Slightly Foxed: Frank Tuohy and D.H. Lawrence

David Burleigh

'— *a friend of her own sex with whom she might have a union of soul*'

Henry James, *The Bostonians*

No parallel readily suggests itself between the two writers who are to be examined in this essay, except that both were English. D.H. Lawrence (1885–1930), raw, passionate, prolific, and dead at only forty-four, left behind a body of work that runs to dozens of volumes in any collected edition of it. By contrast, Frank Tuohy (1925–1999), constrained, precise, almost costive in his output, had published only three short novels and three books of stories when he died at the age of seventy-three. Where Lawrence, *sui generis*, the son of a coal-miner, rose from his working-class background to become a major figure in literary modernism, Tuohy, the son of a doctor, born to the professional classes, educated at public school and Cambridge, earned his living mostly in academia, and wrote when he had time. While Lawrence supported his restless life through unceasing activity, and lived mostly by his pen, Tuohy always found it difficult to write, and accepted university positions, either as a visiting professor or as a writer-in-residence, when he needed some additional income. Both men travelled a good deal, and wrote about it, though not for the same reasons. Where Lawrence pursued a visionary quest that led him across different continents, ending in Mexico though he finally died in France, Tuohy, born with a heart defect that was not corrected until middle-age, went to work in Brazil because his life was not expected at first to be a long one, then moved on to other continents, yet returned to his native land in later years. The subject that connects them, and which will be examined here, is a single story set in England.

Frank Tuohy's short story 'A Ghost Garden', occurring near the end of *The Collected Stories* (1984), gives a hint of its connection to a work by Lawrence in the opening paragraph:

> The biographer Bamford Chetwynd immediately chose the best room in the house as a study and work room. Its window overlooked the entire garden, as far as a stream lined with water flags and alder trees and the white wooden bridge that led to the village. The room was apart, but it was not isolated. Susan Vincent, the biographer's lifelong friend, was a dedicated gardener...[1]

D.H. Lawrence's long story 'The Fox', written more than half a century before, opens with a shorter paragraph:

> The two girls were usually known by their surnames, Banford and March. 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...[2]

The first resemblance is the similarity of the names, except that Bamford is a first name, while Banford is not, even though in each case it is the name by which the character is generally known. Bamford, usually called 'Bam' by Susan, is referred to as 'the biographer' throughout Tuohy's story, with the result that some readers have missed not only the story's literary provenance, but also one of its essential implications. The name itself is sexually ambiguous, yet appears to be masculine, and it is part of the author's humour in the fiction never to specify the gender with a personal pronoun. Yet to the attentive reader, and especially one alerted to the Lawrentian precedent, it is quite clear that Bamford Chetwynd is not a man but a *woman*.

Alan Price, in his detailed account of Tuohy's shorter fiction for the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, nevertheless refers to the biographer as male.[3] He is by no means the only reader to have made this assumption, and missed the fictional allusion that seems to me crucial to a proper reading of the story. There are several hints of sexual ambivalence in the text, such as Tuohy's early reference to the lesbian novelist, Radclyffe Hall (1880–1943),[4] who also shortened her name to something less obviously feminine, besides adopting male attire, as Bamford Chetwynd does. Price picks up a reference to the author and gardener Victoria Sackville-West (1892–1962),[5] for a time the lover of the novelist Virginia Woolf (1882–1941), but again he overlooks the implications, and reads the tale as a straightforward one of heterosexual contest between two men for a single female. In doing so he unfortunately misses both the droll humour and the literary resonance of

this text. In this essay I would like to explore more fully the pretexts of this story, both in terms of its allusions to other literary works and figures, and its place in the corpus of Tuohy's shorter fiction. To do this, it is necessary first to return to Lawrence's much earlier tale.

