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Subalternity and the Spatial Politics of Gender and Species in D. H. Lawrence's *The Fox*

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Abstract: This study advances a spatial examination of patriarchal and speciesist hierarchies in D. H. Lawrence's *The Fox* (1922). It traces how the marginalisation of women and animals is organised through the spatial regimes of a wartime English farm. Drawing on Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's conceptualisation of the subaltern as a subject defined by the absence of institutionalised voice, the study positions the novella's two female protagonists and the fox as subjects whose survival depends on spaces beyond institutional control. Nancy Fraser's concept of subaltern counterpublics extends this framework spatially, and the study reads Bailey Farm as a precarious realm of survival and labour, held together by use rather than ownership and vulnerable to intrusions. The fox occupies an analogous position as a killable body under surveillance whose killing restores territorial order. Henry Grenfel's arrival, his killing of the fox and his possible complicity in Jill Banford's death together consolidate the system of patriarchal and anthropocentric governance. Reading the women and the fox together, this study argues that *The Fox* exposes the mechanisms by which modern rural order secures itself through the naturalisation of intersecting hierarchies of gender and species.[1]

Keywords:

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D. H. Lawrence'ın *Tilki* Adlı Eserinde Toplumsal Cinsiyet ve Türcülüğün Mekânsal Politikaları ve Madunluk

Öz: Bu çalışma, D. H. Lawrence'ın *Tilki* (1922) adlı eserindeki ataerkil ve türcü hiyerarşilerin mekânsal bir incelemesini sunmaktadır. Çalışma, kadınların ve hayvanların ötekileştirilmesinin, savaş dönemi bir İngiliz çiftliğinin mekânsal düzenleri aracılığıyla nasıl örgütlendiğini izlemektedir. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak'ın madunu, kurumsallaşmış bir sesin yokluğuyla tanımlanan bir özne olarak kavramsallaştırmasından hareketle, çalışma novelladaki iki kadın kahramanı ve tilkiyi, hayatta kalışları kurumsal denetimin dışındaki mekânlara bağlı özneler olarak konumlandırmaktadır. Nancy Fraser'ın madun karşı-kamusu kavramı bu çerçeveyi mekânsal olarak genişletir. Bu çalışma, Bailey Çiftliği'ni, mülkiyetten çok kullanıma dayalı, müdahalelere açık, kırılgan bir hayatta kalma ve emek alanı olarak okumaktadır. Tilki de, öldürülmesi mekânsal düzeni yeniden tesis eden, sürekli gözetim altındaki öldürülebilir bir beden olarak benzer bir konum işgal eder. Henry Grenfel'in çiftliğe gelişi ve hem

Anahtar Sözcükler:

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tilkiyi öldürmesi hem de Jill Banford'un ölümündeki olası sorumluluğu, ataerkil ve insanmerkezci tahakküm sistemini pekiştirir. Kadınları ve tilkiyi birlikte ele alan bu çalışma, *Tilki* adlı eserin, modern kırsal düzenin kendisini toplumsal cinsiyet ve tür temelli kesişen hiyerarşilerin doğallaştırılması yoluyla güvence altına aldığını öne sürmektedir.

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Introduction

D. H. Lawrence's (1885–1930) novella *The Fox* (1922) is set on a destitute English farm during the final years of the First World War. Two women, Nellie March and Jill Banford, manage a poultry enterprise on Bailey Farm. Their balanced coexistence on the farm is disrupted initially by a predatory fox, followed by the arrival of a young soldier, Henry Grenfel. Despite its seemingly simple plot, the novella constructs a complex symbolic framework concerning space: the farm's boundaries, its permeability to intrusion, and the struggle over occupancy and governance functions as the practical foundation for the interplay of hierarchies of gender and species.

