

## A Structural Approach to D. H. Lawrence's: *the Lovely Lady*: Application of Roland Barthes' Five Codes

### Une approche structurale de D. H. Lawrence: la belle dame: application des cinq codes de Roland Barthes

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#### Abstract

Structuralism is a new school of thoughts emerged from linguistics and language theories. This article attempts to apply Roland Barthes' structural theory of five codes on *The Lovely Lady* (1933), by D.H. Lawrence so as analyze the meanings implied behind the codes. The present article intends to discuss the application of the five codes as theorized by Barthes on the structure of the story as the current analysis of the literary text shows that it is deeply enmeshed in the Barthesian five basic codes: the hermeneutic, proairetic, semantic, symbolic and cultural codes. The researcher, then, attempts to analyze the five codes that are hidden in the actions, words and images of the character. The theme and structure of the story rests on the idea of polarity or binary oppositions. The study concludes that the author has created a fine balance in the story through the contrasting personalities of Pauline (*The lovely Lady*), Cecilia (the niece), and Robert (the son).

**Keywords:** Barthes, codes, Lawrence, oppositions, Structuralism.

#### Résumé

Le structuralisme est une nouvelle école de pensée issue de la linguistique et des théories linguistiques. Cet article tente d'appliquer la théorie structurale des cinq codes de Roland Barthes dans « *The Lovely Lady* » (1933), une nouvelle de D.H. Lawrence afin d'analyser les significations sous-jacentes aux codes. Le présent article se propose d'examiner l'application des cinq codes théorisés par Barthes sur la structure de l'histoire, car l'analyse actuelle du texte littéraire montre que celui-ci est profondément imbriqué dans les cinq codes de base barthesiens: herméneutique, proairétique, sémantique, codes symboliques et culturels. Le chercheur tente alors d'analyser les cinq codes cachés dans les actions, les mots et les images du personnage. Les oppositions binaires (code symbolique) jouent de plus en plus un rôle central dans la structure de l'histoire. L'étude conclut que l'auteur a créé un juste équilibre dans l'histoire grâce aux personnalités contrastées de Pauline (*La belle dame*), Cecilia (la nièce) et Robert (le fils).

**Mots clés :** Barthes, codes, Lawrence, oppositions, structuralisme.

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## Introduction

Stemming from the linguistic structural views of Ferdinand de Saussure, Structuralism as an open-ended theory has been predominantly evolved in different and diverse disciplines. As an intellectual movement, Structuralism is conditioned by a French air of the 1950s. However, the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908) and the literary critic Roland Barthes (1915-1980) were probably the first to found its basis. Rejecting the principle of being alien, structuralism very soon surpassed its spatial boundaries and extended to Britain in the 1970s and the 1980s. Though, structuralism may strongly be connected with a group of other names such as: Althusser, Foucault, Lacan, and Derrida, it is, nonetheless, Roland Barthes whose work has developed the basic ideas of structuralism in a provocative way. What concerns the researcher is the way Barthes focuses on codes and structures in analyzing pieces of literary works. Thus, in literature structuralist critics is much concerned with the analysis of the study of the structural system of a literary text. Put crudely, structuralism emphasizes the idea that everything that the text may hold has to be regarded as of potential consequence to discover the underlying structures that shapes it (Tyson, 2006).

In his remarkable book *S/Z* (1970) which Barthes devoted to the study of a novella by Balzac, he caused work of literature to be examined with a tremendous care and new methods of literary analysis are introduced (Sturrock, 1986). In his analysis of Balzac's story 'Sarrasine', Barthes as a semiotician of the text, introduced five codes: hermeneutic code, proairetic code, semantic code, symbolic code and cultural code. Barthes' attempt is to capture something of how meaning is produced and dispersed in the text and correlate a number of the elements of the story both grammatical and semantic manner (Allen, 2003). Surprisingly, these codes, Barthes suggests, are by no means to be imposed on the text, but are rather provided by the text itself. Moreover, Barthes insists on the idea that these codes should be treated at equal distance, and no hierarchy is to be exercised upon them (Sturrock, 1986). They are revealed in the form of words, images, sounds, favours, acts or objects in the literary works. Pierce (in Chandler, 2005: 2) says: "Anything can be a sign as long as someone interprets it as 'signifying something' referring to or standing for something other than itself". The present study uses Barthes five codes in the textual analysis Lawrence's short story *The Lovely Lady* to figure out to what extent the theory could be implemented in a different social and cultural context. Barthes posits that a text (narrative) is a bunch of signifiers which can generate multiple meanings via the reader's participation (Barthes, 1974). The five codes that Barthes proposes would help the reader to unravel and understand any narrative into multiple meanings.