D.H. Lawrence wrote two versions of 'The Fox', the first in 1918, near the end of World War I, and a second in 1921. According to *The Cambridge Companion to D.H. Lawrence*, the story 'was expanded from 8,000 words to 20,000 words' in the second version.[6] The revised version was subsequently published in a volume called *The Ladybird* (1923), containing three novellas: 'The Ladybird', 'The Fox' and 'The Captain's Doll', in that order. All three tales were substantially longer than the usual magazine short story. As we have seen, 'The Fox' opens with two women who have decided to go into farming, the sort of young women who were then known as Land Girls. In both World War I and World War II this name applied to women who contributed to the war effort by helping to produce food in place of the men who had gone away to fight. When the war was over, and especially after World War I, the male population was considerably depleted, so that many women were left with no choice but to live unmarried throughout their lives. In Lawrence's tale, however, it is suggested that there is an element not just of necessity but choice in the arrangement. In the second paragraph he describes the two women thus:

> Banford was a small, thin, delicate thing with spectacles. She, however, was the principal investor, for March had little or no money. Banford's father, who was a tradesman in Islington, gave his daughter the start, for her health's sake, and because he loved her, and because it didn't look as if she would marry. March was more robust. She had learned carpentry and joinery at the evening classes in Islington. She would be the man about the place...

It is clear that one of the two has the financial wherewithal to start the farm, while the other has the energy and skill. Nevertheless, it is March who is both more womanly and manly than her companion:

> March did most of the outdoor work. When she was out and about, in her puttees and breeches, her belted coat and her loose cap, she looked almost like

> some graceful, loose-balanced young man, for her shoulders were straight, and her movements easy and confident, even tinged with a little indifference or irony. But her face was not a man's face, ever…[7]

The farming proves difficult, partly because the women have no real aptitude for it, and partly because of a fox that carries off their poultry. When March sees it one evening, however, and its eyes meet hers, she is at once 'spellbound'. The fox escapes unharmed, walking away slowly. Later she goes out again with the gun:

> She did not so much think of him: she was possessed by him. She saw his dark, shrewd, unabashed eye looking into her, knowing her. She felt him invisibly master her spirit…[8]

Into the women's secluded and companionable, but less than idyllic and successful home, comes a soldier on leave. Henry Grenfel arrives unannounced one evening at the house, where he had once lived with his grandfather. He does not know that the old man has died, and is looking for a place to stay. It is near the end of the war and just at the beginning of the influenza epidemic that followed. The two women are wary of Henry, but Banford finally allows him to stay the night since he has nowhere else to go. He stares particularly at March, who 'stood pale, with great dilated eyes'. Although to Banford he seems later like her younger brother, 'to March he was the fox'.[9]

While Banford and March are both almost thirty, the boy is a decade younger. After a few days observing the household, and the dilapidated state of the farm, he observes quietly, '"There wants a man about the place."'[10] He shoots rabbits and pigeons for their supper and gradually becomes a contributing member of the household. March is now haunted by the fox in dreams. Suddenly, but not quite unexpectedly, Henry decides that he would like to marry March, and proposes to her. While she acquiesces in this plan, Banford is first mocking, and then bitterly opposed to it. In the ensuing struggle for March's favour, a battle in which 'they sat each one at the sharp corner of a triangle',[11] the future grows uncertain. March becomes increasingly conscious of attraction to Henry, changing her breeches one evening for a dress, while she also dreams prophetically of Banford's death. Yet when Henry leaves to return to camp, March quickly writes a letter begging off the marriage, having been persuaded into this by her companion. He acts

immediately, getting leave from his superior to return to the farm. When he arrives by bicycle, March is hewing a tree, watched by Banford and her parents, who have come to visit. Henry has already dispatched the fox earlier in the story, and hung it up for March to see. Now he takes over the felling of the tree, and politely cautions Banford about the danger. But she ignores his warning, and when the tree falls upon her she is killed outright. 'In his heart he had decided her death,' Lawrence tells the reader.[12] There are several more pages describing the changed feelings of the couple now, before they finally leave England for Canada, the larger, freer world from which Henry had recently come back at the beginning of the story. 'England was little and tight,'[13] Henry has already decided.