The fox occupies a comparable place within this spatial economy. It is not simply a narrative element that fosters Henry's arrival. Rather, from its first appearance, the text designates it as a body that could be killed without hesitation. Its wordless claim on March, most visible in the celebrated scene in which the animal returns her gaze, has no institutional form through which it might be registered as anything other than a hunting problem to be solved. The women's precarious authority over the farm and the fox's precarious hold on its own life turn out to be structurally continuous rather than merely analogous, two instances of a single logic that decides whose claim on space counts as legitimate and whose does not. This structural continuity, and the fox's designation as an unhesitatingly killable body, both echo positions long developed in ecofeminist and animal-ethics scholarship (see Adams, *Sexual Politics*; Kheel; Singer), though this study foregrounds Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's and Nancy Fraser's accounts to isolate the spatial and institutional mechanisms of that convergence in *The Fox*. Existing criticism has approached the text from a range of perspectives. Gender has been read through Jan Good's account of gender identity, Jo Jones's queer reading, and M. G. Prasuna's feminist analysis while Stanley Renner offers a psychosexual reading. Species has been addressed through Peter Fjågesund's ecocritical reading and Gerald Doherty's treatment of the species question. What remains unexamined is how gender and species marginalization intersect in *The Fox*. While Doherty reads species as the rhetorical and psychoanalytic

mediator of the novella's gender conflicts, this study locates gender and species marginalisation within a shared spatial and institutional logic of legitimate claim.

This study interprets *The Fox* through two theoretical frameworks concerned with conditions of voice and space. Spivak's subaltern is defined not merely by economic hardship but by the structural absence of a position from which speech can register as credible testimony. Fraser's subaltern counterpublics offer a spatial and institutional analogue, explaining the alternative spaces the subordinated produce when excluded from legitimate public authority. These frameworks position Bailey Farm as such a counterpublic: an alternative economy of subsistence that the narrative produces only to disintegrate. This reading also draws on Susie Jacobs's sociological study of land, gender, and sexuality in agrarian economies, which argues that "control over land and agriculture is bound up with the nexus of kinship, gender, sexuality and household-based economies in many rural areas" (173). Jacobs's own frame of reference, twentieth-century land reform across Africa, Latin America, and Asia, could hardly be further from a private wartime farm in the English Midlands, yet her vocabulary describes Bailey Farm with striking precision: Lawrence's novella dramatizes at the level of individual desire and violence what Jacobs documents at the level of policy and statute. The mechanisms binding land, gender, and sexuality together, it suggests, are not peculiar to any single historical or geographical setting but recur wherever access to land also functions as a means of deciding who counts as its legitimate claimant. Spivak and Fraser supply the study's primary theoretical background while Jacobs's account plays a secondary, corroborating role. This extension of subalternity to a nonhuman figure follows an emerging body of postcolonial animal studies (see Rajamannar).

Jacobs's question of who counts as a legitimate claimant was, in Bailey Farm's case, already shadowed by a deadline. The First World War had drawn many women into forms of agricultural and industrial labour from which they had previously been excluded, Bailey Farm being one such site; the war's end, as the novella itself makes clear, was widely expected to close that window again (Lindsey 318). Therefore, reading the farm as a subaltern counterpublic means positioning it as a space whose very existence was understood as temporary and exceptional rather than as a durable alternative to the gendered order the war had briefly interrupted. That expectation of reversal is already present in the text before Henry attempts to enforce it, and it shapes how this study approaches the farm's eventual dissolution.

Spivak's Subaltern and Fraser's Counterpublics: A Theoretical Framework

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?" refuses the assumption that marginality can be remedied by the simple recovery of a suppressed voice, since the subaltern is constituted by the absence of the institutionalised frameworks through which an utterance could register as meaningful. Central to the argument is a distinction dominant discourse habitually conflates—"representation as 'speaking for', as in politics, and representation as 're-presentation', as in art or philosophy" (70), *Vertretung* and

Darstellung respectively—whose collapse permits an intellectual, or a narrative, to claim transparent access to the subaltern's position while in effect occupying it. While Ranajit Guha anchors subalternity in class position within a colonial economy, arguing that hegemony "depended largely on the support of the two most important constituents of the subaltern population – that is, the peasantry and the working class" (101), March and Banford in *The Fox* belong to neither category in any literal sense. However, Bailey Farm reproduces the structural relation Guha describes: a subsistence economy sustained by unrecognised labour, dependent on a hegemonic order it cannot address on equal terms, and illustrative of "the relationship between power and visibility [that] is complex and nonlinear" (Adut 251). It is this structural analogy that warrants extending the vocabulary of subalternity to the gendered and spatial terms developed through Fraser.

