The relationship between the human self and art involves two kinds of relationships. One is the relation of artist’s self to his craft and the other is the relationship between the art and the self that who responds to it. But, in any analysis of these two relations, the equivalents of the three traditional aspects of art distinguished by Aristotle (the object, the medium and the manner of imitation) are also to be taken into account. At its simplest, the formulation can be as follows. The artist signifies the world or the universe (object) through his materials (medium) and in a way that is to be chosen by him (manner), and the person who responds to it perceives the world or the universe presented by the artist (object) through his relation to the materials used (medium) which is presumably the same as the artist’s, and arrives at his total response in his own way (manner). As Gerard Genette points out in the structuralist context, in the case of the literary artist the whole thing becomes complicated as the medium used is already a complex system of signs (language) (64-65). Lawrence, the literary artist, considers “art-speech” as “the only truth.” He says, “An artist is usually a damned liar, but his art, if it be art, will tell you the truth of his day” (“The Spirit . . . 123). With all its qualifications this utterance by Lawrence is a vital statement relating to the relationship between the author and his art and between the reader and the literary work. And for Lawrence, who is also a poet and a playwright, “the novel is the highest form of human expression so far attained” (“The Novel” 416).

Self and Creativity

Lawrence describes “the creative element” present in all living beings as something science cannot tackle. The scientist, who can define a piece of iron, cannot
define a living rabbit because “every living creature has an individual soul, however
trivial or rudimentary, which connects it individually with the source of all life, as man,
in the religious terminology, is connected with God, and inseparable from God.”
Lawrence calls “the great life-urge” God, and says “every creature, even an ant or a
louse” is in contact with it. According to him, calling the “will towards further creation
of the self,” ‘a will-to-live’ shows the inadequacy of science. The scientist can only
consider the change from caterpillar to butterfly “utterly unscientific, illogical, and
unnatural.” But in Lawrence’s view, “it is an answer to the strange creative urge, the
God-whisper, which is the one and only everlasting motive for everything” (324-25).

Huxley quotes Lawrence saying, “I always say my motto is ‘Art for my sake’”
(x). What Lawrence means by this is that he wrote only if he wanted to, and the
difficulty was to find exactly what “form” one’s passion would take. As Huxley says,
Lawrence was “always and unescapably an artist”; it was his “destiny” to be an artist
and he “loved his destiny.” As he says, there was not the question of liking or disliking
to be an artist; “Lawrence was in a real sense possessed by his creative genius.” And he
submitted to the power that created his works of art, “completely, and with reverence.”
He wrote: “I often think one ought to be able to pray before one works – and then leave
it to the Lord. [. . . ] I always feel as though I stood for the fire of Almighty God to go
through me – and it’s rather an awful feeling. One has to be so terribly religious, to be
an artist.” And Huxley adds: one has to be terribly an artist, “to be religious as
Lawrence was religious” (ix-x). And what Coveney says of Wordsworth’s poetry can
also be said of Lawrence’s novels and short stories. His greatest fictional work is
“philosophic” in the sense that it is the creative work of “a man involved seriously with
his art and the central problems of human existence” (69).

Though both Eliot the poet and Lawrence the novelist have their significant
place in twentieth century literary world, there is no gainsaying the fact that the modern world is marked by the increasing role played by the novel as a literary genre. Though poets still continue to write poems of great quality and influence, Lawrence claims for the novel all that has been traditionally said to be done by poetry. In “Why the Novel Matters,” he considers the novelist “superior,” not only to the saint, the scientist, and the philosopher, but also to the poet, because, according to him, they “are all great masters of different bits of man alive, but never get the whole hog.” He says the novel is “the one bright book of life”, which, “as a tremulation can make the whole man alive tremble, [...] more than poetry, philosophy, science, or any other book tremulation can do.” However, to relieve the anxieties of the reader, who comes to him with the great image of poetry impressed on his mind by the ‘apologies’ for poetry from Sidney to Shelley, Lawrence includes in the list of “supreme old novels,” the Bible, Homer and Shakespeare. So, in Lawrence’s conception, there is no difference between great poetry and the novel. However what matters here is Lawrence’s emphasis on the wholeness of the self in its role both in creativity and in its response to art. In a great work of art the “communication” is from wholeness to wholeness, from “whole man alive” to “whole man alive”.

