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Eachus,

Jacqueline Clark

1987

D.H. LAWRENCE'S PHILOSOPHY OF HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS AS SEEN IN FOUR NOVELS

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Department of English

Western Kentucky University

Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by Jacqueline Clark Eachus

July 1987

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D.H. LAWRENCE'S PHILOSOPHY OF HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS
AS SEEN IN FOUR NOVELS

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D.H. LAWRENCE'S PHILOSOPHY OF HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS AS SEEN IN FOUR NOVELS

Jacqueline Eachus July 1987 125 pages

Directed by: James Heldman, Charmaine Mosby, and George McCelvey

Department of English Western Kentucky University

The growth of an individual into mature selfhood is the primary basis of the Lawrentian relationship. Lawrence describes a mystical kind of rebirth of the self into a deeper level of the unconscious. He says that one should explore the impulses and desires of the unconscious in order to find a deeper, more fulfilled self. Ursula of _The Rainbow_ and Paul of _Sons and Lovers_ are the characters who most successfully begin this growth into separate selfhood.

According to Lawrence the journey into the unconscious is to be accomplished through sensual experiences. He mistrusts the intellect because he feels that the mind distorts reality. The bodily sensations are more concrete, and therefore more real. Lawrence demonstrates in Walter Morel of _Sons and Lovers_, Birkin and Ursula of _Women in Love_, and Connie and Mellors of _Lady Chatterley's Lover_ that spontaneous, sensual experiences are necessary to live a fully sensual life.

For Lawrence, the failure to discover the deepest, sensual self results in the need to control others. Characters who embrace abstract intellectualism and modern industrialism are the ones who attempt to force every living thing into submission to their egos. The compulsion to dominate others gives the characters a temporary feeling of fulfillment but is ultimately destructive. Gertrude, Miriam, Gerald, and Hermione are destructive characters who strive to control others. They are weak and dependent, needing another person's strength of self to feel complete.

The acknowledgement of a separate self is crucial to Lawrence's philosophy of relationships. According to his philosophy a person discovers the separate, fundamental self at the unconscious level through sensual experiences. Abstract intellectualism and industrialism are responsible for causing man's alienation from himself; his failure to discover and acknowledge a deeper self generates destructiveness which is manifested in his domination of other living beings.

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Introduction

> Vitally, the human race is dying. It is like a great uprooted tree, with its roots in the air. We must plant ourselves again in the universe.
>
> "A Propos of _Lady Chatterley's Lover_"

The novels of D.H. Lawrence function as studies of different types of human relationships. One gets to the very heart of Lawrence's philosophy of these relationships in _Sons and Lovers_, _The Rainbow_, _Women in Love_, and _Lady Chatterley's Lover_. The purpose of this study is to explore the different types of relationships in these novels, the characters' motives for their actions within a relationship, and Lawrence's evolving philosophy as it progresses from novel to novel. Lawrence's doctrine of love is a complicated philosophy of interlocking ideas fitting together in unison. Lawrence's idea of emotionalism opposing intellectualism is a common theme in these four novels. Also, according to Lawrence, industrialism has devitalized man making him unable to find fulfillment; one can trace his increasing preoccupation with this theme reaching his fullest treatment of it in _Lady Chatterley's Lover_. He uses a variation of a mystic,

Eastern erotic philosophy as the foundation for man's salvation through the sexual act.

In Chapter One the birth and role of the mature, healthy self as seen in these four novels is investigated. In the Lawrentian relationship between two people the self should be secure, complete, and fulfilled, an idea which is at the very center of many Eastern philosophies, by means of growth in the likeness of a wheel hub with its many spokes reaching outward. Chapter Two consists of Lawrence's ideas concerning the senses and subconscious communion through sex. Many passages from the novels will be used to illustrate this sensuousness on which Lawrence based his philosophy. Chapter Three contains an analysis of the different relationships between the characters of the novels as the characters relate to the domination theme; in many of these relationships the two people often struggle for dominance. Lawrence writes about how one person's "will" can destroy another person who is not complete and secure within himself; in Chapter Three the consequences of the female as victor and male as victor will be discussed. Relationships between members of the same sex in these novels are to be considered as well.

Central to the success of a Lawrentian relationship is the birth and role of the self; according to Lawrence, one must achieve a separateness or otherness before one can accept in others that same quality which makes a successful relationship. The absence of this secure self usually results either in a person wanting to be possessed or in that person possessing another. In order for one to be reborn within the self, the senses must be developed as a means of subconscious communion with another human being; subconscious communion through the senses and the sexual act is present only when two people exist as separate beings and simultaneously connect through the vital "blood-circuit." Lawrence says in "A Propos of <u>Lady Chatterley's Lover</u>" that the "blood-circuit" is the connection of man and woman during the sexual act which he describes as two rivers flowing along beside one another, attracting and repelling one another, creating a "polarity." When the phallic "column of blood" fills the "valley of blood of a woman," an electrical impulse establishes the "blood-circuit" (101). Lawrence warns that, in the event one partner is too weak to connect, a power struggle ensues, and one partner emerges as the dominant force in the relationship.

In Lawrence's novels the people who actually achieve a separateness and completeness within themselves are much stronger than those who are dependent and weak. In _The Rainbow_ Virtually all the Brangwen men, plus Skrebensky, cling to their women and cannot accept that the women exist in themselves; accepting this independence in otherness would be to admit their own insecurities and shortcomings. Peter Balbert writes that this "struggle for freedom, for organic consciousness, is related to the familiar battle that insecure youth wages for satisfactory socio-sexual adjustment" (30). The problem arises when an inexperienced, incomplete person becomes involved with another person before his birth into selfhood. Paul Morel in _Sons and Lovers_, for example, is reborn into himself when his mother dies and the controlling, suffocating force is removed.

Sensuality is vital to Lawrence's philosophy, for an unconscious communion can exist only if all the senses are involved. During this act of communion, mental processes are to be suspended for Lawrence hated conscious sensuality. Lawrence thought that one should explore all the different sensations possible and that all of them should be spontaneous. Spontaneity seems to be the essence of sensuality for him because mental

responses are less apt to be utilized. Through Birkin in Women in Love Lawrence attempts to dramatize experiences of this sort for the reader. An example is the scene in which Birkin taking off his clothing

> sat down naked among the primroses, moving his feet softly among the primroses, his legs, his knees, his arms right up to the arm-pits, lying down and letting them touch his belly, his breasts. . . . The soft sharp boughs beat upon him, as he moved in keen pangs against them, threw little cold showers of drops on his belly, and beat his loins with their clusters of soft-sharp needles. (100)

Here Birkin seems to reach a high level of euphoria and concentrates only on the sense of touch. Tactile sensory experiences appear to be the ultimate achievement of sensuousness as the skin functions as a reservoir of sensation.

Anthony Burgess summarizes Lawrence's feeling on the idea of making sex more sensual and fulfilling:

> Lawrence told us in his novels and prophetic writings that Western industrialism was breaking down, that bourgeois Christianity was dead, that salvation lay in a return to

> the life of the loins and the instincts.
> (30)

A return to this life of "the loins and the instincts" is important to Lawrence's idea of sex, for it calls on one to rely on the instincts and senses in the sex experience. If one relies on these, the sexual act can help one to become reborn into a new existence within the self. Lawrence's favorite symbol of the Phoenix comes to mind: the dying away of the old self and the new one in the form of the Phoenix rising from its ashes.

Horace Gregory understands the Lawrentian importance of sex:

> Here, in the act of sex, is the short death from which all mankind is reborn, a function as universal as the sunrise upon a summer morning. One may lose all the material things of life, stock markets fall, and the entire fabric of modern culture fade into nothingness, but the central function of life would remain secure. (85)

One Eastern philosophy is based almost entirely on the sexual act; it is a form of yoga called Tantra in which Nirvana or oneness with the cosmos is achieved, not

through meditation or physical exercise, but through the sexual act. Kamala Devi said that D.H. Lawrence

> understood the Tantric vision of energy and presented it exquisitely. He saw it as a life-force capable of being sucked out of a man, or by the power of sexual love, fanned into a fierce living flame. (29)

However, living the life of pure sensuality does not a guarantee that a relationship will be a success. In D.H. Lawrence: An Unprofessional Study Anais Nin writes that "If Lawrence had meant that we should abide by a 'mindless sensuality' then the relationship between Gerald and Gudrun would have been quite perfect" (83).

In most of the novels one can see Lawrence's obsession with dominance in a relationship. Through the characters of Paul Morel in Sons and Lovers, Birkin in Women in Love, and Mellors in Lady Chatterley's Lover, Lawrence asserts that women have a kind of built-in drive to fuse their mates into themselves, possess them, and carry them around in their minds. Birkin says in Women in Love: "'Why not leave the other being free, why try to absorb, or melt, or merge?'" (301) Hermione and Gudrun of Women in Love, Gertrude Morel and Miriam of Sons and Lovers, and Anna,

Will, and Tom of _The Rainbow_ all attempt to force their will on another being. Father-daughter and mother-son relationships are also subject to this emotionally crippling domination which in any relationship retards self-growth.

Lawrence allows only a few relationships to work--Ursula and Birkin in _Women in Love_ and Connie and Mellors in _Lady Chatterley's Lover_--and a measure of success can be seen in the relationship between Tom and Lydia of _The Rainbow_ before modern industrialism kills off the last remnants of rural life. Unrest and unhappiness seem to permeate most of the other Lawrentian relationships. Many people in Lawrence's novels want to love for all the wrong reasons--to absorb another person or to live as a parasite, dependent and weak which indicates insecurities within the self. Carol Dix paraphrases Lawrence's idea of what a working relationship should be: "We see one of Lawrence's recurring images for modern marriage: that of the ships grappled together, travelling in the same direction, but apart" (74).

CHAPTER ONE

GROWTH INTO SELFHOOD

> . . . there is in me this necessity to separate and distinguish myself into gem-like singleness, distinct and apart from all the rest, proud as a lion, isolated as a star.
>
> "Love"

The core of D.H. Lawrence's philosophy concerns a theme which is found in almost all his writings, the importance of self-discovery. Kenneth Young says of this theme, "Lawrence taught that a man's first duty was to his deepest self" (40). In other words, a person must discover the most elemental self which lies in the depths of the unconscious; this self is not a pattern of what other people or institutions expect. Raymond Williams quotes Lawrence's assertion that "'The living self has one purpose only: to come into its own fulness of being'" (169). Lawrence's stronger characters assert their individuality proudly and shamelessly; to be oneself without the fear of being accepted by others seems to be the message of Lawrence's novels.

Lawrence consistently claims that one must achieve this sense of belonging to oneself before one can accept the self in others. Here is the achievement of the mature, fulfilled person; it takes much self-confidence to allow other people, or any living thing, to exist on its own and not exert one's will on that living being. Julian Moynahan writes that a unity is achieved in Lawrentian thought when one can accept "live things and persons outside oneself" (79). He parallels Lawrentian thought with that of the philosopher Alfred North Whitehead who said that nature and man are alive within each other and that man's "sense of self is included in his sense of otherness" (79). It seems that if a person conceives of and accepts the separateness and uniqueness of any living creature, that person has a strong sense of the self; otherwise, he cannot get past himself to see anyone else. In the event that no self is formed, the chasm between two living beings is not bridged; that person is lost in himself and eventually forces his will upon the other. He imposes his own self upon the other because he is not complete; quite simply, the other being is an extension of his own egotistical self. This sense of power temporarily causes him to feel whole and complete, but this feeling is transient.

Once a person withdraws into himself and turns in upon his nature, utter despair and hollowness become unbearable. Anton Skrebensky and Tom Brangwen of *The Rainbow* are good examples of this type of character. Ursula and Lydia Brangwen of *The Rainbow* are the opposite natures, strong and self-secure. Birkin of *Women in Love* and Mellors of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* are the male models of the secure self.

The struggle into selfhood is the most important issue in *The Rainbow*; it is fundamental to the Lawrentian relationship. There must be a secure self already in existence before a relationship can develop. In this novel Lawrence dramatizes the growth of the self in stages, particularly the growth of Ursula Brangwen. This theme of self-discovery will be examined first because the themes in Chapters Two and Three are based on this all important one.

In the struggle to become oneself, or to be reborn within the self, some characters stand high above the rest, especially Ursula and Lydia. The non-self category is filled with countless lost souls from Lawrence's novels, but a few are so pathetic that they seem like shadowy forms of human beings. These non-entities search for another soul in which to pour themselves, and they do this to expel the burden of

discovering themselves--Anton Skrebensky of The Rainbow is, without doubt, Lawrence's masterpiece of this type.

The Rainbow is a novel of three generations of the Brangwen family beginning with Tom and Lydia Brangwen. Tom and Lydia have an unsatisfying relationship in the beginning, but Tom finally achieves a degree of happiness with Lydia's support. They come to enjoy a kind of unexciting companionship; Peter Balbert says that theirs is a "dull world, of course, because it is never explored, and that is the heavy qualification which Lawrence places on Tom and Lydia's quest for the rainbow condition. Their progress is from fear and constraint to stability and domesticity" (42). Tom never completely satisfies Lydia's desire that they meet as equals; however, their relationship is more successful than that of the next generation. Anna, Lydia's daughter from her first marriage, marries Will Brangwen. This relationship is not fulfilling. Will is either mad with rage or completely withdrawn, and Anna is only half-alive in her physical existence. Their daughter Ursula falls in love with Anton Skrebensky, and this relationship is the least successful of the three. Skrebensky has no self to meet with Ursula as an equal partner, so he attempts to force his will on her. A struggle of wills results,

and being the stronger of the two, Ursula destroys him. At the end of the novel, Ursula discovers herself at the deepest level of the unconscious, and Skrebensky goes off to India annihilated. She is left with a sense of hope, for she stands on a solid foundation, having been reborn within herself.

In The Rainbow Lydia and Ursula Brangwen are two strong characters who achieve a sense of otherness. Lydia is self-secure when she is first introduced, but Ursula's growth into selfhood is plotted throughout a large part of the novel. Lydia's very foreignness contributes to her separateness, whereas Ursula must grow out of a self already known to her family and friends. Subsequently, through this carefully plotted growth, the reader can relate more to Ursula because he grows along with her, feels her pain, and experiences her joys. Ursula seems to be the strongest feminine character in the four novels under consideration.

Lydia Lensky is described by Tom Brangwen as being "isolated yet for him dominant in her foreign existence" (33). He knows this the moment he spots her walking down the road. The fact that she is an outsider allows her a greater degree of separateness. However, Lydia possesses a strong sense of individuality without her foreignness. Tom is pleased

with this in the beginning; he feels as if her separateness has "set him curiously free" (36). This detached quality of Lydia's personality is what draws Tom to her, but later it begins to enrage him because he discovers that she is so much stronger than he and that he is not complete within himself.