The condition bears on the subaltern woman, spoken for by more than one system of authority at once: "Within the effaced itinerary of the subaltern subject, the track of sexual difference is doubly effaced" (Spivak 82), so that "the woman is doubly in shadow" (84). Formulated through a specific colonial instance, the figure names a structural effect: a subject present in the record yet never recorded as a speaking person. Women were, correspondingly, "actively and coercively" excluded through patriarchal control, economic dependency, and hostile institutional environments, their public activity constituting a struggle over "the very meaning of publicity" itself (Goode 32–33). In *The Fox*, March and Banford's predicament is accordingly not that their enterprise fails but that the narrative allows failure to be read only as the natural consequence of operating outside the patriarchal order, foreclosing any alternative discursive position. The condition is condensed in Spivak's claim that "the subaltern woman will be as mute as ever" (90) and, finally, that "the subaltern cannot speak" (104). At stake, then, is not only "Can the subaltern speak?" but "Can the subaltern be heard?" (Maggio 419), subaltern silence signalling "the impossibility of speech to an audience that refuses to hear" (426): A dominant public may tolerate subaltern speech while withholding from it the status of knowledge. Such speech issues from wounded conditions whereby minority discourse is "the product of damage" systematically inflicted by the dominant culture (JanMohamed and Lloyd 7), taking shape within the languages, institutions, and injuries domination has produced. The question that remains is not whether such damaged speech is possible but where it might be sustained.

It is this spatial and institutional dimension that Fraser's subaltern counterpublics supply, completing an account otherwise centred on voice. Against Habermas's idealised bourgeois sphere, Fraser notes that it "rested on, indeed was importantly constituted by, a number of significant exclusions" ("Rethinking" 59), even as "a host of competing counterpublics" ("Rethinking" 61) persisted alongside it—among them subaltern counterpublics, "parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses, which in turn permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs" ("Rethinking" 67). This sphere, ideally, "designates a theater in modern societies in which political

participation is enacted through the medium of talk" ("Rethinking" 57). In practice, "discursive interaction within the bourgeois public sphere was governed by protocols of style and decorum that were themselves correlates and markers of status inequality," which "functioned informally to marginalize women and members of the plebeian classes and to prevent them from participating as peers" ("Rethinking" 63). In parallel with this, the prevailing hegemony of social values denies women any space of their own, exposing those who fall outside its sanctioned codes to censorship (Doğan 199; see also Rose; Massey). This exclusion operated "actively and coercively, through patriarchal relations of control and economic dependency, and by the hostile environments of the public-sphere institutions themselves," even as liberal theory portrayed it "in quasi-natural terms" (Goode 33)—a "conceptual dissonance between femininity and the dialogical capacities central to Habermas' conception of citizenship" ("What's Critical" 116), rooted in codes of dominant ideology (Doğan 197). It is this conflict that generates the counter-discursive arenas subaltern groups construct for themselves. Weisser notes their double orientation: They "seek to write themselves back into public conversations rather than detach from them" (610), while also functioning as "sites of safety, encouragement, and nurturing" (611), through "alternative discursive conventions . . . [that] serve a political function, giving voice and power of expression to the subaltern" (612).

