Chapter four takes up the middle phase of Lawrence’s creative career from 1914 to 1920. Detailed discussion of *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* form the main part of this chapter.

**THE RAINBOW**

*Sons and Lovers* ended with the lovers parting and the question of life and death. Both were not prepared to deny life, while both feared extinction of their respective life if they remain together. He felt, in leaving her, that he was defrauding her of life. But he knew that in staying instifling the inner, desperate man, he was denying his own life. And he did not hope to give life to her by denying his own. As Lawrence writes in his essay “Why the Novels Matters”:

> “Nothing is important but life. And for him, I can see life nowhere but in the living. Life with a capital ‘L’ is only man live. All things that are alive are amazing and all things that are dead are subsidiary to the living.” ([P 532](#))

It is for this reason that although Paul does not achieve wholeness in life he has at least realized the need for it and starts in search of it towards the “city’s gold phosphorescence.” Instead of the drift towards death he goes in search of life. In *The Rainbow* the same moral concern is highlighted, this time not with one but three generations of Brangwens. *The Rainbow* is the saga of a midland family, through three generations, from inarticulate farmer to rootless schoolteachers. Though Lawrence presents a view of the development of English society in the period approximately 1840 -1905, from a dream of pastoral community where industrialism is literally only on the horizon, to a nightmare of industrialism, capitalism and competitive individualism, his concern is with three couples engagement in what he sees as the essential struggle for a satisfactory relationship, “both between the man and the woman,
and between the male principle (physical -intuitive-unitive) and the female principle (idealistic -rational-individualistic).” (Pritchard 67) As Keith Sagar writes: “It seems that the writing of *Sons and Lovers* emancipated Lawrence not only from the now restricting influence of the mother, but also from the preoccupation with autobiographical material.” (*The Art* 35) Lawrence continues to explore his personal problems in his fiction, but there is from now on a highly developed awareness of, for example, the social implications of the sexual lives of individuals.

The novel begins with a beautiful sensuous lyricism, establishing Lawrence’s male and female duality. It is the man who has the physical intuitive blood-intimacy with nature that leaves their intellect inert, while it is the woman, looking up to the church and city beyond, who aspire to the development of mind and individualism. The first Brangwen couples are in a harmonious relationship with each other. *The Rainbow* begins with the history of Brangwen generations, but this archetypal pattern is only used to emphasize the “basic and opposite impulses within all people and relationships: the impulse to be one with all created nature through the body and the senses and the opposite impulse to become individual, to know, to act upon the ‘other,’ in separateness and differentiation.” (Weekes, *Interpretation of The Rainbow* 131) The Brangwens lived in “blood -intimacy” with the changing seasons, the soil, the vegetation and the animals. It is the flow of vitality, the whole “man alive” in subtle interrelatedness with the cosmos. And this subtle interrelatedness, one becomes aware of earth enacting a human process and of the human being enacting earthly process, fulfilling itself within and in vital connection with the impersonal natural forces. It was virtually unconscious and mindless life rhythmically uniting man with the wider universe in oneness. The Brangwen men content themselves in unconscious communion with teeming life. But Brangwen women make us aware of the opposite impulse towards a different kind of life. While sharing “the drowse of blood intimacy”(*R* 42) with their men, the Brangwen women crave for the mind -knowledge and experience of the wider world bey ond the intimate and restricted life of the Marsh farm. It
was something that threatens to break up the timeless intimacy between man and nature. The blood knowledge a scribed to the earlier generations of Brangwen men is broken by the steady encroachment of expanding industrialism—the high canal embankment, the railway and the colliery. It is a byproduct of the world of beyond which appeals to the women. The death of Tom Brangwen in the flood that swallows up the Marsh farm signifies the end of the natural connection to the earth, of the non-mental “blood-intimacy” with the primal sources. The integration of the everyday life and the cosmos in the creative balance is never again achieved in this novel. The narrative maintains the dialectical polarity between the instinctual and the conscious requirements for life and the struggle toward a synthesis of perfectly integrated human-being continues for three generations. David Cavitch writes: “Pairs of lovers marry and find their psychological differences heal or aggravate the internal conflict that afflicts them as separate persons.” (New World 39) The Rainbow, is a family chronicle novel which assumes not only that generations are generated, but that the relationship between husband and wife is the central fact of human existence, that the living nucleus of this relationship is the act of sexual union, that the fact of sexual union is infinitely serious complex and difficult, and that act of such radiant significance must be fairly treated by the honest novelist as Lawrence does.

Easily the most encompassing of Lawrence’s works, the novel traces, to begin with the history of Alfred Brangwen. He had married a woman from Heanor, the daughter of the “Black Horse.” She was a slim, pretty dark woman. She was oddly a thing to herself rather querulous in her manner. So that when she raised her voice against her husband in particular and again everybody else after him, only made those who heard her wonder and feel affectionately towards her, even while they were irritated she always railed long and loud about her husband, though her husband would laugh what she said away. He calmly did as he liked, laughed of her railing, excused himself in a teasing tone that she loved him. As Lawrence writes: “they were two very separate beings,
vitaly connected, knowing nothing of each other, yet living in their separate ways from one root.” (R 48)

They had four sons and two daughters. But while she railed, Alfred mostly, unlike Walter Morel took it lightly. The eldest of Alfred couple, a boy ran away early to sea, and did not come back. This was like the death of William in Sons and Lovers. The second boy Alfred, whom the mother admired most, was the most reserved. But he could not pull himself along in his schooling but somehow became draughtsman. Frank, the third son, refused from the first to have anything to do with learning. The last child, Tom was considerably younger than his brothers, so had belonged rather to the company of his sisters. Indeed he was like Paul. He went to school but unwillingly. Keith Sagar states that: “Tom, the youngest child of a large family was his mother’s favorite and carried the burden of her hopes.” (The Art of Lawrence 47) At twelve, she sent him away to grammar school; but he could not force his unintellectual nature to fit her conception. Therefore he was glad to leave school and to get back to the farm where he felt that he was in his own.

Tom Brangwen, at nineteen, was a youth fresh like a plant, rooted in his mother and in his sisters. But he started mixing up with prostitutes, quite early in his life and though he felt shocked over his sexual contacts, he wanted to find in a woman the embodiment of all his inarticulate, innate desires. Lawrence equates sex with life, not that it is the source of present life but also of individuals. His first affair with a woman in a common public house did not much matter but the business of love for him was the most serious in terrifying of all his experiences so far. Sex now tormented him. What prevented his returning to a loose woman was not much his inhibition but the experience gave him the sense of nothing.

Tom felt the risk of repetition of it. Nevertheless the desire to have sex would not leave him alone. He always thought of woman, day in and day out and that infuriated him. He remained dissatisfied. His association with a girl at this stage was equally frustrating. Lawrence shows simultaneously Tom’s attraction and repulsion for sex. The Rainbow discloses itself poignantly and
most crucially in the sexual histories of individuals. The revolutionary nature of *The Rainbow* is, then, twofold: “It is the first English novel to record, normality and significance of physical passion, and it is the only English novel to record with a prophetic awareness of consequences, the social revolution whereby Western man lost his sense of community and men — more especially woman — learned, if they could, that there’s no help any longer except in the individual and in his capacity for a passional life.” (Quoted Spilka, *Essays* 34)

He had innate desire to find a woman embodying all his “inarticulate, powerful religious impulse” (*R* 54) at the same time “desiring the satisfaction of a voluptuous woman.” (*R* 60) He was spontaneously drawn toward, Lydia. The mere sight of the stranger transported him a far off world “beyond reality.” It was something natural as Lawrence called it “Holy Ghost,” that this spontaneous attraction was magnetic rather than a deliberate and mental liking. He was pleased with her strangeness, mystery and self-possession which set “Tom’s imprisoned self free.” (*R* 71) Tom and Lydia were utter strangers and yet they seemed drawn towards each other like the opposite poles by the unknown forces. Lawrence puts: “A daze had come over his mind; he had another centre of consciousness. Sometimes in his body another activity had started which he was unable to know except that this transfiguration burned between him and her, connecting them like a secret power.” (*R* 74) Lawrence explains the organic growth of consciousness towards full individuality. The unconscious is the soul from which all life springs. For Lawrence unconscious is the active, self-evolving soul bringing forth its own incarnation and self manifestation which is the whole good of life and consciousness is like a web woven finally in the mind from the various silken strands spun forth from the prime centre of consciousness. So attraction between Tom and Lydia was not the common attraction of a man for a woman. It was a more primitive theory. Lawrence takes us beneath the surface of their personalities where the unconscious self was slowly emerging to form connection without the knowledge of the character. Instinctively both wanted to come closer to arrive at a new form of life, completing each other. This was what brought them
together in marriage. In the fullness of their passion they were able to abandon their personalities. They met not as personalities, but as essential selves. The sacredness of these encounters was conveyed by a timeless silence and stillness surrounding them.

But Lawrence writes in his essay that balance is always flickering. Tom gradually became desperate and obviously lost his understanding. David Cavitch writes: “After their marriage Lydia’s firm and mysterious separateness that so used him, and which he still values, continues intermittently to irritate him.” (New World 43) She loses herself in thought about her past or she becomes fully absorbed with maternal cares, while Tom waits, sometimes bitterly, to be admitted again to her life. His blood stirred to life as and when she opens towards him. But these moments were few and far between. She belonged elsewhere and he lost his peace of mind. She might go away. Then she was with the child and he had to learn to contain himself. He was deposed as Gertrude deposed Walter, he was cast out. This followed a battle. He hated her that she was not there for him. But Tom was impatient, cold; he also called her selfish, only caring about herself. He put a lot of other abuses on her, that she was a foreign with a bad nature, caring really about nothing, having no proper feeling at the bottom of her heart and no proper niceness. He fumed and fretted. But he was equally afraid of her; primarily because she was great with his child and that it was his turn to submit.