> But during the long February nights with the ewes in labor, looking out from the shelter into the flashing stars, he knew he did not belong to himself. He must admit that he was only fragmentary, something incomplete and subject. (40)

Tom comes to depend on Lydia for his sense of self; he has no idea who he really is. He seems to be blown about, feeling this or that, not really knowing why he is reacting. He feels that Lydia will give him peace and "completeness and perfection" (41). Lydia, however, is so strong and complete within herself that she wants a man who can meet her as her equal--who can balance with her. Tom appears to be that equal in the beginning, but it is a kind of transient strength that falters against the solid strength of Lydia. Tom feels as if he must know Lydia's "darkness" that part of her kept within herself, the mystical individuality which, once known, lessens the needed distance from a partner.

But Tom loves this distantness of Lydia's person in the early stages of their relationship:

> It was rather splendid, to be so ignored by her, whilst she lay against him, and he lifted her with his breathing, and felt her weight upon his living, so he had a completeness and an inviolable power. He did not interfere with her. He did not even know her. . . . He felt strong, physically, carrying her on his breathing. (47)

Indeed, Lydia is self-secure, but she has a past filled with the pain of the death of her two children and her first husband. Her fear of involvement with others drives her into isolation; she withdraws since she cannot endure the pain of losing someone she loves. Tom is weak, but he possesses enough strength to rekindle the "little flame of being" in Lydia. Tom is still connected with the earth, as all the Brangwen men before him; the industrial revolution has not yet touched his way of life. The impact of industrialism accounts, in part, for the weakness of the succeeding generations; Tom has the good fortune to live still in the old "blood-intimacy":

> So much warmth and generating and pain and death did they know in their blood, earth and

> sky and beast and green plants, so much exchange and interchange they had with these, that they lived full and surcharged, their senses full fed, their faces always turned to the heat of the blood. (9)

Lydia is ready for a man to awaken her, and Tom has enough of this Brangwen "blood-intimacy" with his surroundings to do so. Lydia finds herself feeling ambivalent. She is

> always, however, between--while she lapsed into the old unconsciousness, indifference, and there was a will in her to save herself from living anymore. But she would wake in the morning one day and feel her blood running, feel herself lying open like a flower unsheathed in the sun, insistent and potent with demand. (55)

She lapses back into her "old indifference" because she has felt so much pain in her life; her indifference is her defense against feeling since feeling brings pain. But when she sees the vitality in Tom's being, she feels the urge to live again, to become receptive to all that surrounds her. Her indifference is not a flaw in her character; in fact, it reveals her strength and determination. Tom may not be complete within himself,

but he rises far above the other men in The Rainbow because of his connection with the earth and nature. This connection with the earth is Lydia's salvation and the reason for what happiness Tom enjoys in his life. But again, Lydia keeps her individuality by withdrawing into herself from time to time, and it drives Tom mad with rage. He is always afraid that she will leave him, and he feels that he does not know her. He is afraid of the unknown since there is so much of the unknown in himself; he cannot endure Lydia's isolating herself from him since he needs her to feel complete. His fear of her leaving him is a fear characteristic of an insecure person. Basically, it is the fear of being completely and utterly alone--all alone with no one but oneself. In being aware of this fear, an insecure person must face the unformed soul residing within the body so that he feels hollow, vacant. Tom is always reactive when Lydia "closes" herself to him:

> . . . she closed again, away from him, was sheathed over, impervious to him, oblivious. Then a black, bottomless despair became real to him, he knew what he had lost. . . . In misery, his heart like a heavy stone, he went about unliving. . . . Till gradually he became desperate, lost his understanding, was

> plunged in a revolt that knew no bounds. Inarticulate, he moved with her at the Marsh in violent, gloomy, wordless passion, almost in hatred of her. (56)

Tom feels that he is living again when Lydia once more turns her attention to him. Lydia resents his childish behavior because "it was cruel to her, to be opened and offered to him, yet not to know what he was, not even that he was there" (57). She needs a strong man against whom to define herself; she also needs to perceive a strong male essence to enjoy her own femininity. Tom cannot meet her to balance her. Yet there are periods of happiness between them; most of these times are during the sexual act. The very fact that they were unknown to each other--Lydia's secure self not needing to divulge itself and Tom's self too afraid she will see his inadequacies--heightens their passions; it adds a sense of mystery and fascination:

> She was sure to come at last, and touch him. Then he burst into flame for her, and lost himself . . . and he went to take her again . . . to bury himself in the depths of her in an inexhaustible exploration, she all the while revelling in that he revelled in her. (62)

Peter Balbert calls this alternating fulfillment and despair a "vitalistic pull and flow" (86) which he feels is a characteristic feature of Lawrence's art. He says that Lawrence was aware that human nature must regress as well as progress and that this process was the essence of living. Balbert states that one is not reborn in a "flash of some epiphany, but from the gradual pulsing to-and-fro of unconscious desire that ultimately purges a person of his devitalizing urge" (86). The alternation between growth and regression invites the reader to participate in the passions of his characters; this is his true art. Tom and Lydia's relationship constantly changes, and the reader feels involved. Therefore, Lawrence achieves that which is all important; the reader thinks not only about abstract themes or ideas, but about himself in relation to the growth of the characters.

Later in the relationship between Tom and Lydia, Lydia becomes pregnant, and feeling even more thrust out of her life, Tom hates her for her "cold and selfish" nature. He begins to exert his will on her and behaves distantly toward her, all the while worrying abou. losing her. He begins to try to escape from the inadequacy in himself, having no one to pour himself into; he withholds his rage "but his wrists

trembled and seemed mad, seemed as if they would burst" (65). He feels that his support has been taken out from under him and that he is grasping for something solid to save him. Lawrence writes that Tom "saved himself . . . by sheer tension, sheer backward resistance" (65).

Finally, in Chapter Three Tom realizes that he needs to find other "centres of living" rather than to depend entirely on Lydia for his existence. He decides on Lydia's daughter Anna from her previous marriage for this centre. Some of the tension between Lydia and Tom is released until Lydia confronts him with the real issue of their struggle: "'you should not want so much attention. You are not a baby'" (92). Then Tom suddenly realizes that Lydia may feel "lonely, isolated, unsure" herself, and he becomes more tender in his treatment of her. The crisis comes in the scene where Tom and Lydia surrender themselves to a passionate mating. Tom finds stability in the relationship after this physical crisis and is able to transcend his incompleteness through the sexual act:

> She put her arms round him as he stood before her, round his thighs, pressing him against her breast. And her hands on him seemed to reveal to him the mould of his own nakedness,

> he was passionately lonely to himself. . . . She waited for him to meet her, not to bow before her and serve her. She wanted his active participation, not his submission. . . . And it was torture to him, that he must give himself to her actively. . . . There were a few moments of stillness. Then gradually, the tension, the withholding realized in him and he began to flow towards her. . . . His blood beat up in waves of desire. He wanted to come to her, to meet her . . . he pressed forward, nearer, nearer, to receive the consummation of himself, be received within the darkness which would swallow him and yield him up to himself. If he could come really within the blazing kernel of darkness, if really he could be destroyed, burst away till he lit with her in one consummation, that were supreme, supreme. (95)

Lawrence describes Tom after this sexual act as entering a higher level of existence; he achieves a sense of self and is able to go about his daily life, as Lydia is, knowing at the same time that he is deeply and vitally connected with her and that their union has

absolutely nothing to do with the rest of the world. Their time together is a private world where none enter save themselves. They cherish this secret and sacred understanding without words; it is a subtle meeting and touching of souls. Lawrence describes the fulfillment of their relationship saying that "at last they had joined hands, the house was finished, and the Lord took up his abode. And they were glad" (96). The key word here is "joined"; they are no longer set against each other by tension. They are open and receptive toward one another: "When she called, he answered, when he asked, her response came at once or at length" (96).

There seems to be some measure of success in this relationship. The sexual act appears to be the way of destroying the devastating tension between the two so that their souls can meet in a powerful consummation. In the world of daylight they regard each other as strangers, and this is part of the reason Tom begins to drink. Peter Balbert maintains that he drinks "to burn out the youth from his blood" (23). Eventually, after a night of drinking in Nottingham, he comes home late and drowns in a flood. Once again poor Lydia withdraws into herself to escape pain: "she wanted to draw away. She wanted at last her own innocence and peace" (253). This retreat dramatizes the essential difference

between Lydia and Ursula. Ursula confronts her pain, works through it, and conquers it by sheer strength of character. She always questions; she never accepts an idea before she analyzes it and makes it a part of her experience. She accepts all living things as being important in themselves without any connection to anything or anyone else, for she understands the supreme importance of the separate existence of all living beings. She is the expression of a truly strong Lawrentian character.

Ursula is never static, which some critics, including Balbert, insist, is the essence of Lawrence's genius. His characters change as persons do in reality; they are fluid, living. Ursula in _The Rainbow_, Paul in _Sons and Lovers_, and Birkin in _Women in Love_ are three of Lawrence's most fluid characters. Their suffering makes them more real than the other characters in the novels; they have color, form, and weight.

In the sections of _The Rainbow_ dealing with Ursula's coming to selfhood, Lawrence writes some of his most powerful passages. Ursula grows through her step-by-step shedding of growth-retarding relationships. She must first free herself from her father with whom she has formed a dangerous, unhealthy

relationship; then she must go beyond her preoccupation with religion and education, break the connection with her school mistress Winnifred Inger and her mother, and sever her emotional and sexual bond with Anton Skrebensky.

Her father, Will Brangwen, is very weak and dependent, leaning heavily on his wife Anna for his sense of self. When Anna resists this intrusion upon herself, he turns to his tiny daughter on whom to exert his will. Will, aptly named, forms a relationship with his daughter which hinders her development but awakens her consciousness much too early. This makes the relationship twice as dangerous for Ursula:

> Her father was the dawn wherein her consciousness woke up. Her father came too near to her. The clasp of his hands and the power of his breast woke her up almost in pain from the transient unconsciousness of childhood. Wide-eyed, unseeing, she was awake before she knew how to see. She was wakened too soon. (221)

Her father is not at all sensitive to Ursula's emotional needs; Peter Balbert claims that she is merely a "depository of his own" (84). Balbert also asserts that her connection with her father is a

"birth-retarding umbilical attachment" (82). Ursula nearly suffocates under his domination and cannot grow until she breaks away.

Since Anna cannot accept the responsibility of Will's soul, Will must turn to someone, and little Ursula becomes the being in whom Will can exist. She is his center of life, even from the time she first learns to walk. She always runs to meet him when he comes home from work, and Lawrence describes her as "a tiny, tottering, wind-blown little mite with a dark head, who as soon as she saw him, would come running in tiny, wild, windmill fashion, lifting her arms up and down to him" (213-4). Will devotes himself to the child, and his devotion does not allow her to grow as she normally would have. It is a subtle kind of domination which will result in a crisis when she begins to pull away and look to the outer world.

When Ursula begins to assert her own will in response to Will's actions, he sternly reprimands her. In one incident Will allows Ursula free run of the inside of the church where she does some damage. Mrs. Wilkinson, the char-woman of the church committee, gives Will a lecture about Ursula's behavior in this matter. Will scolds Ursula: "harsh and cat-like, he was blind to the child. She shrank away in childish

anguish and dread" (218). She still clings to Will, however, even after the harsh scolding. She continues to struggle to please him in every way. When he is happy and at peace, so is she.

In one scene Will plants a potato seed bed, and little Ursula decides that she wants to help. This experience proves to be painful to her because she tries too hard for approval. She measures herself against an adult, and of course, she is not as efficient in the potato patch as an adult would be. Therefore, she gives up, knowing that she cannot possibly have anything to offer to this big, grown-up world. She promptly walks across the seed beds, and Will is beside himself with rage. He calls her a "nuisance" and "greedy," and Ursula is devastated:

> Her vulnerable little soul was flayed and trampled. Why were the foot-prints there? She had not wanted to make them. . . . Her soul, her consciousness seemed to die away. . . . Her soul had gone hard and unresponsive. She cared no longer. (224)

Like Tom Brangwen, Will cannot accept another person's isolated self. He feels as if he wants "to break her" by forcing his will upon her. Her active resistance

infuriates him, and finally Will becomes physical in his demand for her subordination and strikes her:

> . . . the sobs were tearing her soul. And when he had gone, she would go and creep under the parlour sofa, and lie clinched in the silent, hidden misery of childhood . . . she asserted herself only. There was now nothing in the world but her own self. So very soon, she came to believe in the outward malevolence that was against her. And very early, she learned that even her adored father was out of this malevolence. And very early she learned to harden her soul in resistance and denial of all that was outside her, harden herself upon her own being. (224)

In order to shock her into submission, Will frightens her when they go swimming and when they go to the fair. At the fair he makes her physically ill by rocking the swingboat too high. When they arrive home, she "crept away under the parlour sofa, like a sick little animal, and was a long time before she crawled out" (226). This approach boomerangs, however, because, instead of becoming submissive, Ursula retreats farther away from him. The turning point comes after Ursula forgets to

lock the parish room and the children do "much damage" to the inside of the parish. Will strikes Ursula across her face. She seemingly breaks in front of him, but

> Her heart burnt in isolation . . . she never forgot. When she returned to her love for her father, the seed of mistrust and defiance burned unquenched. . . . She no longer belonged to him unquestioned. Slowly, slowly, the first of mistrust and defiance burned in her, burned away her connection with him. (267)

She then turns her passion upon the "Sunday world," the only day that she feels "really free to be herself" (271). By now, Ursula has many brothers and sisters, and on Sunday they are made to play outside. The house becomes a kind of "sanctuary, with peace breathing like a strange bird alighted in the rooms" (273). She decides that religion is to be her salvation, but she idealizes Jesus, making him "remote, shining in the distance" (275). This concept of a distant Jesus does not satisfy her, so she "leapt with sensuous yearning to respond to Christ" (287). She wanted to see and feel him; she wanted to "go to him really, and lay her head on his breast" (287). But

eventually, she comes to mistrust his bleeding wounds and "the smell of grave-clothes" (280), and she begins to question Christian teachings and doctrines. Christianity becomes to her "a tale, a myth, an illusion," for she realizes that these Christian lessons cannot apply to her week-day world.

When Ursula's sister Theresa slaps her, Ursula remembers her Sunday school lesson and turns the other cheek "which Theresa, in exasperation at the challenge, also hit. Whereupon Ursula, with boiling heart, went meekly away" (285). But she is not content with the application of this lesson; she wants to get her revenge. Ursula "was not easy till she had again quarreled with Theresa and had almost shaken her sister's head off after which she went away, unchristian, but clean" (285). Religion serves one purpose in Ursula's development; it serves as an experience against which she can define herself. Once more she grows in spirit and becomes a degree more sure in herself.

The next stage in Ursula's growth into selfhood involves a young man on leave from the Army, Anton Skrebensky. Ursula thinks him the most "independent" and "established" young man she has ever met. Ironically, he seems complete to her, and his

confidence draws her to him. Theirs appears to be a wonderful relationship, but Lawrence warns the reader from the outset that "under it all was a poignant sense of transience" (303).