Two characteristics of Fraser's account bear directly on a reading of Bailey Farm. The first is the dual character of these spaces, which function "on the one hand" as "spaces of withdrawal and regroupment" and "on the other hand" as "bases and training grounds for agitational activities directed toward wider publics," their emancipatory potential residing in the dialectic between the two ("Rethinking" 68). The second is their structural vulnerability even where they succeed in forming: Counterpublics are not automatically virtuous and may practise "their own modes of informal exclusion and marginalization" ("Rethinking" 67). In stratified societies "deliberative processes in public spheres will tend to operate to the advantage of dominant groups and to the disadvantage of subordinates" ("Rethinking" 66), and "gender and class disadvantages may continue to operate subtextually and informally" ("Rethinking" 74) after institutional barriers have fallen.

Taken together, the two frameworks approach a single problem from opposite directions in that while Spivak asks what conditions must obtain before an utterance can register as testimony, Fraser asks what kind of space a group denied those conditions can build in the meantime. A counterpublic may exist, in Fraser's sense, without its members ever attaining the discursive recognition Spivak describes, and it is this conjunction, a real space of alternative practice that never converts into recognised voice, that Bailey Farm exemplifies. Moreover, Fraser characterizes the function of subaltern counterpublics in two stages: "spaces of withdrawal and regroupment" and "bases and training grounds for agitational activities directed toward wider publics" (68), locating their emancipatory potential in the movement between them. Bailey Farm remarkably represents the first stage since the women's subsistence economy provides the space of withdrawal Fraser

articulates. However, the narrative forecloses the second one: The farm fails to transform its internal labour and care practices into a discourse addressed to a wider public. Read this way, Bailey Farm is not an imperfect approximation of Fraser's model but an example of what happens when a subaltern counterpublic is arrested at the withdrawal stage, its transformative potential foreclosed before it could be tested. This study accordingly treats the farm's spatial arrangement and the women's inaudibility as two aspects of one condition. A subaltern counterpublic cannot declare its own boundaries secure. It depends on conditions of relative insularity and institutional legitimacy that dominant arrangements are structurally disposed to withhold. Bailey Farm could be read as such a space that is productive, alternative, and permeable in ways its inhabitants are never able to correct.

Bailey Farm as Subaltern Counterpublic

Lawrence introduces Bailey Farm with notable spatial precision, describing "a little homestead, with ancient wooden barn and two-gabled farm-house, lying just one field removed from the edge of the wood" (52). Positioning the farm at the margin between cultivation and wilderness is not merely a scenic choice. The wood's proximity means the farm's boundaries are constitutively porous as the fox slips freely between wood and farmyard, the fowls wander, the heifers escape whenever they find the chance. The two women who work the land cannot, from the outset, fully secure the space they inhabit, however carefully they tend it.

The farm is a space of real and sustained production in the text; March's labour receives careful narrative attention: "March had set up her carpenter's bench at the end of the open shed. Here she worked, making coops and doors and other appurtenances" (51). Her relationship to the animals is affectionate rather than purely instrumental. She would call "to her favourite white hen, which came in answer to her name" (51), a small detail that signals a mode of care organised around recognition rather than mere use. This exemplifies Fraser's concept of the subaltern counterpublics: a space in which marginalised subjects have developed practices of survival and value that the dominant order does not recognise as legitimate labour at all. This enterprise, founded by women, is not profitable. It offers a means of livelihood, mutual care, and a different perspective on the purpose of the land. March's mode of relating to the farm's nonhuman inhabitants extends this alternative economy beyond questions of labour into something closer to an ethics. The detail of the hen that comes "in answer to her name" (51) marks a way of inhabiting the farm that treats its animals as individuals rather than as interchangeable units of production. Nothing in the text suggests that this way of seeing makes March's enterprise less efficient. On the contrary, her carpentry and her care of the flock are the most competent labour in the narrative. What the text suggests is that this relational mode of engagement belongs to the counterpublic rather than to the order that will eventually replace it, and that its disappearance from the narrative after Henry's arrival is not incidental but part of what his arrival accomplishes.

