Ezra Pound’s defeated sadness following the fall of Italian fascism is not a lone lament. Many of his contemporaries developed the same tone, even those who remained staunchly liberal throughout this period and had nothing to mourn with the fall of fascism per se. They too—even when associated with the side that won the war(s)—shared in the sense of loss that more and more accompanies representations of white masculinity. Ernest Hemingway, for example, is generally known as the author of hypermasculine representation and self-representation who nonetheless and paradoxically portrays that masculinity in the anxious midst of its dissolution: Jake Barnes is in large part the man he is because of—and not in spite of—his sadness over the lost penis; Robert Jordan dies to protect the woman who has already been raped by the fascists, her braids already sheared away in mute articulation of Robert’s own castration anxieties. At perhaps the opposite end of the scale, notably masculine Stanley Kowalski rapes Blanche DuBois in a gesture that resonates with petty cruelty and pathos. Mid-century thus witnessed the development of a wide-ranging vision of white masculinity that could not participate fully in the triumphant rape pictured by Pound, or Ayn Rand, or even T. S. Eliot or W. B. Yeats—nor could it finally identify wholly with the rising productivity of capitalism, with the tremendous concentration of state and military power in the West, with the explosive productivity and new industrialization that accompanied and followed the world wars. Michel Beaud points out that the industrial growth rate during the ten-year period from 1938 to 1948 “equaled the highest growth rates attained since the middle of the nineteenth century,” and that it was on top of this “already high base” that an even stronger, “exceptional phase of growth began” (217). Yet the
portrayal of white masculinity during this period—presumably reflective of that segment of the world population most likely to benefit from these burgeoning changes—is often marked by nostalgia, or even grief, for lost or endangered manhood.

The weakening faculty for identifying white middle-class masculinity with the growth of industrial capitalism can perhaps be attributed to the extent to which that growth was accomplished not so much through labor power, as Beaud points out, but through labor productivity, meaning that “the rise in productivity was obtained by using [a variety of dehumanizing] means for pumping out surplus labor,” including increased automation, the phasing out of the small entrepreneur and shop, the extension of Taylorism, Fordism, and wage systems, and the utilization of continuous and intensified labor (219–20). In part, then, it was technological production itself—the engine that powers capitalism—that was silently (and sometimes not so silently) understood to be displacing the white man. F. Gavin Davenport has demonstrated that James Agee’s *A Death in the Family* is dominated by an intense but indirectly stated ambivalence toward technology and technological production: the father teaches the son of the autonomy, power, and joy to be felt in the presence of the machine, and yet the same man is killed when a mechanical failure in his Model T’s steering mechanism causes him to lose control of his “Tin Lizzy.” The son is bereft, cheated of the sovereign inheritance that had been promised to him in such childhood visions as the “quiet deep joy” the neighborhood men used to take in the use of the mechanical nozzle, a scene that suggests to the narrator the “urination of huge children stood loosely military against an invisible wall, and gentle happy and peaceful” (5). The angst felt by the son is thus constructed in phallic terms: the machine and the father have promised autonomy and identity, sovereign control over a harmonious mechanical/natural world, and that promise has been brutally retracted; the father’s life has been cut short by “Lizzy,” leaving a wounded son to grapple with the absence. The novel thus speaks to the vulnerability of masculine identification with the forces of industrial capitalism. On the one hand, as Cecelia Tichi and Lisa Steinman have established, modernist desire is directed at the figure of the engineer and/or inventor—the master of matter (mater), chaos, and dissolution. On the other hand, modernism is haunted by the fear that the master’s creation will not only become more powerful and autonomous than he, but will actually supplant him, demonstrating its (his) sovereignty through the rape and murder of his bride. The technological product begins to glitter in its own autonomy, a monstrously androgynous figure, promising the masculine subject that it will either rival him as a man or kill him as a woman.
In celebration or in fear, rape articulates this ambivalent relationship of the masculine subject to the forces of technology. As is previously discussed, for example, Pound’s sacred techne is realized in the “factive” and raping personality of such characters as Sigismondo Malatesta, and for Ayn Rand, the rapist/architect forces into meaningful expression the concrete, steel, and frigid female bodies that surround him. Filippo Tommaso Marinetti’s misogynist technophilia is well known; his commitment to “the life of a motor” is expressed generally in terms of “scorn for women,” graphically imaged in this encouragement to war written in 1909: “My airplane runs on its wheels, skates along, and then up again in flight! [. . .] Continue the massacre! . . . Watch me! I seize the stick and glide smoothly down. . . . See the furious coitus of war, gigantic vulva stirred by the friction of courage, shapeless vulva that spreads to offer itself to the terrific spasm of final victory! . . . I raise my sights to a hundred meters! . . . Ready! . . . Fire!” (87, 42, 53–54). The “shapeless” wasteland of matter—read explicitly here as mater—will be given form through the violent penetration by the sovereign masculine cyborg. The underside of this modernist rhetoric of mastery, however—even Marinetti’s bombast—suggests that a vulnerability hangs about that powerful seat astride the flying machine—surely one might be shot down, lose control, or plunge too deeply into an earth that might be less soft and pliable than it appears to be from a distance. This trepidation is as modern as is the sense of confident and phallic mastery over or in union with technology and technological production, and this fear is articulated in terms of gender violence. Vorticism, the largely British movement too often conflated with Marinetti’s Futurism, evidences in spite of its shrill virility an anxiety in the presence of the machine, an anxiety that is addressed with further misogyny. D. H. Lawrence is another writer said to be under the influence of Futurism (if in spite of himself), yet his male characters are explicitly threatened by technological production—represented as nothing short of cuckolded and/or castrated by the machine; the Lawrentian response is rage at the unrapable “Magna Mater” who burns man with her industrial light. At the same time, however, the literature I take up in this chapter evidences a deep and mournful sympathy that begins to weave its way into the rape story, although the male protagonists and narrators themselves—all literally or figuratively castrated—weep not so much in solidarity with the female rape victims who litter their world but rather out of a sense of impotence. Thus, the sadness that pervades Faulkner’s Sanctuary and the (non)narration of Temple Drake’s rape finally works to mourn the passing of the Southern white gentleman.