Despite the claim made by E.M. Forster (1879–1970) when Lawrence died, that 'he was the greatest imaginative novelist of our generation,' it was some time before his writings received much critical acclaim. F.R. Leavis refers to Forster's comment, and the laggardly and grudging recognition of the work, in the preface to *D.H. Lawrence: Novelist*, his seminal study of the writer, published in 1955.[14] The following year Graham Hough published another important study, *The Dark Sun*, and since then there have been numerous biographical and critical accounts. Two of the tales in *The Ladybird*, the first and last, deal with people of the upper-middle class, and Leavis emphasises the 'homely lower-middle-class ordinariness' of idiom upon which the effect of 'The Fox' depends.[15] He acknowledges the powerful symbolism of the story: 'The whole fox-motive in all its development is remarkable for its inevitability of truth and the economy and precision of its art.'[16] Graham Hough concurs with this: '"The Fox" is almost a classical *novelle*, with its central symbol, its small group of characters, its restricted and unified plot.'[17] With less reference to the class background of the story, Hough claims it is 'one of Lawrence's masterpieces of straightforward naturalistic narrative', and 'classically perfect in its unforced development of a single unitary theme.'[18] Another, more recent critic, H.M. Daleski, more or less agrees but qualifies this view: '"The Fox", until the killing of Banford, has a fine and powerful inevitability of development that makes it, up to that point, one of the most translucent of Lawrence's tales.'[19] For Daleski, 'the murder of Banford…is strictly unnecessary'[20], and it is certainly true that the concluding passages,

in which Ellen March and Henry Grenfel look back on what has happened and forward into the future, are murkier than what has gone before. The more immediate question, however, is how much of this tale, and these events, have been deployed by Frank Tuohy in his much shorter story.

Against the seventy-four pages of Lawrence's tale 'The Fox' in a modern paperback edition, Tuohy's story 'The Ghost Garden', though printed in a slightly larger format, barely makes it to eleven. In later life Tuohy turned almost entirely to short stories, claiming that he 'dislike[d] the factitious element in novels'.[21] His updated version of the Lawrence setting, then, is a distillation, with certain overlapping elements. The first similarity is that we are shown a home shared by two devoted women. As we have seen, Bamford Chetwynd and Susan Vincent have recently moved to a house in the country, or at least on the outskirts of a village. The economic arrangement is similar, in that 'Midsomer Cottage was Susan Vincent's property'. Susan does not need to earn a living, and is thus able to support her companion, the author of a series of biographies of 'redoubtable French ladies', the income from which 'is hardly sufficient to keep the author in cigars and brandy'[22]. One important reason for the removal is to reduce expenses. But Susan has also given out to friends how she 'longed to create a garden of her own.' For the farm in Lawrence, there is the garden, in which Susan hopes to grow some well-chosen plants, along the lines recommended by famous garden experts, like Gertrude Jekyll (1843–1932), and above all Victoria Sackville-West — generally called 'Vita'—and both of them renowned for the carefully blended and subdued colours of their planting. Before Bam arrives from London, Susan seeks help with practical matters in the house from two local workmen, Sydney and Kevin, befriending both to some extent. There are more people in this story, short as it is, than in Lawrence's longer tale. Susan is sympathetic toward Kevin, whose wife is unable to conceive a child, but it is Sydney who proves the more useful of the two:

> The physical world obeyed Sydney; while the radio shrilled to the Top Twenty, she watched his paintbrush move silkily across doors and wainscoting. He seemed to know everything she needed to know at this time. After a little she began to rejoice in Sydney, as she rejoiced in the new house and the future

> garden.[23]

Unfortunately, Sydney is also an accomplished gardener, and repeatedly tells Susan that the plants that she has ordered will not grow in the local soil, recommending instead more common varieties in brighter colours, and plainer vegetables. The other problem is the biographer's imminent arrival, since Susan realises that her companion detests ordinary working people. But 'Sydney never set eyes on Bam,' Tuohy suddenly announces. 'That night he was killed on his motorbike at the corner where the lane from the village joined the main road.'

The prompt removal of the interloping male on a female household ought to remove the possibility of conflict, or at any rate of difficult encounters. But Susan is haunted, and keenly feels the absence:

> She kept remembering Sydney through the idle days of winter, when there was little to do in the garden. The earth was quiet, full of promises for the spring. Though she trusted her own skills, there was always some doubt as to what would flourish, what would need cherishing, and what would die out without trace.[24]

Kevin calls unexpectedly one morning with his wife when Susan is not at home, and Bam, now in residence, expresses 'fury' at this interruption. Susan briefly feels concerned that people in the village might be offended at the biographer's rude dismissal of the visitors. 'Then she reflected that, except for herself, no one … had ever taken Bam seriously.' The first flowers to come up in the garden are ordinary daffodils, quite unlike the ones Susan believed that she had ordered:

> Miss Vincent wrote to the bulb merchants, who denied the possibility of a mistake. By this time the garden was as full of bright yellow as the others in the village.