This relationship begins to sour once Skrebensky begins to force his will upon Ursula; he wants to bully her because it gives him a temporary surge of power which he mistakes for completeness. Ursula refuses to allow this intrusion on herself, and her refusal causes a considerable amount of tension in their relationship. Furthermore, she loses some respect for him in their conversation about his duty to his nation, for he tells her that he will perform his duty in the same way everyone else does. He believes that the self is not important, just society as a whole. A man is special in his contribution to the society and not important in his separate self. Ursula says, "'It seems to me as if you weren't anybody--as if there weren't anybody there, where you are. . . . You seem like nothing to me'" (311). She no longer cares if she hurts him and often resembles what he thinks of as a harpy.

The real conflict is that Ursula has very strong sense of self and will protect it with all the power she has. Skrebensky is no match for her; he cannot exist within his own self. He must have another being

in whom he can exist. When Skrebensky bullies Ursula, he gets a temporary feeling of power and fulfillment: however, since Ursula is stronger than he, he does not succeed in forcing her into submission. In fact, she is so much stronger than he that her power spills over in excess and destroys him. William Lenz argues that Skrebensky "draws his only real sense of identity from Ursula" (16). He needs a warm, human cocoon into which he can immerse himself while Ursula needs a strong, self-secure male against whom she can define herself. Gavriel Ben Ephraim states that "she is not balanced by a male" which makes her growth too "abstract" (172).

Ursula's power reaches its culmination under the influence of the white moonlight. Peter Balbert says that "the moon is for Lawrence the symbol of individuality, of inviolable separateness" (100). Ursula seems to crystallize her separate self by the light of the moon:

> But her naked self was away there beating upon the moonlight, dashing the moonlight with her breasts and her knees, in meeting, in communion. She half started . . . to fling away her clothing and flee away. . . . Skrebensky like a loadstone weighed on her. . . . She felt the burden of him. . . .

> Her hands felt destructive, like metal blades of destruction. (319)

Instead of turning away from what he knows will be his spiritual death, Skrebensky embraces "a blade that hurt him. Yet he would clasp her, if it killed him" (320-1). Ursula, having no equally strong male to counterbalance her, goes to the extreme with her power of self. Skrebensky cannot stop her; in fact, he wants so much to force his own will upon her and have her submissiveness that he will not cease his efforts. He must control that which evades him or die in the struggle:

> But hard and fierce she had fastened upon him, cold as the moon and burning as a fierce salt. . . . She was there fierce, corrosive, seething with his destruction, seething like some cruel, corrosive salt around the last substance of his being, destroying him . . .and his soul was dissolved with agony and annihilation. . . . She had triumphed: he was not any more. (322)

In effect, Skrebensky loses this battle with Ursula because he does not consider the individual soul important; his soul is important "as far as he represents all humanity" (328). He has no perception

of an individual/separate soul upon which to place importance; he exists as a carbon copy of a mass of soldiers. So as he leaves to fight in the Boer War, Skrebensky is already defeated.

During his time away Ursula becomes obsessed with her class-mistress, Miss Winnifred Inger, whose pride, intelligence, and independence win Ursula's love and respect. During class lectures Ursula feels a kind of "unspoken intimacy" with her mistress, and sometimes, they are not even aware that anyone else is present. Ursula, seeing her as the shining example of what she wants to become, tries to please her in any way she can. She thinks Winnifred "proud and free as a man, yet exquisite as a woman. . .how straight and fine was her back, how strong her loins, how calm and free her limbs!" (337).

Then one day when Ursula goes to her swimming class, she and Miss Inger become more passionate in their treatment of one another. Ursula "wanted to touch the other, to touch her, to feel her. . .the beauty of the firm, white, cool flesh! Ah, the wonderful firm limbs. If she could but hold them, hug them, press them between her own small breasts" (338). Winnifred catches Ursula and holds her around her waist after the swimming race and "the bodies of the two

women touched, heaved against each other" (338). Ursula is so overcome with passion and emotion that she is unable to stand on her own and grasps the rails of the swimming pool for support.

The relationship becomes sensual on the afternoon that Miss Inger invites Ursula to tea. After darkness falls, they go for a swim in the nude, and Miss Inger

> put her arms round her, and kissed her. And she lifted her in her arms. . . . Ursula twined her body about her mistress . . . after a while the rain came down on their flushed, hot limbs, startling, delicious. . . . Ursula received the stream of it upon her breasts and her limbs. (340)

Winnifred is surely more dominant and aggressive in the relationship than Ursula; Lydia Blanchard goes so far as to say that Winnifred is a "mother figure" to Ursula (90). Lawrence does not allow the relationship between Ursula and Winnifred to work. Nowhere in Lawrence's novels is there a successful relationship between two women. A few relationships between men have the potential to work, but never is this true of relationships between women. Even the title of the chapter, "Shame," indicates how undesirable such a relationship is to Lawrence. Ursula begins to reject

Winnifred and views her as she does her Uncle Tom. He worships the "impure abstraction, the mechanisms of matter" (358). Winnifred, too, worships the machine; therefore, the two are paired together in terms of the "marsh, where life and decaying are one" (351).

Later, when Ursula attends college, she becomes disenchanted with education and knowledge. She sees it as false, "a flunkey to the god of material success" (435). There is one class she enjoys--biology. In her college biology lab while examining a cell under the microscope, she perceives that the self is really the most important responsibility an individual has, and the purpose of life becomes suddenly clear to her:

> For what purpose were the incalculable physical and chemical activities nodalized in this shadowy, moving speck under her microscope?. . . It intended to be itself. But what self? Suddenly in her mind the world gleamed strangely, with an intense light, like the nucleus of the creature under the microscope. Suddenly, she had passed away into an intensely-gleaming light of knowledge. . . . It was a consummation, a being infinite. Self was a oneness with the

> infinite. To be oneself was a supreme, gleaming triumph of infinity. (441)

Ursula comes to a great understanding of the world and of herself, but she regresses in her thinking by imagining Skrebensky her saviour, her love. The relationship becomes purely sensual; this is the strongest hold Skrebensky has on Ursula. Critics point out that Ursula will not submit fully to this "mindless sensuality" as so many Lawrentian characters do, thus avoiding the birth into selfhood. Her strong female will exerts itself, and she attacks him, destroying him as he feels "cut off at the knees, a figure made worthless" (462). One of the most pathetic scenes in the novel is the one where Ursula tells Skrebensky that she will not marry him. He cries uncontrollably; "his chin jerked back against his throat" and "the curious, crowing, hiccuping sound came again, his face twisted like insanity" (467). After this painful exchange, Skrebensky leaves for India. Skrebensky is perhaps the most pathetic character in Lawrence's novels.

When Ursula finds that she is pregnant, she punishes herself by believing that she should be content with Skrebensky, and she thinks that she should be content as her mother is with "her man, her children, her place of shelter under the sun" (485).

Ursula realizes that her mother has been perfectly satisfied in her physical, sensual existence, bearing child after child. She feels that maybe her mother was the one true to her spirit and that she herself was "false, trashy, conceited" (485). She berates herself for feeling that she is different and special, and she feels ashamed that she should want more in life than anyone else has. At this point in the novel, Ursula is questioning everything, mostly herself, and trying to cope with guilt in her relations with Skrebensky and her mother. She regresses in her development for a brief time, but Ursula is too strong willed to be satisfied with less.

After Skrebensky leaves for India, the scene in which Ursula encounters a group of wild horses in a lane where she is working is one that brings her to the crisis in her development. This scene takes place just after she learns she is pregnant, and she is thinking about her situation as she walks. The horses pursue her and threaten her with their wildness and heaviness. She escapes them by climbing an oak tree close to a fence and falling to the other side of the fence to safety. Some critics view the horses as the masculine threat of a life of pure sensuousness and voluptuousness. To Ursula they seem to symbolize an

oppressive weight upon her, much in the same way Skrebensky is, and an obstruction to her fulfillment. The fall she takes in her efforts to escape the horses rids her of the last hold Skrebensky has on her--the child.

During her subsequent illness Ursula purges herself of all in the past that binds her, and she becomes

> The naked, clear kernel thrusting forth the clear, powerful shoot, and the world was a bygone winter, discarded, her mother and father and Anton, and college and all her friends, all cast off like a year that has gone by, whilst the kernel was free and naked and striving to take new root, to create a new knowledge of Eternity in the flux of Time. And the kernel was the only reality. . . . She had her root in new ground, she was gradually absorbed into growth. (493)

Now there is hope with the coming of the rainbow, and Ursula is reborn within herself. Allan Zoll writes that coming to know oneself is not accomplished by utilizing the mind but by relying on the "senses of the animal body" (14). Lawrence embraces the same

vitalistic philosophy and has Ursula listen and feel with her instincts and senses as she casts off the mental restraints imposed by her parents, lovers, and even her musings on education and religion. Now she is beginning to fill herself with the "creation of the living God, instead of the old, hard barren form of bygone living" (495).

In The Rainbow the struggle of self-discovery is won by Ursula; a woman is born in the concluding pages of the novel. She is not satisfied with stability in a relationship or domestic affairs as Tom and Lydia were, nor is she satisfied with a life of complete mindless sensuality. She has the power to move ahead; she can never be satisfied with a stagnant life. Tom and Lydia's lives are stagnant; they do not move into other planes of existence. They arrive on a higher level of consciousness, but they never go any farther. Tom fails to become complete and reborn within himself, and Lydia fails because she is content to leave the relationship as it is instead of pushing farther ahead for even greater fulfillment. Ursula appears to be the only person born at the end of the novel; she is the only one mature and complete enough to build a truly satisfying and exciting relationship with another person. She accomplishes her rebirth into selfhood by

constantly questioning everything she encounters; she seems to be perpetually dissatisfied. She inherits the quest for the rainbow, and she finds it. Now she is reborn with her crystallized self serving as her strength.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SENSUAL LIFE AS MAN'S SALVATION

> My great religion is a belief in the blood, the flesh, as being wiser than the intellect. We can go wrong in our minds. But what our blood feels and believes and says is always true.
>
> "Apocalypse"

All through Lawrence's works the theme of salvation through a life of the senses is given much discussion; he sees it as vital to life. He actually glorifies the life of the senses far above the life of the intellect. This theme appears in _Sons and Lovers_ and yet it is given more discussion in _Women in Love_. The fullest treatment of this theme, however, is in _Lady Chatterley's Lover_. In "Totem" of _Women in Love_ Lawrence complains that modern life is "much too visual" and that one should "_feel_ things instead of merely looking at them" (70-1). In _Delta of Venus_ Anais Nin realizes that Lawrence's purpose in his novels is to give "instinct a language" (xi). The intellect seems to have a way of killing genuine tenderness for Lawrence; in _Lady Chatterley's Lover_ he

has Dukes, one of Clifford Chatterley's friends visiting at Wragby Hall, say:

> Real knowledge comes out of the whole corpus of the consciousness; out of your belly and your penis as much as out of your brain and mind. The mind can only analyse and rationalise. Set the mind and the reason to cock it over the rest, and all they can do is criticise, and make a deadness. (37)

Lawrence seems to feel that people tend to experience life through mental channels instead of through emotional channels it seems natural that human beings capable of emotion suffer if cheated of emotion. In "A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover" Lawrence says:

> The body's life is the life of sensations and emotions. The body feels real hunger, real thirst, real joy in the sun or the snow, real pleasure in the smell of roses or the look of a lilac bush; real anger, real sorrow, real love, real tenderness, real warmth, real passion, real hate, real grief. All the emotions belong to the body, and are only recognized by the mind. We may hear the most sorrowful piece of news, and only feel a mental excitement. Then, hours later,

> perhaps in sleep, the awareness may reach the bodily centres, and true grief wrings the heart. (335)

Lawrence claims that our knowledge has made the sun a "ball of gas with spots" (355) rather than a mystic powerful life-force of warmth; it has made the moon a "dead little earth fretted with extinct craters as with smallpox" (355) instead of an inspiration to create as with poets who often gaze wonderingly at the moon. He accuses knowledge and the machine of the modern age of making the earth just a "surface, more or less bumpy, that you travel over" instead of a life-sustaining power (355). In relation to all this talk about the intellect versus instinct and the senses, Lawrence considers the relationships between men and women and those between men and men. The success of either type of relationship depends upon how far the characters rely on their senses and impulses.

Sex and a return to the life of sensual, instinctive urges are man's salvation in the Lawrentian view. Clifford Davidson sees this theme in Lawrence as understandable since it "followed an era of psychological repression" (34). Donald Gutierrez says that Lawrence attributes the rise of puritanism and sexual repression to the "impact of syphilis on Europe"

(54) which brought about extreme fear of sex. Whatever the cause or reason, Lawrence puts forth his philosophy of man's coming to fulfillment and happiness through his own body and feelings, rather than through living by society's rules and restrictions. Lawrence attempts to show mankind how to go about getting in touch with himself through certain experiences. As mentioned earlier, Lawrence developed this theme as early as Sons and Lovers, and it becomes more developed and important with Women in Love and Lady Chatterley's Lover.

In Sons and Lovers Walter Morel is the character of the earth, sensual and magnetic. As he walks, he feels the earth with his feet through all his tissue, much the same way as Mellors does in Lady Chatterley's Lover. Gertrude Morel marries him mainly because of this sexual light that emanates from him warming her very soul. His nature is jolly, and he is often laughing in the beginning of the tale with his "rich, ringing laugh. . . . He was so full of colour and animation" (9). Lawrence further describes him as a man vital, "soft, non-intellectual, warm" (9); he also has a reverence for dancing. When Gertrude watches him dancing, she thinks him fluid and glamorous in his "subtle exultation" (9). In the evenings he even bathes with "gusto" as he "puffed and swilled" (19).

Into every small, trivial thing he does he brings some of his vitality; for example, as he fries a slice of bacon over a fire on a fork, he lets the bacon grease drip on the bread (27). The reader can almost taste this bacon-soaked bread. He is a man who gets a joy from living and refuses to give up his joy; he is perfectly happy in his physical, everyday existence, which keeps him in touch with his most elemental self--a self that is uncomplicated and natural.

Gertrude Morel's nature is opposite, and this difference is why she is so drawn to him. She is an intellectual, spiritual and other-worldly; she has a "curious, receptive mind. . . . She was clever in leading folk to talk. She loved ideas, and was considered very intellectual. What she liked most of all was an argument on religion or philosophy or politics with some educated man" (9). In comparison with Walter, she seems cut off from her physical self; furthermore, she abhors dancing, even though she is fascinated by Walter's exuberance while dancing. She hates anything that does not utilize the mind; her world is far removed from the world of Walter. This difference proves to be disastrous to their marriage, for she tries to mold him into an image of what he should be as her husband instead of leaving him as he

is. Lawrence writes that "she could not be content with the little he might be; she would have him the much that he ought to be. So, in seeking to make him nobler than he could be, she destroyed him" (16). Her biting sarcasm and destructive criticism which Lawrence associates with intellectualism kill the sensuous flame in Walter; his vitality crumbles, and he often drinks as an escape from her continuous disapproval.