♦
The vortex of *Blast* suggests very early on in the twentieth century a pronounced unease with the Futuristic phallus-machine. As William Wees and Naomi Segal have both argued, Vorticism as a semi-coherent movement took a small step away from the hard, thrusting piston of the Futurists—an image which the Vorticists retained but which they both did and did not perceive anthropomorphically. Wyndham Lewis’s vortex machine was, for one thing, a static presence not given to the rush of time (this, paradoxically, in spite of the fact that a “vortex” is always by definition in motion). Equally paradoxically, the Vorticist image established the coexistence of sharp point and concave (feminine?) surface leading to unfathomable depths, depths that would seem to exceed the external phallic outlines. It is not surprising, then, given this unstable shape, that the vortex machine faded in and out of synonymity with humanity—in and out of identification with masculinity, in other words—and I would like to make the case that this is nowhere more clear than in the fiction of Wyndham Lewis. In his novel *Tarr*, published in 1918, Lewis creates a futuristic mechanic man in the character of Kreisler, making him, appropriately, a rapist. In spite of a certain distanced admiration, however, the tone of the representation is not celebratory; in fact, Kreisler is pitted against another character, Tarr, who is clearly an alter ego for Lewis himself. Tarr is painted in the colors of full Lewisian irony as a cuckold, symbolically castrated by Kreisler’s explicitly mechanical rape of Tarr’s “woman,” Bertha. Thus, the machine is man, yet the machine supplants man, unmans him, usurps his generative role and takes violent possession of the passive (feminine) field on which masculine identity is symbolically inscribed.

Drawing on electromagnetic field theory as well as modernist attitudes toward the machine, Michael Wutz has argued convincingly that Otto Kreisler is the “narrative engine” of *Tarr*; he is the electromagnetic vortex that, after “ignition,” organizes into coherence the “force fields” of narrative space. The model, Wutz shows, is a masculinist one, establishing as it does sovereign masculine action on the ground of a femininity doubly figured as initial (but trivial) spark and passive field: “Kreisler’s fantasy is one of male self-empowerment, the *generation* of his force field becomes his form of *male self-generation*; and the visual suggestiveness of the vortex, with its drilling motion and its conical protrusion, associates Kreisler with a self-sustaining phallus” (846). The violence of this autogenetic and mechanic fantasy is realized, among other places, in the dance sequence. In this scene, Kreisler intrudes on a dance at the Bonnington Club and creates an uproar through his aggressive obscenity (he attempts to rearrange the position of a woman’s breasts, for example) and his wild spinning of unwilling dance partners. Wutz summarizes the scene, empha-
sizing how Kreisler’s “wild gyrations inject motion and action into the narrative event [. . .] dynamizing] the narrative zone . . . while exercising control over a woman”:

. . . moving from verbal circumlocution to physical circulation, he takes his dance partner, Mrs. Bevelage, for a vortical spin: “He took her twice with ever-increasing velocity, round the large hall, and at the third round, at breakneck speed, spun with her in the direction of the front door.” Their speedy gyrations would have carried them into the street, like “a disturbing meteor, whizzing out of sight,” had they not been intercepted by a large English family rushing in through the door. Blocking Kreisler’s spinning frenzy, “they received this violent couple in their midst” and carried them back into the middle of the room, where they “began a second mad, but this time merely circular, career.” (854)

Kreisler not only organizes dance and narrative space here, but his violent spinning of the hapless victim establishes masculine identity, the “ultimate reality” of modernism, according to Sandra Gilbert (72); his display of phallic violence gives Kreisler face and name at the club, and in this way he brings himself to the attention of Anastasya, which is his intended goal.

The aggressively masculine identity established in this scene and similar ones is dependent upon the mechanical representation of Kreisler’s cyborg nature. The ultimate expression of this dependence is Bertha’s rape, a scene Wutz describes as emphasizing “Kreisler’s frictional ignition,” his electric transformation from “a formerly inert hunk of matter into a regenerated sexual cyclone, a vortex” (858). It is not uncommonly asserted that, as Teresa de Lauretis puts it, “the representation of violence is inseparable from the notion of gender” (Technologies of Gender 33); in Bertha’s rape, that correspondence is cemented in images of technology. At first he appears to be benignly “machine-like,” “dazed”; then “suddenly, without any direct articulateness, he [revenges] himself as a machine might do, in a nightmare” (199). The incident begins, as Wutz points out, with Kreisler mechanically “chafing” Bertha’s arm, rubbing himself into an electric frenzy. Once energized, Kreisler is described as inhuman in his fierce spinning, “full of blindness and violence” (195). The pronoun used to refer to him, in fact, is “it”: “It had quietly, indifferently, talked: it had drawn: it had suddenly flung itself upon her and taken her: and now it was standing idly there. It could do all these things. It appeared to her in a series of precipitate states” (195). After the event, Bertha thinks of her rape as having been “like some violent accident of the high road”; the “powerful violent springs” of Kreisler’s “unconscious” had “snapped down on” her (194,
The rape is particularly horrible for Bertha because it is bereft of human significance; it had been for her “a loathsome, senseless event, of no meaning, naturally, to that figure there” (i.e., Kreisler) (195). Furthermore, this “jest too deep for laughter” has infected her with the meaninglessness of humanity: as she retreats from the scene, she thinks, “Ha! ha! the importance of our actions! Is it more than the kissing of the bricks?” (197).

As she acknowledges, Bertha has become Kreisler’s “cipher,” and what she now holds within her not only negates her own reality as a human being—which reality has never existed as such, has been throughout an effect of a system of metaphor—but “[shuts] her in with Kriesler, somehow for good”: “She would never be able to escape the contamination of that room of his . . . Kreisler by doing this had made an absolute finishing with Kreisler perhaps impossible” (199). She senses that she is closed in with Kreisler, shut off from the world, just as her body and her womb have become symbolically closed off through this phallic event—invaded, filled, sealed. In terms of narrative presence, she now functions as the polluted vessel and unfaithful mirror—the virgin territory that has been imperialized by the machine and that has thus ejected man from his rightful place, foreclosed his own violent initiative, and stolen his name and identity. The pregnancy is the incarnation of this message.