In an authorial comment in Aaron’s Rod, Lawrence makes a comparison between his art as “a word-user,” which translates “deep conscious vibrations into finite words” and Aaron’s art of music which transmits the deepest thoughts and ideas from his “dark invisible” self “as electric vibrations.” Both the literary artist and the musician, as Lawrence writes in “Why the Novel Matters” about the novelist, cause “tremulations on the ether.” As Lawrence puts it, one speaks in music and the other with words (199). Each artist has the creative source or energy manifested differently.
The Artist and His Tale

Lawrence not only transmutes his personal experiences into art, but also holds such a transmutation as a doctrine for both the artist who creates and the reader who appreciates his work. As for the reader, Lawrence’s advice is that he should be careful enough to transcend the artist’s personal prejudices and intentions and reach what the work by itself communicates. He says, in “The Spirit of Place,” that the reader should be able to distinguish between “two blankly opposing morals, the artist’s and the tale’s.” His dictum is: “Never trust the artist. Trust the tale” (123). And he concludes the essay “The Novel” with the words: “Oh, give me the novel! Let me hear what the novel says. As for the novelist, he is usually a dribbling liar” (426).

As Leavis says, “the poetic intensity that characterizes Lawrence’s works in general,” derives from two aspects of his response to life: wholeness and depth. These two aspects are inseparable in Lawrence’s art and they both are marked by their impersonality. In his wholeness there is “an impersonal depth” and in his depth there is “an impersonal wholeness.” The depth has “an immensely wide and varied application,” and “his rendering of all the varieties of life, human and non-human,” has its depth (123-24).

Ever since T. S. Eliot wrote his “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (1919), the impersonal theory of art has gained currency among critics of art and literature. As Eliot explicates it, what happens when the artist is at work is “a continual surrender of himself as he is at the moment to something which is more valuable. The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality.” And the difference between the mature poet (artist) and the immature one depends on the degree of “depersonalization” the mind is capable of. “The more perfect the artist, the more
completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates; the more perfectly will the mind digest and transmute the passions which are its material” (296-97).

*The White Peacock* grew out of Lawrence’s own experiences in the Midlands. Though it is not an autobiographical novel in the sense *Sons and Lovers* is, it is, as Aldington points out, “a portion of Lawrence’s youth imaginatively reconstructed.” The narrator Cyril is “a stilted portrait” of Lawrence himself “in his naïf youth, with much of his fun and all his malice and bossiness left out.” Cyril’s mother is given the name ‘Beardsall,’ which was the maiden name of Lawrence’s mother. As Aldington suggests, the fact that Cyril’s father dies of drink and Cyril settles down happily with his mother and sister gains significance as Lawrence himself had an “intense love for his mother and dislike for his father.” One of the faults of the novel is that the author, out of “shyness and self-mistrust” takes working-class characters and gives them a middle-class veneer (Introd. 8). The first person narrative must have caused the author much difficulty, especially in presenting intimate relationship between other characters, which, the narrator is not expected to have had knowledge of. And there are also occasional odd situations. For example, it is rather embarrassing to hear the following description by Cyril of his sister Lettie, who is taking a walk with Leslie and George: “then, as the three walked along towards the wood she flung her draperies into loose eloquence and there was a glimpse of her bosom white with the moon” (292).

If *Sons and Lovers* is a novel that still continues to hold the attention of readers, it is because Lawrence, in this most autobiographical of his works, succeeds in achieving the “impersonality” required by a great work of art. As Anthony Beal points out, like *Sons and Lovers*, which handles the theme of the growth of one individual, *The
Rainbow, which deals with “the theme of men and women constantly entering new circles of existence and experience between birth and death,” is also about growth. But The Rainbow is “by far the more impersonal and more generalised of the two.” In The Rainbow, as Leavis says, the personal experience of the author is wholly impersonalized and extended. There are many evidences of such transmutation of personal into artistic experiences. For example, the parallel between the couples Tom and Lydia (who is “older, foreign and a lady”) and Lawrence and Frieda is “clearly not accidental.” However, the personal element is never obtrusive; it “belongs as much and as inevitably to the impersonal dramatic whole as any other in it.” And, of all the lives dealt with in the novel, the nearest to Lawrence’s own is Ursula’s. “The impersonalizing process,” says Leavis, “has its overt manifestation in the sex – the she protagonist.” This substitution of the other sex for the author’s is not “a disguise prompted by a sense of danger,” but “rather the mark of creative genius, the impulse and the power to transcend the merely personal predicament by the intelligence that is imagination – or the imagination that is intelligence.” Ursula is portrayed as convincingly and as inwardly as George Eliot’s Maggie Tulliver, says Leavis (D. H. Lawrence . . . 137).