Increasingly, there are many reasons that are behind the choice of the story. Though it may appear very short, it is extremely challenging enigmatic for the reader. The reader of the story can hardly miss its engaging silent dialogue with traditional discourses about women who cogently and concurrently kept themselves prisoners in the mirror of the male. ("Give Her a Pattern" 393-97) In the same vein, the story is rich with the cultural references to Western society in general and to England in particular. It is strengthened by the actions of suspense and rich of many symbolic and

cultural references. The story presents an amazing contradiction between two different characters Pauline and Cecilia. To the average reader, however, they are identified as binary oppositions. This would include their opposing personalities; visions of life as well as their different ways of thinking. Thus, Barthes codes may sound very adequate to the interpretation of the story as they can give a strong insight into the theme and structure of the text.

## **1. Roland Barthes' Five Codes**

Barthes' five codes are meant to be implemented to understand the underlying structure of a text. Barthes insists that these structuralist readings in terms of codes are inevitably the basic underlying structures of all narratives (Barry, 2002). Hence, Barthes' referential codes—though may altogether seem quite distinctive—they delicately lap over each other to form and make sense of a narrative work of art. The text, to quote Barthes is “a powerful gush of words, a ribbon of infra-language” (Barthes, 1975: 7). Barthes attempts to employ these codes to figure out “how meaning is produced and dispersed in the text.” (Allen, 2003: 86) It demands a close scrutiny of the narrative text so as to uncover its various and different meanings. The researcher, however, deems it very fundamental to provide a brief description of these codes before any attempt of practical implementation.

### **1.1. The Hermeneutic Code**

The hermeneutic code is also called the enigmatic code (Selden, Widdowson & Brooker, 2005). It deals with the chronological order in the narrative. Its function is to raise questions about the mysterious and puzzling element of a text. It is also employed to constitute an enigma and provides its solution. It augments the reader's inquisitiveness and curiosity so as to understand them (Scholes, 1985). The reader wholeheartedly tries to unveil the mystery of these elements by raising different questions. In fact, Scholes suggests that this is the ‘story-telling’ code, whereby “the narrative raises questions, creates suspense and mystery, before resolving these as it proceeds along its course” (Hawks, 2003: 94).

It is worth to note that Barthes associates other diverse terms to illustrate the hermeneutic code: ‘snares’ which refers to “deliberate evasion of truth”; and ‘equivocations’ which is the use ambiguities “to conceal truth” and ‘jamming or ‘suspended answer’ whose function is to stop enigma and keep it open (Greco, 2011: 161). Some of the enigmatic elements are answered in the end of the text while some of them remain a mystery for the reader. The reader is, therefore, required to use his/her mental faculty to give meaning to the text (Felluga, n.d.). Jamming, for instance, deliberately that there is no solution or whatsoever to a problem. It enhances the reader to keep using guesses until the final scene when closure is given to the audience. A best example, where the entire narrative seems to operate primarily by the hermeneutic code is, perhaps, Franz Kafka's “The Trial.” The readers witness the unjustified arrest of a young man one morning for something that

he has not done. The rest of the narrative is devoted to determining the questions that are raised by the initial scene (Kafka, 1925).

### **1.2. The Proairetic Code (the code of actions and behaviour)**

The proairetic code is also called the code of actions (Hawks, 2003), meaning an event or action is going to take place and enhances the reader guessing what will happen next. It refers in many respects to the actions and their effects of the narrative. It corresponds to those elements that create suspense in the text and catches the interest of the reader. Every action of suspense heralds what comes next. What happens next? In this way it keeps the interest of reader alive for the coming actions.

The aforementioned codes are the important parts of a traditional literary work where the reader finds a chronological sequence in the actions, situations and characterization of the story. Barthes described them as follows: "dependent on...sequential codes: the revelation of truth and the coordination of the actions represented: there is the same constraint in the gradual order of melody and in the equally gradual order of narrative sequence" (in Thomas, 2019, 107). Therefore, these codes are studied syntagmatic manner. The rest of the codes are free from the chronological order and thus may have their meaning outside of the narrative sequences and logic of the text.