Tarr is the cuckold in this triangle, and the role resonates with as much horror and rage as it does in the literature of Elizabethan England. The significant difference is that the winner in this triangle, the parasite who disrupts monogamy, is a machine-man; confronting him/it will not return one’s masculine status. In short, Kreisler is a machine who does not duel mano a mano. When confronted, he fades into oneness with the feminine territory that he has invaded, thus turning even man’s aggressive counter-gesture into an act of homoerotic desire. In the midst of his confrontation with another man, Soltyk, Kreisler makes a mockery of the formally virile structure of the duel by offering to resolve the dispute with a kiss: “I am willing to forego the duel at once on one condition. If Herr Soltyk will give me a kiss, I will forego the duel!” . . . Kreisler thrust his mouth forward amorously, his body in the attitude of the eighteenth century gallant, as though Soltyk had been a woman” (286). Soltyk is thus effectively feminized, and given Lewis’s misogyny this feminization is not to be taken lightly. The narrative action to which Soltyk is relegated is face scratching—not pistol shooting—and he digs his nails into Kreisler’s flesh. The violence of the attack does not redeem his masculinity, obviously. In fact, the futility of the gesture is heightened by Kreisler’s symbolic removal from the arena through a striking narrative transformation into an “engine . . . overcharged with fuel”: “Acha—acha—” the noise, the beginning of a
word, came from his mouth. He sank on his knees. A notion of endless violence filled him. Tchun—tchun—tchun—tchun—tchun—tchun! He fell on his back, and the convulsive arms came with him” (287). Kreisler’s metamorphoses—back and forth from man to machine, from man to woman—complicate the possibility of sovereign and redemptive violence; ultimately, the mindless aggression of the machine closes off access to the traditional masculine stance.

This emasculation defines Kreisler’s effect on Tarr. Even before Kreisler’s appearance, in fact, Tarr is dominated by a desire to be the machine, to master feminine bodies through violent and automated action, and from the beginning he is threatened by this role that he cannot fill. The novel opens on an extended chapter, which follows Tarr’s attempt to dominate, emotionally torture, and “rape” Bertha; he envisions all of this in terms of his own mechanical body: he works to maintain a state of inhuman “indifference” and receives Bertha “frigidly” (45); he “manufactures” cigarettes to maintain this stance (39); similarly, all of his actions and attitudes are mechanically scripted as “Scientific” (58); he “project[s] the manufacture of a more adequate sentiment,” for example (49); in his conversation with Bertha, he feels the need for more “uniformity of engines of attack” (56); his body itself is narrated mechanically, as in, “Tarr got up, a released automaton,” or, “the strawberries were devoured mechanically, with un-hungry itch to clear the plate. He had become just a devouring-machine” (59). The attempt is a failure, however. Tarr is not a cyborg, and his attempted “rape” of Bertha is quickly countered by her: “I must not be too vain. I exaggerate the gravity of the hit. As to my attempted rape:—See how I square up when she shows signs of annexing my illusion. We are really the whole time playing a game of grabs and dashes at each other’s fairy vestment of Imagination” (59). The “raping” game Tarr is trying to play fails to uphold the mechanically masculine identity he has constructed for himself; the flaw, in another way of putting it, is that he is not machine enough—as opposed to “man enough”—to rape Bertha. Significantly, Tarr’s failure speaks to the unstable double nature of the vortex: if he has attempted to mobilize the projective, drill-like aspect of the vortex, Bertha has been somehow able to draw on the power of its concave, whirling depths: “She does nothing it is the man’s place to do. She remains ‘woman’ as she would say. Only she is so intensely alive in her passivity, so maelstrom-like in her surrender, so cataclysmic in her sacrifice, that very little remains to be done. The man’s position is a mere sinecure” (59). Tarr’s prosthetic phallus is thus jammed by its own reverse image. Tarr’s failure to “rape” Bertha repeats in modernist format the consternation with which Plato confronts the cave—the “hystera” that he suspects will prove untrustworthy as a surface for the father’s reflection; this instability, as Irigaray
points out, is what the Socratic dialogues work desperately to cover up: “[the father] insists on remaining ignorant of the irreducible inversion that occurs in the identification . . . ‘in the mirror’” (301). Tarr’s desire to rape Bertha reveals the same dangerous attempt to formulate masculine identity in a passive reflective surface. Tarr’s mater proves to be frighteningly and mechanically autonomous in its unfathomable depth. Somehow his victim has taken possession of his automatic weapon without having changed the rules of the game.

But then he has been very awkward with his sidearm. Machines, after all, are dangerous things not to be taken lightly. And of course it is the machine-man who truly threatens Tarr in the novel; Bertha’s power should not be overstated. The largest part of the novel follows Bertha’s rape and shows Tarr in classic Lewisian “self parody,” to use Vincent Sherry’s term, trailing Kreisler and attempting to agitate him (99). His aim is not so much to challenge Kreisler (as is the case with Soltyk) or to regain Bertha (“he was . . . delighted, in fact, to be free of Bertha”) but rather to stage publicly his own secondary status in an ongoing display that he realizes is “childish” but which he embarks on anyway (216): “But the least hint that he had come to reinstate himself must not remain. It must be clearly understood that Kreisler was the principal figure now.—He, Tarr, was only a privileged friend” (221). Throughout this long and painful section during which Tarr exhibits his exclusion and humiliation, he is removed from the mechanical imagery that surrounds him before. No longer a “released automaton” or “devouring machine,” he now wakes with “legs rather cramped” and is troubled by “nausea,” “depression,” and loneliness (the last an essentially “non-descript, lowered and unreal state for him”); most particularly, “sex surged up and martyrised him” (209). The mechanical references are few and far between and are of the nature of the difficulty he has keeping his pencil tip sharp: “to get a thread-like edge a pencil had to be sharpened several times” (209).