Gertrude tries to make him responsible and moral. In Lawrence a relationship begins to crumble when the terrible female will exerts itself. Lawrence writes that "he could not endure it--it drove him out of his mind" (14). In "The State of Funk" Lawrence writes that when men or women lose contact with their physical bodies, "they become at last dangerous, bullying, cruel" (104). Walter Allen says that this situation is "fundamental in Lawrence, the destruction of the instinctive man by the spiritual woman" (434). Lawrence appears to be fascinated by both extreme personalities. The sensual life of the father is glorified, but the intellectualism of the mother is shown as desirable at various times as well. In Sons and Lovers Lawrence's rejection of intellectualism and rationality is not as firm as later in Women in Love and especially in Lady Chatterley's Lover.

The sensual nature of Walter and the spiritual nature of Gertrude are treated in the first part of the novel when they first meet and early in the relationship:

> She was a puritan, like her father, high-minded, and really stern. Therefore, the dusky golden softness of this man's sensuous flame of life, that flowed off his flesh like the flame from a candle, not baffled and gripped into incandescence by thought and spirit as her life was, seemed to her something wonderful, beyond her. (10)

Obviously Walter's way of living is preferable. Lawrence leads one to believe that Gertrude, who is out of touch with her true feelings and her physical self, is drawn to him in the same way a moth throws itself upon a flame. He is the living flame of life, and she feels her own tragedy in being cut off from her deeper, physical self. Even the image of the candle flame creates a mysterious fuzzy-like image as the glow from the candle becomes dimmer with each inch from its source. This source of strength emanates from a warmth and vitality inside him. He lives by instinct, by his "blood-consciousness" which is that deepest level of

the senses. He feels things with his blood, his senses, rather than with his mind or intellect.

Allen says that even though Lawrence was not a miner as was his father, "he had what one feels is essentially a miner's response to the world of nature; it is as though he has emerged daily from the darkness of the pit and daily seen the world newborn" (433). In Walter, one finds the instinctive man in whom Lawrence believes. Allen says Lawrence sees

> that the value of people consisted in how far mystery resided in them, how far they were conscious of mystery. And since the analyzing, scientific intellect killed the mystery, it obviously flourished most powerfully where the analyzing, scientific intellect was least powerful, on the instinctive level, in sexual relationships, in the experience of death, in the impulsive life of animals and nature. (435)

Walter understands mystery because he goes down into the dark pit each day and comes out again into a world that seems new and fresh. His reverence for nature brings about his zest for life, and his vitality and sensuousness create a sense of mystery felt by him as

well as by Gertrude, who seems to resent his vitality and contentment

Going a step further in later novels, Lawrence increasingly emphasizes the importance of the sexual act; according to Lawrence the way back to the instinctive, vital self of man is through the sexual act and the intense involvement of the senses. Allen says Jung calls this "primitive thinking and feeling" (435). Even so, this is the life Walter chooses in place of the detached, impersonal life of the mind. It is also the life Birkin and Ursula in Women in Love, as well as by Mellors and Connie in Lady Chatterley's Lover. This kind of existence is life-giving, whereas an existence of the mind is life-retarding.

In Women in Love Birkin consistently strives to experience the world through his blood consciousness or senses. Raymond Williams maintains that "the only thing man has to trust to in coming to himself is his desire and his impulse" (169). Birkin surely lives according to this theory, and there are many scenes where Birkin practices "coming to himself" through sensuous experiences. One of the most famous scenes from Women in Love takes place in the chapter "Breadalby" as Birkin takes off his clothes and touches the vegetation with every part of his body. This

experience is only one of many such sensual passages in _Women in Love_; Birkin is getting in closer touch with his physical being; and in turn, he schools Ursula in coming to realize more fully her physical self.

The senuous feelings and impulses that Birkin experiences are manifested in his relationship with Ursula and also with Gerald. Lawrence implies that sensuality is a very important part of a relationship and should not be omitted, even in a relationship between two members of the same sex. It appears that in Lawrence the only healthy relationship between two members of the same sex is one between two men, never between two women. Ursula's relationship with Winnifred is to Lawrence a kind of unnatural one, and Mellors says in _Lady Chatterley's Lover_ that a lesbian woman makes him "fairly howl in his soul, wanting to kill her" (219). The relationship between Birkin and Gerald is a healthy, sensual one. Each man is aware of the other physically and very early in the novel the reader is aware of their attraction for one another.

In the first section of the novel a deep connection forms between the two men:

> There was a pause of strange enmity between the two men that was very near to love. It was always the same between them; always

> their talk brought them into a deadly nearness of contact . . . yet the heart of each burned from the other. They burned with each other inwardly. They intended to keep their relationship a casual free-and-easy friendship, they were not going to be so unmanly and unnatural as to allow any heart burning between them. (28)

Birkin and Gerald fight the sensuous yearnings they feel for one another. This strong sensual attraction between the two men brings about Birkin's offer of "Blutbruderschaft" or blood-brothership. Birkin believes that since they already have a strong bond of friendship and have senuous yearnings for each other, the blood-brother type of relationship will prove satisfying to them both since it is a commitment of love.

Birkin longs to swear an oath with Gerald pledging eternal love for each other, yet he holds back periodically as if he fears it. Gerald is guilty of this fear as well, for at intervals, both seem to mistrust their feelings for each other. The reader is made aware of this doubt from the beginning: "They had not the faintest belief in deep relationships between men and men" (28). Gerald seems pleased when Birkin

offers the blood-brother pledge to him, but he does not trust his own inclinations to participate actively. Even though Gerald holds back at this point, he does feel much freer after the often-quoted wrestling scene in "Gladiatorial"; Birkin is the one who holds back from involvement during this experience. Subsequently, it is as much Birkin's own fault as it is Gerald's that the two never pledge Blutbruderschaft to each other. Some critics view the nude wrestling scene as the sensuous consummation between the two men. It certainly carries the suggestion of a sexual consummation, for it seems sexual in language and brings about a kind of climax of their senuous feelings for each other. It is one of the most erotic descriptions Lawrence ever composed:

> And his hands closed on the naked body of the other man. . . . So the two men began to struggle together . . . they practised grips and throws. And then again they had a real struggle. They seemed to drive their white flesh deeper and deeper against each other, as if they would break into a oneness. . . . So the two men entwined and wrestled with each other, working nearer and nearer. . . . So they wrestled swiftly, rapturously, intent

> and mindless at last, two essential white figures working into a tighter, closer oneness of struggle with a strange, octopus-like knotting and flashing of limbs. . . . At length Gerald lay back inert on the carpet, his breast rising in great slow panting. . . . Birkin was much more exhausted. . . . He slid forward quite unconscious over Gerald and Gerald did not notice. . . . The world was sliding, everything was sliding off into the darkness. . . . He put out his hand to steady himself. It touched the hand of Gerald, that was lying out on the floor. And Gerald's hand closed warm and sudden over Birkin's. They remained exhausted and breathless, the one hand clasped closely over the other. (261-4)

Birkin and Gerald achieve a high level of euphoria and concentrate only on the sense of touch. Tactile sensory experiences seem to be the ultimate achievement of sensuality since the skin functions as a reservoir of sensation. Such words as "flesh," "drive," "deeper," "junction," "clinched," and "warm" point up the sexual element of the event. However, most critics

fail to consider the conversation just before the incident; Gerald says, "'You mean jiu-jitsu, I suppose?'" Birkin then says, "'Yes. . . .'" (260). Indeed jiu-jitsu is performed without clothing, so Birkin's request for the two of them to wrestle in the nude is in keeping with the traditional form of the art. Douglas M. Catron recognizes that this passage can be read without the homosexual implications; he writes that "the practice of the martial arts is itself a kind of Bruderschaft. Practitioners of the martial arts often share a camaraderie that even language barriers do not prevent" (92). He thinks that this scene "need not be read in homosexual terms only" (93). There is no denying that this passage can be read in homosexual terms, but the reader should realize that there are other explanations.

After the wrestling experience Birkin explains to Gerald that they should enjoy each other's beauty of form and that "one ought to wrestle and strive to be physically close. It makes one sane. We are mentally, spiritually intimate, therefore we should be more or less physically intimate too--it is more whole" (265). Some critics explain the wish for physical intimacy as the result of Lawrence's seeing the world through a miner's eyes; since Lawrence's father was a miner

living in a subterranean world much of the time, he understood how a man could view nature as though it were new and wondrous each day. The darkness of the pit forces a sort of physical relationship between miners. Risking their lives daily underneath the earth's surface evokes a strange physical camaraderie which is understandable since men need the physical touch of another being to negate the threat of death and the unknown. Lawrence deeply understands this physical intimacy in the face of the unknown; he sees that human beings cling to other human beings joining together against the great unknown. When confronted with death as often as a miner would be, one would naturally revel in the aliveness of nature, and just being alive. Lawrence seems to feel that man needs an alliance with another man to complement the relationship with a woman and man needs this love of another man to make himself complete and to know himself as part of a human connection. It could very well be that Birkin wants the sensual, physical closeness and love of another man, but this does not mean that it has to be sexual.

Birkin deeply regrets that he and Gerald do not allow this relationship to develop, and after Gerald's death at the end of the novel, Birkin explains to

Ursula the reason this friendship is so important. This idea is similar to Paul's belief that his mother will live on in him after her death and give Paul a depth of strength that will carry him through life. Birkin's lament that Gerald could have lived on in him is his explanation to Ursula:

> If He [Gerald] had kept true to that clasp, death would not have mattered. Those who die, and dying still can love, still believe, do not die. They live still in the beloved. Gerald might still have been living in the spirit with Birkin, even after death. He might have lived with his friend, a further life. (471)

When Ursula tells him that his idea of friendship is "'false, impossible,'" Birkin replies with conviction: "'I don't believe that'" (473). Lawrence seems to believe that Gerald could have been set free in the person of his friend if he had taken the oath of love. Each could have set free in the other the ability to love a member of the same sex and could have lived on in the remaining partner in life.

This relationship, then, is unsatisfying because it never develops into the type of relationship Birkin or Gerald want. Each of them at different times holds

back from pledging himself, and as a result, the friendship never progresses to one that can be the salvation of Gerald and the completeness of Birkin. With Women in Love ending as it does, the reader can only assume that it closes with Birkin unsatisfied and incomplete since what he has wished is denied him. However, Lawrence leaves the novel open-ended because there is hope that Birkin will get this Blutbruderschaft, for he knows the importance of this type of relationship in attaining wholeness. Although Birkin knows that there is more, his relationship with Ursula is satisfying, so he is more or less fulfilled. This relationship is the only successful one in Women in Love.

One of the reasons for Birkin and Ursula's successful relationship is that sensuality is a very important part of it. They explore all the different sensations they possibly can, all of them spontaneous. Apparently, spontaneity is the essence of true sensuality for Lawrence.

Through her relationship with Birkin, Ursula discovers the sensual nature within herself; he actually awakens in Ursula the powerful, sensuous awareness that he possesses. She takes the initiative

in the scene where she becomes obsessed with the backs of his thighs and loins:

> She was tracing the backs of his thighs, following some mysterious life-flow there . . . as she looked up at him and laid her hands full on his thighs, behind, as he stood before her. . . . She traced with her hands the line of his loins and thighs, at the back, and a living fire ran through her, from him, darkly. It was a dark flood of electric passion she released from him. . . . She had established a rich new circuit, a new current of passionate electric energy. . . . She closed her hands over the full, rounded body of his loins, as he stooped over her, she seemed to touch the quick of the mystery of darkness that was bodily him. She seemed to faint beneath, and he seemed to faint, stooping over her. (305-6)

Ursula becomes conscious of the mystical meeting of souls on a higher level through her sensual relationship with Birkin. She learns about mystery as it augments the sexual act; this mystery Lawrence calls the "phallic mystery."

Lawrence's writings reflect elements of a philosophy of the flesh advocated by a group of people who practice a type of physical yoga called Tantra. Tantra is based on the belief that the sexual act is the way of reaching the state of nirvana. They also achieve a kind of separateness in unity through the sexual act, as do Birkin and Ursula. Gerald Doherty understands the connection between Lawrence's philosophy and Tantra and says all sense of self is lost and "speech and thought" are unimportant in the communion that takes place during the sexual act. In his essays "Love" and "On Being a Man" Lawrence describes communion in the sexual act, and it is very close to Tantric doctrine.

Many times Lawrence describes the sexual act in electrical terms. In <u>Fantasia of the Unconscious</u> he talks about blood-consciousness as the "first and last knowledge of the living soul" (171-2). A man's blood and a woman's blood are separate, like two "rivers" flowing along beside one another; these two opposite forces both attract and repel one another creating a "polarity." Lawrence believes that during sex these two rivers of blood come into contact, never mingling, but the vital "blood-circuit" is made and is an electrical impulse from the contact between the man and

woman. In "A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover" Lawrence says that:

> The phallus is a column of blood that fills the valley of blood of a woman. . . . It is the deepest of all communions, as all the religions, in practice, know. And it is one of the greatest mysteries; in fact, the greatest. . . . This is marriage this circuit of the two rivers, this communion of the two blood-streams, this, and nothing close. . . . (101)

Carol Dix calls this Lawrentian idea the "forest of deep, instinctual sexuality" (89).

These electrical terms and Ursula's obsession with Birkin's thighs, back and loins come very close to the Tantric idea of love and sex. Kamala Devi describes the Tantric ritual of love or sexual union, maithuna, as being a "union with the divine" where the participants "become one with the ocean" (9). The participants become passive, and their suspended wills have the effect of renewal. Devi writes that:

> D.H. Lawrence understood the Tantric vision of energy and presented it exquisitely. He saw it as a life-force capable of being sucked out of a man, or, by the power of

> sexual love, fanned into a fierce living flame. This undulating, serpentine energy is present in all living things. (29)

Devi says that, according to Tantra, one "cannot realize the basic oneness of the universe by will or intellect, but only in experience" (16). He, too, uses electrical terms when describing the sexual nature of male and female; he says that "the male and female possess different poles of cosmic bioelectric energy that become united during coitus" (19).

What happens during the sexual act in a Tantric ritual closely resembles scenes between Birkin and Ursula; Devi writes that one must:

> concentrate on the Muladhara chakra, or sex center, located between the anus and the genitals. Here sleeps Kundalini, a serpentine form of energy, visualized as a snake sleeping with her tail in her mouth. . . . Contract the sphincter muscles of the anus to stimulate the sex chakra. Ecstasy occurs when she rises completely to unite with Shiva, who is located in your head. . . . (21-6)

Emile Delavenay also attributes Lawrence's philosophy of sex to the doctrines of Tantra; he says

that Lawrence read J.M. Pryse's <u>The Apocalypse Unsealed</u> which outlines Tantric practices in detail:

> When Kundalini . . . curled up like a serpent, is roused to activity, it 'conquers' the chakras, and two side currents circulate along the spinal cord: in Chapter Thirty Lawrence speaks of 'the central serpent that is coiled at the core of life' which Loerke has the gift of awakening in Gudrun. (408)

Lawrence's description of orgasm sounds much like the description Devi gives. Lawrence describes orgasm as a kind of electrical explosion in the brain, as dces Devi. Devi even says that Dr. Robert G. Heath of Tulane University "found that explosive electrical activity actually does take place during orgasm and he has recorded it with an electroencephalograph" (45).