### **1.3. The Semantic Code (The code of semes or signifiers)**

The semantic code is also called the connotative code concerns the entire connotations which constitute the characters' qualities and actions. It helps the readers identify persons and places in the narrative. This code refers to those elements that give some additional meaning or connotative meaning. The connotative meaning is often found in the characterization. Barthes believes that all narratives have some definite "characters, places and objects" that connotatively help the reader to unveil the theme of the text (Eagleton, 1993). This code is also, especially in Anglo American criticism, referred to as "themes" or "thematic structures" (Barry, 2002); (Selden, Widdowson & Brooker, 2005).

### **1.4. The Symbolic Code**

This fourth code also termed as the antithetic code is very hard and tough to define. It is concerned with all the symbolic antithesis patterns, oppositions and configurations that are frequently repeated in the text (Barthes, 1974). Unlike the semantic code, the symbolic code has much deeper function than the semantic code (Hawks, 2003). It reveals the symbols of a narrative and defines the major rhetorical device in literature. Perhaps the most crucial aspect of the symbolic code is its reference to all the elements that give opposite meanings, i.e. have polarities and antithesis. The notion of binary antagonisms or polarities is much inherited in the theory of structuralism. Therefore, it is through the relevance of these abiding binary oppositions that a post- structuralist understands and uncovers reality (Barry, 2002).

### 1.5. The Cultural Code (or 'reference' code)

This last code is also known as the referential code concerns all codes of knowledge which constitute a relevant reference to the narrative text. In this respect Barthes also stresses that all codes are characterize of being cultural. (Barthes, 1974: 20) As Hawks further notes, "This code manifests itself as a 'gnomic', collective, anonymous and authoritative voice which speaks for and about what it aims to establish as 'accepted' knowledge or wisdom" (Hawks, 2003: 96). It is connected with any system of knowledge or system of value which is hidden in the text. It is associated with the type of knowledge that each reader uses to interpret everyday experiences. Therefore, the cultural code includes all codes that are tied to clichés, proverbs or popular sayings of various sorts (Felluga, n.d.). What is notable is that this is the most controversial and perverse of the codes (Barthes, 1970).

## 2. The Story and the Author

The selected short story "The Lovely Lady" is taken from the book entitled *The Portable D.H. Lawrence* (1977) edited by Diana Trilling. D. H. Lawrence is a strikingly active English writer who though his illness he produced an abundance quantity of work. He is the author of many novels: *The White Peacock* (1911), *The Sons and Lovers* (1913), *The Rainbow* (1915), *Women in Love* (1920), *The Lost Girl* (1921), and many others. He is also the author of a collection of short stories and novelettes such as: "The Blind Man", (1914) "Two Blue Birds" (1914), "The Fox" (1923) and "The Princess" (1925)

The *Lovely Lady* is a short story about a trio: a mother (Mrs. Pauline Attenborough), her adult son (Robert) and her equally adult orphan niece (Cecilia). At a surface level 'The *Lovely Lady*' represents the antagonic battle between two women, one of them being a mother figure. It is a story of a woman characterized as a strong personality who patently casts a shadow over her own offspring. The mother is in her seventies but for some reason, the reader could mistakenly think of her as being in her thirties (Lawrence, 1946).

It should be notable that the entire story is pervaded by an all familiar mother-blaming discourse. Right from the first lines it appears that the narration is permeated by the less favoured niece Cecilia's perspective. The story, then opens with Cecilia's description of Pauline, the "mother-monster", granting the reader the opportunity to share Cecilia's secret knowledge about Pauline and entices us to identify the mother's true self from Cecilia's negative judgement. "[Pauline's] niece Cecilia was perhaps the only person in the world who was aware of the invisible little wire which connected Pauline's eye-wrinkles with Pauline's willpower". (124)

The story, though at the first glance its readers may be attracted by Lawrence's biased themes of "mother phobia" and "Oedipus complex", it nonetheless does not hide the author's deep concern in shattering in his fictions the mirror in which women saw themselves reflected. This can already be touched in the scene in which Pauline, pressed by her son's

relationship Robert to look after her appearance and how with his presence at home

Then ping!—the mysterious little wire that worked between Pauline's will and her face went taut; the weary, haggard, prominent eyes suddenly began to gleam; the eyelids arched; the queer curved eye-brown floated in such frail arches on Pauline's forehead, began to gather a mocking significance, and you had the *real lovely* lady, in all her char. (Lawrence, 124-125).