As the season turns, her dismay increases:

> By midsummer the garden was a total disaster; it looked like something off a cheap calendar, or a picture to be cross-stitched on a tea cosy. No sooner had puce aubretia and yellow alyssum done their worst than pillar-box red poppies hurt the eyes, clashing with the hard orange of marigolds. Delphiniums and

> dahlias were on the way. Among the vegetables, the carefully selected variety of French beans turned out to be scarlet runners, the courgettes swelled into vegetable marrows, fit only for harvest festivals or ginger jam.[25]

Tuohy clearly delights in describing all of this, while the gardener herself is acquiescent:

> Susan Vincent resigned herself to tending these monstrosities diligently. She knew there was some disorder, some primal fault in the makeup of things, but she did not protest. Like herself, the garden was a prey to forces that she flinched from trying to understand. Sydney Woods had won her heart and was proclaiming his triumph; everything was just as he would have wanted it.

The mundanity of the garden display, while drawing unsympathetic responses from her friends, nonetheless connects Susan to the everyday world that Sydney inhabited, and the memory of his physical presence returns to haunt her. She hears his radio and smells the smoke of his cigarettes. When she runs into Kevin in the village, she invites him to bring his wife and their adopted baby to see the house. Holding the baby and welcoming the young couple, she is suddenly 'shaken by a sense of the incompleteness of her world.' Once the visitors have gone, Bam reappears, 'furious and drunk',[26] and there is a confrontation. Apart from indignation at the disturbance, Bam also accuses Susan of being attracted to the young man: '"After all we've stood for. That's how it's ended."' Susan's reaction to this outburst is to give 'an odd wild laugh, like a tropical bird', before persuading her partner to make a research trip to Paris and sending her off with a 'fat check'.[27] Susan drives back to the cottage afterwards with a whole new sense of freedom, and we do not know what will happen when Bam returns, except that Susan now welcomes the vision of life brought to her by Sydney. This open-ended conclusion to the story is nicely ambiguous and quite satisfactory.

F.R. Leavis, under whom Tuohy probably studied at Cambridge, and with whose critical writing he was certainly familiar, makes this observation about Lawrence's tale: 'The tone of *The Fox* all the way through may be described as simply and overtly serious; there is in the tale no sardonic element and no irony.'[28] When Tuohy recasts 'The Fox' into a more contemporary setting, he not only condenses the Lawrentian original, but subverts it too by retailing the story with a certain mordancy. What this in turn recalls

is another literary pretext, further back than D.H. Lawrence but with which Lawrence is also thought to have engaged.[29] This is *The Bostonians*, one of the earlier novels of Henry James (1843–1916), first published in book form 1886. The novel is a substantial volume, nearly six times the length of 'The Fox', set in a wholly different social milieu, and yet with a plot that is remarkably similar. Essentially this consists of a contest for the affections of the young and beautiful Verena Tarrant, who makes her first appearance as a speaker at a meeting for women's emancipation in Boston, and is thereafter taken up by Olive Chancellor, a wealthy and passionate advocate of this cause, who sees a chance to make a special friend of her. The other contestant is Olive Chancellor's cousin, Basil Ransom, a Southerner from Mississippi, who happens to be visiting her at the time. Basil does not at all agree with the ideas that Verena has been recruited to speak about, but is thoroughly engaged by her person, and does battle with his cousin, in both New York and Boston, until he eventually persuades Verena to join him in marriage. There are a number of lesser characters, such as Verena's parents and other participants at meetings, or supporters of the cause, including one who would also like to marry her, though not all that many for a novel of this length. The struggle to win Verena's heart is very much the centre of the story. Olive Chancellor, by no means old herself, is immediately drawn to the younger woman, whom she invites to visit her at home, leaving Basil at a loss:

