by a pair who capitulate impulsively down to the nadir of existential despair, bracing themselves against their own sense of loneliness. Parallels to the central theme of Anita Desai’s work can also be seen in Lawrence’s "The Woman Who Rode away", "The Princess" and The Plumed Serpent.

Like Lawrence’s description of the Alpine terrain, Anita Desai’s account of the Himalayan ranges too commends itself to the readers of the short story with the ring of charming authenticity. "Scholar and Gypsy" thus remains another good example illuminating some of the prominent Lawrentian techniques, consciously experimented by Anita Desai, in addition to the wealth of originality it presents.