Nonetheless, almost from its first mention, the narrative frames this enterprise in the register of failure. "They had taken the farm together . . . intending to work it all by themselves: that is, they were going to rear chickens, make a living by poultry, and add to this by keeping a cow, and raising one or two young beasts. Unfortunately, things did not turn out well" (50). The narrative treats the women's failure not as an accident of circumstance but as a foregone conclusion. Jacobs's sociological account of women's agricultural labour helps explain why the text treats this fatalism as self-evident. As she observes, women's farm work is "often hidden and is devalued" (175) in much the way housework is. More pointedly, she links this devaluation to the gendering of the category itself: The identity of a "farmer" is "assumed to be linked with masculinity because in most societies, land rights are held by men" (175). Bailey Farm represents this disjunction precisely. The women's labour is real and continuous, yet the identity of legitimate agricultural authority never becomes available to them, not because they lack competence, but because the category of competence is already gendered before either of them begins her labour.

The precariousness of the women's position is dramatized most insistently through the question of enforcement. Lawrence describes their exhausting campaign against the fox: "The fox really exasperated them both. As soon as they had let the fowls out, in the early summer mornings, they had to take their guns and keep guard: and then again, as soon as evening began to mellow, they must go once more. And he was so sly. He slid along in the deep grass, he was difficult as a serpent to see" (53). Yet he continues to "circumvent" them at every turn. This inability to enforce a boundary is, in Fraser's formulation, virtually definitive of subaltern status within a nominally open arena: Informal impediments pose a more fundamental obstacle to participatory parity than formal exclusion, since subordinated groups remain "less likely than otherwise to 'find the right voice or words to express their thoughts,'" and more likely "to keep their wants inchoate" ("Rethinking" 66). At Bailey Farm this inchoateness takes spatial form: The women cannot translate their claim on the farm into terms the dominant order will recognise, and their repeated failure to secure its boundaries, first against the fox and later against Henry, is its material expression. The rhetoric of domestic privacy, which historically serves to "exclude some issues and interests from public debate by personalizing and/or familializing them" ("Rethinking" 73), describes how the text frames their situation: Their claim is never treated as a legitimate claim on land and resources but as a private, wartime makeshift, understood as temporary by everyone, including at moments the women themselves. Nonetheless, March and Banford's struggle against the fox also positions them in the very logic of species-based domination they otherwise suffer under. Their failure to secure the farm still proceeds through an attempt to kill, not merely coexist with, the animal that threatens it.

Across the agrarian contexts Jacobs surveys, she points out that "women who work and control land, particularly without men present, are often viewed as unfeminine," and that those who acquire or retain land against the grain of convention "may be policed

through denigrating identities, and seen not to be true women" (178). *The Fox* provides a narrative equivalent of this policing when Henry observes, with the casual confidence of someone restating an obvious fact, that "there won't be any demand for women landworkers now the war's over" (62). The remark anticipates the farm's fate before Henry acts to bring it about, and it is worth noting how little resistance it draws from either woman when it is spoken. Bailey Farm's counterpublic exists inside a temporal horizon of anticipated normalisation: its inhabitants seem to know that their present arrangement is understood by everyone around them as an exception rather than a durable order.

Porous boundaries, productive but unrecognised labour, and vulnerability to both animal and social intrusion establish Bailey Farm as what Fraser calls a weak subaltern counterpublic. It sustains an alternative practice of subsistence and care; what it cannot do is convert that practice into binding authority over the ground on which it depends. This incapacity, rather than any failure of will or competence on the women's part, is what the rest of the narrative continues to exploit, and it is against this incapacity that Henry's arrival will be tested.