There was a slight contraction of pain at his heart, a slight tension in his brows. Something he wanted to grasp and could not. While she lives with him, giving him her weight and her strange confidence, she seemed so absent. Tom did not know the mystery. So close on him she lay and yet she answered him from so far away. His first experience was none too happy; she appeared drifting away from him. They were such strangers. Lawrence underlines here and elsewhere that love between sexes should be more awakened more responsive, to be lived and enjoyed, not by the force of metaphysics but in full awareness that it is a meeting of two bodies and souls, beyond any end and purpose. The essential of sexual meeting should be the reciprocation of love on
both sides. During the last month of her pregnancy, Tom felt all the more miserable because she did not want him at all, she did not want even to be made aware of him. He then started enjoying the company of Anna. So much so that even after the birth of his own son he loved Anna. He was happy that she was the mother of his son. As Lawrence states in his essay “Morality and the Novel” that:

A new relation, a new relatedness hurts somewhat in the attaining, and will always hurt… each time we strive to a new relation which anyone or anything, it is bound to hurt somewhat. Because it means the struggle with and the displacing of old connections and this is never pleasant. (P 531)

But when Lydia opened her soul to him, Tom realized her otherness.

Gradually he learnt to accept “the non-human, dread evoking quality of Lydia which is nothing but her otherness.”(Adamowski 60) In the “Study of Thomas Hardy,” Lawrence writes: “Every individual must be born to the knowledge that other things exist beside himself, and utterly apart from all, and before he can exist himself, as a separate identity, he must allow and recognize their distinct existence.”(P 453) Lawrence believed that when one has a complete and finished mental concept of the other person, “it is the end of all relationships, for the nearer mental conception comes towards finality, the ‘dynamic flow’ out of which the relationship emerges draws to a close.”(FU 71-72) There is an inviolable gap between the known self and the other which must forever remain unknown. “This known self-personality is a mask” (P 379) which is nothing but the self conscious ego. The contact with otherness can only be had when one is able to tear the mask, to abandon the conscious self or ego and tries to establish a direct rapper. And this is what Tom came to realize, after some flickering of balance in their relationship. The conflict in their married life was superficial and did not involve victory or defeat, dominance or sub-servience of one by the other. Lawrence describes success of their marriage in religious terms using words like “transfiguration, baptism, an accession to higher plane of being.”(R 133) The birth of new impersonal selves takes place
by “leaping off into the unknown.” (P 441) In this regard Graham Hough remarks that “the intense polarity is never a fixed relation, but rather a matter of momentary revelations.” (Dark Sun 228) The fulfillment achieved by Tom and Lydia was complete as both were reborn in their personal selves. Perfectly polarized they felt connected with the greater mystery of their natural surroundings. Although this complete confirmation is preceded by a long process of exploration and experimentation, insecurity and apprehension, the transfiguration. Lydia tried to build the relationship on the stable soil of equality: “She waited for him to meet her, not to bow before her, serve her. She wanted his active participation and not his submission.” (R 132) Gradually he began to flow spontaneously to her and their two potent presences sustain their family. Anna felt that her father had “a strong, dark bond with her mother, a potent intimacy that existed inarticulate and wild, following its own course and savage if interrupted uncovered.” (R 143) When they are old the quality of separate relatedness that shines in their married relationship gets sprinkled over the whole Brangwen family: “His wife was there with him, a different being from himself, yet somewhere vitally connected with him… His two sons were… men distinct from himself. It was all adventures and puzzling. Yet one remained vital within one’s own existence, whatever the off shoots.” (R 285)

As Lawrence, again and again emphasized, morality lies in this separate relatedness among individuals. “After this acceptance of wholeness, independence of each other’s flesh, Tom and Lydia can relate to each other, forming a protective arch over Anna who is now released from their emotional demands to fulfill herself.” (Pritchard 69)

In the next couple or the next stage of development, the polarities are more extreme, the relationship more intense and distorted. The story of Anna Lensky, Tom’s step daughter, takes the foreground of the fiction as she falls in love and marries her cousin. Lawrence begins to present the second generation with the girlhood of Anna. As a child, she was proud and shadowy as a tiger, and as aloof like a wild thing, she wanted her distance. She mistrusted intimacy. Thus right from the beginning Lawrence starts building Anna’s sense
of self-assertion as the central principle of the will to live. She had a curious shrinking from common people. She felt easy at home, happy with her parents. At school she was none too happy. She often faulted. She was not good at doing her lessons. She rebelled against authority of any kind and hated people “whilst they had power over her.” (R139) In fact she wanted it the other way round, that is she hated others because they did not let her have power over them. Lawrence’s morality is not of life lived according to certain moral codes, but a morality that springs from our realization of otherness, of separate relatedness and loss of egoism but not merging or fusion of personalities. Therefore genuine morality is one wherein we surrender our egos.

Anna grew in the protection of her father. Protection of her father from outside and serenity of her mother from inside. Lawrence writes: “They were a curious family a law to themselves, separate from the world, isolated, a small republic set in invisible bounds.” (R 265) Such was the Brangwen family, a law to them selves, not so much outside as much inside, to which Lawrence draws our attention. As she grew she became increasingly touchy, as was likely, when one lives for oneself. She was uneasy. She wanted to get away. She was only eighteen when she met William Brangwen, who came to their side of the country to work as a junior draughtsman in a lace factory. He was twenty year old, the son of Alfred Brangwen. The two Brangwens, Tom and Alfred have never been friendly but Tom Alfred to provide William a home at the Marsh. Anna was not happy with her father, the way he showed affection towards this young man. Anna knew Will from her childhood days but had no occasion to be intimate with him first. So without knowing much of him, she wanted him to come, for that she thought would be an occasion to escape from the bounds of her family. Indeed, in him, the bounds of her experience expanded, transgressed: “was the hole in the wall, beyond which the sunshine blazed on the outside world.” (R 271)

From the very first, Anna was curiously amazed and in tone by this young man. She was aware of a strange influence entering her influence which she enjoyed and which she had never known before. Very soon, the two young
people began to draw apart and established a separate kingdom. Tom, however, felt irritated on account of his nephew. The boy seemed to him too special, self-contained. If Tom was irritated with Will, Lydia was unhappy with Anna. She did not want her daughter to be under the spell of Will. But the two young people continued to draw apart. Will followed Anna like a shadow. She had grown suddenly independent, wanting to live beyond her parents. Will found himself in an electric state of passion. Then there was no hold bars. They often met in the dark. Of the two, Anna was much more alive. She wanted to enjoy courtship. It was the core of her life, to touch him alone was, to become alive. Out of their courtship, “the very fountain of life flowed.”(R 281) A spell was cast over them both and they soon decided that — they should get married.

Unlike Tom and Lydia who had a strong, dark bond of “potent intimacy” (R 143) resolving all conflicts, Will and Anna were not able to overcome strangeness and separateness. They were confronted with a question: “Why was there always a space between them, why were they apart?”(R 161) After marriage, her proud and impulsive temper often resulted in quarrels with her husband. Their married life was a long drawn out combat for mastery. It was because both had a strong will and were always conscious of their own selves. Will’s abbreviated name is also significant. Gradually we become aware of “a low deep sounding will in him, vibrating low at first, but beginning to drum persistently, darkly till it drowned everything.”(R 161) He was “purely a fixed will.”(R 165) Anna, too, was her father’s daughter, wilful and strong minded. On her wedding, she is described as a “white peacock,” a symbol Lawrence used in his first novel: “a vain white peacock of a bride and the vanity of her white, slim, daintly stepping feet and her arched neck.”(R 175) The very description shows what type of a girl Anna is. It is a marriage of two wills with the chances of fulfillment quite remote.

The underlying imbalance in the relationship soon becomes apparent after Will and Anna’s marriage. Graham Hough writes: “The Rainbow is in the first place a novel about marriage as its original title suggests.”(Dark Sun 58) It
is rightly then a family chronicle — showing the continuity from one generation to another, and the same eternal situation to be faced with individual variations, by succession of young people. The conflict in married life assumes the form of a battle of wills — a struggle to restrain the partner’s self and dominate the other. Anna remains open to experience and expressive of her personal feelings. Will suppresses his feelings and controls himself with rigid egoistic force. Unlike *The White Peacock* where women seek mastery of the men, Will strives to bring Anna under the influence of his will to gain “some form of mastery as a satisfaction of his male pride.” *(R 215)* Anna fights back to free herself from his imposing authority. They always fought an unknown battle, unconsciously.” *(R 209)*

Will was wrong in making sex an end in itself. Sex according to Lawrence, is a mean through which one has to achieve spontaneous creative fullness of being. Fullness is only possible in contact with other beings and when one gives oneself to “purposive activity.” Perhaps because the contract with others implies breaking out of the self-willed isolation. Will who started living from the negative mode, yielded his creative positivity to sensuality. His unfinished wood carving of Adam and Eves made him aware of his failure. Lawrence’s concept of perfected relation demands that there must be a balance between the sexes. Graham Hough states: “Lawrence returns to his central theme, the attempt to present directly the shifting facets of the relationship between a man and a woman in marriage.” *(Dark Sun 62)*

For Will Brangwen the honeymoon was the entry into another world, silent and remote, from everyday concerns. But this entranced unity was succeeded by a reassertion of separateness. Each began to resent the other and the dependence on the other, and there were two black, ghastly days of estrangement then again a blind rush of tenderness. They frequently quarreled, then made up the quarrel, loved each other passionately for some time, and then quarreled again. They were in fact, not the compliments but the opposites of each other, the representatives of the male and female principles at war in the universe. It was a regular duel between them for domination, for mastery.
They loved each other, they wanted each other, they could not live away from each other, and yet they quarreled fiercely and incessantly. As Graham Hough remarks: “No one has equaled Lawrence, no one has ever got so near the bone in presenting the experience of two people of different sexes living together in one house.” (Dark Sun 63)