As a part of his program of sexual martyrdom, Tarr becomes involved with Anastasya Vasek, a “big brute” of a woman and an “organism of fierce mechanical reactions and self-possession” to whom he admits enslavement (218, 326). Tarr thus proclaims his abjection to two embodiments of technology, one masculine and one feminine. The machine thus once again slides away from its prescribed phallic role into the “passive” field of femininity—only in this case that movement is not the violently penetrative action of rape but rather has more to do with androgynous slippage. The former gesture threatens to cuckold and displace man; the latter, more dangerous, threatens to obliterate him. In both cases, the female body negotiates that threat. It is specifically the echo of the machine in Anastasya’s imposing body that overpowers Tarr; when he watches her
mechanical “revolving hips and thudding skirts,” which “carr[y] her forward with the orchestral majesty of a simple ship,” he is even “tempted” to go so far as “to abandon art” (247). It is particularly significant that his subjection to woman and machine is registered in this way, as a betrayal of his painting: “Surrender to a woman was a sort of suicide for an artist. . . . With any “superior” woman he had ever met, this feeling of being with a parvenu never left him.—Anastasya was not an exception” (219). For Lewis (and for Tarr), as Sherry makes clear, art, particularly visual art, is about dominance and depends upon “the eye . . . exert[ing] physical superiority” in a gesture of “severe mastery” over “currents of aggression” (95, 97, 96). Tarr’s betrayal of his “art,” then, implies not only the loss of masculinity entailed in his “enslavement” to a feminine and mechanic “‘superior’” but also the abandonment of the (in)famous “enemy” stance, the position of abrasive “outsider” that Lewis believed was the last holdout for intelligent humanity (i.e., economically privileged white men) in a mechanized and democratized wasteland.

What is “suicide” for Tarr, then, is to enter into a sexual relationship with a woman whose machinery will tolerate no violent imposition of form and whose body easily rejects the “raping” games he plays with Bertha. Anastasya and her “swagger sex” deny him his very identity—his roles as enemy, artist, and man. The condition of art—the condition of the female body—is “to have no inside, nothing you can see. Instead, then, of being something impelled like an independent machine by a little egoistic fire inside, it lives soullessly and deadly by its frontal lines and masses” (317). Anastasya is dangerous to Tarr because her flesh is barely a cover for her own spinning engines; she is “impelled like an independent machine” and cannot reflect his message or his person: “We represent absolutely nothing—thank God!” she tells him, laughing in the face of his attempts to explain his art. Tarr finally turns from her and marries Bertha because Bertha’s pregnancy suggests penetrability to him, as well as abstractability. She is the necessary ingredient for what Reed Way Dassenbrock calls the Vorticist aesthetic—the desire to “de-organicize” life through abstraction (54). Tarr marries Bertha so that he can be an artist again, and for that “he needed an empty vessel to flood with his vitality, and not an equal and foreign vitality to coldly exist side by side with” (335). If Bertha’s pregnancy speaks at present of the ascendancy of the machine and the emasculation of Tarr, it nevertheless constitutes the indispensable half of the gender binary—the part whose “gaping” “jellyfish diffuseness” hails in its negativity the “one God, . . . man” (334).

This triumphant return of the gender binary works to exclude and forget the third term—Kreisler, the parasitic machine. The gaping vessel whose permeability to the machine might well be the end of “humanity” is yet the
only vessel able to identify man as sovereign “enemy,” and so the parasite must be silenced (Kreisler is dead by this point in the text), and Bertha must be retained, “despicable” and “flaccid” as she is (334). Bertha’s role in Tarr is pure, and her rapability defines her; she enters the text as “Woman,” according to Lea Melandri, enters history, “having already lost concreteness and singularity: . . . she is the Mother, an equivalent more universal than money, the most abstract measure ever invented by patriarchal ideology” (qtd. in de Lauretis, Technologies of Gender, 130). While she is to be hated for being permeable to others—or to the machine—Woman is yet necessary for the formulation of man. Tarr enters into marriage more cruel and aggressive than ever before, confronted and strengthened daily by the presence of Kreisler’s and Bertha’s child, a constant living reminder that “he was beaten” (330)—worse, that he was feminized, hemmed in by the machines that would compromise his gender and obliterate his identity.

If Lewis meets machined emasculation with bitter resignation, many of his contemporaries greet the same nightmare of technological castration with rage, and the proliferations of the machine—first embodied as phallic accompaniment, later as Woman—become subject to increasingly brutal displays of violence. In the work of D. H. Lawrence, for example, the confrontation approaches archetypal dimensions: “man” is figured as losing (or having lost) to the forces of technology and production the “primal” or divine power that should have descended to him from an absent father. His rage at this injustice is articulated not as revolt against these specific usurping forces (forces that, unlike those in Lewis, are explicitly located outside the human body), however, but rather as rage against the body of woman, the sickeningly productive “Magna Mater,” which has somehow become the guiding light of technological production. The sovereign raping father has left the scene, leaving a crippled man, ill-equipped for the task, to fill the vacancy. In Lady Chatterley’s Lover, the technomother is given a docile body that can be raped into subordination, and rage floats free in the redeemed wasteland. But this triumph is accomplished through a complete withdrawal from the reality of technological production, the chaos of which cannot be positively organized. In Women in Love, similarly, the man who identifies himself with the forces of technology cannot subdue the murderous mother/lover to masculine signature, and he is doomed, pathetically, to die in her glittering iron wilderness. The man who does survive is the one who retreats from the forces of industrial production for the warmer climes of abstracted phallic power. In Lawrence’s work, mother Demeter’s world glitters with the dangerous proliferations of industrialization gone mad, and Persephone alone is redeemed, as her world cannot be, by her rape and captivity in that darkened phallic world of true generative power. Man thus grapples with the
specter of his impotence in the face of a seemingly autogenetic technology by usurping the traditionally feminine image of the dark and fecund earth. Rape defiantly inscribes masculine identity, but only under cover of darkness; the mindless and apocalyptic copulations of the machine grind on above him, in the light of day (or of the moon). *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* articulates a similar message of limited survival. In this novel, however, the rapist is not the man-machine but rather the organic man whose phallic potency is redeemed by pirating a little piece of femininity from the burgeoning world of technological production. Like a renegade Dis, this man pulls his Proserpine under into a world of darkness, and there she is raped in order that production, symbolically, can be brought within the domain of autonomous masculine/human control.