### 3. Application of Barthes' Codes / Discussion

#### 3.1. The Proairetic Code

The story begins with an astonishing physical description of the mother, Pauline Attenborough who is on the verge of her seventieth but for some reason, she has the notion of being only in her thirties and ends up with a death by suicide. The story under analysis is, then, interwoven by suspense actions. The short story follows a trio: a mother, her adult son Robert and her equally adult orphan niece Cecilia. It is worth to note that the story is told from Cecilia's perspective. The readers are left to encounter Cecilia's description of Pauline's energy and power of vampirism over her son's unnatural dedication and submissive to his possessive mother, Pauline in *The Lovely Lady*. She is the type of the mother who thrives and actually gains youth by sucking the life out of others particularly by draining the life from her son. This action code indicates "to control." Robert is totally controlled by his mother. One cannot miss Pauline's immense effect upon Robert as communicated by Cecilia:

Robert was a gentleman, with an old-fashioned, punctilious courtesy that covered his shyness quite completely. He was, and Ciss knew it, more confused than shy. He was worse than she was . . . Robert's must have started before he was born. In the lovely lady's womb he must have felt very confused (Lawrence, 128).

Perhaps more crucial is Cecilia's bitterness and distress from Robert's incapacity to notice her emotions and feelings towards him. This event indicates "to complain". Cecilia complains her unsuccessful relationship with Robert whose passion and attraction is devoted to his mother. She really laments herself and bad her bad fate. She says: "He paid all his attention to his mother, drawn to her as a humble flower to the sun" (Lawrence 128).

In the same vein, the reader would not miss that strange relationship between Pauline and her son Robert that has such a crippling effect on the son making him incapable of establishing a normal and happy bond with other women. Robert could not even have a passionate relationship with Ciss. The action code here is "to protect". Pauline protected Robert longer than he deserved resulted into his incapacity to strike a happy and unfulfilling relationship with his beloved. This well notice by Ciss: "He was ashamed that he was not a man." (Lawrence 130)

It is interesting to note that by the end of the story Pauline's lust for control and power swamps even her love towards her son. This scene indicates "to fail". Pauline fails to prove herself as a good mother. Her selfishness, over-indulgent nature, and greed to become a well-known woman by creating a museum holding her name after her death as "Pauline Attenborough Museum" (Lawrence 147) pushed her to leave her main fortune to the museum. By contrast, she left a mediocre amount of money to Robert who sacrificed his life for her.

### 3.2. The Hermeneutic Code Analysis

The Hermeneutic code is appropriate to the enigmas present in the story. It accommodates many puzzling scenes which creates confusion for the reader. Though the title of the story, "The Lovely Lady" attracts the reader's attention, it still seems to have some mystery in itself. It appears as an enigma to the reader. It gives some hints but does not tell the whole truth and thus compels the reader to read the entire story. It is a form of aesthetic contract between the author and the reader. From the very beginning the reader will want to know who speaks and whose opinion he/she is reading. At the first glance, the reader asks that why the story is entitled as "The Lovely Lady". Then to whom the title designates? The enigma is immediately resolved in the first page of the story through Cecilia's description as being the only person who knows only too well. (Lawrence 124) The readers can get all the answers, no matter how partial from Cecilia, Pauline's niece.

The next questions that comes to the reader's mind is the cause of Pauline's neglect to Cecilia, Cecilia's hatred to Pauline and Robert's unnatural dedication to his possessive mother. "He was fascinated by her. Completely fascinated. And for the rest, paralysed in a life-long confusion" (Lawrence 129).

It is also unexplained that why Robert's mother would like her son and Ciss, this latter believed, marry each other after Pauline's death and not before the death. A healthy reasoning is that every normal mother in the world will enjoy having their children getting married and forging a family of their own before they are dead. This is certainly not the case of Pauline. Even after Pauline's death, Ciss feels that Robert would become "just a shell, the shell of a man who had never lived" (Lawrence 129).