> Ransom saw that she would come and see any one who would ask her like that, and he regretted for a minute that he was not a Boston lady, so that he might extend her such an invitation. Olive Chancellor held [Verena's] hand a moment longer, looked at her in farewell, and then, saying, 'Come, Mr Ransom,' drew him out of the room.[30]

Later Olive has Verena come to live with her, and extracts a promise from her that she will become devoted to the cause, and never marry, even sending a 'pecuniary tribute'[31] to Verena's parents in order to gain possession of her. The domestic arrangement is of the type that came to be known as a 'Boston marriage'. But in the end the jealous, man-hating Olive is defeated — 'The reality was simply that Verena was more to her than she was to Verena'[32] — and Basil Ransom wins the day, though it is not an entirely happy ending:

> 'Ah, now I am glad,' said Verena when they reached the street. But though she

> was glad, he presently discovered that, beneath her hood, she was in tears. It is to be feared that with the union, so far from brilliant, into which she was about to enter, these were not the last she was destined to shed.[33]

Although a social and economic gulf divides the settings of James's and Lawrence's accounts, and the style of presentation is quite different, yet the outcome is the same. James differs to some extent not only in using a larger cast, but in the bemused, sardonic tone with which he presents the story, and this is precisely the tone that Tuohy has adopted. Furthermore, in Bamford Chetwynd's accusation that Susan has forsaken '"all we've stood for"', some kind of feminist agenda, or at any rate female solidarity and independence, is obviously intended, and echoes the arrangements made by Olive Chancellor in Henry James. Tuohy also restores to the setting the financial and educational benefits of a privileged or leisured class, and might be said to trivialise the story Lawrence told. Certainly the raw passion in Lawrence has been domesticated and subdued. Yet, in spite of F.R. Leavis's faintly condescending observation, it is precisely the 'homely lower-middle-class ordinariness' of Lawrence, personified by Sydney Woods in Tuohy's story, that triumphs in the end. It may be reasonably claimed, I think, that Tuohy telescopes the work of Henry James through that of D.H. Lawrence in 'The Ghost Garden', which can then be read as a commentary on either of them.

There are some grounds for believing that both of the main characters in this story are based on people that Frank Tuohy knew, one of them a particularly close friend. In the last sentence of the 'Author's Note' at the beginning of his 1976 biography of the Irish poet W.B. Yeats, Tuohy thanks 'Kathleen Farrell, novelist, neighbour and muse'.[34] Farrell had a flat in a neighbouring street to Tuohy when he lived in Brighton, and they corresponded regularly while he was away. Though there are doubtless many small differences in detail (Farrell was short in stature, for example), there is still a notable similarity in general disposition between Kathleen Farrell (1912–1999) and her former partner, the novelist Kay Dick (1915–2001), and Susan Vincent and Bamford Chetwynd respectively. This is quickly apparent from the summary of their respective lives given in obituary notices: Farrell charming and with numerous friends, Dick quite often arming for prolonged feuds with her enemies. Not only the dynamic of the relationship, but even

its financial basis bears a resemblance to its fictional counterpart, Farrell having provided the wherewithal from her private means for the other's literary career, at least in the early stages. It seems, too, that Dick at one time wrote under a man's name.[35] Since 'The Ghost Garden' is written from Susan's viewpoint, Tuohy clearly regards the other party in a bemused light. Within his own stories there are also some precedents for the way that he presents the character of Bam. In an autobiographical piece called 'A War of Liberation', there is a Miss de Saumarez, 'a throbbing woman in a cloak'[36] In a further story from the same original collection called 'A Reprieve', there is another mannish woman:

> Miss Peacock appeared odd but perhaps not entirely exotic, for she was "Eton-cropped", and her sports jacket and corduroys might have been bought at any school outfitters'. With her plump body and curiously wrinkled face, Miss Peacock sometimes reminded you of a midget, an extremely large one, male.[37]

The same elements reappear in the description of Bamford Chetwynd attending literary gatherings in 'A Ghost Garden':

> Wearing a cloak, a velvet suit, and a fedora hat, the biographer was a conspicuous figure [...]: more and more, the dashing Regency Buck of past years had come to suggest a retired jockey too fond of the bottle. The force of the biographer's attack had always been mitigated by shortness of stature. A devoted friend, an Oxford don, had once compared Bam to "a bust of Radclyffe Hall, walking."[38]

Later in the story the costume is updated to the 1970s, when the story is evidently set:

> The monocle, the fedora, the cloak had by now given way to National Health spectacles and jeans and sweaters from a local menswear department, yet the total impression remained gently ludicrous.[39]

Merciless yet entertaining, this is a something of a caricature, hardly politically correct by later standards, but nonetheless deftly put together and evocative of a certain type of personality. Perhaps the best way to triangulate this story is to search for coordinates within the author's other writing.