In one way of looking at it, Constance Chatterley is defined by her symbolic association with the machine: she is the wife and thus property of an industrial magnate, and she is also, until her rape, sexually frigid—brilliant and hard in her autonomy. Lady Chatterley is not properly “frigid,” of course; her “problem” is rather that her orgasms are self-controlled, a pathological condition that is the cause of much rage in Lawrence’s narrative: “A woman could take a man, without really giving herself away. Certainly she could take him without giving herself into his power. Rather she could use this sex thing to have power over him. For she had only to hold herself back, in the sexual intercourse, and let him finish and expend himself without herself coming to the crisis; and then she could prolong the connection and achieve her orgasm and her crisis while he was merely a tool” (8). Like the “evil electric lights” and “diabolical rattlings of [the] engines” of Tevershall pit, the woman’s body can suck all the life out of a man and alienate him from his own productions and his own potency. The woman/Tevershall would dehumanize him by taking from him the control he should rightfully have over his productive action.

After her rape, she is much more akin to Ursula and Bertha, soft and yielding in body and mind, ready for the imprint of man. And as with Kreisler’s, Mellors’s rape of Lady Chatterley is a “success”: the mother body is made pregnant, forced to speak the sovereign identity of the rapist. Furthermore, like Dominique Francon, Constance is not only given a baby but the gift of sexual pleasure by her rapist. The impression is that Mellors “heals” Constance Chatterley, first through rape and then through his dominance in sex. In this way he both energizes the mother body and brings its proliferations under masculine control. With him Constance can “no longer force her own conclusion”; she can “do nothing” but “wait, wait, and moan in spirit as she felt him inside her withdrawing, . . . whilst all her womb was open and soft and softly clamouring like a sea-anemone under the tides, clamouring for him to come in
again and make a fulfillment for her” (133). As the production machine cannot be, she is shown her central lack, the fact that it is only when “his life [springs] out into her” that “she [is] born, a woman” (134, 174). The life in her and the life that she is are thus both generated by the dark phallus, and her “yearning adoration” of him and his penis reciprocally identifies him as sovereign individual, allows him to “[fold] himself” in “darkness” against that “malevolent Thing outside.” Because a little piece of the feminized whiteness that is industry is cut off and dominated, the essential humanity of the phallus is validated; Mellors can preserve the “turgidity of his desire which, in spite of all, was like a riches: the stirring restlessness of his penis, the stirring fire in his loins!” (120).

Mellors expresses the Lawrentian sentiment that humanity itself could be healed of its effacement before the machine if only there were a community of men—“if only there were men to fight side by side with” against the white light, the “Thing” outside—but as in all of Lawrence’s work, this dream is destined to be unrealized (120). The potential blood brother in Lady Chatterley’s Lover, the equivalent of Gerald Crich, is Clifford Chatterley, a man lost to industrial production and the machine. He is, in fact, almost a cyborg: crippled and rendered impotent by the war, he is not only dependent on but a part of his motorized wheelchair. He has thus become a part of the “generation of ladylike prigs with half a ball each,” and he has been castrated by technological production—the war machinery, the wheelchair, the colliery of which he is lord, and the “motor-cars and cinemas and aeroplanes [that] suck the last bit out of [men]” (217).

As in Women in Love, the technology that emasculates Clifford Chatterley is finally folded into images of the unreapable woman: “his manhood was dead” before his housekeeper, Mrs. Bolton, who is in turn described as “the Magna Mater, full of power and potency, having the great blond child-man under her will and her stroke entirely” (290, 291). The masculinity tolerated by modern capitalism is thus defined as the death of “manhood” and of humanity: “It was as if his very passivity and prostitution to the Magna Mater gave him insight into material business affairs, and lent him a certain remarkable inhuman force. The wallowing in private emotion, the utter abasement of his manly self, seemed to lend him a second nature, cold, almost visionary, business-clever. In business he was quite inhuman” (291–92). It is from him that Constance is stolen in a gesture that accomplishes the final cut in Clifford’s psychic castration. Masculine solidarity is rendered finally impossible; Mellors and Constance will be only a private island where “man” retains his humanity and his connection with the primal dark forces of life.

Clifford Chatterley is paralleled in Lawrence’s Women in Love by Gerald Crich, son of an “industrial magnate” and associated throughout with
technological production and scientific engineering. He is the “God of the machine,” and the miners are “his instruments,” his “great social productive machine” (215, 219). His is a world of light and visibility, and he tolerates no fecund shadows: as “Deus ex Machina,” “terrible and inhuman were his examinations into every detail; there was no privacy he would spare” (220, 221). The “arch-god of earth” is thus technological master of feminized nature. Much cited is the scene of Gerald astride the Arab mare, violently keeping her in check as she panics at the railroad crossing. Clearly technophobic, as David Mesher points out, the image of the bloody horse nonetheless celebrates Gerald’s “will,” if ambivalently, in this figurative rape and domination of the animal.

Like Clifford Chatterley, then, Gerald Crich does not partake of the dark imagery of primal fertility but only of the white light of technological production and dominance, yet because this is the case, he, like Clifford, is ultimately vulnerable to the more powerful and more primal light of woman in all of its uncontrollable proliferations. The tragic undertone of the scene with the Arab mare, given the context of the novel as a whole, has to do with Gerald’s blindness to the danger he is in, his vulnerability in all of this “glistening,” “shining” “cold sunshine,” and “sharp light”; the “keen . . . sword,” which he “press[es] into her” with “mechanical relentlessness” is, as in Tarr, not always as easily controlled as is mother nature (confident control of which is also illusory, of course) (102–4). When Gerald attempts to rape and dominate Gudrun Brangwen, Ursula’s sister, in similar fashion, that vulnerability ultimately opens him up to destruction, and in that confrontation, we are clearly meant to empathize with Gerald’s plight, not Gudrun’s. Lawrence thus establishes a connection with the phallic man-machine—a relationship that Lewis always counters; the Kreisler-machine is invincible and apart, displacing organic man. Even in Lewis’s rape scene, the reader is not invited to be with Kreisler but is forced instead to share in Bertha’s fear of her mechanical aggressor and her humiliation at its hands. Lawrence, on the other hand, sides with the man in questions of rape, and thus a failed rape is the stuff of tragedy; the ensuing figurative castration and murder of the “industrial magnate” is the source of almost hysterical rage against the Magna Mater, “the mother and substance of all life,” who outmachines her master (337).

