finally, the six film adaptations of “The Rocking-Horse Winner”, dating from 1949 to 2010, cover five distinct genres, shedding light on the generic potentialities latent within Lawrence’s short stories and the genetic nature of adaptation and genre, which combines replication with variation. My specific approach to these adaptations in this book will be outlined at the end of my Introduction. Initially I will discuss the distinctive qualities of the short story and the short film, taking into account their subordination to the novel and the feature-film in Lawrence studies, before addressing the existing criticism of Lawrence on film.

Lawrence: short story writer

Lawrence produced more than sixty short stories. Some of these tales are arguably among his greatest work – the critics Bates, Finney, Leavis, Widmer, Draper, Moynahan, Hubbard-Harris, Steele, and Madox Ford all praise his mastery of the form. Ford Madox Ford famously claimed to have declared Lawrence a “genius” after reading the opening to Lawrence’s short story “Odour of Chrysanthemums”. Anna Grmelova claims that Lawrence was one of the modern short story’s great innovators, experimenting with techniques “such as the internalization of action”. Brian Finney draws attention to the skilful use of “image clusters, narrative ambiguity, and a commitment to the inner-workings of the

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6 This figure is taken from the count by Con Coroneos and Trudi Tate, “Lawrence wrote more than sixty tales” (“Lawrence’s Tales”, in The Cambridge Companion, 103).


human mind" as Lawrence’s chief contributions. Lawrence describes his approach to the composition of the short story in a letter to Louie Burrows: "select the salient details – a few striking details to make a sudden swift impression. Try to use words vivid and emotion-quicken; give as little explanation as possible." This quotation makes reference to a number of critically acknowledged characteristics of the modern short story: strict economy, swift delivery, evocative vocabulary, ellipsis, ambiguity and attention to minutiae.

In order to adhere to strict limitations on the word count in magazines, modern short story writers such as Lawrence stripped the prose down through multiple revisions to create tone and content through the juxtaposition of images. Since there is less in a short story, what remains tends to gain a heightened significance; thus, short stories have often tended to attract symbolic readings and are even imbued with epiphanic or mythic qualities. As Allan Pasco observes, the short story can effectively communicate "an essential truth or idea or image ... [that] ... rises above time and negates whatever chronological progression the work possesses". Other stories suggest the fairy tale in their language or structure. "Two Blue Birds" (1926), "The Man Who Loved Islands" (1926) and "The Rocking-Horse Winner" (1926) all begin with the iconic fairy tale opening "There once was a ..." to create an ironic detachment from the characters and events described, while stories such as "A Prelude" (1907), "Daughters of the Vicar" (1914), "The Horse-Dealer’s Daughter" (1917), "Hadrian [You Touched Me]" (1919), and "The Blue Moccasins" (1928) all recall the

10 Finney, Selected Short Stories of D.H. Lawrence, 11.
12 Julio Cortazar explains that the short story gains an “intensity obtained by the elimination of everything that does not bear directly upon the action” (“Some Aspects of the Short Story”, in New Short Story Theories, ed. Charles E. May, Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1994, 245-55, 251).
14 Kingsley Widmer explains that ‘Lawrence, unlike the rationalistic scholars, is not interested in a reductive and more or less naturalistic explanation of the myth; for him the myth has become demoralized but not demythicized, and so he affirms the new form of the myth but not its new rationalization’ (The Art of Perversity: D.H. Lawrence’s Shorter Fictions, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1962, 232).
“Sleeping Beauty” fairy tale in their use of awakenings. In their rhythmic repetition of certain words, phrases, scenes, images, conflicts, or desires, Lawrence’s stories have drawn comparisons with poetry and in particular the lyric. Eileen Baldeshwiler observes that the lyrical structure of many of Lawrence’s stories seems to be derived “from the very ebb and flow of emotion”. This was partly achieved though his use of free indirect discourse to create a narrative that drifts in and out of the protagonists’ tangled emotions to capture the vacillating rhythmic nature of their thoughts without authorial explanation. D.H. Lawrence famously articulated his distinctive approach to character thus:

You must look in my novel for the old stable ego of the character. There is another ego, according to whose action the individual is unrecognisable, and passes through, as it were, allotropic states which it needs a deeper sense than any we’ve been used to exercise, to discover are states of the same single radically-unchanged element.

This quotation signals Lawrence’s attempt to depict psychologically convincing characters that exist beyond the confines of the text as