In Women in Love Birkin is not only the author’s fictional alter ego but also a full-fledged dramatic character. But, Leavis has had to rescue him from attacks from persons such as Middleton Murry, who considers him as the “self-vindicating, self-deceiving presence of Lawrence in the book” According to Leavis, “Birkin is substantially Lawrence,” but the “creative power, with its transcendent impersonalizing intelligence” gives “the author’s direct presence” “a dramatic status among other characters” (183).

An important question which Leavis seeks to settle here is the possibility of the text causing the reader the dilemma of deciding whether to trust the author dramatized
within the tale or the tale itself. As Leavis points out, one of the ways by which Lawrence circumvents this problem is to expose Birkin, "the special representative of Lawrence’s conscious and formulated attitudes," to "the implicit criticism of the whole creative context." "Self-dramatized in Birkin, the Lawrence who formulates conclusions (‘doctrines’) and ponders them suffers exposure to the searching tests and the impersonal criteria that the artist’s creative genius, which represents an impersonal profundity and wholeness of being, implicitly and impartially applies to them.” Lawrence serves his creative purpose with such “sensitive integrity” that his or Birkin’s conclusions are not thrust from outside but are endorsed and concretely defined by the ‘tale’ (183-84).

Robert Burden, applying Bakhtin’s observations on Dostoevsky to Lawrence, points out that “the author’s monologic ideas in essays or lectures should not be confused with what happens to those ideas once they enter the novel, where they are subject to the dialogic process.” In the text of the novel the monologic view becomes “decentred” (163). It is quite obvious that Women in Love “dialogizes Lawrence’s most monologic thoughts.” Birkin often appears to assume the role and attitude of a preacher and lecture on his favourite issues trying to force his point of view on the listener. At times he sounds “as if he were addressing a meeting” (48). But there is always somebody, an Ursula or a Hermione or a Gerald, to argue with him and oppose, criticise or jeer at his views. This helps the reader to look at the author’s own standpoint from multiple angles. However, there is also the strange instance of Birkin encountering his own ideas in someone who does not normally share his views. In the chapter “Class-Room,” the unwary reader is really puzzled when, in her “duel” with Birkin, Hermione utters what can be considered “pure Laurentian doctrine” (Leavis 185). For example, the following utterances of Hermione can be expected only from Birkin:
Isn’t it better that they [the children] should remain unconscious of the hazel, isn’t it better they should see as a whole, without pulling to pieces, all this knowledge? (43)

Isn’t the mind – isn’t it our death? Doesn’t it destroy all our spontaneity, all our instincts? Are not the young people growing up today, really dead before they have a chance to live? (44)

Birkin hits her hard with a plethora of words expressing hate and contempt: “You are merely making words, knowledge means everything to you. [. . . ] Passion and the instincts – you want them hard enough, but through your head, in your consciousness. It all takes place in your head, under that skull of yours” (45). It is only when he comes to Birkin’s violent repudiation of Hermione’s words the reader gets out of his confusion and understands Hermione’s as a perversion of Birkin’s doctrine. According to Leavis, the perversion is something Birkin has to take note of in his own inner experience. Birkin’s general formulations “testify to the vital function of ‘mental consciousness’ in the attainment of ‘spontaneous-creative fulness of being’.” But the danger lies in the “usurping domination” by mental consciousness, which is what “Birkin denounces so brutally in Hermione” and “what he knows as a dangerous potentiality in himself” (185-86). The presentation here is perhaps like what Bakhtin finds in the texts of Dostoevsky, which “are characterized by a kind of simultaneity of relationships in which internal contradictions force a character ‘to converse with his own double’ in ‘internal dialogics’ (Burden 163).