The relationship lacks “the strong dark bond of potent intimacy” (R 143) which had united Tom and Lydia. “Marriage temporarily gives Will the sense that his experience is eternally fixed and ultimately fulfilling. But suddenly, Anna threatens to take his new world as she created it.” (Cavitch 46) The incompatibility of temperaments assumes the form of a battle of wills in their sexual relation. Both of them were “fierce and hard, like a hawk striking and taking each other like a prey.” (R 203) Both of them were incapable of giving themselves to each other. They failed to recognize “the separateness of another being in togetherness.” (PII 715) Once Lydia told Anna: “Between two people, the love itself is the important thing, and that is neither you nor him. It is a third thing you must create. You must not expect it to be just your way.” (R 217)

Anna and Will always wanted to have their own way. And Anna had her own way in child bearing. When the children began to arrive, Anna gave herself, joyously to motherhood and she learnt to be gentler with her husband, to placate his black temper and accommodate him. But she remained the creator and dominant in this life together. She is in fact, the Magna Mater again, self-satisfied and concerned with herself as child-bearer in which he is merely instrumental. Asserting female supremacy she maintains: “It is impudence to say that woman was made out of man’s body. Rather she believed that every man is born of woman.” (R 215) In fact, the title of the chapter itself wherein the conflict mounts is called “Anna Victrix,” that is Anna’s victory. Anna defied Will’s authority when she danced naked in her room. This dance was greatly criticized by the Victorian public who found it obscene.

This is the scene that led to the banning of the book; the scene in which she is surprised by Will, dancing the defined triumph of her pregnancy, naked
in her bed room. Further, she is the Magna-Mater, the type figure averted to so much in *Women in Love* of the feminine dominance that must defeat the growth of any prosperous long-term relation between a man and a woman. She was exulted over him. She danced to annual. He watched and his soul burnt in him. He turned aside, for he could not look at her. It hurt him as he watched as if he were at a stake. Lawrence’s language is of Christian symbolism. Her dance consumed him, burned him on the stake. In fact, the dance has a symbolic significance. She danced her success in fulfilling nature’s purpose of creation in defiance of man’s will. Will was only an instrument in fulfilling the nature’s purpose.

Anna was absorbed in the child now. She found fulfillment in child bearing. She became the proud mother of eight children. It has been said that Lawrence’s characters tend to be symbolic figures representative of particular ideas, and Anna represents the mother, happy in rearing her large family, and quite oblivious of the outside world, and with no outside interests. This further confirms that a woman’s victory lies in her child bearing. The man is the seed, the woman is the earth. She had a greater role to play, the nursery. “It is a compromise, deferring the struggle again for coming generation. Having children is not, for Lawrence, a primary human purpose, nor even the primary purpose of the sexual act.” (Sagar, *The Art* 54)

In this sense, Lawrence is neither an anti-feminist nor a pro-feminist. We may go on discussing, piling charges upon charges without understanding him, as lately Kate Millett in her *Sexual Politics* has done. In *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, Lawrence puts very clearly his position regarding his views about man-woman relationship: “Almost invariably a married woman, as she passes the age of thirty, conceives a dislike, or contempt for her husband, or a pity which is too near contempt. Particularly if he be a good husband, a true modern. And he, for his past, though just as jarred inside himself, resents only the fact that he is not loved as he ought to be. Then start a new game. The
woman, even the most virtuous looks abroad for a new sympathy. She will have a man friend, if nothing more. She has got her children." (FU 107-108) It was not only Will’s nullification; it was the nullification of her own, the falsity as also the falsity of their relationship.

It has replaced the blood intimacy of Brangwens with fierce passion of negative and destructive characters. The unified personality begins to disintegrate, the single vision is lost. Anna becomes a rationalist, and Will, a religious mystic. When one part of the personality becomes dominant and threatens to submerge the other part, the self-conflict and conflict between persons arise. As Lawrence states this conflict causes immortality in relations. There is a complete failure of fulfillment in marriage — a failure to create a new knowledge of Eternity in the flux of time.

Now the supreme task of Brangwen’s self-realization falls to Ursula. The second half of the novel carries her through the broadest range of social and private experience as in her growth from childhood to young womanhood; she vacillates between the guides of convention and the dictates of her deep self. In Ursula’s life the crisis of the Brangwen destiny are all met before and outside a formal marriage relation; her singleness surpasses even her mother’s, but the cost of maintaining her integrity is greater for her and it postpones her maturation in marriage.

Again the focus shifts: “The elders grow faint,” as Graham Hough writes, “parent and the children come into the foreground.” (Dark Sun 66) The rest of the book, more than half of it is occupied with Anna’s first born daughter Ursula. She is the manifest continuation of the Brangwen line, but more differentiated, more individual, more demanding. According to Graham Hough, “From her wayward, independent childhood it is evident that her satisfaction will not be easy; that she will not find her fulfillment as naturally and as near at home as her elders.” (Dark Sun 66) Further she is to grow up into circumstances very different from the pastoral simplicities of Marsh Farm. It is
a significant point that life in search for its satisfaction, has over the passage of time become more difficult and therefore more frustrating. This is what Graham Hough underlines, of course, while tracing this intention in Lawrence. Further as Graham Hough writes as Ursula grows up, the old background of traditional pieties is symbolized by the succession of Sundays, the cycle of creation is forgotten. Anna had already questioned pieties of the church. Her intimacy with Will passed away on this account. They were not one on this point. She wanted her own self, detached, active but not absorbed in rituals. Lawrence considers assertion of self an evil. Ursula grew up in this new age and new climate.

As a self absorbed and romantically inclined girl, Ursula suffers from being the oldest child in a teeming household. From the very beginning we become aware that Ursula is a distinct individual who insists on her own individual being. As she grows up, she rebels against her mother’s “muddled domesticity” (R 320) and craves for some spirituality. Her craving for spirituality is a symptom of her being infected by her father’s disease. Her struggle with Skrebensky and later with Birkin was for gaining health and fullness of being which was only by getting rid of her craving for abstractions. She found Cossethay too restricted a place for her development. She did not want to be judged by the standard of her own people who lived a very restricted life. She wanted to break free from the world, where only limited people lived, “craved to widen her circle of life, to have contact with proud people.”( R 308) But she later came to know these proud people were devoid of all vitality and liveliness. The world beyond, she realized is not a finer vivid circle of life inhabited by mechanical and wilful people like the school mistress and Skrebensky who lived by abstractions. Ursula got an opportunity to have contact with the outside world when she was sent to the Grammar school. She was a sort of female Quixote starting her journey for self discovery. For sometimes she was also swept away with religious mysteries. But she rejected
the conventional religion as its techniques could not be practiced in everyday life. Instead of following the gospels, she wanted to follow her own instinct, to do what was right. The main question for every individual as Lawrence held is not to know but to “be thyself.” Ursula’s problem was how to become herself. She wanted the fulfillment of her own desires of the self which the conventional religion denied. According to Lawrence, fulfillment can be achieved by living life fully and not by denying it.

She preferred the weekday world, the life of action, the contact with the people than the Sunday world “absolute truth and living mystery.” To be oneself, one has to live by actions and deeds, be a part of the life of running blood. But the conventional religion lacks joy and fulfillment. It only rests on the memory of the birth, wounds and death. Instead of celebrating Christ’s resurrection, Christians give more importance to his death on the cross. Lawrence believes that “the resurrection is to life not to death.” Resurrection is rising in the flesh and living life of the body. Ursula was in search of a religion which should give her fulfillment as a whole.

Ursula’s experience in the man’s world was important step in the development of herself. Viewing her experiences in the widening circle of man’s world, we realize that fulfillment will not come to her as naturally as it came to her grandparent. It was not so easy to be oneself in the complete mechanical world. Town Wiggiston is a place where human life and relationships were brutally subordinated to the “hard, mechanical activity.” Keith Sagar writes: “She has to grow into a world which offers no communal fulfillment or aspiration, no civilized life -effort worth taking part in.” The first danger is that she will be beaten down by the system; but the second and even greater danger is that she will seek her absolute within her ego, exploiting others to serve her lusts. She is emancipated and uprooted: she is free as her parents and grandparents were not, but free as a man overboard without a lifebelt is freer than those trapped aboard a sinking ship. “How to act, that was the question? Whither to go, how to become oneself?” It is a
specifically modern dilemma, which few of us face with Ursula’s honesty and courage.

At this moment Skrebensky came into her life. His bare existence attracted Ursula very much. She herself was unsure of reality, so she took on a new being who was equally unsure. So Ursula thought him wonderful. His full name was Anton Skrebensky. Her parents acknowledged him. She knew that he was an orphan, Skrebensky seemed to give her a sense of the vast world “a sense of distances, and large masses of humanity…” (R 382) Lawrence writes: “For the first time she was in love with a vision of herself: she saw as if it were a fine little reflection in his eyes. And she must act up to this, she must be beautiful.” (R 382) from this moment, she wanted to look beautiful. Even her family was surprised on account of her transformation. This was the material part of her search for reality — to approach it through love. While loving each other, they together wandered in the state of unrealisation. She was in particular entirely lost in her own world.