Similarly, it is enigmatic to the reader to perceive Robert's defenceless reaction towards his mother's intense egotism. Being qualified as a defenceless victim through Cecilia's eyes, Robert deliberately procrastinate his action. This would indicate his failure to assume responsibility for his own life:

Perhaps Ciss was the only person who fathomed his awful shyness and *malaise*, his habitual feeling that he was in the wrong place: almost like a soul that has got into a wrong body. But he never did anything about it. (Lawrence 126)

Equally enigmatic and puzzling to the reader is the reason why Pauline had strongly loved Henry better than Robert. Henry had died at the age of twenty-two after his love affair with an actress, Claudia, had been stymied by Pauline. "Ciss believed that Aunt Pauline had loved her big, handsome, brilliant first-born much more than she loved Robert, and that his death had been a terrible blow and a chagrin to her" (Lawrence, 1946, p.135).

To make it short, the text is coiled with enigmas whose purpose is to keep the reader's inquisitiveness awake while reading the story. The reader remains suspicious and doubtful about his/her sympathy which the narration itself manipulates vis-à-vis each of the characters involved. It is only in the middle of the story that the narration suddenly changes direction and the reader begins to take distance from Cecilia's hostility towards Pauline.

### 3.3. The Semantic Code

There are a variety of elements which add to the connotative meaning of the story. The first example of this code is the expression "woman with feminine charm still in the swerve of the bone and the pretty, naïve teeth". This means that Pauline's charm endures and persists even on the verge of her abrupt decaying bones and that she has never previously been subject to hard treatment or experience.

Similarly important is what really helps Pauline keep and preserve her impression of youth. Cecilia who knows too well invites the reader to share her secret knowledge. She divulges Pauline's secret of her impressive preservation of youth which is her eagle like will power. "She really had the secret of everlasting youth; that is to say, she could don her youth again like an eagle" (Lawrence 125). Biologically speaking, eagles have a beauty and grace fitting their status. They are the symbol of great strength and wisdom. This can be illustrated through the following well-known verses in Isaiah: "... those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint" (Isaiah 40:3).

Increasingly, another important connotative meaning in the story is the concept of vampirism. Pauline maintains her beauty and gains youth by feeding on her sons' energies. In fact, the old lady remains young by draining the life of her sons and sucking them dry. Being financially empowered woman, Pauline is described as "a mother murdering her sensitive sons, who were fascinated by her: the Circe!" (Lawrence 133). Robert describes his mother as follows: "She fed on life. She has fed on me as she fed on [my brother] Henry. She put a sucker into one's soul, and it sucked up one's essential life." (Lawrence 146) Astounded by her all-encompassing matriarchal power, Robert is "sucked" dry of his vitality. The more Robert's life grows vapid and insipid, the more Pauline's life grows enlivened and rejuvenated. Therefore, it is undeniable that Mrs Pauline "thrives on the lifeblood of those around her, incorporating their vitality into her own and fortifying the illusion of agelessness through her acts of ingestion" (Tidwell & Ragar, 2007: 218).

In this manner, to satisfy the demands of her ego, Pauline's feeding on her children could be characterized as cannibalistic. Nevertheless, she lacks the desire to become the other through its incorporation. Instead, Pauline's vampirism to join Diana Fuss's views is "a cultural figure for identification



that differs from cannibalism in that, rather than simply incorporating the other, the vampire transforms her victims into fellow vampires” (Fuss, 1992: 730).

### 3.4. The Symbolic Code

As it is aforementioned, the assumption of the symbolic code is to determine textual antithetical elements that “allow multi-valences and reversibility” (Selden, Widdowson & Brooker, 2005, p. 152). It is related to the tension created by simple binary oppositions on which the structure of a narrative rests. The target story under discussion is structured on the basis of binary polarity system. The story is concerned with three major characters, Pauline, Cecilia and Robert who are entirely opposite to each other in their personalities, behaviours, vision of life, and outlook because they belong to different generations and social backgrounds.