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15 Janice Hubbard Harris points out that tales such as “A Prelude” (1907), “Daughters of the Vicar” (1914), “The Horse-Dealer’s Daughter” (1917) and “Hadrian [You Touched Me]” (1919) and “The Blue Moccasins” (1928), all draw on the ‘Sleeping Beauty’ fairy tale (The Short Fiction of D.H. Lawrence, 58-59 and 216). Note that unless specified otherwise, all dates of Lawrence texts in parenthesis refer to the date of first appearance in publication as recorded by the Prefaces in the Cambridge Editions.
16 Thomas McCabe explains, ‘That Lawrence’s most characteristic stories are rhythmic has a special appropriateness because Lawrence sees life itself as rhythm. The rhythmic rise and fall, attraction and repulsion, of his stories corresponds to the rhythmic movement of nature itself’ (“Rhythm as Form in Lawrence: ‘The Horse Dealer’s Daughter’”, PMLA, LXXXVII [January 1972], 65).
17 Eileen Baldeshwiler, “The Lyric Short Story”, in New Short Story Theories, 231-244, 237.
18 Weldon Thornton explains that “the use of third-person indirect presentation enables Lawrence to represent states beneath any the character can express, or can even feel very coherently” (D.H. Lawrence: A Study of the Short Fiction, New York: Twayne Publishers, 1993, 17).
compendiums of conflicting urges and ideas – characters that are unique but at the same time represent universal concerns and emotions.\textsuperscript{20}

Unlike the novel, the modern short story is better equipped to provide an experience that is closer to how we really live our daily lives, minute-by-minute, one moment detached from the next, incoherent and with no conclusion, just a beginning and end.\textsuperscript{21} However, in contrast to the virtually plot-less short works by Modernist writers such as Virginia Woolf and Katherine Mansfield, or the break from traditional narrative represented by James Joyce's linguistic playfulness, Lawrence's tales still tend to follow a plot, albeit one that weaves a loose path in and out of realism and the consciousness of its protagonists.\textsuperscript{22} As Weldon Thornton explains:

In a story by Lawrence, plot is never the primary interest, and the authorial voice, though undeniably present, rarely emerges as a tangible persona or character. In Lawrence's stories the conception of character, of personality, is more complex; the focus of interest is more intensely psychological – especially concerning conflicts within and among the characters; and the style is more "poetic", that is, it involves distinctive rhythms and repetitions and imagery, than in most tales.\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{20} Michael Bell explains how Lawrence's form of characterization contributed to his unique style and to Modernism: "the relative status of the human was a central recognition of Modernism itself. Lawrence ... rejected the 'old stable ego' of humanistic ethical characterizaton because he only cared 'about what the woman is – what she IS – inhumanly, physiologically, materially – ... what she is as a phenomenon (or as representing some greater, unhuman will), instead of what she feels according to the human conception.' Yet he was equally interested in what these characters felt as individuals, and the category of the individual retained a crucial importance for him" ("The Metaphysics of Modernism", in \textit{The Cambridge Companion to Modernism}, ed. Michael Levenson, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, 9-32, 13). Bell is quoting Lawrence from \textit{The Letters of D.H. Lawrence}, II, 182.

\textsuperscript{21} Ali Smith argues that by its very brevity, the short story "challenges aliveness with the certainty of mortality" and is thus well positioned to articulate the anxieties of the modern age ("All There Is: An Interview About the Short Story", \textit{Critical Quarterly}, LII/2 [August 2000], 66).

\textsuperscript{22} Janice Hubbard Harris explains that "As in Joyce and Mansfield, the overt focus on the mundane in Lawrence hides more general levels of meaning, levels rich with allusions to history and myth. But unlike his colleagues in realism, Lawrence quickly began to expose those buried levels of meaning in his short stories, turning away from realism and taking the English short story in directions quite new" (\textit{The Short Fiction of D.H. Lawrence}, 252).

There is some debate as to whether or not Lawrence’s short stories should be considered Modernist. Dominic Head, for instance, argues that Lawrence’s “work in the genre is distinct from the modernist short story proper” because it draws upon the more traditional plotted narrative of the previous century. However, this view applies techniques used by other Modernist writers to evaluate Lawrence’s stories rather than considering the significant contributions of Lawrence’s own innovations to the diversity of Modernism. As Gregory Ulmer argues, Lawrence’s approach was “a radical, informed effort to convert modernism to his own personal ethic of art” and thus to criticize Lawrence for perceived conservatism denies “Lawrence the recognition he deserves as a contributor to the vanguard theory of his day.” Thornton explains that Lawrence rejected certain techniques associated with Modernism such as Joyce’s use of stream of consciousness because he felt it identified “the self with the mind’s conception of the self”. Lawrence advocated a different understanding of consciousness that expresses its physical vibrancy and mutability. In this sense Lawrence might be considered as a writer who presents a distinct challenge to the predominantly visual medium of film. In fact, Lawrence appears to have been quite resistant to the emerging art of moving pictures, which marks a rare point of agreement between the author and many of his Modernist contemporaries.

Modernists on film
The majority of authors and critics of the Modernist era generally viewed contemporary film, which at that point in time tended towards the populist melodrama, as rather crass and no substitute for the refined arts of literature or theatre, which they feared it would desecrate. Cartell

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25 Fiona Becket explains that “Lawrence is central to our understanding of modernism although many view him in practice and temperament as a figure at a distinct remove from intellectuals and practitioners like T.S. Eliot, James Joyce, Ezra Pound and Virginia Woolf, who themselves embodied radically different approaches to their historical moment” (The Complete Critical Guide to D.H. Lawrence, 14).
28 This book adheres to Michael Bell’s view that Modernism’s “peak period in the Anglo-American context lay between 1910 and 1925” (The Metaphysics of Modernism, 9).