The relation between Ursula and Skrebensky is marked by a perpetual struggle for dominance and submission, Skrebensky secretly wishes to be the superior party in this relationship, whereas Ursula wants to find that eternal balance which can lead her towards the highest goal of life, the realization of the deepest self through communion with equally potent beings. When Ursula and Skrebensky meet for the first time, she mistakes him as her cherished companion. She is swept by his apparent “directness” and “his independent motion.” (R 328) She considers him “so distinct, self-contained, self-supporting.” (R 337) However very soon, she also perceives the inherent hostility of his will and becomes “aware of the movement his life over against her.” (R 336) Skrebensky is aware of “his influence upon her.” (R 342) So he begins taking undue advantages of his dominant position over Ursula. For instance, he always sits “close to her,” walks “near to her,” puts his arm round...
her waist and draws her to him, “till his arm hard and pressed in upon her.” (R 344)

Ursula desires to “leap from the known into the unknown” (R 364) through her contact with Skrebensky. Ursula doggedly persists, veering away from that, from which her soul recoil, moving into unknown territory with no better guide than the principle of trial and error, a deep sense of responsibility for her own life, and an indestructible faith, at the very centre of her, surviving all disillusions, in a world of all “absolute truth and living mystery” within the everyday world, within herself and all living things. But Skrebensky fears to lay his self bare to the mysteries of life and meet Ursula naked self in its fullness. A man must conceive his own soul, bring his self to birth. The incomplete personality can never be the complete lover or husband. The “unknown” is excluded from Skrebensky’s worldview, as it is from the “passion” he offers Ursula. The easy and less demanding way for him is to exert his will and force the other vulnerable being to succumb to his own notion of imposed identity. That is why; he takes her into his arms “as if into the sure, subtle power of his will.” (R 364) He exerts his sterile will upon her by holding her very close “so that she could feel his body, the weight of him sinking, settling upon her, overcoming her life and energy, making her inert along with him.” (R 366) But Ursula is resolute to keep her initiated self intact. When she feels his dead weight too heavy to bear; she is filled with “a rage to tear things asunder.” (R 366) Thus, they become like “two wills locked in one motion, yet never fusing, never yielding one to the other.” (R 364) He summons “all his energy, to enclose her, to have her.” (R 368) However, he is clueless before her illuminated self. He is unable to overpower and dominate her deeper self with the help of his hard, mechanical and hence brittle will. Though they are physically together, spiritually they are miles apart; Ursula is now quite sure that Skrebensky is not capable of meeting her deepest level of the being... She feels “a sort of nullity” in Skrebensky “which she had to submit to. She felt a great sense of disaster impending.” (R 376) That is why; she remains “cold, and hard and compact of brilliance as the moon itself, and beyond him as the
moonlight was beyond him, never to be grasped or known.” (R 367) She remains as “cold and unmoved as a pillar of salt.” (R 366)

Skrebensky keeps on striving with his hard will to overpower Ursula’s very being. Initially, she tries to deter him through passive resistance. But ultimately, she has to act in retaliation. As she fails in her efforts to mend the egoistic ways of wilful Skrebensky, she decides to put him in his childish chauvinism, she, like Argyle in *Aaron’s rod*, prefers to smash the load of their relationship. Accordingly, she also starts exerting her own will upon him in order to insulate her vulnerable being from his fatal influence. Now, she herself takes the charge and grips him in a hard kiss till “gradually his warm, soft iron yielded and his willful soul gets dissolved with agony and annihilation.” (R 368) No doubt, her soul wins its freedom from an impending slavery: “she had triumphed: he was not anymore.” (R 368) Yet, Ursula is not happy; she does not feel triumphant. She has never wanted to violate the other being. But what can she do if Skrebensky is merely a will, an ego, threatening her very being. Actually, he has been trained in the school of society whose only precept is; either victimize or be a victim. To her dismay there is nothing left in Skrebensky if not that hard will: “But there was no core to him …He would be subject now, reciprocal, never indomitable thing with a core of overweening, unbeatably fire.” (R 369) She feels terrified. The knowledge that she is neither under his spell nor his influence, kills the male in him. Thus, “there was a breach between them. They were hostile worlds.” (R 377)

The final failure of the doomed affair between Ursula and Skrebensky remains merely a matter of time. Once again, they walk “close together, powerful in unison.” (R 495) But this time their roles have got reversed. Earlier while Skrebensky has tried to dominate Ursula, this time he surrenders himself to Ursula’s potency: “the dark flame leaped up in him. He must give up himself. He must give her the very foundations of himself.” (R 496) Surprisingly, this time Ursula turns to him and holds him fast, “as if she were turned to steel.” (R 497) Even as she keeps near to him, she becomes increasingly her all engulfing will: “she was perfectly sure of herself, perfectly
strong, stronger than all the world.”( R 502) Thus, Ursula who in the beginning aspired to submit herself to the marvel of communion with other being now gathers herself to the cocoon of her isolated self when she fails to realize her former aspiration. She wants to leave him because they were “strangers” to each other. But he begins to tremble with the fear of her departure. He wants to marry her, but “she found herself very rich in being alone.”( R 501) Slowly, but inexorably, he keeps losing ground: “After each contact his mad dependence on her was deepened, his hope of standing strong and taking her in his own strength gets gradually weakened. He felt himself a more attribute of her.”( R 514) But he cannot arouse in Ursula the “fruitful fecundity” ( R 525) she yearns. His soul could not contain her in its waves of strength.

Skrebensky is aware of his failure with Ursula: he “felt as if ordeal of proof was upon him, for life or death.”( R 532) Therefore, as a last attempt, he takes her to “a dark hollow” and engages her in a love act: “the fire, the struggle for consummation was terrible. It lasted till it was agony to his soul, till he succumbed, till he gave way as if dead.”( R 532) But this time, he admits his inadequacy and curls “in the deepest darkness he could find, under the sea grass, and lay there without consciousnesses.”( R 533) Ursula also “she lifted her dead body from the sands, and rose at last…… She trailed her dead body to the house, to her room.”(R 533) With this tragic failure, Ursula and Skrebensky become “like two dead people who does not recognize, does not see each other.”(R 533) Afterwards, Skrebensky is lost to the ways of the world that has been his real haven since the very beginning, while Ursula passes through a terrible ordeal of pain and frustration in which she barely skips even the physical death. She also learns her lesson: “Who was she to have a man according to her own desire? It was not for her to create, but to recognize a man created by God.”( R 547) This ephemeral experience enables her to touch the innermost core of her being and prepares her for any future possibility of achieving “star-equilibrium.”

In this way, Skrebensky unflinching belief in the victim -victimizer ideal of modern culture, and then his inability to bear the burden of life -
responsibility mar all the possibilities of establishing “star -equilibrium” in his interpersonal relationship. It is also a fact that Ursula as a living human being is not immune from temperamental inconsistencies. She is also prone to human weaknesses. Her fatal weaknesses is her somewhat idealized and hence magnified sense of “self” that often take everything outside its own sway as a mere object.

Skrebensky leaves for Africa, obviously to get rid of her. He writes back but his letter does not mean much to her. He is a part of her partial life but she is deeply hurt, not blaming herself, so much as blaming him. In his absence she comes under the influence of Miss Inger. She gets so attached to her mistress that any restrictions from meeting her become a restriction from living. The two women become intimate. Their lives seem to fuse into one. They talk among other things about religion. The school mistress gets Ursula, rid of dogmas, falsehoods about religion. She humanizes it all. This is what Lawrence wants religion to be — that all religions wear clothing to a human aspiration. The aspiration is the real thing — the clothing was a matter of national taste or need. In religion, then has always been two great motives fear and love. Most mankind is religious because of fear.

Her mistress leaves her to go with her uncle. Ursula soon discovers that she is with child; she is to be the mother of Anton’s child. She feels as if she is tied to a stake, and the flames running through her. The child bound her to him; “The child was like a bond around her brain, tightened on her brain. It bound her to Skrebensky.” (R 504) She questioned? Was she be bound to Skrebensky? Could she not have a child of herself? Was not the child her own affair? Feminists attack, Lawrence among other things, for making women responsible for children. Lawrence’s view seems to be that the child is mostly mother’s responsibility because by nature she has a greater share in conceiving, delivering and bringing the next generation. And though he would reject this natural process, he could not have left this fact unstated. That is why we say that his view of life is both natural and non -natural. Ursula in these words also seems to be reacting against nature. She wishes if she can get out of this bond.
Lawrence observes: “She fought and fought and fought all through her illness to be free of him and his world…” (R 504) But there is no easy way out. However, her desire persists if she can extricate herself, can disengage herself, and in fact the whole of the world. She must break out of the world like a nut from its shell. She finds the world unreal. It is nullity. The child is also a non-reality. It is at this time that she receives a telegram that he is married. She has already given him up. She is now free both from the child and the child-giver. That is her triumph over the nullity of life. In the end of the novel, Lawrence turns to his favorite rhapsody. As she sits on her window, she sees the people go by in the street below, colliers, women, children, walking each in the husk of an old fruition, but visible through the husk, waiting for the new liberation like her. “When Ursula recuperates a feverish illness following a miscarriage, she sense that she has finally cast the last husk and shell of outward life, and that she will travel into the future as a firm, beautifully flowering individual.”(Cavitch 53)

Critics have generally commented on the last part of the novel. They have failed to appreciate it. Graham Hough, for example, finds that the confusion and the failure in presenting Ursula’s relation with Skrebensky mean that the book can have no proper ending. In rejecting Skrebensky, Ursula feels that she has rejected a whole, dead brittle kind of civilization; and enough has been suggested of his nature and her social attitudes to make this identification plausible. But when she, as mere result of this rejection has an intuition of regenerating power in her visionary encounter with the wild horses, when she sees the vision of the rainbow with which the book ends, the world build up in the living fabric of truth — we can only feel, adds Graham Hough “That this is quite insufficiently based, nothing in the book up to now has led us to it.”(Dark Sun 78) Moreover, the critic feels that regenerations are not achieved by mere rejection; the only positive value consistently represented in the text has been fulfillment in the bond between man and woman, and this Ursula has just failed to achieve.
It is a misreading not only of the entire novel but also of its supreme ending which is, of course, suggestive. Lawrence introduces battle of sexes in all love relationships, battles which often result in death, departure or destruction. He seems to ask: Why should not love be without the battle? That is why he desires a new kind of relationship. This is what, he thinks is the business of art to reveal the relation between man and woman, together with their relationship to the circumambient universe. When man and woman are related in themselves and also with their whole universe, with the whole organic and inorganic world, they are more alive. But mankind unfortunately, according to him, is struggling in the toils, as we have earlier referred to the old relationships — the relationship of mutual domination. That is where his morality takes its life, which is when a painter like Van achieves a vivid relation with sunflowers. His painting does not represent the sunflowers in itself, an utterly intangible and inexplicable relationship — a revelation of perfect relations, at a certain moment between a man and a sunflower. It is not a mimetic picture, something in the camera. There is a fourth dimension of this relationship that is a man related to the sunflower, the sunflower related to the man and together their relation to the universe. And this fourth dimension relationship man and the sunflower, as Lawrence says in “Morality and the Novel”; “both pass away from the moment, in the process of forming a new relationship.” The same can possibly be the relationship between sexes that in loving they must ideally pass away become willless. Though this relationship can’t be pinned down once for all, Lawrence allows for changes from day to day, in this relationship. Hence art, as Lawrence’s own, reveals or attains to, or at least aspires for perfect relationships, which he calls forever new relationships.