There are many scenes in <u>Women in Love</u> which sound like Tantric yoga practices. For example, Lawrence writes of the "source of the deepest life-force, the darkest, deepest, strangest life-source of the human body, at the back and base of the loins" (306). Devi writes that in the sexual act:

> The self is annihilated so that you become pure capacity for the divine. You are opened up into an immensity of liberty and

> exultation. . . . The breathless, vibrating peak of joy is followed by a feeling of the emptying of the self. All pent-up tension drains out and you experience the peace of samadhi. . . . You have been stripped naked to the literal substance of the self, the irreducible ground of being. . . . Your mind is no longer bound by logic and reason. Knowledge becomes spontaneous and intuitive. . . . By losing yourself, you find a stronger, deeper self. A sense of center remains, where you can live. (26)

These ideas of intuitive knowledge and a feeling of being beyond the self certainly sound like Lawrence's claims. This idea of the peace that comes with a release of the will and the mind so that the self may be reborn into another level of existence is comparable to Lawrence's idea in Women in Love:

> It was a perfect passing away for both of them, and at the same time the most intolerable accession into being . . . from the source of the deepest life-force. . . . After a lapse of stillness, after the rivers of strange dark fluid richness had passed over her, flooding, carrying away her mind

> and flooding down her spine and down her knees, past her feet, a strange flood, sweeping away everything and leaving her an essential new being, she was left quite free, she was free in complete ease, her complete self. (306)

After the sexual encounter, Lawrence adds, a kind of warm energy flows back down the spine to all areas of the body, and Gerald Doherty says that this energy irradiates the body, "overwhelming the couple with a new awareness of selfhood and well-being" (213).

Tantric rituals take place primarily in the scenes of the chapter titled "Excurse." Doherty compares Lawrence's ideas with those of the Tantrics:

> Tantric rituals often commence with an offering of jewels or flowers, the equivalent of Birkin's initial offer of three jeweled rings to Ursula. This is followed by the encounter with and conquest of the forces of dissolution and death (the substance of the lovers' quarrel), by the birth of a new "body" of awareness (Birkin's sense of rebirth as if "out of the cramp of a womb"), by ritual touchings and strokings of the partner's body (Ursula's tracing of Birkin's

> loins with her fingertips), and by the taking of food and drink. These are preliminaries to the transfiguration of partners into god and goddess (as Birkin becomes a "son of God" and Ursula a "luminous flower"), the irruption of energy from the "root-centre" (the "fire of electricity" that bursts forth from Birkin's "dark pole"), the access to transcent liberation and "bliss" (which both the lovers experience), all culminating in ceremonial sexual intercourse (the ritual "dark" sex of the lovers in Sherwood Forest). (214)

According to Doherty even when Birkin gives Ursula the rings, a blue sapphire, a red opal, and a yellow topaz, he is behaving according to Tantric rituals because these three colors represent centers of the body (215). It certainly seems that Lawrence was extremely familiar with the Tantric philosophy of love.

Birkin and Ursula explore erotic mysticism and become more aware of themselves and each other. This is the reason for their relationship's success; it is the only successful one in the three novels _Sons and Lovers_, _The Rainbow_, and _Women in Love_. The novel ends in disagreement between Birkin and Ursula, but this

ending is typical of Lawrence, who does not allow the characters to become stationary. Typically, the characters are still moving to their fulfillment; they are always striving to grow and to become. It seems that if there were not some sort of struggle there would be no growth and no vitality. Lawrence demonstrates to the reader that living always involves conflicts; without conflict there is no life, only deadness.

Sons and Lovers, The Rainbow, Women in Love, and Lady Chatterley's Lover all end with an openness; there is no "And they lived happily ever after" in the Lawrentian relationship. Sons and Lovers, examined in Chapter Three, ends even more ambiguously than the others. Lawrence's last novel Lady Chatterley's Lover ends with Mellors and Connie confronting society. Now Mellors must establish himself so that he can provide for his family, and Lawrence appears to have considered this relationship extremely successful. He gives Connie and Mellors a child, a symbol of their deep connection with one another. Their relationship is unlike the others in these four novels because it is the first successful relationship that is procreative.

Devi mentions that "Radha made a bed of leaves and risked everything (she was a married woman) for the

love trysts she shared with Krishna in the forest" (49). Devi's example sounds very much like some details in Lady Chatterley's Lover. The Tantrics even performed some rituals to shock the upper class into breaking their social taboos; for example, Devi says that they would "make love to an Untouchable and call her a goddess" (13). Society, of course, was shocked by an act of this type since the Untouchables were held in the lowest possible esteem. This rigid class structure made it impossible for anyone to mate with a member of a lower class. The Tantrics ignored this restriction society placed upon its individuals. It is possible that Lawrence attempted the same kind of shock tactic in Lady Chatterley's Lover in order to shock puritan-minded people from living a kind of dead life and to force them to live fully. Connie and Mellors break the social restraints and find happiness, and, like the Tantrics, they accomplish fulfillment through the sexual act.

The relationship between Connie and Mellors is successful basically because of their honest, natural sexuality which they choose not to ignore nor resist. Neither denies the natural urging within. Connie is drawn to Mellors because he lives by his senses and feelings and his "warm, live beauty of contact, so much

deeper than the beauty of wisdom" (133). She is drawn to him because she is a warm, sensitive being who wants to live a life of meaning rather than the sterile, remote self that she lives with the intellectual Clifford, who is physically paralyzed from the waist down; his paralysis seems to be symbolic.

> Vaguely she knew herself that she was going to pieces in some way. Vaguely she knew she was out of connection: she had lost touch with the substantial and vital world. Only Clifford and his books, which did not exist . . . which had nothing in them! Void to void. Vaguely she knew. But it was like beating her head against a stone. (18)

The idea of instinct versus intellect is a common theme in Lawrence; Connie and Clifford perfectly symbolize the conflict between the two forces. Donald Gutierrez recognizes that sex in Lady Chatterley's Lover is to be seen as Lawrence's idea of man's salvation; the conflict arises from "the pervasive dehumanization wrought by the modern industrial order" (55). The constant changing from intellectual, industrial conversations and the sexual encounters between Mellors and Connie make the novel a piece of philosophical advice more than a tale. The speeches of

the characters are designed to pose the problem to the reader, and the sensual awakening of Connie is designed to reveal to the reader the road to his own salvation.

Clifford Chatterley relies entirely on his ability to reason and on his ability to rule his kingdom. Connie learns what she wants to be and the kind of life she wants with Mellors who relies completely on his senses and instincts, even in his everyday activities: "But it was difficult, the earth under their feet was a mystery, but he felt his way by tread" (135). This is a powerful image of Mellors, Lawrence's epitome of the natural man alive with the earth. In contrast the reader sees in Clifford the unnatural man who can use only his mind and useless mechanisms that kill the humanness and mystical self of man.

Connie answers the call from her deep sensual self when she is with Mellors; she responds from within her spontaneous intuitive self. Mellors brings out in her the sensitive, warm being that Clifford tries to annihilate by cold, impersonal intellectualism. She begins to answer the call from her deep, sensual self when she runs out into the rain without her clothing

> with a wild little laugh, holding up her breasts to the heavy rain and spreading her arms . . . bending so the rain beat and

> glistened on the full haunches, swaying up again and coming belly-forward through the rain, then stopping again so that only the full loins and buttocks were offered in a kind of homage towards him, repeating a wild obeisance. (239)

Of course, Mellors becomes aroused at this sylvan dance and follows her, unclothed as well. They make love in the rain on the ground, quickly and animal-like. What follows this lovemaking is a tender scene inside the hut:

> He took the old sheet and rubbed her down, she standing like a child. . . . Still panting with their exertions, each wrapped in an army blanket, but the front of the body open to the fire, they sat on a log side by side before the blaze, to get quiet. (240)

There are many such scenes in the novel. Often quoted are the explicit lovemaking scenes, which are important, but the warm, caring scenes that follow these are not usually quoted by critics. For example Mellors acts with the tenderness of a man deeply in love: "He lay still, too. But he held her close and tried to cover her poor naked legs with his legs, to keep them warm" (134). Another touching scene is the

one when Mellors goes to the Chatterley estate late at night to try to see which room belongs to Connie; it brings to mind Romeo and Juliet. He stands outside the house, and "he wanted her, to touch her, to hold her fast against him in one moment of completeness and sleep" (153). One can almost picture the lonely, pathetic man gazing toward a dark house and longing for the woman he loves who belongs legally to another.

There are many scenes of passion and sensuous abandon in the novel, and since Lawrence's purpose in writing them is to show how tender and loving Connie and Mellors are toward each other, they should not be excluded:

> He too had bared the front part of his body and she felt his naked flesh against her as he came into her. For a moment he was still inside her, turgid there and quivering. Then as he began to move, in the sudden helpless orgasm, there awoke in her new strange thrills rippling inside her. Rippling, rippling, rippling, like a flapping overlapping of soft flames, soft as feathers, running to points of brilliance, exquisite, exquisite and melting her all molten inside. . . . Whilst all her womb was open

> and soft, and softly clamoring, like a sea-anenome under the tide. . . . She clung to him unconscious in passion . . . and strange rhythms flushing up into her with a strange rhythmic growing motion, swelling and swelling till it filled her all cleaving consciousness, and then began again the unspeakable motion that was not really motion, but pure deepening whirlpools of sensation swirling deeper and deeper through all his tissue and consciousness. (141-2)

This is, of course, Connie's first orgasm. But the sexual encounter which transforms Connie permanently comes later in the novel:

> And it seemed she was like the sea, nothing but dark waves rising and heaving, heaving with a great swell, so that slowly her whole darkness was in motion, and she was ocean rolling its dark, dumb mass. Oh, and far down inside her the deeps parted and rolled asunder in long, far-travelling billows, and ever, at the quick of her, the depths parted and rolled asunder, from the centre of soft plunging, as the plunger went deeper and deeper, touching lower, and she was deeper

> and deeper and deeper disclosed, and heavier the billows of her rolled away to some shore, uncovering her, and closer and closer plunged the palapable unknown, and further and further rolled the waves of herself away from herself, leaving her, till suddenly, in a soft, shuddering convulsion, the quick fall her plasm was touched, she knew herself touched, the consummation was upon her, and she was gone. She was gone, she was not and she was born: a woman. (187)

This kind of sex seems to be a kind of religious worship for Connie and Mellors. They stroke and adore each other's bodies as if they were temples meant for worship. Their bodies are acutely alive, and they feel every touch, no matter how feather-light. Connie feels "the glide of his cheek on her thighs, and belly and buttocks, and the close brushing of his moustache and his soft thick hair, and her knees began to quiver" (133). Most of these scenes are told from the viewpoint of a woman, but since the novel primarily is about the rebirth of Connie, it is understandable that Lawrence wrote from her viewpoint. There are, however, lovemaking scenes told from Mellor's viewpoint:

> He took her in his arms again and drew her to him, and suddenly she became small in his arms, small and nestling. . . . And she melted small and wonderful in his arms, she became infinitely desirable to him, all his blood-vessels seemed to scald with intense yet tender desire, for her, for her softness, for the penetrating beauty of her in his arms, passing into his blood. (186)

He constantly touches her and talks to her low and soft; he seems to be quite fascinated with her body as she is with his: "He stroked her tail with his hand, long and subtly taking in the curves and the globe-fullness" (240). He shows his affection by taking "the leaves from her hair, kissing her damp hair, and the flowers from her breasts, and kissed her breasts, and kissed her navel, and kissed her maiden-hair, where he left the flowers threaded" (247-8).

Sex, to Connie and Mellors, is surely not a mechanical performance; it is a spontaneous release of the primal self. Lawrence believes that society and the mechanical age are the things which separate one from his true, deeper self; he asserts consistently that society teaches one to be ashamed of sex and the natural functions of the body. He implies that people

are not at home in their bodies and that, instead of denouncing the physical self as being base or vulgar, they should accept it and revel in the physical sensations which bring about a life of vitality, fullness, and satisfaction. In accepting the physical self, there should be no shame, for the body is more natural and organic than ideas and thoughts.

The entire novel seems intended to enlighten Lawrence's reading public; he does sometimes use shock tactics to accomplish this purpose, it seems. Some critics see the sexual act in chapter sixteen as anal. There is much talk about shame and some other words like "fundamentally" and "organic" which tend to suggest an anal sexual act:

> She would have thought a woman would have died of shame. Instead of which, the shame died. Shame, which is fear; the deep organic shame, the old, old physical fear which crouches in the bodily roots of us, and can only be closed away by the sensual fire. At last it was roused up and routed by the phallic hunt of the man, and she came to the very heart of the jungle of herself. (268)

Connie certainly seems to be at peace with herself, but some critics shout that the anal sexual act is her

ultimate submission and that Mellors is a bit of an ogre being angry with her for going on her trip and then forcing himself upon her in anger. What they fail to mention is that Connie "fundamentally had needed this phallic hunting out, she had secretly wanted it" (268). A few critics even suggest that this act is symbolic of Lawrence's desire to make love to another man.

But knowledge of Tantric yoga and the understanding that the root of sensual energy is between the anus and the genitals makes the claim that this is an anal sex experience less convincing. During the Victorian age society demanded that one should divorce himself from his body, be ashamed of its natural functions and sexual activities. Whether or not this sexual act is anal, Lawrence was attempting to nourish an acceptance of natural, living sex. He set examples in his books to burn the shame out of people, and some people were shocked. Some people were not, but they had to take notice.

The awakening that Connie experiences is somewhat like that of Ursula in <u>Women in Love</u>. Both women see the loins of their mates as fascinating and full of mysterious fire and power. Both find their deepest selves and are reborn into womanhood. Connie goes a

step further in her development than Ursula, for she becomes pregnant as a result of her relationship with Mellors. Rather than ending with a couple being born as in Women in Love, Lady Chatterley's Lover ends with a woman, a man, and the deepest kind of hope for their future together--a child. The baby signifies that the connection between these two lovers is stronger than any connection known to man and woman, for with her impregnation "his seed sprang in her, his soul sprang towards her too, in the creative act that is far more than procreative" (303).

Connie and Mellors are two frail, sensitive human beings in the midst of a cold, mechanical world, and the green wood is their home, alive as they are. In their experience Lawrence gives his readers a formula to live by so that they may lead a more fulfilling life. At times he sounds rather preachy, and as a result, some critics consider him condescending and dogmatic. Even if he does appear overbearing at times, Lawrence believes in mankind, and he makes an effort to save modern man who he believes is a disconnected, fragmentary creature. He says that in order to be fulfilled and complete, modern man must turn his attention away from the mind or the intellect to the spontaneous sensations of the body. In the Lawrentian

view modern man _must_ begin to live according to his emotions and impulses, or he will destroy himself via his impersonal logic. To Lawrence, man must reconstruct his world based on love and feeling for his fellow man and, just as important, man's love for himself. His plea for man to believe in his emotions and impulses proves that he has great hope for man.