An interesting question in Aaron’s Rod is whether the author is to be identified with Aaron Sisson or Rawdon Lilly or both. Like Lawrence, Aaron was born in a working-class family and had a few years’ apprenticeship to school teaching but had “gone into the pit” as a checkweighman, repudiating education. Aldington says Aaron is
“obviously intended to be Mr Middleton Murry, with whom Lawrence had bitterly quarrelled in Cornwall and with whom he was to quarrel again even more bitterly.” In his opinion, “in spite of their incompatibilities, Lawrence was really more attached to Mr Murry than to any other of his men friends, and was always willing to forget how bitterly he had hurt his friend in the hope of reconciliation.” The problem with Lawrence was that he always expected a friend to be “an utterly obedient and subservient disciple.” Aldington feels that “the chapter in which Lilly looks after the sick Aaron is probably founded on reconciliation of a week end in 1915, when Mr Murry arrived at the Lawrences’ cottage with a heavy cold, and Lawrence enjoyed himself fussily nursing his friend” (Introd. 8-9).

Aldington and Leavis agree on the identification of Lawrence and Frieda with Lilly and his wife Tanny. Leavis, who does not associate Murry with Aaron as Aldington does, argues convincingly and shows how, in spite of Aaron’s own distinct physical presence and personality, we can find Lawrence himself in “the profound reactions” of Aaron’s being. So, there is a “curious dual presence of Lawrence” in Aaron’s Rod. However, as Leavis argues, in the novel, which is “self-exploratory” in nature, Lawrence fails in his imaginative experiment of presenting Aaron as what he himself “might very well have been if he had married in his own class and things had gone more ordinarily” (40-42).

The authorial or the narrative voice intervening between the narrative and the reader is usually considered an inartistic intrusion, which no modern writer opts for. The authorial voice merging with that of a Birkin, a Lilly or a Somers has never caused any problem except when these characters become strident creatures. But Lawrence sometimes, like the eighteenth century novelists like Fielding, pops out of the narrative and begins to address “the gentle reader” directly. Lawrence, who made such a presence
in the narrative voice in *Aaron's Rod* and *The Lost Girl*, indulges in it in greater frequency in *Mr Noon*, which is “a largely uncorrected first draft of an uncompleted novel” (Preston xvii). In *Mr Noon* the narrator is “constantly in debate with a number of imagined readers who are teased, berated, flattered, adjured, preached at and constantly unsettled.” Preston explains the continual flooding of the narrative “with an awareness of the moment of composition” as Lawrence’s need “to reestablish the right to be in command of the narrative” when he is “embattled by hostile and uncomprehending critics.” As Paul Eggert observes, Lawrence, whose relationship with his audience deteriorated during the War years, had to find a voice to tell the reader what he wanted to (xxiii). As Preston says Lawrence wanted to assert his “right to be the author of his own books” as seen in the following: “Am I writing this, or are you? Let me tell you, even if, gentle reader, you happen to be wonderful, chirping, gentle, soft-billed gosling of a critic, gentilissimo, I am writing this book, and it is not being chirped out by you” (137). However, when one expects the novel to be an organic whole, the authorial voices do appear as avoidable intrusions between the reader and the work.

**The Artist and the World**

*Women in Love*, in which a major concern is art and its handling of the world, Lawrence not only discusses some works of art but also presents a professional artist and others who show interest in arts and artefacts. At the beginning, Gudrun is introduced as one who “had just come back from London, where she had spent several years, working at an art-school, as a student, and living a studio life” (8). At London Gerald is introduced to Birkin’s Bohemian friends including the artist’s model Minette. In the chapter “Class-Room,” Ursula speaks of Gudrun’s artistic predilection for “small things, that one can put between one’s hands, birds and tiny animals.” Ursula is of the view that Gudrun “likes to look through the wrong end of the opera-glasses, and see the
world that way."(42). Perhaps this is one of the traits in Gudrun that contributes to Gudrun’s later enchantment with the gnome of an artist Loerke.

An instance of the irony of situation often present in the artist’s ‘imitation’ is apparent in Minette’s career as an artist’s model. In Browning’s “Andrea Del Sarto” the flirtatious Lucrezia, whose face is described by her artist husband Andrea del Sarto as “My moon, my everybody’s moon,” is ironically the model for the painter’s Madonna. In Lawrence’s novel too the inveterate flirt Minette is said to have been a model for an artist’s Madonna. Even as she was flirting and going to bed with Gerald, “her intention, ultimately, was to capture Halliday, to have complete power over him” (89).