As Ursula lies convalescing in the family’s new brick house in a colliery town, her situation symbolizes the imminent will rise from the materialism and corruption of the social world. Her faith is confirmed in the reappearance of a
rainbow over the country side, and she looks to millennial era for all mankind. Lawrence was a specialist at the indefinite ending. 

*Sons and Lovers*, the present novel, *Women in Love*, *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* all the inconclusive conclusion—this is of course part of Lawrence’s dynamism: his avoidance of the static. His lovers never quite find fulfillment, but only go in the general direction of it; life itself gives promise rather than perfection.

**WOMEN IN LOVE**

The end of *The Rainbow* marks the beginning of *Women in Love* where Ursula and Birkin determine to carry the dignity and richness found in nature back into the society. One may deny that *Women in Love* is a sequel to *The Rainbow*, but it is, because the third generation of Brangwen’s that is Ursula’s life spills over in *Women in Love*. Indeed, both spring out of same conception of life. The girl who saw the rainbow is yet to realize it in her own life. Her sufferings are part of her growth. Thus there is continuity of character. *Women in Love*, therefore, does depend upon the knowledge arising out of her frustrations in love with Skrebensky. *The Rainbow* is therefore not closed in the ending. F.R. Leavis also praises Lawrence’s rendering of the continuity and rhythm of life. The continuity of *The Rainbow* in *Women in Love* is seen in the first chapter itself and also the earlier title of the novel *The Sisters*, for Ursula and Gudrun occupy the centre-stage or Brangwen sisters. The novel begins with a discussion on the possibility of marriage, and ends with one on the possibility of a further relationship beyond marriage, a relationship between men. In each case, the relationship is more than a private one, and has implications for society as a whole. The individual consciousness needs to be in harmonious relationship with the “other” — the sensual being, the other person, society at large.

At the end of *Sons and Lovers* a man is born, at the end of *The Rainbow* a woman, and in *Women in Love* a man and a woman and their marriage. Here is a simple formula, too simple perhaps to execute for the complex structures of
the novels at hand, yet suitable enough for the conscious attempt on Lawrence’s part, to work out the conditions of manhood, womanhood and marriage, as he experienced or understood them in his own life. There is no doubt, that Rupert Birkin in *Women in Love* is a further projection of Paul Morel in *Sons and Lovers*. Birkin is a man who wrestles with his own soul; like Paul Morel, he strives to understand what happens inside as well as around himself. It is not superimposition of a theory. “It is a passionate struggle into one conscious being.”(Spilka, *Love Ethic* 121)

The theme is established early. Gudrun sees Gerald Crich, young colliery owner, in the first scene of the book and knows at once that she is to be deeply involved with him. Ursula meets Birkin, the inspector of schools, in her class room not long after and the rest of the book works out relationship of two couples. Like many other novels, *Women in Love* takes two couples and develops their relationships, and the affair of one go wrong and those of other go right. As Graham Hough writes: “Power is the right word here, for Lawrence is extremely concerned about dominance and submission in love and the relation between men and women is more like fight than a friendship.”(*Dark Sun* 77) We have already noticed the growing strain of violence in *The Rainbow*. It appears more nakedly in *Women in Love*, because the characters are no longer rooted in any settled ground. In *The Rainbow* the farm and the church, the twin cycles of the agricultural and Christian year provide an element of permanence and therefore of rest. Marriage until Ursula begins to grow up means a family and children; but the chief actors of *Women in Love* are both professionally emancipated and spiritually uprooted. And a correspondingly great strain is thrown on their private relations. All are aware of this, all are in search of something and the leader is Birkin, the representative of Lawrence himself. Alastair remarks that in *The Rainbow*, Ursula struggles “to take her place within the social world.” The fact, however, is that the Ursula of Women in Love “no longer sees herself as a social being.” She is focused exclusively on her own being. (Leavis, *Novelist* 113) *Women in Love* examines the unconscious roots of bitterness and immorality in relations,
more analytically than *The Rainbow*, for in contrast to the preceding saga of Brnagwen life. *Women in Love* treats experience that is individual rather than familial.

The analysis of individual consciousness, however, is the principle intent of the novel, and the sense that grave troubles infect us is established in the first chapter. Ursula and Gudrun sitting in the window bay of their parent’s substantial house in Beldover, where Ursula recuperated at the end of *The Rainbow*, discuss love and the prospect of marriage. They are afraid that all married men are bores and that married life will not sustain the sense of heightened significance, the romantic vividness that they require in life. Ursula complains that marriage is more than likely to be “the end of experience.” However, Lawrence believed as Cavitch put it that: “though marriage offers the only opportunity for profound self-fulfillment, it paradoxically makes the severest attack upon one’s separate identity.” (New World 63) As an aid to maintaining “equilibrium” Birkin recommends another bond outside of marriage. He looks to manly love as a necessary support to marriage and as a liberating extension of our unconscious life into a revivified civilization. Quite early in the book, in the conversation with Ursula and Hermione in the classroom, Birkin makes his position if not clear, at least definite:

“But do you really want sensuality?” she asked puzzled Birkin looked at her, and became intent in his explanation. “Yes,” he said, “that and nothing else, at this point. It is a fulfillment the great dark knowledge you can’t have in your head—the dark involuntary thing. It is a death to one’s self but it is coming into being of another.” “But how? How can you have knowledge not in your head?” she asked quite unable to interpret his phrases.

“In the blood”: he answered; “when the mind and known world is drowned into darkness everything must go there must the deluge. Then you find yourself a palpable body of darkness, a demon…” (WL 43)

And it is apparent; this is not Birkin, but Lawrence himself talking. When Birkin share the mystic desire for the dissolution of the ego, the daily conscious
self, he looks for it, not in any of the traditional disciplines but in man-woman relationship alone.

What are the conditions of a perfected relation between man and woman, which Birkin struggles to define in *Women in Love*? Its first instance lies in the early chapters, when Birkin tries to rid himself of his former mistress Hermione Roddice. Like so many Laurentian figures, Hermione depends too heavily upon one or two elements of being: will, spirit and intellect are fused within this woman, into a single passion for final abstract knowledge. Such knowledge means power to Hermione, power to hold all life within the scope of her conscious intellect, to reduce them to finite particles of thought and to reduce even Birkin to his abstract spiritual essence and it is here with reference to Hermione’s lust for knowledge that Lawrence strikes most deeply into the problem of diseased intellectualism. As Hermione cries that: “there can be no reason, no excuse for education, excepts the joy and beauty of knowledge in itself… nothing has meant so much to me in all life, as certain knowledge… yes it is the greatest thing in life to know. It is really to be happy, to be free.” (*WL* 20) But Birkin, the Laurentian hero, argues that knowledge is a finite, bottled sort of attainment, and that true liberty or spontaneity, can never be known, in the strictest sense of the world, but only experienced by the emotional self, and then treated with proper reverence by mind.

Hermione like a typical wasterlander, fears the deeper realities and prefers to live merely from the upper centers of her being. She is “a woman of the new school full of intellectuality, and heavy, nerve worn with consciousness…. She was a man’s woman; it was the manly world that held her.” (*WL* 15-16) Charles Rossman rightly observes: “behind her veneer of culture, she is as hollow as Skrebensky.” (*You are The Call* 274-75) She is wilful and believes in the one up-one down kind of relationship. It may be deduced from her treatment of the stag in her park. She looks at and talks to it “as it too was a boy, she wanted to wheedle and fondle. He was male so she must exert some kind of power over him.” (*WL* 88) She again displays her will to possess another being like a mere object when she prevents her male cat
from drinking the cream she herself has put before it: “It was always the same, the joy in power she manifested, peculiarly in power over any male being.” (WL 30) She believes: “If only we could learn how to use our will… we could do anything.” (WL 139) She tries to make Birkin also the victim of her wicked will. It is Hermione who turns out to be the real culprit. But Birkin, like Ursula feels himself tied up “possessed by her as it were his fate, without question.” (WL 22) So he opposes her will to possess him as a love object: “you want to clutch things and have them in your power… You have no sensuality. You have only your will and you conceit of consciousness and your lust for power, to know.” (WL 41-42) Her love for Birkin is not a passion, but a bullying will to have liar in her power.