The Fox, Henry, and the Consolidation of Patriarchal Order

From its first appearance, the fox in *The Fox* is marked as a body under surveillance, one whose existence is defined by its status as legitimate prey. Its introduction is inseparable from an account of the killing that its presence licenses: "When it became permitted to shoot foxes, they stood sentinel with their guns, the two of them, at the favoured hours" (52). The fox's killability is not arguable; the legal and narrative context in which the animal exists is taken for granted, as if it were already known. This taken-for-granted killability names a condition recent scholarship on animal life and sovereign power has identified as definitive of certain bodies: a death that requires no justification because the body in question has already been classified as available for it (see Margulies). What distinguishes this killability from a mere control mechanism, however, is its role in the spatial economy of the farm. The fox's repeated and successful raids demonstrate that the farm's territory cannot be safeguarded by women alone. Thus, the fox's killable body becomes the visible measure of their authority's limits, long before Henry arrives to make that measure explicit.

March's encounter with the fox in the twilight, the moment when the two look directly at one another, could be illuminated by Spivak's account of the subaltern at the level of structure rather than history: the gap she diagnoses between occupying a position and being heard from it recurs here in a creature whose only mode of address is a look: "She lowered her eyes, and suddenly saw the fox. He was looking up at her. His chin was pressed down, and his eyes were looking up. They met her eyes. And he knew her. She was spell-bound, she knew he knew her. So he looked into her eyes, and her soul failed her. He knew her, he was not daunted" (54). In this exchange of glances, recognition runs only one way: the fox knows March, but nothing in the scene offers her, or the farm's

institutions, a way to register what has passed between them as anything more than an unusually vivid sighting. Carrie Rohman's account of the animal gaze describes a closely related problem here: "this undecidability of the animal gaze mirrors the difficulty of placing the animal, ontologically, within the metaphysical tradition" (19). The fox's gaze resists March's understanding for the same reason it resists the farm's institutions: neither has a category ready for what it is asking to be recognised as. Spivak's description of the group whose "identity is its difference," for whom "there is no unrepresentable subaltern subject that can know and speak itself" (80), fits the fox's predicament: a subject whose interiority the text insists upon (he "knew her") yet whose access to any institutionalised form of address remains permanently foreclosed. March herself struggles to translate the encounter into speech even within her own household. She cannot mention it to Banford for several days, and when she finally does, her explanation is minimal: "The fox was right at my feet on Saturday night," she says, and when Banford asks why she did not shoot, March can only offer, "Why, I was too much surprised, I suppose" (55). The encounter persists instead as a private possession, resurfacing "whenever she fell into her half-musing, when she was half rapt, and half intelligently aware of what passed under her vision, then it was the fox which somehow dominated her unconsciousness, possessed the blank half of her musing" (56). The encounter between the fox and March cannot, therefore, be translated into a recognised claim; it is characterised as the state of subalternity.

The Fox interrogates the spatial margins of Bailey Farm, in which domesticated animals are productive and wild ones are excluded or killed. The narrative grants the fox a form of agency that exceeds mere pest status by positioning the animal as "a demon" (52), a term that marks him as morally suspect while crediting him with an effectiveness bordering on the deliberate. In return, the fox that consistently outwits its pursuers refuses the place the farm's spatial order has assigned to it. That refusal, rather than any straightforward threat to the hens, is what makes the animal dangerous. Even March's resolve wavers at the decisive moment: She "put her gun to her shoulder, but even then pursed her mouth, knowing it was nonsense to pretend to fire" (54), a brief hesitation that registers doubt about a logic the narrative elsewhere treats as beyond question.

Where the fox's incursions are treated as illegitimate, something the women have both a right and a duty to resist, Henry's presence is rapidly reclassified as welcome; he is invited in, fed, housed. Once Henry appears, March "became almost peaceful, at last. He was identified with the fox, and he was here in full presence. She need not go after him any more" (63). Although March builds a familiarity between the fox and Henry, this indicates a decisive asymmetry between Henry and the fox implicitly. While the fox remains a "demon" (52), Henry describes the farm, with studied casualness, as "my own home, in a way" (64). His expression quietly performs the ideological work attributed to the concept of home as "an ideological apparatus and sphere where one feels the sense of belonging to a specific piece of land" (Kaygısız 46). Henry's casual possessive is thus not merely descriptive but constitutive, an early discursive claim to belonging that anticipates

his later territorial and marital claims over the farm. The shift in March and Banford's life from fox to Henry could also be read as a shift from an illegitimate to a legitimate mode of masculine territorial claim, accomplished with almost no friction.