One of the symbolic codes in the narrative text is the contrast between Cecilia and Mrs Attenborough. Cecilia is actually thirty years old, whereas, Pauline is seventy-two. Obviously they belong to two different worlds and therefore have different views. Cecilia is still young full of sympathy, emotions and love towards Robert while Pauline who “looked old, very old, and like a witch” (Lawrence 144) is overshadowing them both. “The strange, unspoken sympathy of the young with one another, when they are overshadowed by the old.” (Lawrence 129). Cecilia is a poor orphan who financially depends on Pauline who is a wealthy and a rich woman. “Pauline had money” (Lawrence 126). Cecilia’s father was just a poor Congregational clergyman; however, Pauline’s “father had been a Consul in the East and in Naples”. (Lawrence 135) These two titles denotatively refer to mere occupations but connotatively they reveal two different social classes that of the poor religious person and the powerful wealthy politician. Pauline “had the REAL lovely lady, in all her charm” (Lawrence 125), whereas, “Ciss... was a big, dark-complexioned, pug-faced young woman.” (Lawrence 125). Pauline is a woman who knows a great deal of arts, discussed manuscripts and spends entire evenings speaking with Robert, by contrast, Ciss is quite shy and retiring and unable to bring matters to a head. She is a plain young woman “who very rarely spoke, and when she did couldn’t get it out”. (Lawrence 125) Pauline has a wonderful, soft, sonorous, caressive, flexible and beautiful voice that makes Cecilia think of as supernatural or the voice of ghosts while Cecilia speaks almost in hesitant or faltering manners unable to thrush things out. Pauline is described as being “so delicate, so subtle and beautifully controlled”, however, laments herself of being “so clumsy...and lack of suavity” (Lawrence 140) devoid of any smooth, courteous qualities that Pauline has.

It is worth noticing that the symbolic code is the code of “theme” i.e. the idea around which the narrative text is constructed. In “The Lovely Lady” the theme of jealousy is central to the story although Cecilia’s loathing of her aunt Pauline is not ignited by jealousy. Nevertheless, the sunbathing scene is an evidence of Cecilia’s envy for Pauline’s beauty and perfection. It cannot be denied that Cecilia’s desire to be like Pauline has already been mentioned many times. However, the way in which she insists to sunbathe in imitation of Pauline is so much flagrant: “One afternoon it occurred to Cecilia that she herself might while away this rather long

afternoon by taking a sun-bath.” (Lawrence 131) Cecilia is also jealous of Robert's great emotion and devotion to his domineering mother Pauline because Cecilia could find no means to drive his attention to her: “But another bond, which Ciss did not know how to draw tight, was the bond of passion.” (129)

Last but not least, whatever the attempts to explain symbols they remain a great challenge. Lawrence makes this point clear; he writes “You can't give a symbol a 'meaning.' Symbols are organic units of consciousness with a life of their own, and you can never explain them away, because their value is dynamic, emotional belonging to the sense-consciousness of the body and the soul, and not simply mental (qtd. in Beal, Anthony, 1936: 157).

### 3.5. The Cultural Code

Although, Barthes posits that “all codes are cultural” (Barthes, 1970, p.18) and that under the cultural code the whole system of knowledge and values invoked by a text are grouped, (Scholes, 1985), the cultural code is hard to apply because “The Lovely Lady” is not a cultural story per se. Nonetheless, the reader can track various traces of cultural code in the Lawrence's “The Lovely Lady”.

A close examination beyond the surface level of the mother/son relationship would suffice to embark on Lawrence's continuous, intense, and cogent critique of the modern English society still permeated by an entire male centered cultural tradition. To affirm his views of matriarchy, Lawrence tried to destroy the generalized type of a woman who is confined to the traditional “angel/witch paradigm” [Díez-Medrano, 1996: 100 (10)] Being an extravagant, wealthy, powerful, and domineering woman, Pauline spent her money foolishly in buying and collecting paintings to satisfy her whims of decoration. Cecilia proceeds:

And Pauline, who had really a passion and a genius for loveliness, whether in texture or form or colour, had laid the basis of her fortune on her father's collection. She had gone on collecting, buying where she could, and selling to collectors or to museums. She was one of the first to sell old, weird African figures to the museums, and ivory carvings from New Guinea. (Lawrence, 135)

Pauline is quite confident that “what was Pauline's was Pauline's” (Lawrence 126) and nobody dared to interfere in her affairs. By so doing, Pauline can be considered as a type of woman who subverts or destabilizes the current traditional binary witch/angel paradigm of patriarchal ideology. This is clearly illustrated by Díez-Medrano when he claims: “Lawrence argues through his works that women try to alter subconsciously the male beliefs about the female race. Lawrence aimed to destroy the patriarchal ideology and that is why his women represent the paradigm of angel/witch” (Díez-Medrano, 1996: 99).