In the dark-skinned German artist Loerke, who is introduced in the last part of the novel as “an odd creature” who looks like “a child” and “a troll,” Lawrence’s presents an implied, total negation of what he stands for in life and art (455). The novel as a whole provides a “comprehensive examination of the nature and function of art” and the conception of art expressed by Loerke and the response generated by it have an important part in it (Leavis 177). Though Birkin does not have any “direct confrontation” with Loerke, he knows who the man really is. As he tells Gerald, the sewer-rat Loerke, who has a “subhuman vitality,” is “a gnawing little negation, gnawing at the roots of life.” (Pritchard 104; Women . . . 481).

Loerke, whose “body was slight and unformed, like a boy’s,” had “a mature voice,” and he frequently made “mischievous jokes.” Though the “uncanny singleness” of the sculptor marked out an artist to Gudrun, “she could see in his brown, gnome’s eyes the black look of inorganic misery which lay behind all his small buffoonery” (474). Gudrun recognized in him a fellow craftsman and was interested in the details of the “great granite frieze” he was making for “a great granite factory in Cologne” (476). The name Gudrun is likely to have been drawn from the one that plays a destructive part
in the saga of the Niblungs, and in Loerke there is a suggestion of Loki and Nidhogg, “the evil power who gnaws at the roots of Yggdrasil, the tree of life” in northern mythology (Leavis 176). The most important flaw in Loerke’s art is the deliberate purpose to which the artist puts it. He says, “art should interpret industry as art once interpreted religion”. “Since churches are all museum stuff, since industry is our business, now, then let us make our places of industry our art – our factory area our Parthenon, *ecce*!” Directly against Lawrence’s view of the machine, Loerke holds that “the machinery and the acts of labour are extremely, maddeningly beautiful” (476-77). Though opposed to each other, Gerald and Loerke are alike in that Loerke is Gerald’s counterpart in art. “Both artist and industrialist accept, from their different points of view, the triumph of mechanism and the implicit reduction of human life to mere instrumentality” (Leavis 177). Loerke is happy to note that “the machine works him [the labourer] instead of he the machine” and “he enjoys the mechanical motion in his own body” (477).

Loerke shows to Gudrun and others a photogravure reproduction of a statuette he has made. The statuette is of a naked girl, sitting on “a great naked horse.” She is “young and tender, a mere bud,” but the horse is “a massive, magnificent stallion, rigid with pent-up power.” Ursula’s comment on the horse that it is “as stiff as a block,” occasions a sharp battle between her and Loerke. She says the horse “is part of a work of art, it has no relation to anything outside that work of art.” Despite his insulting retorts Ursula continues to argue. But Loerke persists that “the relative work of action” must not be confused with “the absolute world of art.” Gudrun dislikes her sister’s “foolish insistence.” Taking sides with the sculptor, she says: “I and my art, they have nothing to do with each other. My art stands in another world, I am in this world.” To her, Ursula is “such an insufferable outsider, rushing in where angels would fear to
But Ursula does not relent. She argues, "The world of art is only the truth about the real world, that's all - but you are too far gone to see it." Even Gerald feels she is "undignified," putting "a sort of vulgarity over the esotericism which gives the man his last distinction" (485). The novel here provides a real criticism of art, and the reader can understand which side has presented the true nature of art. As Leavis puts it, Ursula, with all her "indignant naivete," is "opposing plain and profound truth to shallow sophistication and sophistry" (178).

How inimical Loerke's art and attitude to life and humanity are can be seen in what he says about the choice of models for his works. Loerke says the girl posed for his statuette six years ago, and now "she will be twenty three years old, no more good." Without any qualms about it, he says, "I don't like them any bigger, any older. Then they are beautiful at sixteen, seventeen, eighteen - after that, they are no use to me." He also admits that he would slap her and make her cry as she would not sit steady for more than a minute (487).