Hermione, despite all her material possess ions, feels defenseless because she has no intrinsic confidence: “It was a lack of robust self, she had no natural sufficiency, and there was a terrible void, a lack, a deficiency of being within her.” (WL 16) She wants Birkin to “close up this deficiency to close it forever.” (WL 16) This shirking of life responsibility on her part irks Birkin. He hates her and tries “to break away from her finally to be free.” (WL 17) She vainly believes in her power to keep him but “underneath she know the split was coming and her hatred of him was subconscious and intense.” (WL 98)

Birkin himself is somewhat “perversion,” but his redeeming features like that of Ursula, is his spontaneity and his intrinsic faith in his deeper self. Hermione hates him “for his irresponsible gaiety; because of his power to escape, to exist, other than she did.” (WL 92) Birkin, on the other hand, believes in the intrinsic uniqueness of a being “as a separate as one star is from another, as different in quality and quantity… One man isn’t any better than another, not because they are intrinsically other, that there is no term of comparison.” (WL 103-04) This unwavering faith in the uniqueness of individuals is strictly foreign to Hermione’s wilful mind. She is full of “violent waves of hatred and loathing of all he said.” (WL 104) But he is going to be cowed down no more by her egoistic tricks. He has already begun to recede back from her deathly contact. What Characterizes Birkin’s action throughout the novel is a search for
transcendent states of being, and that search draws him away from women, not
toward them? When Hermione realizes that he is trying to get rid of her, she
starts hating him: “her whole mind was a chaos… herself struggling to gain
control with her will.” (WL 104) She even attacks him with a paper weight out
of her desperation. As cannot put up any more with Hermione and her ruthless
will, he thinks it better to drift away from her finally and forever. In this way “a
complete estrangement” (WL 104) sets in between them. He seeks solace in the
lap of nature, and finds the desired relief there: “Birkin feels tired and weak,
but relieved and, in a strangely Dantesque manner purged of the fast remnants
of his diseased love for Hermione.” (Spilka, Love Ethic 133) The epiphanic
experience he has immediately after Hermione’s attack absolves him of his past
relations, releases his primal being in its pure nakedness and prepares the
meeting ground with Ursula.

As Mark Spilka comments that, in the relation between man and woman,
Lawrence called for balance or “polarity,” as if between “two oppositely
charged entities,” (Love Ethic 10) or he placed the marriage unit itself in
balance with the world of purposive activity — so that the protagonists of his
novels must also be in tune, as it were, with the world around them. In other
words, they must achieve infinity of pure relations with the living universe:
first with each other, through love then with other men and women through
friendship and creative labor; and finally even with birds, beasts and flowers,
which play a vital role in all the novels. And here lies seeds of Laurentian
morality not in any religion or sect.

And morality lies in what Birkin calls “star - equilibrium” and he sets it
forth in opposition to Ursula’s belief that love surpasses the individual, and to
Hermione’s belief in spiritual and abstract communion. Such forms of love
involve the loss of self - hood, they depend upon the ancient theory that men
and women are but broken fragments of one whole, while Birkin insists that
men and women have been singled out from an original mixture into pure
individuality; they must polarize rather than merge in love — hence “star -
equilibrium”: a pure balance of two single being, as the stars balance each other. Birkin believes that love is not an “absolute,” but only “a part of human relationship.” As Lawrence writes in *Aaron’s Rod*:

> Two eagles in the mid air, grappling, whirling, coming to their intensification of love oneness there in mid air. In mid air the love consummation but all the time each lifted on its own wings: each bearing itself up on its own wings at every moment of the mid air love consummation. That is the splendid love way. ( *AR* 196)

It is through these symbols of love and sex that Lawrence brings home his moral point that if love is egoism and sex is propagation of the species which, of course, is an extension of egoism, then love is nothing. It is not that love is and cannot be a perfect consummation of two egoless persons. Indeed Birkin knows that his life rested with Ursula. But he does not want that type of love which she offers. Lawrence always points out the old ways of loving in having the other in possession, is vulgarization of love. In the chapter “Man to Man,” Lawrence writes in this context: “the old way of love seemed a dreadful bondage, a sort of conscription. What was in him, he did not know, but the thought of love, marriage and children and a life lived together, in the horrible privacy of domestic and connubial satisfaction, was repulsive.”( *WL* 223)

Further Birkin wants something clearer, more open, and cooler as it is. The hot narrow intimacy between man and wife is abhorrent. The way they shut their doors, these married people and shut themselves into their own exclusive alliance with each other, even in love, disgusts him. According to Birkin it is a whole community of mistrustful couples insulated in private houses or private rooms, always in couples, and no further life. The charge against Lawrence is that he propagates promiscuity and even homosexuality appears. This is placed in the context of Birkin’s view on narrow coupling, for even when joined together in their love and domesticity they remain separate suspicious of each other. The morality that Lawrence states or proffers is opposite to this old conception of love and marriage. Birkin hates promiscuity as Lawrence writes,
specifying his point, even worse than marriage and “a liaison was only another kind of coupling, reactionary from the legal marriage. Reaction was another bore than action.” (WL 223)

This makes it very clear that Lawrence is not propagator of promiscuity. For him love and sex can be pure. If Birkin hates sex, as does Lawrence, it is because of its limitations. It is sex that turns a man into a broken half of a couple, “the woman into the other broken half. And he wanted to be single in himself, the woman single in her. He wants sex to revert to the novel of other appetites to be regarded as a functional process not as a fulfillment.” (WL 223)

It is a very significant statement first because Birkin wants man and woman not to compromise their individuality one for the sake of the other and as they should remain their whole selves alive; in that case sex is functional, and not a fulfillment. He believes in sex -marriage. There is, in his opinion, nothing wrong when the two sexes as pure beings, constitute each other’s freedom, balancing each -other like two poles of one force, like two angels or like to demons.

This is the clearest statement, ever in Lawrence whole corpse. In “Morality and the Novel” Lawrence holds the same view. He sees the danger of fusion, of one into the other. So he through the images of two poles holding the balance together seems more act than that of fusion. Tom remained frustrated because he wanted too much of Lydia. Lawrence thinks that when it comes to loving, one can satisfy the desire without being conscious, provided it is a simple thrust in a world of plenty of water. One should not only focus oneself on one person, as he has earlier said in terms of exclusive relationship; there are many people and relations, capable of loving and being loved. Tom for example diverted his attention to the child and thus satisfied his access of desires for Lydia. Then he tended his feet. That is how the intensity of love for one person can be deluded into many. Gerald dies because he cannot see Gudrun in relationship with Loerke. There is the whole world for human love, sympathy and joy. Birkin wants to be with Ursula, as free as with him, single out, clear and cool, yet balanced, polarized with her. This is the morality of
love. The merging, the clutching, the mingling of love, becomes madly abhorrent to him.

It is in this regard that he thinks woman to be horrible and clutching, because she has such a lust for possession, “a greed of self importance in love.” *(WL 224)* A woman according to him wants to have to own, to control, to be dominant. Everything must be referred back to her, to the woman as he put it, the great mother of everything, out of whom she does everything and to whom everything must finally be rendered up.

Birkin thus emerges as a mouthpiece of Lawrence, regarding the novelist’s morality of love. Here Lawrence’s rejection of the women must not be misunderstood. As already pointed out, she is Mother Nature. She is therefore more in the clutches of nature’s design to possess the man and to propagate the species. In this context feminists too have taken exception to Lawrence’s rejection of women. Some of the most developed and influential political critiques of Lawrence are the product of feminist literary criticism. Under scrutiny have been the representation of women in Lawrence’s writing, and the specific implications of his sexual politics. This emphasis gave rise influential arguments in the early 1970’s which sought to unmask his misogyny, and to draw attention to the oppressive operations on patriarchy. In his work, feminist literary and cultural criticism is diverse and draws on a number of traditions. Within feminism, of course, a range of views co-exist. Since the early 1970’s feminists have been attacking Lawrence as the epitome of sexism and his theories of sexuality, as male-centered and insensitive, dismissive towards women. It has scarcely been able to find a woman in the 1980’s who has a good word to say to him.

The feminist case was first put against Lawrence by Murry who construed Lawrence’s attitude towards women as the assertion of his “hypersensitive masculinity,” which is highlighted by creating the sexual mystery wherein “he is the lord.” *(Son of Woman 72)* About Lawrence’s treatment of female Helen Corke says that although “these women are fully drawn,” Lawrence was not interested in them as “individuals” and saw them
“only in relation to their man” (Croydon Years 98) Kate Millett reading of Lawrence in *Sexual Politics*, sounded a new role which created a stir in the literary world. She saw Lawrence as a “sexual politician leading a counter revolution against all form of female emancipation.” (Millett, *Sexual Politics*)

But on the other hand of the spectrum, feminist appreciation of Lawrence have not been lacking. Defending Lawrence against Murry’s criticism, Anais Nin affirmed that Lawrence had “a complete realization of feeling of women. In fact very often he wrote as a woman could write. It is the first time a man has so wholly and completely expressed women accurately.” (*Unprofessional Study* 57-58)

Kate Millett is highly off the mark. As Lawrence points out, woman is not only nature’s instrument but also, for that matter always anxious to keep the nail in her hold because in her comparison, her opposite sex is less loyal to the progeny. That is why she is always anxious to possess the nail, making him often put off by her insistence that he must love her. This is almost refraining, like that of Ursula. This often fills Birkin with almost insane fury, as he regards her, also quoted earlier, the “Magna Mater,” (*WL* 224) that all is hers, because she has borne it, including men; having borne him, she claims him, with all his soul and body. This is what horrifies the nail. Ursula is that arrogant queen of life.

Lawrence is not against women, nor is he against men. He wants them to be pure, perfectly polarized, neither dominating nor being dominated. The problem Birkin wrestles with throughout the novel: “what must the individual do to be saved when he finds himself living in an age of renewed chaos, age of dissolution?” (*The Art* 78) While Birkin tries to balance his relationship with Ursula, the relationship between Gerald and Gudrun is deadly because it always involves exploiting the other.