Gudrun Brangwen is literally a man killer like her namesake, the German counterpart of Procne, the Gudrun who kills her own children and feeds them to her husband (their father). Gudrun of the novel is thus the murderous sister of the docile/victimized woman; she is not herself that woman. Gudrun/Procne is the mother who “hated” and “would murder . . . gladly . . . the infant crying in the night” (458) and who feeds the defeated man the bloody supper of his own productions. Significantly,
Gudrun is associated throughout *Women in Love* with frozen white power, and the image is unstable: it can refer to the moon, thus eliciting the archetypally feminine, or it can refer to technology in its most negative aspect (Birkin’s motorcar, framed positively, deifies man in darkness). In either case, her brilliant inner light prevents her body from being the matter—the “vessel”—that can be filled with Gerald’s potency, thus identifying him as subject: even in the midst of their violent sex, Gudrun is Gerald’s “white flame,” his “snow-flower” of such moon-like power that although “he had subdued her,” “her subjugation was to him an infinite chastity in her, a virginity which he could never break, and which dominated him as by a spell” (210). Thus, although he rapes and throttles her, she wins and he dies. Although he “penetrate[s] all the outer places of Gudrun’s soul” and makes her “eyes dilate in strange violation”—and although he pictures the “voluptuous finality” of her murder, her body “a soft heap lying dead between his hands, utterly dead”—he is left behind nonetheless “like a postulant in the ante-room of this temple of mysteries, this woman” (443, 391, 452, 442). At a different level, although he is born to be “the arch-god of the earth” and although “it was his will to subjugate Matter to his own ends,” it is his fate to die in a “cradle of snow” below an icy moon, “a painful brilliant thing that was always there, unremitting, from which there was no escape” (464). What he falls victim to, then—seemingly cold light itself—is associated with technology and femaleness at the same time; industrial production is thus feminized and the feminine comes to serve as ecological scapegoat. The message of *Women in Love* is that man cannot usurp or control the growing cold light, and his “humanity” is rendered impotent and insignificant in the face of the woman machine. Only Birkin survives—the man who retreats from the English and northern European wasteland to the warmth of southern climates and the power implicit in the domination of a woman cut off from communion with that wasteland.

R. W. Flint and Earl Ingersoll have both pointed out that Lawrence’s attitude toward the machine was not at all entirely negative, however, as is often pronounced, but was, as with Lewis, profoundly ambivalent. In spite of a little unease, for example, Lawrence admired Marinetti greatly, and in spite of the usual Lawrentian mouthpiece who heaps anathema on technology (e.g., Mellors in *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*), I would argue that he nonetheless celebrates the machine to the extent that it is detached from corporate production—when it has become, in other words, a consumer item. Ingersoll has pointed out, for example, how central the motorcar is in the crucial “Excuse” chapter of *Women in Love* (151). It is in this chapter that Rupert Birkin (Lawrentian alter ego) and Ursula Brangwen first have sex—in a car. In the scene, Ursula succumbs to Birkin’s dark and
“electric” force, acknowledging him as a “son of God.” The scene depends upon Birkin and Ursula escaping “to the greenwood,” ironically, in his motorcar (Ingersoll 154). Technology thus offers them the freedom to enter into primal darkness, and in this dark Ursula and Birkin both realize his connection to archetype: “He sat still like an Egyptian Pharaoh, driving the car. He felt as if he were seated in immemorial potency. . . . He knew what it was to have the strange and magical current of force in his back and loins, and down his legs, force so perfect that it stayed him immobile. . . . He knew what it was to be awake and potent in that other basic mind, the deepest physical mind. And from this source he had a pure and magic control, magical, mystical, a force in darkness, like electricity” (310). As Earl Ingersoll has pointed out, for Lawrence, the mastery of the machine—and I would add deification of man—is accomplished in phallic darkness. This is a turn away from the traditional (and certainly Vorticist) association of phallic power with (electric) light and toward an implicit celebration of Dis, rapist god of the underworld who controls (female) production through violence.5 The scene preceding this, in fact, places Ursula Brangwen in awe, kneeling before the ubiquitous “loins” of Birkin.6 In this position, she recognizes the wealth and value somehow potential in the male body; she, as woman, can be given this gift, this “dark fluid richness” that is associated with but somehow more powerful than the phallus, and it will redeem her, like Lethe “sweeping away everything and leaving her an essential new being” (306). Like the “empty vessel” necessary to Tarr’s art and identity, Ursula’s hollow interior will contain the “ineffable riches” of the masculine “mystery”; she will thus be made a “complete self,” “liberated into perfection,” through the expression of his “strange, whole body” with its “marvellous fountains” (306, 311).7

Technology is thus both an emasculating force and at the same time a synapse that enables reconnection to some archaic, mythical form of masculinity, one not subject to the degradations of advanced capitalism. Like the middle-class tourists who James Wolf argues visited the British colonies throughout the first four decades of the twentieth century in the safety and comfort of the private automobile, the surviving Lawrencean protagonist defines his distinctive separateness and individuality within the context of consumer technology: the private, freely speeding automobile ironically offers itself up as a sanctuary from the otherwise pervasive and dehumanizing/demasculinizing effects of industrial technology. The man, in this framework, is thus maintained through what is finally, in effect, purchasing power. His “perfect force” is clearly visible only when foregrounded by the technology that had become available—although not to all—for consumer purchase. As if in counterbalance, it is a primitive, natural essence of masculinity that is stressed in the portrayals of vehicular manhood: to
own and drive a car is to be transported to “basic mind, the deepest physical mind” and to “immemorial potency”; the power found in this ancient space is a “control” or a “force” that is “magic,” “pure,” and “mystical” (310). The new masculinity thus masquerades as a very old (and indelible) masculinity that has been preserved deep below the effects of industrial technology; it is nevertheless enough “like electricity” to offer resistance to the “evil electric lights” and “diabolical rattlings of [the] engines” of Tevershall pit.

