CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to look at the possibility of interactions between women characters in the novels of D.H. Lawrence through an examination of certain selected works of fiction. It has, moreover, tried to explore the nature of woman-to-woman bonding and communication between them in order to emphasize the fact that, unlike the position taken by radical feminists such as Kate Millett, Lawrence texts are not monologic sites of patriarchal domination but act more as sites where contentious perspectives battle for dominance, mostly along the lines of gender. While there are quite a few moments in the texts where Lawrence’s misogyny spills over into the texts, they are almost always qualified by the significance or relevance invested in the female characters. Again, while this has been the more prevalent position in later feminist criticism of D.H. Lawrence (as in Linda Ruth Williams), it has concentrated more on man-woman relationship and man-to-man bonding than on communication between women; the latter featuring, if at all, only tangentially in its argument. My study has, through the examination of the selected texts of Lawrence, found that even though these novels attempt to suppress the notion of women’s togetherness through their dominant narrative perspectives, they can never totally do away with it. The community of women that finds its most powerful manifestation in The Rainbow provides an alternative to the male bonding in Lawrence’s novels. At the same time, there is a constant tension in the novels regarding the power inherent in such bonding so that in many of the novels (most particularly in the novels usually labeled as the ‘leadership’ novels) there is an attempt to break that sense of solidarity (if not community) between women. In fact, the assertion of self-identity in the male
design with light, culture and so on, they, nevertheless, point out Siegmund’s own affiliation with culture (through his own inhibitions) at the same time of opening up a space in the text for the articulation of a women’s perspective.

The rejection of the family again features in *Aaron’s Rod* and here again, it is a community of women that is indicated as being the site of dissonance. Aaron, like Siegmund but as a more successful version of him, leaves home in order to free himself from what for him (and the other significant male character Rawdon Lilly) is the devouring nature of the female. In this novel, the upper-class women share in this construction of the mother figure and thus come into an unwitting and mostly unconscious bonding as they resent, and resist, being represented in such a manner.

In *The Lost Girl*, the idea of community is made more complex by introducing in it the idea of “odd women” or the spinster. As in *The Trespasser*, the single woman in Lawrence is regarded as a threat to the perceived harmony of the heterosexual relationship, and characters like Louisa in *The Trespasser* and Miss Frost and Miss Pinnegar are those single women and spinsters who, by repudiating their female ‘destiny’ (as it were) take themselves outside the fold of nature, its cycles, of and spontaneous life and creativity. As a result, the community they build up works only as a ‘rite to passage’ for the protagonist Alvina who must come out of this set-up in order to find herself. This means entering into, again temporarily, another matriarchy that is initially opposed to the sterility of the family at Manchester House, only to be supplanted by an ultimate submission to the man (Cicio, in this case). However, this trajectory is contested in the narrative by the fact that it is the initial family in Manchester House that initiates Alvina’s quest for self, and remains a more authentic bond for her, providing her with the resilience she takes with herself as she ends up in Italy. Again, her instinctive response to the
character in most of the novels rests on their, or the narratives' attempts to segregate the female characters and break down their shared experience and the degree of their success in doing so.

The first novel to be considered, *The Trespasser*, relies on the opposition between the constitutions of home and the possibility of liberation represented by the Isle of Wight. Home and the impossibility of self-expression for the male protagonist Siegmund manifest themselves in the figure of Beatrice and their daughters; the liberation from the constraints of conventional social mores initially embodies itself in Helena amidst the pastoral location of the Isle of Wight. Siegmund’s conception of himself as a self that finds its fulfillment in contact with the vivid life in the Isle of Wight through the mediation of Helena thus depends on this binary, and when he cannot sustain this, his whole psyche breaks down and he commits suicide. The fact that both Beatrice and Helena serve only as instruments aiding Siegmund’s self actualization refuses to take into cognizance their autonomy as selves who themselves have their own sets of confrontations. It is only the death of Siegmund that releases both Beatrice and Helena from such a bind, at the same time of effectively questioning the validity of such a binary. Another, and, from the perspective of my argument, more important aspect of this binary is the relegation of the Helena-Louisa relationship to the margins, since their nearly lesbian relationship threatens to unsettle the heterosexual construction of the Siegmund – Helena relationship. Again, the family in *The Trespasser* has chiefly a community of women (Beatrice and her daughters) at the centre that defies Siegmund’s presence, and after his death, this community is able to make its foray into the more public world of business. While Beatrice, with her business aspirations, and Helena, with her emphasis on the visual and the spiritual aspects of sex, are aligned in Lawrence’s
landscape in mountainous Italy also undermines the force of her submission to Cicio, since it is as an intrinsic part of the Italian landscape that he is able to establish a contact with her.

In Chapter 4, the question of female identity becomes embroiled with the issue of imperialism. Here again Kate, the protagonist of *The Plumed Serpent* is one of the representatives of white European civilization when the primitive world of New Mexico provides a release from the banal realities of an English upper-middle class life of leisure. On the other hand, Carlota becomes the other face of imperialism that embarks on the ‘enlightenment’ and religious conversion of the ‘savage’ and ‘primitive’ ‘natives’. Kate thus becomes the embodiment of a subversion of the traditional role expected of women belonging to a ruling race. At the same time, Kate’s subversive identity as a rebel woman is rendered more problematic as she seems to return to the status quo of the power hierarchy in gender relationships by apparently subscribing to the exceedingly masculine cult of Quetzalcoatl. Kate thus seems to waver between a conventional culture-driven feminine identity and a resistant self that finally is able to come to an interactive and symbiotic communion with the ‘dark’ vivid life embodied in the Mexican landscape. The release experienced by Kate, though indicative of a kind of anti-imperialism in Lawrence, does not escape the allegation of racism.

In *The Fox* (as also in short stories such as ‘Tickets; Please’), a more lasting and subversive assertion of women’s self-actualization takes place through the characters of March and Banford. Though the attempt of the two women to establish a community beyond traditional heterosexual society does not succeed in reality, the novella is left sufficiently open-ended to suggest that the bonding between the two women does not break with Banford’s death. As a corollary, Henry’s attempt to
assert his manhood (he is continually referred to in the text as a "boy") by breaking the bond between the two killing Banford and establishing his mastery over March, is not allowed to stand intact/supreme in the narrative.

Throughout these novels, as in the others in Lawrence's oeuvre, women stand ambivalently between culture and nature. In a distinct qualification of the usual association between women and nature, Lawrence aligns women with education, knowledge, visual culture and man with darkness, spontaneous vitality and nature. At the same time, Lawrence's notion of male leadership reveals the fact that the apparent change in the equation does not necessarily mean a change in power. However, a study of his novels also show that Lawrence's novels are as much an exploration of women's quest for self-expression and identity as much as it is for men and one of the ways in which this can be explored is by looking at the dynamics of the relationships and communication between/among the women characters in his novels.