In _Sons and Lovers_ Walter Morel is Lawrence's prototype of the elemental man who lives his life based on his emotional impulses, and he mistrusted the intellectual life, thinking it too abstract. Walter perceives reality through bodily sensations, and he seems more content than the characters who perceive reality through mental processes. In _Women in Love_ Birkin also prefers a life of the senses, believing the mental processes to be a distortion of reality. He attempts a relationship with Gerald based on communion through the senses; he believes that the relationship between a man and a woman is necessary for completeness. Birkin and Gerald achieve a sense of physical intimacy, but it never develops into a fulfilling relationship.

Birkin and Ursula have a sensually fulfilling relationship because, when they interact, they suspend all mental activity and utilize their sensual

perception. Many of the detailed accounts of their sexual passion sound like the accounts of sexual passion recorded by those who study Tantric Yoga. The deeply sensual nature of Birkin and Ursula's relationship can be observed in Connie and Mellors' relationship, and Lawrence seems to have intended theirs to be the ideal relationship. The desire for the sensual, instinctive life instead of the mental, intellectual life is central to Lady Chatterley's Lover; in this novel is Lawrence's strongest denunciation of intellectualism and industrialism. The novel ends with both characters fulfilled, and the ultimate hope for their future is the child they are expecting.

CHAPTER 3

DOMINANCE AND THE FATE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

> Why this dreadful all-comprehensiveness, this hateful tyranny? Why not leave the other being free, why try to absorb, or melt, or merge? One might abandon oneself utterly to the _moments_, but not to any other being.
>
> _Women In Love_

In Lawrence's novels the people who are the greatest offenders to their sensual, living selves are those who bully or manipulate others. They feel a need to control other living beings because they are incomplete themselves, and their manipulation of others gives them a temporary feeling of fulfillment. The characters who are guilty of forcing others to submit to their wills ignore a self rich in emotions and impulses; they become too intellectual or too spiritual. In _Sons and Lovers_ Gertrude Morel and Miriam are the two characters who feel a compulsion to bring others under their control. For Walter Morel, Gertrude is the dominating wife. For Paul, Gertrude is the domineering mother, and Miriam is the domineering lover. Gertrude, hoping to find fulfillment, uses

various people in the novel in the attempt to live through them as a human parasite.

In Women In Love Gerald is Lawrence's example of the incomplete, dependent person who searches for another person in whom he can comfortably exist. He chooses Gudrun, one of the most self-contained characters in the novel, and strives to dominate her. Resenting Gerald's intrusion upon her, Gudrun fights Gerald for her private, separate self. Kate Millet believes that Lawrence felt it acceptable for a man to dominate a woman, but that the woman should never dominate the man (244). Seemingly any male or female who dominates another commits the same crime against humanity. Lawrence's female version of Gerald is Hermione Roddice who, like Gerald, cannot exist as a separate, complete person. She is Birkin's lover for a short time at the beginning of Women in Love, but he, like Gudrun, resists her dominating intrusion.

In Sons and Lovers the male characters seem to be dominated by the female characters. Faith Pullin asserts, however, that Lawrence's purpose was "to always examine the male psyche and to use his women characters to that end" (50). Gertrude and Miriam seem to be given as much depth of character as Walter and Paul. Although they possess negative characteristics,

but they are important to the meaning of the novel. Lawrence's most influential character is Gertrude. Her relationship with her husband is one of constant struggle for domination. In addition, her power over Paul is established at birth.

As soon as Gertrude begins to exert her will over Walter, he balks and fights back. Their lifelong struggle affects all the children, but especially Paul, the most sensitive. Their first argument is over a financial matter; Walter is irresponsible and constantly in debt. Gertrude eventually discovers his weakness and sets out to make him responsible and moral. In the first stages of her first pregnancy he begins to stay out at night drinking with his friends, and she begins to hate him.

Gertrude's first son, William, has beautiful golden curls of which she is quite proud. When William reaches one year, Walter performs an unforgivable act; he cuts the child's hair. Gertrude rages, "'I could kill you, I could!'" (15). Walter knows that he has no hope of being forgiven, so he "crept about wretchedly" (16) making himself unnoticeable. After this hair-cutting episode, Gertrude becomes even more tyrannical in her treatment of him: "If he sinned, she tortured him. If he drank, and lied, was often a poltroon,

sometimes a knave, she wielded the lash unmercifully" (16).

Soon Gertrude is pregnant with Paul, her most delicate child, and Walter is even more violent toward her during this pregnancy. In one scene after drinking all evening, he becomes angry and violent after she berates him:

> He came up to her, his red face, with its bloodshot eyes, thrust forward, and gripped her arms. She cried in fear of him, struggled to be free. Coming slightly to himself, panting, he pushed her roughly to the outer door, and thrust her forth, slotting the bolt behind her with a bang. . . . The moon was high and magnificent in the August night. Mrs. Morel, seared with passion, shivered to find herself out there in a great white light, that fell cold on her, and gave a shock to her inflamed soul. She stood for a few moments helplessly staring at the glistening great rhubarb leaves nearer the door. Then she got the air into her breast. She walked down the garden path, trembling in every limb, while the child boiled within her. (23)

Even before he is born, Paul seems to feel, through Gertrude, a supreme hatred for his father. The image of the child boiling within her womb is powerful and effective, illustrating the unusually deep connection of the mother and son.

After Paul's birth, Gertrude feels a special connection with the child, deeper and stronger than those with her other children. She even imagines that the baby watches her, trying to understand her; she feels "as if the navel string that had connected its frail little body with hers had not been broken" (37). Gertrude probably feels guilty for bringing Paul into a world filled with hate and resentment and decides to dedicate her life "making up to it for having brought it into the world unloved" (37). Her hatred had consumed her during her pregnancy so that she had had no time to feel love.

One of the most violent scenes at the beginning of Sons and Lovers comes when little Paul is sick, as he often is throughout his childhood. Walter comes home drunk and attempts to pick a fight. Of course, Gertrude obliges him and insults him often, and he throws a drawer at her:

> One of the corners caught her brow as the shallow drawer crashed into the fireplace.

> She swayed, almost fell stunned from her chair. To her very soul she was sick; she clasped the child tightly to her bosom. . . . Her left brow was bleeding rather profusely. As she glanced down at the child, her brain reeling, some drops of blood soaked into its white shawl; but the baby was at least not hurt. She balanced her head to keep equilibrium, so that the blood ran into her eyes. (39)

Walter watches some drops of blood fall from her brow onto the child and appears to be fascinated by the "heavy dark" drops. Lawrence writes that with this violent scene Walter's "manhood broke" (40). He is too proud to apologize to Gertrude, and his guilt destroys his spirit. Indirectly, Gertrude appears to have broken his soul, and he never again participates actively in the family life. His violent and coarse nature alienates all his children, and Richard Wasson credits the children's profound emotional attachment to their mother to his "surly behavior" and his "drunkenness and brutality" (298).

Gertrude first sees her possible fulfillment in life in her oldest son William: "she saw him a man, young, full of vigour, making the world glow again for

her" (47). She is proud of his success in school and work, and he associates with "the sons of the chemist, the schoolmaster, and the tradesman" (53). The one thing Gertrude does not approve of in William's life is his choice of girlfriends and his love of dancing. He distances himself from her emotionally and finally takes an apartment in London. Gertrude is sad because she realizes that her hope of finding fulfillment through William is a dream.

She then decides to build her dreams on Paul. He is the most sensitive to her; Daniel A. Weiss says that the drops of blood which fall on Paul's head after Walter's violent throwing of the drawer are responsible for the unnatural attachment of the two. Weiss describes their relationship as a "mystic communion between Gertrude and Paul when her blood falls upon his head" (23).

Walter believes that Gertrude makes sure all the children hate him, and his relationship with Paul is more antagonistic than his relationship with the other children. Almost completely ostracized by the family, Walter blames Gertrude:

> "Look at the children, you nasty little bitch!" he sneered. "Why, what have I done to the children, I should like to know? But

> they're like yourself; you've put 'em up to
> your own tricks and nasty ways--you've
> learned 'em in it, you 'ave. (59)

Walter cannot seem to pull himself out of the habit of being offensive when he should be apologetic. His inability to admit regret, coupled with his determination not to be dominated, causes him pain, and when the pain becomes unbearable, he drinks to escape.

Paul always feels that his mother deserves better, and he tries to make all her suffering up to her. Lawrence writes that "this feeling about her that she had never had her life's fulfillment and his own incapability to make it up to her hurt him with a sense of impotence" (66). Paul shares everything with his mother, his burdens as well as his happiness, "and in the end she shared almost everything with him without knowing" (87). All that she had hoped to accomplish in life is now transferred into her expectations for him: "Mrs. Morel's life now rooted itself in Paul" (141). Gertrude is his inspiration in his work; he cannot paint or work without her influence; they form a closed circle of intimacy allowing no one to enter.

The relationship between Paul and his mother often resembles the relationship between two lovers; they kiss each other passionately and call each other "my

love" (398). Paul feels pain when he realizes that his mother is aging; his helplessness causes him frustration. He believes that he cannot live without her because she is the "pivot and pole of his life, from which he could not escape" (222). Paul overreacts because Gertrude's first signs of aging do not mean that her death is imminent. He is terrified of losing her because he is aware of this dependence on her.

Gertrude believes that Paul can succeed at anything he attempts to do, as she could have done if Walter had not kept her in the working class. She longs to do something of importance, but with her situation in life, she cannot. Therefore, she experiences life vicariously through Paul, and he feels that he profits from her help and guidance. He appears content with their intimate relationship and produces his best work when they are alone together.

Paul is not capable of freeing himself from his mother's smothering affection, and as a result he is never free to love another woman. As he grows older, Paul longs for something else, something not included in his relationship with his mother: "she loved him first; he loved her first. And yet it was not enough" (222). He tortures himself for feeling that he needs

something else in his life. What he needs is a sexual relationship with someone.

In the beginning Miriam seems perfect for Paul; he does not feel that she needs to control him. She shares his enthusiasm for art and literature, and they frequently discuss art and books. Miriam intensifies his "life warmth, the strength to produce" (158), but he gets his real inspiration from his mother. Gertrude does not approve of Miriam, and tension develops in the relationship between Paul and his mother. Gertrude sees herself in Miriam; she knows that Miriam, too, has to have the soul of the man she loves. At one point Lawrence explicitly describes Gertrude's jealousy: "Miriam sat on the sofa absorbed in him. She always seemed absorbed in him, and by him, when he was present. Mrs. Morel sat jealously in her own chair" (175).

Gertrude resents Miriam's power over Paul; she knows that the extremely spiritual Miriam will leave nothing of Paul for her. Gertrude feels that Miriam cannot be content with possessing Paul's physical body, but must have his soul:

> she could feel Paul being drawn away by this girl. And she did not care for Miriam. "She is one of those who will want to suck a man's

> soul out till he has none of his own left,"
> she said to herself; "and he is just such a
> baby as to let himself be absorbed. She will
> never let him become a man; she never will."
> (160)

Apparently Gertrude recognizes this characteristic in Miriam since it so closely resembles her own. Naturally, she can identify the intense female will in Miriam. Gertrude wants to keep Paul for herself because she feels that each is the other's salvation. She can find her fulfillment through his life, and he does his best painting and work when they are together. As a result of Paul's unnatural attachment to his mother, he and Miriam never have a satisfying relationship.

Graham Hough says that the sections dealing with Paul and Miriam are the "essential core of Sons and Lovers" (47). Gavriel Ben-Ephraim says that Miriam is a replacement for Paul's mother (110) and that a sexual relationship is acceptable with Miriam. But Miriam is too spiritual, abhoring physical intimacy, and Paul becomes frustrated at her seeming lack of living, physical existence. Miriam inherits her fear of the natural functions of the body and sexual intimacy from her mother:

> Miriam was exceedingly sensitive, as her mother had always been. The slightest grossness made her recoil almost in anguish. . . . But, perhaps, because of the continual business of birth and begetting which goes on upon every farm, Miriam was the more hypersensitive to the matter and her blood was chastoned almost to disgust of the faintest suggestion of such intercourse . . . their intimacy went on in an utterly blanched and chaste fashion. It could never be mentioned that the mare was in foal. (162)

Miriam's hypersensitivity to the sexual act is almost a paranoia, and her inability to be physically intimate soon begins to frustrate Paul. His first urges of manhood are frustrated when he realizes that she can never meet him on a sensual, physical level. She withdraws in terror at his attempt to make love to her because "she was cut off from ordinary life by her religious intensity which made the world for her either a nunnery garden or a paradise, where sin and knowledge were not, or else an ugly, cruel thing" (148).

When Miriam glimpses the uninhibited physical pleasure Paul experiences on the swing in the cowshed, she is overcome with feeling:

> For a moment he was nothing but a piece of swinging stuff; not a particle of him that did not swing. She could never lose herself so, nor could her brothers. It roused a warmth in her. It were almost as if he were a flame that had lit a warmth in her whilst he swung in the middle air. (151)

Paul is the living flame in much the same way Gertrude had perceived Walter when they first met. Miriam is different in that she cannot embrace the sensuality offered her as Gertrude did. Miriam is overcome with fear and intimidation when Paul asserts his maleness before her.

Early in the relationship between Paul and Miriam, Paul sees that Miriam is too spiritually intense and out of touch with her deep physical self to connect with him. Lawrence has Paul think that she envies and hates men. Paul criticizes her for her inability to feel and to appreciate things in nature without clutching them, and he accuses her of absorbing them into herself by an act of spiritual will. He wonders at her lack of human attachment: "She could very

rarely get into human relations with anyone: so her friend, her companion, her lover, was Nature" (165). Her lack of physical connection with another human being partly accounts for the fact that she is always "brooding" about something, and Paul tells her, "'even your joy is like a flame coming off of sadness'" (152). He fears her spiritual intensity as she clutches at passive objects such as flowers or animals: "Always something in his breast shrank from these close, intimate, dazzled looks of hers" (152). It is as if all her vital, living qualities are concentrated in a dead spiritual self; in fact, Paul thinks of her body as a thing "not flexible and living" (153).

Lawrence cites many examples to show the reader how Miriam forces her soul into everything she does; she clinches herself into a tightness that causes her to appear uncomfortable in her physical self. Sometimes while doing dishes she breaks things, and she doesn't know how she broke them: "It was as if, in her fear of self-mistrust, she put too much strength into the effort. There was no looseness or abandon about her. Everything was gripped stiff with intensity, and her effort, overcharged, closed in on itself" (153-4). Paul seems to imagine his soul gripped in such a way,

and when she looks at him with her "dazzled" expression, he experiences a feeling of dread.