Consumable technology thus offers itself as a viable, if unstable, carrier of masculinity in the twentieth century. Given this, it is not coincidental that William Faulkner’s Sanctuary is haunted by the perpetual sound of car noises fading on distant roads. As Sondra Guttman has pointed out, Faulkner’s work articulates profound unrest with the changing configuration of masculinity under the large-scale move of the U.S. South toward an industrial economy. At the same time, the technological consumerism that Lawrence claims as a route back to natural, archaic man suggests something else entirely to Faulkner—the feminization and contamination of the chivalric ideal (Guttman 16–19). The pervasive presence of the car in Sanctuary speaks to the radical instability that accompanies masculinity having become a consumer effect, available to anyone with enough money to buy it. The continual (and crucial) appearance and disappearance of automobiles works to reinforce the central event that the novel discloses, or fails to disclose—one of the most famous literary rapes available to Western readers. In fact, it is the rape, or non-rape, of Temple Drake with a corncob that has been the source of most of the literary criticism of the novel. The elision of the actual physical assault from concrete, realistic representation, as has often been noted, “subjugate[s] the feminine rape narrative” (Patterson 57), replacing it with a blank space onto which a variety of fantasies and narratives—all coded masculine—can be projected. In fact, it is the “visibly absent” quality of the rape, as Laura Tanner puts it, that “gaping hole in the text,” that best speaks to the type of white masculinist narrative the text proposes: a story of accessibility and inaccessibility that suggests that the prerogative to rape has been stolen in a gesture of piracy that indicts not only the pirate—who certainly is not in possession of “immemorial potency”—but also the old gentry who are satisfied with driving (or being driven in) their sisters’ cars, unable or unwilling to participate in an economy under which masculinity has become a consumer product (Tanner 18, 19).

The novel is framed by Horace Benbow, descendent of the old Southern elite and the character closest to the role of protagonist; Temple Drake’s story—which is never, in fact, Temple Drake’s story, as many have pointed out—works as “an elaborate transmogrification of Horace’s story,”
as John Matthews puts it: “Horace is more prominent in the original version of *Sanctuary*, in which his polymorphous desire is the principal subject. But even in the revised version, in which he is reduced to the framework for Temple’s story, Horace’s excision rends the text in such a way that his desire determines the book’s configurations. Both versions of *Sanctuary* are organized by Horace’s crisis” (104). As the distilled and then corrupted image of what Millgate has called “a particular conception of Southern womanhood” that embodies a glorious, agrarian past (226), Temple Drake figures for Horace his own emasculation: like the rapist himself, childless Horace lacks potency, and his fluid emissions are figured separately as shrimp juice—“a fading series of small stinking spots on a Mississippi sidewalk” (19)—and the vomit that erupts in place of ejaculate when he fantasizes about Temple’s rape:

> He gave over and plunged forward and struck the lavatory and leaned upon his braced arms while the shucks set up a terrific uproar beneath her thighs. . . . she watched something black and furious go roaring out of her pale body. She was bound naked on her back on a flat car moving at speed through a black tunnel, the blackness streaming in rigid threads overhead, a roar of iron wheels in her ears. The car shot bodily from the tunnel in a long upward slant, the darkness overhead now shredded with parallel attenuations of living fire, toward a crescendo like a held breath. (268)

Although certainly this scene “represent[s a] masculine account . . . of rape,” as Patterson points out (45), it is also significant that Horace figures Temple’s rape as a technological abduction—without human antagonist, yet powered by an inhuman force animated by “living fire” and a “held breath.” In fact, as Guttman points out, Horace has from the opening of the novel viewed the rapist himself “as though seen by electric light,” as more machine than man: “By contrasting Popeye’s coloring with natural light, the novel presents him as an artificial man. Constructed of ‘stamped tin’ rather than flesh and blood, Popeye has eyes like ‘rubber knobs’ and a ‘hat like a modernist lampstand’” (25). Inversely, Horace sees his own emasculation in terms of a lack of this living technology: “You see,” he tells Ruby Lamar, “I lack courage: that was left out of me. The machinery is all here, but it won’t run” (18). Unlike the technology he fantasizes taking Temple Drake away, his own “machinery” is dead, inert, without breath.

In terms of narrative function, then, and the overall frame of the novel, it is Horace Benbow whose masculinity Temple puts into question when she challenges a seemingly endless stream of characters about whether or not they are men. And the most pervasive image of Horace’s failure to meet
that challenge is the constant reference to the fact that he “could not even learn to drive a motor car” (142). His sister, on the other hand, can and does drive, haunts him and his actions throughout the novel by suddenly driving up unannounced, or waiting in her car outside his house. In a direct attempt to stop him from fulfilling what he feels is his masculine duty in protecting Ruby Lamar, for example, she sends her driver after him, with orders to return him: “Miss Narcissa say to bring you back out home” (148). Horace is thus not only further emasculated, but further emasculated in a specifically white way—a woman with a car puts him under the power of her black servant. His inability to drive also destabilizes the class configuration of his masculinity: when this handicap lands him at the Old Frenchman place, where Popeye holds him mysteriously captive at the spring, cars pass and pass on “the invisible highway,” their sounds “[dying] away,” and when Popeye allows him to move, he sees “the prints of automobile tires” (5). When he is finally defeated at the end of the novel, in everything he has attempted over the course of the narrative, “Narcissa was waiting for him in the car. . . . She was driving the car” (349).

It is significant, then, that the one car owner in the novel other than Narcissa is the rapist, Popeye, a fact that is alluded to repeatedly. The despoiler of the temple of white upper-class Southern womanhood is a socioeconomic interloper—“a man explicitly associated with mechanization” (Guttman 22), “an entity native to a world of concrete and steel” (Campbell 103)—who “[drives] swiftly but without any quality of haste or of flight” (Faulkner 163). It is, further, “a powerful car” that he drives: “even in the sand it held forty miles an hour” (163). When Temple questions his being a “real man,” mocking his impotence, Popeye’s response and defense is aggressive driving: “One finger, ringed with a thick ring, held her lips apart, his finger-tips digging into her cheek. With the other hand he whipped the car in and out of traffic, bearing down upon other cars until they slewed aside with brakes squealing, shooting recklessly across intersections. Once a policeman shouted at them, but he did not even look around” (278). Thus, the phallus is clearly established as artificial and transferable—it is of no effective significance that it fails to coincide with the penis; its power is rather up for grabs. Vivian Wagner has argued that Faulkner makes textual use of the airplane to manufacture a kind of technological utopia and “ unearthly space where gender relations can be refigured” (86). In Sanctuary, it is rather masculine class relations that are reconfigured in the space opened by technology: the new white man who displaces the old does so by virtue of technological association and consumer accessibility—not land ownership or patrilineal descent. Operating outside the law, deaf to the shouts of the police, Popeye and his
Packard merge into one fearsome opponent. Later in the novel, Judge Snopes is caught and beaten up by Popeye; his version of the events maintains that he “got hit by a car in Jackson” (319). Further, he mixes the story with sudden and seemingly random anti-Semitism: “a jew lawyer can hold up an American, a white man, and not give him but ten dollars for something that two Americans, Americans, southron [sic] gentlemen” (320). Reconfigured as a car and a Jew, Popeye thus embodies a serious threat to “southron gentlemen”: like the Jew of Pound’s ranting anti-Semitism, the rapist in *Sanctuary* is an unnatural man who skews the patriarchal economy by obstructing the natural dissemination of the father. Temple’s appeals to her own father, the judge, are of no consequence against the man with the Packard.