There are in fact three short stories in *The Collected Stories* of Frank Tuohy that have approximately the same subject and concern, one in each of the three collections gathered

in this volume. The first of these, 'At Home with the Colonel', is much the nastiest of the three, and has a retired colonel keeping poultry like the women in D.H. Lawrence, which might be an echo of 'The Fox'. Colonel Starcross is a widower, unhappily at home in the country with his daughter Bridget, whose lesbian girlfriend has come to stay. While the two young women remain upstairs and enjoy themselves together dressmaking, the old man is left alone. When a younger man from the neighbourhood appears, the colonel invites him in to tea, and calls the young women down to meet him, but instead of being friendly, they humiliate him. The young man leaves in anger, and the colonel is perplexed at his sudden departure. At the end of the story Bridget, who has no occupation and is plainly waiting for her father to die so that she can inherit his money, assures her friend: '"But we'll have our cottage one day, won't we?"'[40] This is the dream in waiting, the same one that is realised provisionally by Banford and March, and with more settled resolve by Bamford Chetwynd and Susan Vincent, at least until the haunting of Midsomer Cottage by Sydney Woods. But the situation in 'At Home with the Colonel' is preliminary to the young women's enactment of an independent life together. Beyond a few petting gestures, there is no overt expression of a sexual relationship, yet its nature seems unmistakable in a modern context. Tuohy almost never wrote about sexuality directly, but only, like Henry James, by implication. Character and disposition are indicated by other factors, such as dress.

In the next story, 'A Reprieve' from Tuohy's second collection, mentioned above, he introduces a pair of heterodox siblings, one of whom is fatally ill. Captain Peacock is in hospital for tests, and is being visited there by his sister. The nurse in charge would like Miss Peacock to take her brother home and look after him, but neither sibling considers this desirable. Captain Peacock knows that he will be unwelcome at his sister's cottage, which she shares with her female friend:

> Miss Peacock knew how much he disliked her friend, and she herself was irritated by the name "Phoebe", which now only her brother used. To Laura, Miss Peacock was always "Jock". "Oh, Jock," she had wailed, "I've tried and tried but I can't stand it any longer." The cottage was tiny; the presence of the sick man made it reverberate with noises it had never known before.[41]

Here too life in the cosy cottage has been tested. The difference in this case is that both parties are unwilling to intrude upon the other's life. Captain Peacock, for his part, would rather return to his younger male friend Stavros overseas, and be taken care of by Stavros's family, for whom he generously provides. Beyond this, both the Peacocks 'made few claims for themselves', but instead quiet, unacknowledged contributions:

> Because of Miss Peacock, Laura had been saved from half a lifetime in an institution for nervous complaints. With dowries from the Captain, Kostaki [Stavros's son]'s little sisters would not have to face perpetual spinsterhood in their mountain village. One must do what one can, even if it be secret and not respectable.[42]

This is almost the closest that this reticent writer comes to articulating a personal philosophy. Tuohy grew up and was educated into a world of 'moral relativity', which informs his tales of cultural misunderstanding, but was also heir to the Forsterian sympathies of Cambridge.[43] The ethos here, however, may derive as much from Chekhov as from Cambridge. Tuohy's admiration for the Russian short-story writer was considerable. And to Anton Chekhov (1860–1904), a trained physician like Tuohy's father, 'it [was] not the function of art to solve problems but to present them correctly.'[44]