This unexpected recognition by March and Banford immediately reveals Henry's desire to establish dominance over the farm's boundaries. Henry states his own understanding of that claim plainly: "there wants a man about the place" (62). Banford laughs sharply, "[t]ake care what you say. We consider ourselves quite efficient" (62); March replies flatly, "[i]t isn't a case of efficiency, I'm afraid" (62). Banford asserts a political claim to competence in her words while March points out, almost in passing, the structural condition that renders competence irrelevant. Henry's remark does not argue that the women are incompetent. It simply reaffirms a division that Kate Millett identified as running through Lawrence's fiction more broadly, in which "female is passive, male is active" (Millett 240): a division that no amount of demonstrated efficiency can unsettle, because it is not a question of efficiency. Fraser's account of deliberation as a possible mask for domination captures March's statement. As Jane Mansbridge argues, subordinate groups "sometimes cannot find the right voice or words to express their thoughts, and when they do, they discover they are not heard" (qtd. in Fraser, "Rethinking" 64). Thus, the dialogue illustrates that exclusion is mediated not by the absence of female competence, but by the refusal of conditions in which competence might be acknowledged as authoritative.

Henry kills the fox alone, at night, without hesitation over its killability, and presents the body to March as a gift. He crouches "in the angle of the long shed, in the black dark," until "a shadow. A sliding shadow in the gateway. . . . The boy smiled to himself and brought the gun to his shoulder" (86). His cry afterward, "[i]t's me. I've shot the fox" (87), functions less as information than as performance. Marti Kheel's account of the hunter's psychology illuminates what Henry experiences: "hunting may be seen as a symbolic attempt to assert mastery and control over the natural world" (39). By killing the animal, Henry announces himself as the farm's true protector and ultimate authority. He later appraises the dead fox as he had announced the kill: "'He's a beauty,' he said. 'He will make you a lovely fur'" (87). Carol J. Adams calls this mode of looking "the arrogant eye," one that helps constitute "human male subjects against human female objects, and contributes also to constituting scientific subjects over the other animals" (*Neither Man* 18). Henry's eyes are bright, but nothing in them looks back: Where March encounters the fox as another living subject, Henry values it only as an object whose death confirms his authority. The scene thus marks the replacement of reciprocal recognition with patriarchal possession, the fox's death becoming the means through which Henry consolidates his authority over both the farm and its inhabitants.

Henry's treatment of the fox mirrors the narrative's depiction of Banford's death. Banford, whose presence still stands in the way of his complete possession of Bailey Farm, is killed by a falling tree. However, the narrative does not permit the event to be

understood either as a simple accident or as a deliberate murder: "In his heart he had decided her death," and "[a] terrible still force seemed in him, and a power that was just his" (115). The action is described from Henry's point of view with the same coldblooded scrutiny as his examination of the body of the fox: "No one saw what was happening except himself. . . . And he watched with intense bright eyes, as he would watch a wild goose he had shot. Was it winged, or dead? Dead!" (115). The coldblooded scrutiny with which Henry watches Banford die echoes, without repeating verbatim, his earlier appraisal of the fox's body. Both scenes flatten a death into an object of appraisal, joining them within the same structure of domination. Kheel's diagnosis of what a kill accomplishes for a hunter fits this second killing as it fit the first: "by killing the animal, the hunter ritually enacts the death of his longing for a return to a primordial female/animal world" (40). Banford, like the fox before her, is what had stood between Henry and an uncontested claim on that world, and the parallel between their elimination indicates that Henry becomes the ultimate representation of patriarchal and anthropocentric ordering of space.