Another cultural reference in the story may be the term “ventriloquism.” “It was Aunt Pauline! It MUST be Aunt Pauline, practising ventriloquism, or something like that. What a devil she was!” (Lawrence: 133) It should be stressed, then that Lawrence's deep relation and profound meditation of the Bible attempts to reconsider some of the religiously forbidden practices in

the English Christian society such as ventriloquism practices. To this Isaiah says,

And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust.” People’s voices coming out of places other than their mouths, is likened unto the sounds made by demons when they speak. That is not a “humorous” thing, but a “deadly serious” matter. (Isaiah 29:4)

Ventriloquism, and a multitude of other worldly gimmicks, should have no place in the ministry.

Vampirism is another cultural code which permeated the European culture notably the English society. It is a recurrent concept in the European ruling traditions which is epitomized by James Joyce’s description of Ireland in *A Portrait of the Artist as a young Man*: “the sow that eats its farrow” (Joyce, 1916: 116). More recently this concept of vampirism refers to people who feed on other people’s energies, draining them, sucking them dry. Literally, in “*The Lovely Lady*”, vampirism denotes the old lady who actually gains youth while draining the life from her son.

Another cultural reference is manifested through that English Christian culture which opposes and rejects adultery and sexual relations outside marriage. This can be illustrated through Ciss’s baffled reactions when listening to Pauline through the drainpipe that Robert is not in fact the son of Pauline’s husband, Ronald, but of an Italian lover of Pauline’s, “*Monsignor Mauro*,” a Jesuit priest. A scene which hypothesizes Ciss’s suspicion and doubt into concrete truth:

No, Robert dear, you will never be the man your father was, though you have some of his looks. He was a marvellous lover, soft as a flower yet piercing as a humming-bird. *Cara, cara mia bellissima, ti ho aspettato come l’agonissante aspetta la morte, morte deliziosa, quasi quasi troppo deliziosa per una mera anima humana.* He gave himself to a woman as he gave himself to God. *Mauro! Mauro! How you loved me! How you loved me!* (Lawrence, 144)

Similarly important is the hidden cultural code in Pauline’s character by which she endeavours to concretize her dominance and suppression of her child. It is a subconscious act of a woman who tries to have a self appearance and existence in the milieu of an English society dominated by the patriarchal ideology. Therefore, it is through the creation of the image in her son’s mind, that Pauline would, perhaps, though illusory achieve the foundations of her being and existence. Nevertheless, Pauline’s desires onto Robert, some critics such as Michael Squires, opines that Lawrence has evoked a whole literary tradition which condemns “assertive females” for “[emptying] of their manliness” the men to whom they relate (Squires, 51). This can be evidenced through Lawrence’s’ ideas which he expresses in *Fantasia of the Unconscious*:

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The unhappy woman beats about for her insatiable satisfaction, seeking whom she may devour. And usually, she turns to her child. Here she provokes what she wants. Here, in her own son who belongs to her, she seems to find the last perfect response for which she is craving. He is a medium to her, she provokes from him her own answer. So she throws herself into a last great love for her son, a final and fatal devotion, that which would have been the richness and strength of her husband and is poison to her boy (qtd. in Steele, 2004: 148)

### Conclusion

In general, the article attempted to analyze Lawrence's short story "The Lovely Lady" from Roland Barthes' structural perspective. Drawing on Barthes' five codes, the researcher has attempted to provide a deep insight in understanding the structure and theme of the story. The analysis has shown that all of the five codes are hidden in the actions, words and images of the characters. They are easily traceable in the text whose meaning is ostensibly permeated and shaped by these codes. The reader's curiosity is kept awoken all along the reading process thanks to the enigmas that entangle the text. The reader remains doubtful and suspicious about the two victims Robert and Cecilia on the one hand, and their oppressor Pauline on the other hand throughout the entire story. It was until the end, it is revealed that the two victims in a melodramatic means escape by destroying their oppressor the lovely lady and form, perhaps, a dull and passionless union. Unsurprisingly, there are plenty of actions that generate suspense and indicate the coming of other actions. Besides, the symbolic code is very significant in the story. The binary oppositions enjoy an utmost significance to the plot of the story: two major female characters (Pauline and Cecilia), two different narrative voices, and contrasting personalities. The text has also forces the reader to go beyond the surface level so as to find out the hidden cultural references that pertain to women's frustrations and their thirst to power, values, customs and perceptions in the patriarchal British society.

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