However, the relation between Ursula and Birkin can be termed as the touchstone for perfected relationships. Here, once again, the novelist is able to impart a practical authenticity to his, possibly, the most controversial theory. Through their experiences of earlier affairs, both Ursula and Birkin learn to
relinquish their corresponding wilful social identities and let their essential beings come to the ground. Having fulfilled this pre-requisite, they strike the ultimate union devoid of all fear of separation. Their relation becomes as perfect as that between two self-illuminating stars. Ursula’s sexual exploits with Skrebensky and then her school mistress in *The Rainbow* (if one takes *Women in Love* as a sequel to *The Rainbow*) engender in her hopelessness. No doubt, now she lives a good deal by herself still, she is “trying to lay hand on life, to grasp it in her own understanding; still she has a prescience and intimation of something yet to come.”(*WL* 9) Likewise, Birkin’s nature is clever and would prefer them to “like the purely individual things in themselves, which makes them act in singleness.”(*WL* 37) He wishes: “one must throw everything away, everything — let everything go, to get one last thing one wants — freedom together.”(*WL* 132) Mark Spilka observes: “he sloughs off past encumbrances, as Ursula Brangwen did before him in *The Rainbow*.”(*Love Ethic* 114) In this way both Birkin and Ursula are prepared to try once more, their luck to achieve a balance in relations.

When Birkin and Ursula meet for the first time, they become aware of each other’s presence. Birkin attacks as well as annoys Ursula. She thinks that “he seemed to acknowledge some kinship between her and him, a natural tacit understanding, and a using of same language.”(*WL* 20) When he suddenly enters her class, she gets started “All her suppressed, subconscious fear sprang into being; with anguish…she looked like one who is suddenly awakened.”(*WL* 36) He is also waiting for her to be aware of his existence. He is “unconsciously drawn to her, she is his future.”(*WL* 92) He wants the regeneration of “the dark involuntary being’ through ‘sensuality’ that could be ‘death to oneself but it is coming into being of another.”(*WL* 43) Birkin believes that one has to be “lapse out before one knows what sexual reality is, lapse into unknowingness; one has to learn not -to-be before coming into being.”(*WL* 44) It can happen only “when the mind and the known world is drowned in darkness. Everything must go — there must be deluge. Then you
find yourself a palpable body of darkness a demon.” (WL 43) As Terry Eagleton points out: “Birkin’s search is for a relationship, which has passed beyond relationship: for a rooted and permanent settlement which offers at the same time the ground of a limitless personal autonomy.” (Exiles and Emigres 217) Ursula, who is aware of her own needs, thinks of her own problems in the light of Birkin’s words and there comes into existence a “beam of understanding between them.” (WL 130)

The affair between Ursula and Birkin passes through many ordeals. In the early stage, the relationship between Birkin and Ursula is marked by conflicts reactions attraction and revulsions. They know that it is “a fight to the death between them—or a new life.” (WL 143) She knows that Birkin wants to establish with her a relationship that is “final and infallible; more impersonal and harder and rarer” whose “root is beyond love, a naked kind of isolation, and an isolated me that does not meet or mingle and never can.” (WL 146) Birkin wants the final me, a spark an impersonal being to meet the final you beyond all responsibility and expectation. “What I want is a strange conjunction with you… not meeting and mingling but equilibrium, a pure balance of two single is being as the stars balance each other.” (WL 148) He believes: “If you admit unison, you forfeit all possibilities of chaos… If you enter into the pure unison, it is irrevocable. And when it is irrevocable, it is one way, like the path of a star… It is the law of creation.” (WL 148) One is committed. One must commit oneself to a conjunction with the other — forever. But it is “the time to relinquish, not to resist any more.” (WL 103) However, such an ultimate unison cannot be achieved so easily.

But this sort of ultimate marriage is not a matter of love — it is something beyond love. Birkin tells Ursula that the point about love is that we hate the world because we have vulgarized it. It ought to be prescribed, tabooed from utterance, for many years, till we get a new, better idea. The new, better idea is soon forthcoming: as Birkin calls it “star-equilibrium” Ursula at first feels like an ordinary girl and wants love. She sees Birkin’s desire for something more as
a mere lust for bullying and domination, and the fight between them begins because she will not accept his notions. He says that he does not want a meeting and mingling, but equilibrium, a balance of opposites. Where Ursula remains convinced that Birkin is trying to bully her, till at one point s he comes to hate him. They reach the stage where they both know that they are irrevocable bound together, but he would rather die than accept the kind of love she offers. It would be too long to follow the whole course of their feeling for each other. When Ursula does not want to submit to such a superfine stability, Birkin does not force or persuade her; rather he calls her a free agent and advises her to follow her own instincts.

In chapter “Moony” Birkin’s fury and Ursula’s stunned bewilderment at it, are absolutely appropriate expressions of their states of being at the time. Here for Birkin, the moon is the white goddess, the primal woman image, by whom he is obviously haunted. He tries to drive her away, but of course she always comes back, as soon as he stops his stone throwing. At this moment Ursula appears, and they talk together - the same old impasse, she wants love and he wants something beyond it. In the modern age, love has become a means to assert one’s ego, to have the other person in one’s power. Birkin objects to Ursula’s desire for domination and possession. She wanted love to “administer” to her “egoism,” to “sub serve.”( WL 170) But Birkin resists this subservience.(Pinion, Lawrence Companion 173) If only Ursula abandons her ego and will, can she come in contact with the unknown. Only they can she be her real self. He realizes that to form a living, dynamic relationship “there needs the pledge between us, that we will both cast off everything, cast off ourselves even, and cease to b e, so that which is perfectly ourselves can place in us.”( WL 163) Failed to understand the import of Birkin’s “mystic conjunction,”( WL 169) Ursula is reluctant to “give the sort of submission he insist on.”( WL 330) Birkin hated her “absorbing,” “merging” kind of love. Birkin is opposed to the idea of any kind of melting which may lead to the dissolution of separate and distinct identities. The “state of free, proud
singleness” is an essential requirement of that integrated being which he is so anxious to cultivate. Such type of communion gives a greater “freedom together,” (WL 109) this contact with the “mystic otherness is made possible by their total giving up of their possessive human wills. (Lawrence Review 9, 197-98)

The tug-of-war between Ursula and Birkin continues. It is in the chapter “Excurse,” in which the struggle between Ursula and Birkin is finally resolved — they fight, yield, or stand aloof from each other till that final burst of anger which leaves them free for consummation. Ursula has not yet shared Birkin’s awareness and there is violent quarrel in which Ursula abuses Birkin for his affair with Hermione. Ursula’s invective reaches an intensity that is remarkable even for Lawrence, though it was always part of his theory that integrity in human relationships is better achieved by violent quarrels than by not having things out. Birkin recognizes the justice of much what she says; the quarrel ends in a new access of tenderness. Suddenly Ursula, too, recognizes this new relationship of unity and separateness — the profound connection between two beings who are nevertheless eternally different. At long last they attain the “mystic conjunction.” They now become luminous beings with an easy access to completeness, perfection. Now they are “free together in a perfected relationship.” (WL 316) In light of such overwhelming textual evidence one cannot accept, Millett’s view that Ursula becomes “only a nonentity, utterly incorporated into Birkin.” Sexually, she wants to be the epitome of passivity: she wanted to submit, she wanted to know, what he would do to her? She could not be herself… she abandoned herself to him. Hereafter marriage presents not only taming of woman, but also her extinction.” (Sexual Politics 265) Millett either forgets or does want to admit that Ursula and Birkin is a voluntary yielding in separation or singleness, rather than an enforced violation of the beings of the either party. Lawrence further makes it clear that Ursula and Birkin are essentially two autonomous beings who have come together to fulfill
their mutual needs. However, the foregoing discussion does not imply that Birkin and Ursula are always, every moment, in the state of perfection, there do come pitfalls just as it happens in real life. Lawrence has made it clear in his essay that this is a flickering balance.

From then the burden of book falls on the relationship of Gudrun and Gerald, the pair who fails to achieve this mysterious “polarity,” and failing in that, fails in everything. If Birkin and Ursula turn towards fuller life, there is also deathward affair between Gerald and Gudrun, which seems to provide symbolic contrast with “star-equilibrium.” The relation between them ends in nullity. Their affair becomes the battlefield for a sensational clash of adamant wills. As they try to overpower each other, it is “will that destroys the balance, and that is culpable manifestation of ‘head action not bowel action.” Both of them fail to discard the sloughs of their egocentric personalities and meet on the level of primal beings. To use the words of Charles Rossman, “Gerald and Gudrun are locked in a struggle for mastery over one another.”(You are The Call 271) While Gudrun is a born mistress, Gerald also is a spoiled child. While she is attracted by his “gleaming beauty, maleness,” she is also not blind to “the lurking danger of his unsubdued temper.”(WL 14-15) While she feels ‘a paroxysm of violent sensation’ in his presence, and gladly accepts his challenge “I shall know more of that man.”(WL 15) Gerald is always watchful. His dual consciousness is torn between his allegiances to his business and his need for a woman. Gerald is an industrial magnate. What matters to him is “the pure instrumentality of the individual.”(WL 223) By sheer dint of desire to satiate “his own will in the struggle with natural conditions”(WL 223-24) he takes over the mines and very soon gets everything in his control. As Keith Sagar puts: “If Gerald were able to experience a pure relationship with a woman, or with Birkin, he would no longer be able to function as industrial magnate, for this, too, involves using of others.”(The Art 79) It is the same mentality as that of a commander who sent his men over the top into barbed wire and machine
gun fire. The public and private themes meet in Gerald, who accepts the extant social form, the class hegemony, the case nexus. This is the reason that his relationship with Gudrun is deadly because it always involves exploitation.