In interesting ways, however, the text finally anathematizes Temple more than it does Popeye, ultimately giving “voice to an almost gynocidal misogyny,” as Gregory Forster puts it (550). We are given a final chapter, for example, that establishes a certain amount of pathos for Popeye and yet freezes Temple into a portrait of hollow vapidity, again consulting her compact while unnoticed around her “the sky [lay] prone and vanquished in the embrace of the season of rain and death” (380). It is this same vapidity—the same inability to recognize the significance of the vanquished body of “sanctified womanhood” (Urgo 437)—that has allowed Temple to “slip” in the first place; she has been fooled by a corncob, and she has been seduced from the safe enclosure of “the Coop” by the automobiles driven by the town boys (66). The “southron gentlemen” of the university “were not permitted to keep cars,” and thus the allure of the automobile for Temple signifies her willingness to flirt with class boundaries (31). Gowan accuses her of “play[ing] around all week with any badger-trimmed hick that owns a ford” (43), Popeye calls her a “whore” when she begs to use his car, and the narrative itself first pictures her in “a final squatting swirl of knickers or whatnot as she sprang into the car waiting there with engine running” (31). This is the slippage that dooms her from the beginning, and her fate, like the car accident that strands her at the Old Frenchman place, is “the logical and disastrous end” to her infatuation with the roadster (44).

The automobile thus displaces the university boys, emptying out the idealized masculinity of the now castrated “southron” gentleman and filling that space with a new, technologically dependent masculinity, a construction defined by its brutal artificiality (which serves in turn to ratify the “naturalness” of the upper-class white masculinity that has now been lost). Like the impotent rapist himself who relies on the corncob, the car cannot claim an inevitable alliance with the biological or the human. Temple turns to the car repeatedly—foolishly—as a source of possible sanctuary for what
is constructed as her vulnerable feminine flesh (and spirit) and is repeatedly betrayed. Her time at the Old Frenchman place prior to the rape is spent desperately attempting to find a car, yet being unable to. The accident itself suggests the untrustworthiness of this new artificial signifier of masculinity: “the engine ceased, though the lifted front wheel continued to spin idly, slowing” (45). That she would nonetheless “stroke . . . her hand along the edge of the door” of Popeye's Packard establishes the inevitability of her fall. The gesture also establishes what will become an increasingly unbridgeable narrative distance between Temple's sexuality and the ideal womanhood silently upheld by the text itself. Like the scene during which she “hurl[s] herself upon” Red, “her mouth gaped and ugly like that of a dying fish as she writhed her loins against him,” Temple's odd association with the private automobile contributes to her growing distance from the reader—and from Horace Benbow, who inhabits the text as if in sadly distanced answer to her ever more unrealized need for sanctuary (287). “We got to protect our girls,” the old ex-landholding driver tells Horace at the end of the novel; “Might need them ourselves” (357). Indeed the ex-landholders do indeed “need . . . our girls”; they are needed in order to prove that a “real man,” that mythical figure Temple continually invokes, “wouldn't have used no cob” (352). The narrative, however, has withheld from Horace what is thus constructed as his natural prerogative to protect (or himself rape) Temple, has kept her story close to his and yet just barely segregated. The story is close enough, in fact, that he is himself rendered rapable, feminized, as Diane Roberts has noted (34): the crowd that has (apparently) sodomized Goodwin before killing him threatens to do the same to Horace: “Do to the lawyer what we did to him. What he did to her. Only we never used a cob. We made him wish we had used a cob” (355). Horace is left by the end with only incestuous desire and an abstract, mythic sense of loss, ordered repeatedly to “lock the back door,” in the hopeless condition of not being able to drive in an alien time “[a]fter the horse era passed” (356, 360). Thus, envisioning himself “marooned in space by the ebb of all time,” Horace comes to dwell in that cloudy land of abstraction and nostalgia inhabited generally by Faulkner’s men and boys of the upper classes (266–67).

The invocation of “the horse era” at the conclusion of the novel—in company with masculine camaraderie—is reminiscent of the ending of E. M. Forster’s A Passage to India. Here, too, D. H. Lawrence's mythic hope for consumer technology as private vehicle to “immemorial potency” is rendered empty. In Forster’s novel, Aziz and Fielding salvage what little they can of their friendship on horseback, years after the main events of the text, because the car has proven itself to be not so much unable to navigate the terrain (to the contrary) but to be the dangerous and
feminized/feminizing tool of imperial power. It has been the timely intervention of the private motorcar—driven by a white woman, stolen from a native man—which has sealed off the (non)assault of the Marabar Caves from sympathetic masculine oversight: by an incredible piece of luck, Miss Derek’s car appeared at the scene at precisely the second when Adela was fleeing from Aziz’s imagined attack. The women sped back to the British station, where the British community closed ranks around Adela and against all sympathetic male characters and began to conduct its travel, suddenly, entirely, by car. The natives threw rocks, but these attacks were ineffectual, given the solid, enclosed, and powerful nature of the automobile. The rape story was thus situated entirely within the jurisdiction of the hysterical white woman and the unjust and inhumane ranks of empire. In the case of both novels, the innocent man is vulnerable to the rape stories told by the white woman, who tells the stories in the ways she tells them for reasons not divulged in either text.