The third and last story in this tiny trilogy or triptych is 'The Ghost Garden', from Tuohy's third collection. Each of the three collections, consisting generally of shorter stories, ends with one longer tale. In the second volume this piece is a significant departure from the serious tone of what precedes it. While there is sometimes a mordant observation, 'Ructions, or a Footnote to the Cold War', is sheer comedy. It tells the story of a nanny-cum-spy, who eventually vanishes: 'Where had she gone? Speculations flourished like ground elder in a neglected garden.'[45] The gardening simile looks forward to the tale under discussion here, but there are other characteristics of 'The Ghost Garden' more deserving of attention. In Tuohy's later writing there is a shift not only towards the ghostly, the haunting in imagination, seldom found in his more realistic early work, but also towards engagement with other literary texts. This trajectory is not unusual, and reflects his great reading. The literary joke in the story when Susan Vincent, at work in her garden, says, '"Vita, Vita, […] I honor you in my breeches and observances"', is a

camp allusion to Land Girls like March in 'The Fox', who actually wore breeches, as well as to the gardening heroine Vita Sackville-West, and finally to some lines in Shakespeare spoken by Hamlet.[46] The ludic and literary Tuohy is the one that is characteristic of his later work, including his unfinished final novel.[47] The secular haunting of 'A Ghost Garden' can be found again in a late, uncollected story called 'Retired People'.[48] The illusory, in memory and dreams, lies at the heart of two further tales, published in anthologies after *The Collected Stories* had appeared.[49] But even in that volume, and particularly in the third collection that it gathers, there are stories that gain resonance through reference to other writers and their work. The poet in 'A Summer Pilgrim' is clearly based to some extent on the English writer Edmund Blunden (1896–1974). 'The Broken Bridge', set in Japan, engages somewhat with a play by Arthur Miller,[50] and 'Evening in Connecticut', coincidentally the title of a poem by Louis MacNeice,[51] invokes the most famous novel in English by Vladimir Nabokov.[52] The play and novel in each case signal the hidden passions of the story, and the masterly indirections with which Tuohy negotiates the subject make these tales among his richest. Though the long story with which Tuohy's third book of stories and also the collected edition of them closes, is a conventional narrative, it is the other tales that seem to me to characterise his later style.

Frank Tuohy used the material he found in life, but not the story of his own life, to create his fiction. In the best of his later stories, shafts open up to other works beyond them that enrich their meaning. The light parody of 'The Fox' by D.H. Lawrence that Tuohy perpetrates in 'A Ghost Garden' seems to me merely a filter through which he strains or percolates the work of Henry James. In writing of 'thwarted desire',[53] but not of sexuality directly, Tuohy much more resembles James than Lawrence, though both he and Lawrence engaged with the story James first told in *The Bostonians*.

Notes

1 Frank Tuohy, *The Collected Stories* (London: Macmillan, 1984), p. 367. There was a Penguin paperback edition in 1986, but the pagination is the same. Henceforth abbreviated to *CS*.

2 D.H. Lawrence, *Three Novellas: The Ladybird, The Fox, The Captain's Doll* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1985), p. 85. This edition maintains the original 1923 publication order. Henceforth abbreviated to *TN*.