Moreover, at the moment of Banford's death, the repetition of "No one saw" and "No one heard" builds toward the single witness who did see and hear, Henry himself, and the effect is to enclose the killing entirely within his perspective. The reader has no independent vantage from which to judge what happened, only Henry's own composed, appraising account of it. This narrative choice is not neutral. It grants Henry's version of events, and by extension his claim on the farm, the status of the only available truth, in the way that Spivak's account of representation would predict: the one with access to the institutionalised means of narration, in this case the novella's own point of view, is also the one whose account of the killing becomes, by default, the record.

Jacobs's research on peasant households offers a useful frame for what Banford's death accomplishes. She notes that in many agrarian settings, "labour, spatial movement and control over sexuality come as a 'bundle' and are hard to disentangle" (184). Banford's presence at Bailey Farm, as the other woman in the household and the figure of an alternative claim on March's time and attention, had been what prevented that bundle from consolidating under a single male authority. Her death does not simply remove a rival. It dissolves the social conditions that had made an alternative organisation of the farm's space and labour possible in the first place. By the novella's ending, Lawrence writes of Henry that "he had won her. And he knew it and was glad, because he wanted her for his life. His life must have her. And now he had won her" (117), a sentence whose flat declarative rhythm marks the completion of a claim that neither the fox nor Banford was ever in a position to contest.

Conclusion

This study has read D. H. Lawrence's *The Fox* as a text organised around the convergence of two forms of subalternity: the gendered marginalisation of March and Banford, and the species-based marginalisation of the fox itself. Spivak's account of the subaltern as a

subject constituted by the absence of institutionalised voice, and Fraser's concept of the subaltern counterpublics as fragile parallel spaces of survival supplies a vocabulary for describing what the novella dramatises at the level of plot: a space of alternative labour and care, permeable from its first appearance, dismantled by the arrival of an order it cannot resist. This parallel should not be read as symmetry: March and Banford are not surveilled and killable in the way the fox is, and their own repeated attempts to shoot it implicate them in the same species-based logic that later renders them vulnerable to Henry. The convergence this study has traced is structural rather than experiential.

Bailey Farm functions as a subaltern counterpublic, constituted by the women's subsistence economy and their collaborative inhabitation of a shared space. It is defined by the permeability and vulnerability Fraser identifies as characteristic of such spaces, and it is ultimately dismantled by the very order Henry's arrival restores. The fox occupies a structurally similar position: kept under constant surveillance, its elimination ensures the farm's territorial order without requiring justification beyond the existing logic of ownership and protection. Henry's killing of the fox and his implication in Banford's death mark the point where these hierarchies intersect and are enforced simultaneously. The same spatial logic that renders the fox killable renders the women's claim on the farm provisional, and the same act of narrative closure, the restoration of a single, legitimate, patriarchal authority, resolves both at once. Fraser's observation that subaltern counterpublics function simultaneously as spaces of "withdrawal and regroupment" and as potential bases for wider address ("Rethinking" 68) describes an unrealised possibility here: Bailey Farm never reaches the latter function, since it is dismantled before the women's alternative economy can address itself to anything beyond its own survival.

Jacobs's comparative account of land, gender, and sexuality has offered a final point of orientation for this study. She observes that "the question of sexuality and fears about women's sexuality form part of the 'story' of the very widespread dispossession of women from control over land, despite their work in farming and within smallholder households" (187–188). Lawrence's novella projects a version of this claim, not at the level of policy, but at the level of desire, violence, and dream. What *The Fox* ultimately makes visible is that the mechanisms securing modern rural order are not confined to a single axis of hierarchy. Gender and species, in this context, are naturalised through the same spatial logic and resolved through the same act of violence, and it is this transposition from policy to imagination that gives the novella its critical value as a document of how rural modernity secures its own order. Future work might extend this spatial approach to Lawrence's other fiction, where similar entanglements of gender and animal life recur, to broader questions in modernist animal and gender studies.

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