One of the most frequently quoted scenes from the section of the novel dealing with Paul and Miriam is the one in which Paul tries to teach her algebra. Miriam is not as quick in her comprehension of algebra as Paul is, and she tries too hard to please him. Paul's limited patience leads to an uncomfortable scene between them:

> She was poring over the book, seemed absorbed in it, yet trembling lest she could not get at it. It made him cross. She was ruddy and beautiful, yet her soul seemed to be intensely supplicating. . . . But things came slowly to her. And when she held herself in a grip, seemed so utterly humble before the lesson, it made his blood rouse. He stormed at her, got ashamed, continued the lesson, and grew furious again, abusing her. . . . "What do you tremble your soul before it for?" he cried. "You don't learn algebra with your blessed soul. Can't you look at it with your clear simple wits?" (156-7)

Paul loses his patience completely and throws a pencil "in her face." It infuriates him that she cannot let her soul alone; she perceives everything through her spiritual self. Miriam never feels anything with her sensual self, and so she cannot accept the sensual maleness of Paul.

Miriam is spiritual to the point that she decides to give herself to Paul as a kind of sacrifice; she prays to God in her misery and feels shame at loving him: "She remained kneeling. . . . Prayer was almost essential to her. Then she fell into that rapture of self-sacrifice, identifying herself with a God who was sacrificed, which gives to so many human souls their deepest bliss" (171). Paul recognizes this characteristic in Miriam, and he feels guilty that he should have to have her physically since she cannot freely give herself in sexual abandon. His guilt re-fuels his anger because in his deepest consciousness he knows that she is wrong, yet he still cannot get away from his guilt. Miriam's spiritual, religious quality defeats Paul on almost every occasion when he attempts to be physical with her: "He was impotent against it. His blood was concentrated like a flame in his chest. But he could not get across to her. There were flashes in his blood. But somehow she ignored them" (178).

Miriam is terrified of the intense desire she sometimes sees in Paul's eyes.

Paul avoids Miriam out of frustration and shame at his unfulfilled passions for her. He voices his anger to her many times: "'You make me so spiritual!' he lamented. 'And I don't want to be spiritual'" (188). He accuses her of wanting to absorb him into herself ignoring his living, physical self: "'You don't want to love--your eternal and abnormal craving is to be loved. You aren't positive, you're negative. You absorb, absorb, as if you must fill yourself up with love, because you've got a shortage somewhere'" (218). Her "shortage" is her failure to acknowledge and accept her physical being and the physical nature of others; her oversensitive nature tortures Paul who often calls her a nun.

The crisis in their struggle comes when Miriam decides that she will make love to Paul; thinking herself a sacrifice, she "clenched her body stiff" and proceeds to tell him "through shut teeth, 'You shall have me'" (283). She does not make love to him in this scene, but when she finally does, it is with the same stiffness. Because Miriam hates physical love, Paul decides to end their relationship.

Paul's mother is happy that Paul has ended his relationship with Miriam. Gertrude knows in her soul that Miriam would take him and share none of him, and Gertrude wants "the roots" of Paul's life. Miriam seems to need a passive object to control such as flowers or animals, and Paul feels his freedom of self being threatened when they are together. Gertrude recognizes the danger of this threat, not because of her desire for her son to be his own man, but because she does not want to be usurped in his affections. Paul knows his mother suffers when he is with Miriam, and on one occasion he grows irritable with his mother, making reference to her age and Miriam's youth. When he sees her pain at this comment, he quickly tells her that he doesn't really love Miriam, and as he

> stooped to kiss his mother, she threw her arms round his neck, hid her face on his shoulder, and cried, in a whimpering voice, so unlike her own that he writhed in agony. "I can't bear it. I could let another woman--but not her. She'd leave me no room, not a bit of room--" And immediately he hated Miriam bitterly. "And I've never--you know, Paul--I've never had a husband--not really-" He stroked his mother's hair and his mouth

> was on her throat. "And she exults so in taking you from me--she's not like ordinary girls." "Well, I don't love her Mother," he murmured, bowing his head and hiding his eyes on her shoulder in misery. His mother kissed him a long, fervent kiss. "My boy!" she said, in a voice trembling with passionate love. Without knowing, he gently stroked her face. (213)

It seems unlikely that simple maternal love could be passionate or that a son would touch his lips to his mother's throat while stroking her hair and face, and a maternal kiss is certainly not "long" or "fervent."

An ugly scene follows when the father enters the house and finds them thus; Lawrence makes the father-son rivalry clear in Walter's statement: "'At your mischief again?'" (213). The jealousy between father and son is evident, and when Walter discovers a pork-pie that Gertrude has bought especially for Paul, he works himself into a rage and strikes at Paul with his fist. When Paul attempts to hit Walter, Gertrude faints, stopping the fight, and after she regains consciousness, Walter goes to bed. When Gertrude prepares for bed, Paul begs her not to sleep with his father. There seems to be no doubt that Paul is

Gertrude's surrogate husband. She sees in him the warm, sensual flame of life she first admired in Walter, and she appreciates his sensitive, artistic nature as much as his intellectualism. On this night Paul tells his mother that he will never marry: "'I'll never marry while I've got you--I won't'" (245).

Soon Paul yearns for "something else," and his youth burns with unfulfilled passions. Clara Dawes, whom Paul meets through Miriam, becomes the woman who gives Paul the sensual, physical relationship he needs:

> She turned to him with a splendid movement. Her mouth was offered him, and her throat; her eyes were half-shut; her breast was tilted as if it asked for him. He flashed with a small laugh, shut his eyes, and met her in a long, whole kiss. Her mouth fused with his; their bodies were sealed and annealed. (308)

She gives him a kind of peace that comes with sexual fulfillment, but this peace is not a true, lasting peace. Neither Paul nor Clara can completely give themselves to each other. Clara is married, and Paul is bound to his mother. Clara feels that they will eventually go in separate directions, and she holds herself back.

Paul and Clara's relationship proves to be unsatisfying because Clara is too self-contained and lets no one near the core of her; she cannot share any of herself to find fulfillment. In the beginning, her indifference obsesses him, but his feelings are not feelings of love. However, his relationship with Clara is more positive than the one with Miriam because Clara does not try to absorb him into herself; instead, she distances herself from him and allows nothing more than a sexual relationship to exist between them.

Paul's mother occupies most of his soul so that he cannot connect with anyone. He begins to feel anger at having to keep his sexual relationship with Clara a secret:

> He had a life apart from her--his sexual life. The rest she still kept. But he felt he had to conceal something from her, and it irked him. There was a certain silence between them, and he felt he had, in that silence, to defend himself against her; he felt condemned by her. Then sometimes he hated her, and pulled at her bondage. His life wanted to free itself of her. It was like a circle where life turned back on itself, and got no further. She bore him,

> loved him, kept him, and his love turned back into her, so that he could not be free to go forward with his own life, really love another woman. (345)

Gertrude's suffocating hold on Paul prevents him from having a fulfilling relationship. He wants a relationship similar to the early relationship between Walter and Gertrude; Paul senses the deep, sensual love they had for one another. He knows that this subliminal connection was what has kept Gertrude by Walter's side for so many years. Paul explains his parents' communion and "'the something big and intense that changes you when you really come together with somebody else. It almost seems to fertilize your soul and make it that you can go on and mature'" (317). Paul cannot meet another person on this level because his soul is not free, and with a meeting of souls of this depth, Paul would need full possession of his soul.

The death of Paul's mother is the turning point in his life. When she falls gravely ill, Paul cannot bear it; he continuously strokes her hair and murmurs soft words to her "as if she were a lover" (376). He is overwhelmed with grief at her death, which is more painful for him than for her:

> "My love--my love--oh, my love!" he whispered again and again. "My love--oh, my love!". . . . He bent and kissed her passionately. But there was a coldness against his mouth. He bit his lips with horror. Looking at her, he felt he could never, never let her go. No! (398-99)

Paul seems temporarily insane because again and again he returns to her room, where she lies in death and whispers his love to her. He even imagines that she is sleeping, not dead: "It eased him she slept so beautifully. He shut her door softly, not to wake her, and went to bed" (400).

After Gertrude's funeral, Paul loses his ability to work and paint; he cannot concentrate on anything: "He could not tell one day from another, one week from another, hardly one place from another. Nothing was distinguishable. Often he lost himself for an hour at a time, could not remember what he had done" (410-11). His conscience speaks to him, telling him not to destroy himself; it tells him that he should choose to remain alive since his mother could still live in him. After a time of arguing with himself, he decides to live because, if he doesn't, Gertrude's suffering in life will have been for nothing.

Some critics believe that Sons and Lovers ends with Paul's drift toward death. That he chooses death in the closing scene of the novel seems unlikely. What is plausible is that he is beginning a new life and that there is now hope that he will find fulfillment, since the oppressive influence is gone from his life. Paul thinks:

> But no, he would not give in. Turning sharply, he walked towards the city's gold phosphorescence. His fists were shut, his mouth set fast. He would not take that direction, to the darkness, to follow her. He walked towards the faintly humming, glowing town, quickly. (420)

It seems inconceivable that critics could view this as a choice of death. The city represents life, glowing and humming, and the adverb "quickly" seems to reflect vitality for Lawrence. When he describes someone's zest for living, he uses the word "quick." Also, Paul's determination to live is obvious in the physical description of his fists and mouth. Lawrence makes it obvious that Paul chooses life by saying that he was not "to follow her."

In Sons and Lovers Lawrence introduces the idea that sexual communion should not be the only end in a

relationship as seen in the relationship between Paul and Clara, but the idea is treated more fully in Women in Love with the relationship of Gerald and Gudrun. In this novel, the meeting of souls through sexual communion is the way to salvation, but it is not the final note. The sexual act brings two people in contact and renews their spirits. The persons involved should meet on a higher level of existence, with their souls touching but never mingling.

Gerald, an industrial magnate, meets Gudrun, Ursula's younger sister, and they fall in love with each other. Gerald is comparable to Skrebensky in The Rainbow and Clifford in Lady Chatterley's Lover, but he seems to possess a potential for becoming a complete and fulfilled person, unlike the other two. Gudrun is a self-contained character much like Clara, but Gudrun is abstract and intellectual and carries her self-possession to an unhealthy extreme. Howard Harper says that Gudrun "transforms life into abstract intellectual experiences" (209). Gudrun is one of the strongest females in Women in Love, yet her sexual attraction for Gerald makes her weak at times. Gerald is the weaker, more dependent character.

Lawrence describes Gerald and Gudrun's relationship as having almost all of the more

undesirable traits of a relationship between two people. There is a dependence or weakness in the male and an overabundance of strength and self-containment in the female. The struggle for domination occurs as a result of Gudrun's refusal to be a depository of Gerald's emotions and insecurities. Gerald is often described as a destructive force akin to the icy, white Nordic creatures. His destructiveness coupled with Gudrun's cruel nature, when imposed upon, foreshadows Gerald's death in Austria at the conclusion of the novel.

Gudrun does not tolerate intrusions upon her private self; she is an artist who loves her solitude. She becomes destructive and malevolent when Gerald invades her soul with his incomplete one. He needs her strength to complement his weakness, and above all else Gudrun wants freedom from such dependent persons. She says, "One must be free, above all, one must be free . . . one must have a free lance or nothing" (366).

In the beginning Gerald and Gudrun are physically attracted to each other to the point of obsession. Their lovemaking is often described as a loss of self; they seem to want to melt into each other's unconscious self: "He lifted her, and seemed to pour her into

himself, like wine into a cup. She seemed to melt, to flow into him" (323). Gudrun is fascinated by her surrender, but once the sexual act is completed, she becomes her normal, abstract self and holds herself apart from him.

Gudrun is fascinated by her sexual surrendering to Gerald, but his maleness is not as stimulating to her as the thrill of playing the submissive female. She is fascinated in a selfish way and cannot get past herself; her own reactions and feelings are more important to her than those of other people, most of whom bore and irritate her.

Gudrun first feels a strong, sexual attraction to Gerald when she sees him bring a frightened mare under his power. The mare balks at the loudness of the train, but Gerald bullies her and forces her to stand beside the tracks as the train goes by. Ursula sees this as unnecessary torture, especially when she sees that the mare is bleeding from abuse. Gudrun, embarrassed by Ursula's shrill objections, sees a "soft, white magnetic domination from the loins and thighs and calves, enclosing and encompassing the mare heavily into unutterable subordination, soft blood-subordination, terrible!" (106). Even as she thinks of

this subordination of the mare as terrible, she quivers at Gerald's strength and manliness.

The relationship between Gerald and Gudrun seems to progress through three stages. The first stage involves Gerald's masculine domination of Gudrun and her powerful sexual attraction to him. The second stage concerns Gudrun's efforts to pull away from Gerald and separate herself from his increasing dependence on her. The final stage of the relationship deals with Gudrun's complete self-possession and abstraction as Gerald attempts to possess and control her, either in life or in death.

Gerald is happy in the beginning of the relationship because Gudrun allows him to dominate her with his sexual prowess. Her intense sexual craving for him weakens her, and he masters her as he did the mare. Gudrun is guilty of seeing sex as the end purpose of a relationship, which Lawrence sees as destructive. Because she can progress no farther in a relationship, she feels an ultimate surrender during the sexual act which makes the relationship sterile. Mark Schorer says that the "inverse" of a powerful will is the "desire to be overpowered" (22), and Gudrun alternates between the two poles of her will.

In the second stage of their relationship Gerald appears to be a child seeking a mother. Gudrun often describes him as a baby seeing "the smile cross his face, reflected from her face," and she remembers that "this is how a baby smiles" (409). Gudrun thinks to herself: "Was she his mother? Had she asked for a child, whom she must nurse through the nights, for her lover. She despised him. . .ooh, but how she hated the infant crying in the night. She would murder it gladly. She would stifle it and bury it" (457). To Gerald, Gudrun is the

> great bath of life, he worshipped her. Mother and substance of all life she was. And he, child and man, received of her and was made whole. His pure body was almost killed. But the miraculous, soft effluence of her breast suffused over him, over his seared, damaged brain, like a healing lymph, like a soft, soothing flow of life itself, perfect as if he were bathed in the womb again. (337)

Gudrun wants Gerald, but she doesn't want to bother with him. His physical beauty draws her to him even as she resents it:

> She wished his warm, expressionless beauty did not so fatally put a spell on her, compel her and subjugate her. It was a burden upon her, that she resented, but could not escape. Yet when she looked at his straight man's brows, and at his rather small, well-shaped nose, and at his blue, indifferent eyes, she knew her passion for him was not yet satisfied, perhaps never could be satisfied. Only now she was weary, with an ache like nausea. She wanted him gone. (341)

It is clear that Gudrun does not want to share her soul with another, and she begins to fight Gerald for her freedom.