On the other hand Gudrun is a born free lance, outside society, yet too assertive and self-conscious ever to find real rest, real self-forgetfulness. She suffers from “contrariness,” she is eager to preserve herself: “she won’t give herself away. She’s always on the defensive.”(WL 94) Besides, she has “an insatiable curiosity to see and to know everything.”(WL 234) She also feels a want within herself. Perhaps that is why she always envies “the strange positive fullness that subsisted in the atmosphere around Ursula and Birkin.”(WL 377) She envies them “a childish sufficiency to which she herself could never approach.”(WL 403)

Naturally, when the two master-wills of Gerald and Gudrun clash, the painful friction leads to nothing fruitful for them. Gerald feels “excited” when he watches Gudrun dancing. To stimulate his own mind Gerald wants “only to come to her, and be given to her.”(WL 239) He is rather infatuated by her and decides to come up to “her standards, fulfill her expectations… fulfill her idea of a man and a human being.”(WL 102) But his modes of existence like that of Skrebensky, hinges on the victim-victimizer equation that forecloses any possibility of “star-equilibrium” in interpersonal relationships.

Although Gerald is successful in dealing with matter, his own life goes on in unintegrated sex scheming which has no connection with the rest of his being. The battle of wills goes on between them. The only connecting factor in this relationship is their savage passion for dominance over each other. Gerald and Gudrun are not able to give up their wills. Instead of being “balanced in conjunction” like Ursula and Birkin, they feel imprisoned, in the bondage of their “egos” struggling for freedom.

For instance in the notations mare-episode, he vulgarly displays his brute masculine prowess by forcing the mare to stand against its will by the
passing locomotive just to satiate his will to power. Gudrun prying spirit gets charged on seeing Gerald’s ruthless handling of vulnerable being. She is bewitched “by the sense of indomitable soft weight of the man, coming down into the loving body of the horse… a sort of soft white magnetic domination from the loins and thighs and calves, enclosing and encompassing the mare heavily into unutterable, subordination.” (WL 113) She wants to know more of this manly man. Here Lawrence states the fact that almost every modern human being “had a secret sense of power, and of inexpressible destructiveness and of fatal half heartedness, a sort of rottenness in the will.”(WL 118)

Gerald believes in the dictum: “either rule or be ruled.” He, like Hermione, takes it “as the normal order.”(WL 139) Naturally such a person is doomed to a sinister play of power politics; anything equi-balanced like the star equilibrium is foreign to his being. When Gudrun strikes him a blow -though a light one -during the highland cattle episode, he remains silent and gives himself “in a strange, electric submission.”(WL 176) She caresses him subtly, “having him completely at her mercy.” (WL 171) For the first time in his life Gerald is “almost transfused, lapsed out,” otherwise he has remained always “concentrated and unyielding in himself.”(WL 178) Both Gudrun and Gerald display their predatory nature through the rabbit episode. When she wants to catch the rabbit but it skips “a heavy cruelty we lled up in her.” (WL 241) When Gerald succeeds in catching it by neck “Gudrun looked at Gerald with strange, darkened eyes, strained with underworld knowledge… There was a league between them, abhorrent to them both. They were implicated with each other in abhorrent mysteries.” (WL 293) Birkin closely watches the way Gerald and Gudrun are going. He warns Gerald: “Do you think you can hire a woman like Gudrun Brangwen with money?... She is your equal like anything  -probably your superior… And if you haven’t the guts to know it, I hope, he’ll leave you to your own devices.” (WL 201) Birkin wants Gerald to accept ‘the fact of
intrinsic difference between human being’ but Gerald “does not intend to accept. It was against his social honour, his principle.” (WL 209)

When his father dies, Gerald feels desperately alone, he must seek reinforcements. He seeks Gudrun to recover “some sort of balance.” (WL 328) But his physical intimacy with Gudrun has the quality of corrosive destructiveness rather than that of the mutually fulfilling “star-equilibrium.” It becomes clear from his treatment of Gudrun during their walk the following night: “as they walked, he seemed to lift her nearer and nearer to himself, till she moved upon the firm vehicle of his body. He was so strong, so sustaining and he could not be opposed.” (WL 329) Under the bridge, he again “lifts her upon his breast and crushed her, breathless and dazed and destroyed… Ah, it was terrible and perfect.” (WL 330) From the time being Gudrun also desires it because she wants to know him perfectly and finally. Keith Sagar put it: “Gerald and Gudrun strain for knowledge of each other, and hence power over each other?” (The Art 92) As Lawrence writes:

So she was passed away and gone in him who was he? He was the exquisite adventure, the desirable unknown to her… Her soul thrilled with complete knowledge. She wanted to touch him and touch him, till she had him all in her hands, till she had strained him into her knowledge. Her fingers had him under thus power… But she knew now, and it was enough… And this knowledge was a death from which she must recover. (WL 331-32)

As Keith Sagar puts it: “Dependence, exploitation, violation and murder, are the developing implications of this relationship, implications which are set against Birkin’s principle of ‘star-equilibrium,’ ‘polarity,’ with its corollaries—individual self — sufficiency and wholeness, mutual respect, tenderness and unforced spontaneous sensuality.” (The Art 93) Now when Gudrun has known Gerald roundly, she tries to get rid of him, but she feels “as if she were caught at past by fate, imprisoned in some horrible and fatal trap.” (WL 325) Gudrun is
a born mistress, cannot enter into any living relationship with another person, she remains too conscious, she will not give herself, her tenderness is something willed, not a real self-abandonment. And Gerald is not expected to satisfy a woman of Gudrun’s caliber. If he thinks that “pride or masterful will or physical strength can help him, he is wrong. The greatest power is the one that is subtle and adjust itself, not the one which blindly attacks.” (WL 451) Gudrun has also known Gerald finally and completely: “knowing him finally she was the Alexander seeking new worlds.” (WL 457) Like Hermione, Gudrun also has obsession for knowledge. She has known Gerald and there was nothing more to know about him. “She reaped the essential from a man,” experienced “ultimate sensation” and threw away the “husk.” (WL 417) She is drawn to Loerke. Pinion rightly remarks, “with Loerke the regressive process goes further than with Gerald.”(Lawrence Companion 169)

Since Gerald cannot bear the thought of living without Gudrun, he tries to force her in his ‘orbit’ on his own conditions. He forcibly takes her in his arms. When she recoils away from him, he closes over her like steel. “He would destroy her rather than be denied.” (WL 442) Gerald seems to be getting power over her like an “inhuman phenomenon. Remote and reserved, she resolves to combat him. One of them must triumph over the other.”(WL 413) And when she tells him that she does not love him, he becomes silent with cold passion of anger. He must either kill her or leave her. But he cannot even leave her because already he has abandoned his life responsibility over her: “she was the determining influence of his very being.”(WL 446)

Charles Rossman rightly observes: “the disintegration of Gerald in the face of corrosive pressure from Gudrun duplicates in its outlines the relationship of Skrebensky and Ursula. In each case, a weak man succumbs to a powerfully demanding woman and both books render a judgment against man.”(You are Call 279) When Gudrun maintains her pose of bravery even in front of a concrete danger of being extinguished, Gerald wants to kill her: “a
heavy overcharged desire, to bring about her death, possessed him.” (WL 461) However, he himself gets ultimately killed among the frozen slops. Joyce Carol Oates writes that Gerald is the personification of a “civilized man” and his private emotional life, his confusion of the individual will with that of cosmos, demand death — death by perfect cold.” (Critical Enquiry 4, No. 3, 561) Thus, Lawrence has worked out the inexorable consequences of his life-defeating idealism. (Robson, Critical Essays 281)

Lawrence is deeply concerned about dominance and submission in love and the relation between men and women is more a fight than a friendship. As Gudrun has broken up mentally, Gerald breaks up physically. Singleness of being is violated by any “love,” sensual or spiritual, which demands merging or uses compulsion. Sacrifice and murder are both extremes to which the love which merges or compels, can lead extreme forms of the violation and disintegration of self and soul. The hostility unleashed by the disharmony between Gerald and Gudrun end only with the death of one of them. And it is totally immoral. Clearly will and ego as also their manifestations in pride, presumption, power, domination and denial of the other — do not make for sound and perfected relationship. Lawrence’s moral concern is now widely accepted. In the end it is quite obvious that Lawrence wishes to establish equilibrium not only between sexes but in all creation. Because is not a one-to-one relation. There is no double saying, that man-woman relationship is pivot of all other relations. But there is something else, too. It is as though, Lawrence has all along an obscure realization, that it is not possible to found a whole way of life on the relation between man and woman, that a man must also play his part in man’s world. Gerald’s death is a climax of a process of disintegration that has been indicated all along. The self — destructiveness of Gerald’s nature has been constantly emphasized. For those who will not or cannot accept the responsibility of a real relationship, disintegration is the only end.
Throughout *Women in Love*, Lawrence and his spokesman, Birkin, try to promulgate a new set of values to recover the will and means to natural fulfillment. Birkin preaches the viability of conjugal love as a foundation for all other human relations. In the end, Birkin recommends another bond outside marriage: an “eternal union with a man too; another kind of love.” Lawrence arrives, further at a mode of approach to life, at a change in being and a change even, in the qualifying human relationships but he does not wholly solve the problem posed in *Women in Love* because, it seems, that problems are insoluble. There must always be a certain amount of conflict between a man’s friendships, however, deep, and his love for his wife, since marriage is always central to the fulfillment, whole friendship are peripheral and expendable, though paradoxically vital. As Lawrence put it:

> A woman is one bank of the river of my life, and the world is the other, without the two shores, my life would be a marsh. It is the relationship to woman and to my fellow men, which makes me myself, a river of life…But the relationship of man to woman is central fact in actual human life. Next comes the relationship of man to man. A long way after, all the other relationships fatherhood, motherhood, sister, brother, friend. (P 192-193)