3 Alan Price, 'Frank Tuohy' in *Dictionary of Literary Biography Vol. 139: British Short-Fiction*

Writers 1945–1980 (Detroit, Washington, D.C., London: Gale Research Inc., 1994), p. 275.
4 *CS*, p. 368.
5 *CS*, pp. 368–9.
6 Com Corneos & Trudi Tate, 'Lawrence's tales' in *The Cambridge Companion to D.H. Lawrence*, ed. Anne Fernihough (Cambridge: CUP, 2001), pp. 103–118. This quote from p. 111.
7 *TN*, p. 86.
8 *TN*, p. 89.
9 *TN*, p. 93.
10 *TN*, p. 97.
11 *TN*, p. 118.
12 *TN*, p. 151.
13 *TN*, p. 121.
14 F.R. Leavis, *D.H. Lawrence: Novelist* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1967; first pub. 1955), p. 10.
15 Ibid., p. 197.
16 Ibid., p. 258.
17 Graham Hough, *The Dark Sun: A Study of D.H. Lawrence* (London: Gerald Duckworth, 1956), p. 167.
18 Ibid., pp. 176–77.
19 'Aphrodite of the Foam and the "Ladybird" Tales' by H.M. Daleski, in *D.H. Lawrence: Modern Critical Views*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House Publishers; first pub. 1978), pp. 201–214. This quote from p. 208.
20 Ibid., p. 211.
21 David Burleigh, interview with Frank Tuohy in *The Mainichi Daily News*, Tokyo, March 18, 1985.
22 *CS*, p. 367.
23 *CS*, p. 369.
24 *CS*, p. 371.
25 *CS*, p. 372.
26 *CS*, p. 374.
27 *CS*, p. 375. Even the British edition employs American spelling.
28 Op. cit., p. 260.
29 See Hugh Stevens, *Henry James and Sexuality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 94–5 & 108. The author makes it clear in his discussion of the novel by James that Lawrence's telling must be seen in the light of later sexological writing which would have represented the relationship as pathological.
30 Henry James, *The Bostonians* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1984; first pub. 1886), p. 60.
31 Ibid., p. 150.
32 Ibid., p. 354.
33 Ibid., p. 390.
34 Frank Tuohy, *Yeats* (London: Macmillan, 1976), p. 6.
35 For the obituary of Kathleen Farrell, see: http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/obituary-kathleen-farrell-1128904.html . For the obituary of Kay Dick see: http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/2001/oct/24/guardianobituaries.books . Accessed 20 November 2011.
36 *CS*, p. 161.
37 *CS*, p. 193.
38 *CS*, p. 369. The description here somewhat echoes that of Miss Birdseye, 'a little old lady with an enormous head', a lesser character in the novel by Henry James. Op cit., p. 24. There is some further echo in the description of Dr Prance as 'a plain, spare young woman, with short hair and an eye-glass', in James's novel. Ibid., p. 28. Radclyffe Hall, who presented herself more or less like this, is one of those whom Hugh Stevens suggests were influenced by *The Bostonians*. Op

cit., pp.100–103.
39 *CS*, p. 372.
40 *CS*, p. 94.
41 *CS*, p. 195.
42 *CS*, p. 197.
43 The primary importance of personal relations is well attested throughout the work of E.M. Forster. But Tuohy's thinking was much influenced by the study of analytic philosophy at Cambridge. See, for example, 'Art and Authority: Can it Matter What Writers Say?' in *The Voice of the Writer 1984: Collected Papers of the 47th International P.E.N. Congress in Tokyo* (Tokyo: The Japan P.E.N. Club, 1986), pp. 54–55.
44 V.S. Pritchett, *Chekhov: A Biography* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1990; first pub. 1988), p. 186. The remark derives from Chekhov's letters.
45 *CS*, p. 265.
46 'But to my mind, though I am native here / And to the manner born, it is a custom / More honour'd in the breach than the observance.' *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* by William Shakespeare, Act 1, Sc. Iv, l. 14–16. *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, edited by Peter Alexander (London: Collins, 1988; first pub. 1951), p. 1035.
47 The untitled manuscript can be found in the archive of Frank Tuohy's papers held in the Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center at Boston University. Box 1, File 13.
48 Frank Tuohy, 'Retired People' in *Best Short Stories 1986*, ed. Giles Gordon & David Hughes (London: Heinemann, 1986), pp. 198–204.
49 Frank Tuohy, 'Dreams of Unfair Women' in *Winter's Tales — New Series: 1* ed. David Hughes (London: Constable, 1985), pp. 181–189; and Frank Tuohy, 'The Gate of the Year' in *The Junky's Christmas and other stories*, ed. Elisa Seagrave (London & New York: Serpent's Tail, 1994), pp. 90–96.
50 The play by Arthur Miller (1915–2005) is *A View from the Bridge*, first performed in 1955. It is being rehearsed by some students in the story. *CS*, pp. 301–302.
51 The poem by Louis MacNeice (1907–1963) was written in 1940, and has a slightly ominous note in its description of the change of season, but seems unconnected with the story. Louis MacNeice, *Collected Poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 1986; first pub. 1966), pp. 185–186.
52 The novel by Vladimir Nabokov (1899–1977) is *Lolita*, first published in 1955. It is referred to in conversation in the story. *CS*, pp. 321 & 324.
53 Hugh Stevens, op. cit., p. 108.