In the final stage of the relationship Gerald exerts his formidable will and becomes even more determined to control Gudrun. When she places herself outside his influence, he fights her for control; he even thinks of murdering her several times to gain the ultimate mastery over her: "his heart went up like a flame of ice, he closed over her like steel. He would destroy her rather than be denied" (392). Lawrence writes that "he pressed upon her like frost, deadening her" (432). As this clash between wills continues,

Gudrun becomes increasingly sadistic in her treatment of Gerald, using sex as a weapon against him:

> "Turn around to me," she whispered, forlorn with insistence and triumph. "Ah, I don't want to torture you," she said pityingly, as if she were comforting a child. The impertinence made his veins go cold; he was insensible. She held her arms round his neck, in a triumph of pity. And her pity for him was as cold as stone, its deepest motive was hate of him, and fear of his power over her, which she must always counterfoil. (434-5)

Very soon Gudrun realizes that this ploy doesn't work against Gerald because by this time their relationship is so full of hate and malice that sex has become evil. Yet neither Gerald or Gudrun can end the relationship since even hate creates a powerful bond between two individuals that is as strong as the bond of love.

Gerald, too, uses sex as a weapon:

> She was as if crushed, powerless in him. His brain seemed hard and invincible now like a jewel, there was no resisting him. His passion was awful to her, tense and ghastly, and impersonal, like a destruction, ultimate.

> She felt it would kill her. She was being killed. (435)

Lawrence perceives ideal sex as a meeting of two souls through the instincts and sensations, a spontaneous, sensual communion, as explored in Chapter Two. To use sex in the way Gerald and Gudrun do is a violation of the soul. Gudrun senses Gerald's desire to violate and destroy her:

> She felt, with horror, as if he tore at the bud of her heart, tore it open, like an irreverent persistent being. Like a boy pulls off a fly's wings, or tears open a bud to see what is in the flower, he tore at her privacy, at her very life; he would destroy her as an immature bud, torn open, is destroyed. (437)

Lawrence depicts Gerald as a white, icy, frosty, destructive being who is associated with death and killing. Gudrun fears Gerald toward the end of the novel because she perceives the destructiveness in his soul. His subversive nature acquires greater power in Austria with its icy, chilling snow. Lawrence describes him as "white and gleaming, she knew by the light in his eyes that she was in his power--the wolf.

And because she was, in his power, she hated him with a power she wondered did not kill him" (446).

The loathing they feel for each other compels Gerald to attempt to kill Gudrun by strangulation. He does not succeed in killing her, but he disappears into the snow and is found frozen to death the following day. Gerald did not have the strength to stand alone; his life was vacant, in contrast with Gudrun's life which was full in sufficient selfhood. Gerald knew she was closed against him, and he felt threatened: "it seemed to him that Gudrun was sufficient unto herself, closed round and completed, like a thing in a case" (436). Gerald could not destroy Gudrun, so he destroyed himself.

The struggle for domination is an important theme in Women in Love, and Gerald and Gudrun are not the only two people to engage in the struggle for power over one another. Before Birkin forms an attachment to Ursula, he has a relationship with Hermione Roddice. When they are first seen, Hermione completely dominates Birkin, and apparently has always done so. Birkin voices his resentment to her,

> "It isn't passion at all, it is your will. It's your bullying will. You want to clutch things and have them in your power. . . .

> Because you haven't got any real body, any dark sensual body of life. You have no sensuality. You have only your will and your conceit of consciousness, and your lust for power, to _know_." (35)

Hermione and Birkin get into many philosophical arguments, and she always asserts her ideas louder than he. In one particular argument she declares that one should forfeit all knowledge, which is a kind of deadness, in favor of the sensual animal instincts, which are alive; she says that people should give up their human qualities and live like animals. Birkin replies:

> "You are merely making words, . . . knowledge means everything to you. Even your animalism, you want it in your head. You don't want to _be_ an animal, you want to observe your own animal functions, to get a mental thrill out of them. It is all purely secondary--and more decadent than the most hide-bound intellectualism." (35)

Hermione is repelled by the insult, and so she verbally attacks him and abruptly leaves. She seems to be satisfied that she can take his "hate" with her as she goes because in a sense she is still the victor,

leaving the other behind in frustrated anger. She doesn't care how she wins, as long as she wins. By taking his hate with her, she still controls him.

In another scene Hermione tries to force Birkin to go for a walk with her and her guests; she even feels her power threatened when he says he is tired and refuses to go. She wants him to consult her in everything he does, just as a child must ask permission from a parent. She seems to want to absorb him into herself where she can have him safely under her control. Having no sense of who she really is, Hermione needs another person to give her a sense of identity. She feels vacant when she is alone, without another being to complete her.

The struggle between Birkin and Hermione ends in her attempt to murder him with a lapis lazuli stone;

> She was going to have her consummation of voluptuous ecstasy at last. . . . Her hand closed on a blue, beautiful ball of lapis lazuli that stood on her desk for a paperweight. She rolled it round in her hand as she rose silently. Her heart was a pure flame in her breast, she was purely unconscious in ecstasy. . . . Then swiftly, in a flame that drenched down her body like

> fluid lightning and gave her a perfect, unutterable consummation, unutterable satisfaction, she brought down the ball of jewel stone with all her force, crash on his head. (98)

Hermione fails to kill Birkin and becomes unimportant in the remaining chapters of the novel. Her anger is the same kind of anger Gerald feels toward Gudrun; it is a resentment that the other person has the strength of self to hold himself separate. Hermione feels the same helpless outrage toward Birkin that Gerald feels toward Gudrun: "Her soul writhed in the black subjugation to him because of his power to escape, to exist, other than she did, because he was not content, not a man, less than a man" (85).

Lawrence makes Hermione appear a cruel tyrant desiring to control and manipulate people, and especially Birkin. Her tragedy is that she has no complete, healthy self of her own; she is shallow, with no substance of soul. Anais Nin characterizes Hermione in terms of her "emptiness, her lack of centrality. Knowledge is on the outside, like a costume" (80). Hermione seems to use knowledge as a facade to hide her hollowness; she mouths words and ideas without really feeling their meaning.

The unhappy relationships in Lawrence's novels are the ones in which one or both partners are out of touch with his or her physical, sensual self and therefore unable to be spontaneous and intuitive. These people dominate others, but they are always victims in their attempts to control. In *Women in Love* two of these undesirable relationships harbor a violent, evil hatred: the relationship between Hermione and Birkin and the one between Gerald and Gudrun. In each case a murder is attempted.

The characters in Lawrence's novels who search for another to give them a sense of identity and some amount of security are the ones who repress others. According to Lawrence, they crave other human souls for their satisfaction and fulfillment. In *Sons and Lovers* Paul's mother is unfulfilled and tries to live her life through her sons, especially Paul. Miriam, who is abstract and spiritual, strives to possess the soul of Paul because she cannot accept and possess his physical maleness. In *Women in Love* Gerald and Hermione are fragmentary characters who need others for their sense of completion; they cannot recognize the otherness of a person since they have no sense of a separate self. Dorothy Van Ghent writes that there is a

> creative relationship between people and between people and things so long as this "otherness" is acknowledged . . . it is denied when man tries to rationalize nature and society, or when he presumptuously assumes the things of nature to be merely instruments for the expression of himself. (21)

Lawrence's theory seems to be that these incomplete, unfulfilled people are a majority in modern society; people place too much importance on the mental processes and ignore spontaneous, unconscious, unconceited self. He seems to have felt that man's abstract intellectualism compels him to force every living thing into submission to his own conceited self. The acknowledgement of the separateness of all living things is Lawrence's answer to the problem of human salvation; it gets man away from his need to subject all living things to his own standards or principles.

Conclusion

> Ours is essentially a tragic age, so we refuse to take it tragically. The cataclysm has happened, we are among the ruins, we start to build up new little habitats, to have new little hopes. It is rather hard work: there is now no smooth road into the future.
>
> <u>Lady Chatterley's Lover</u>

D.H. Lawrence spent most of his life writing about the decline of modern society and the resulting problems in relationships between people. He felt that the dilemma of rising industrialism and intellectualism could be rectified through his fiction. Raymond Williams says that Lawrence's "vital study of relationships, which is the basis of his original contribution to our social thinking is naturally conducted in the novels and stories" (162). Lawrence deals with the problem of the incomplete individual who, rather than experiencing life through the sensual perceptions of his body, chooses to assimilate his experiences through abstract rationalizations. Lawrence felt that there were two ways of looking at life: one may perceive our experiences through the

immediate bodily sensations and impulses, or one may perceive them through abstract cerebral activity.

Sons and Lovers, The Rainbow, Women in Love, and Lady Chatterley's Lover reflect Lawrence's evolving philosophy of man in relation to himself, other beings, and society as a whole. Mark Spilka describes the chronological pattern of Lawrence's changing philosophy. He observes

> the birth of a man in Sons and Lovers; the birth of a woman in The Rainbow; the marriage of a "man" and "woman" in Woman in Love; and now, in Lady Chatterley's Lover, with the conditions for creative love more firmly established, there is procreative love. (202)

Paul is the man born in the final pages of Sons and Lovers as he walks toward the new life symbolized by the "glowing" town. In The Rainbow Ursula is the woman born after a struggle to escape the impeding influence of others. In Women in Love, Ursula and Birkin come together in a marriage based on Lawrence's philosophy of the flesh, and in Lady Chatterley's Lover the cycle of love, marriage, and family is completed. Connie and Mellors base a relationship on Lawrence's idea of "phallic tenderness"--which is simple, demonstrative

warm-heartedness--and their belief in the deepest sensual connection between two human beings is consummated by Connie's impregnation.

In his novels Lawrence examines relationships between two people; he explores those relationships which are negative and detrimental and those which are positive and beneficial. Keith Sagar lists the three stages of a positive Lawrentian relationship: the first stage is "the isolate self in proud singleness of being" (96); the second stage is "the polarity, the equipoise of an achieved sexual harmony" (96); and the final stage involves "a conscious purpose in life, a coordinated effort towards a society which will embody life-values" (96).

The mature, healthy self functions as the foundation upon which one builds a fulfilling relationship, and for Lawrence, the idea that the self was at the bottom of all living is evident in all four novels examined. According to Lawrence, the importance of the deep, instinctive self surpasses the importance of society, religion, and philosophy. The Rainbow is concerned primarily with the individual's struggle to discover the self at the sensual, intuitive, unconscious level, comparable to Freud's description of the id. Lydia Lensky of The Rainbow achieves a sense

of self, and Tom is the man who, finally, is able to meet with her in a touching of souls transcending normal consciousness. Tom is able to accept the separateness of others; therefore, he establishes a relationship with Lydia which is somewhat fulfilling. However, Tom and Lydia do not actively move forward to find even greater fulfillment; they settle for a dull stability. Ursula is Lawrence's character who actively searches for the completely free self in unity. She is seen in contrast to Anton Skrebensky who seeks another person on whom he can unload the burden of his incomplete, insecure soul. Skrebensky sees society as far more important than the individual. In The Rainbow is concerned chiefly with the birth of an individual into a rich, vital existence. Lawrence seems to have believed that the salvation of man depends on his individuality at the level of the unconscious which is manifested through instinctual, bodily reactions having nothing to do with the rational mind.

D.H. Lawrence formed his philosophy as early as Sons and Lovers; the idea that a sensual life was desirable became of paramount importance to him. Mark Schorer says that Lawrence believed "the value of life exists in the act of living" (13). In Sons and Lovers Walter Morel delights in his daily activities, enjoying

the simple pleasures they give him; he savors every sensual experience of his physical existence. To Lawrence, Walter is "living." Birkin in Women in Love is the mouthpiece for Lawrence's assertion that close, physical intimacy is necessary between human beings, and he attempts to establish a relationship of this sort with both Gerald and Ursula. Lady Chatterley's Lover is the novel in which this theme receives its fullest treatment. Connie and Mellors explore a life of sensation and deny the urge to intellectualize experiences. They are Lawrence's innocents who have been badly used by others and now bring renewal to each other through sensual communion. Dong-Son Kim says with Lady Chatterley's Lover Lawrence "came to believe that what was important was not self-assertion but the tenderness of the physical contact between man and woman" (104). In "On Being a Man" Lawrence wrote that there were two selves in everyone:

> First is this body which is vulnerable and never quite within our control. The body with its irrational sympathies and desires and passions, its peculiar direct communication, defying the mind. And second is the conscious ego, the self I KNOW I AM. (190)

Mark Schorer says Lawrence felt that within each person there were "two kinds of power: the power to dominate others, and the power to fulfill oneself" (13). As early as Sons and Lovers the themes of self-fulfillment and dominance are treated in Paul's relationships with his mother, with Miriam, and with Clara. Paul's rebirth at the end of the novel is brought about in the same way as Ursula's, by removal of the dominating influences. Paul's mother is the most serious growth-retarding influence in his life; on a secondary level Miriam's spiritual possessiveness is responsible for the frustration of his attempts to achieve selfhood. Philip Hobsbaum says that Lawrence puts too much blame on Miriam's possessiveness for Paul's failure to form a healthy relationship, and he thinks that Lawrence does not give Gertrude's domination of Paul's soul enough criticism. Hobsbaum agrees, saying that Gertrude is seen in "a series of images which are Oedipal in effect; and yet they are not judged as such" (49). Mark Spilka attributes the burden of responsibility to Miriam (66). Apparently, both women are responsible, but the influence of Gertrude's smothering maternal affection seems deeper in the unconscious and more psychologically damaging. Clara is not even considered an influence because she

places herself outside Paul's sphere of growth; she tires of his efforts to find fulfillment. T.H. Adamowski describes their purely sexual relationship as an "intimacy at a distance" (85).

Gudrun and Birkin of Women in Love are stronger than Gerald and Hermione who strive to dominate them. Gerald and Hermione are incomplete, have no concept of the separateness of the self, therefore, ignore it in others. They dominate living beings as a means of embellishing their own conceit. Kenneth Young claims that Lawrence uses them as examples of people who are out of touch with their sensual selves, the sensitive, gentle, compassionate self of man. Young predicts what happens when people like Hermione and Gerald become a majority in society:

> Man may achieve extraordinary glories in science and speculation, society attain the finest and subtlest veneer of civilization, but unless the animal roots are maintained and cultivated, neurosis will appear in the one and violent explosions of war epidemic in the other. (40)

Lawrence wrote of selfhood and the individual in Sons and Lovers and The Rainbow, but in Women in Love he seemed to be more concerned with man's place in

society. Camaraderie is an important element of Women in Love; Birkin surrounds himself with people with whom he wants to form relationships. Lawrence sees the human connection as necessary on the physical and emotional selves because the intellectual level of communication had produced a society of cold, impersonal industrialism and intellectualism. Believing the human "touch" as salvation," Birkin tries to save Gerald, who is the embodiment of industrialism and rationalism, from the fate of personal annihilation. With Lady Chatterley's Lover Lawrence has decided that the personal, living relationship between a man and a woman is the most important reality of life. He terms society "insane," and Connie and Mellors have as little to do with it as possible. In this novel, society, its class divisions, and industrialism were responsible for man's misery and frustration, and what one must do is isolate oneself from its debilitating influence as do Connie and Mellors. At the close of his life, through the characters of Connie and Mellors, Lawrence presents his strong belief that man is capable of redeeming himself through what he terms "phallic tenderness."

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