Gudrun and Loerke were almost of the same ideas about art. They liked "the West African wooden figures, the Aztec art, Mexican and Central American." "The suggestion of primitive art was their refuge, and the inner mysteries of sensation their object of worship." "They praised the bygone things, they took a sentimental, childish delight in the achieved perfections of the past. Particularly they liked the late eighteenth century, the period of Goethe and of Shelley, and Mozart" (504). As Leavis points out, they cultivated "the finished perfections of the past in a subtler denial of creative life in the present" (180). In this chapter once again they aver their conception of life and art. "Art and life were to them the Reality and the Unreality." "Of course," said Gudrun, "life doesn't really matter – it is one's art which is central." The sculptor corroborates her idea: "What one does in one's art, that is the breath of one's being. What one does
in one’s life, that is a bagatelle for the outsiders to fuss about” (504). But, this time, there is no Ursula to engage them in a pitched battle.

Just as Loerke’s sculptures subserved industry, in *The Plumed Serpent*, the frescoes by the Mexican muralist Diego Rivera, which Kate saw on the walls of the university and school, subserved the socialist revolution in Mexico. They were “strident caricatures of the Capitalist and the Church, and of the Rich Woman, and of mammon,” all “meant to be ugly” as Garcia, the young Mexican professor who accompanied Kate and Owen, said. To Kate, they were “too intentional” and like “vulgar abuse, not art at all” (84-85).

In the essay “The Novel” Lawrence defines the novelist’s presentment of the world around him in his art in terms of his favourite word ‘quick’. Quickness is the opposite of deadness. “Vronsky’s taking Anna Karenina we must count godly, since it is quick. And that Prince in *Resurrection*, following the convict girl, we must count dead.” Lawrence says, “the man in the novel must be “quick”; “it means he must have a quick relatedness to all other things in the novel: snow, bed-bugs, sunshine, the phallus, trains, silk-hats, cats, sorrow, people, food, diphtheria, fuchsias, stars, ideas, God, toothpaste, lightning, and toilet-paper” (420). Lawrence’s ‘quick’ does not seem to mean ‘organic life.’ He says the cat sleeping in his room is “very quick”; the ridiculous little iron stove is “quick,” “for some unknown reason”; the iron wardrobe trunk is “quick,” “for still more mysterious reason”; but the table is “dead.” Lawrence seems to think of “certain weird relationship” between that which is quick and all the rest of things (419-20).

As made clear by Lawrence in “Morality and the Novel,” the relative ‘quickness’ or ‘livingness’ is determined by the kind of “lively relation” one has with the objects, how “piquant” one feels about them. He says: “The business of art is to
reveal the relation between man and his circumambient universe, at the living moment.”

He shows how art, in dealing with the relationship between the self and the living universe, attains a "fourth dimensional quality of eternity" even as it retains its freshness and newness. Van Gogh’s painting of sunflowers reveals the relationship between the artist as man and the sunflower as sunflower at a certain moment. The man-sunflower relationship changes as relation between all things does, and so the work of art remains new forever. At the same time, as “it gives us the feeling of being beyond life or death,” it is “deathless, lifeless, and eternal.” It ‘lives’ as “we say an Assyrian lion or an Egyptian hawk’s head ‘lives’.” It exists as a “vision on the canvass” in “the much-debated fourth dimension.” “In dimensional space it has no existence” (127-29).

Lawrence’s criterion of the ‘morality’ of the novel itself is based on the kind of relation between the self and the universe the novel reveals. He says: “If a novel reveals true and vivid relationships, it is a moral work, no matter what relationships may consist in. If the novelist honours the relationship in itself, it will be a great novel” (129).

Self and Its Response to Art

In Women in Love the author draws the attention of the reader to a few works of art, which the major characters respond to and have some definite opinion about. In the apartment of the London Bohemia there were some statues from the West Pacific. The natives, carved in wood, “looked almost like the foetus of a human being.” One of them was a native woman sitting naked in the strange posture with her abdomen stuck out. The woman was at child-birth with her “strange, rudimentary face” “conveying the suggestion of the extreme of physical sensation, beyond the limits of mental consciousness” (81-82). To Birkin this carven statue with a face “abstracted almost into meaninglessness by the weight of sensation beneath” is great art. To Gerald, who cannot accept “the sheer barbaric thing” as “high” art, Birkin explains why it is
great. “It conveys a complete truth. It contains the whole truth of that state.” “There are centuries and hundreds of centuries of development in a straight line, behind that carving; it is an awful pitch of culture, of a definite sort.” “Pure culture in sensation, culture in the physical consciousness, really ultimate physical consciousness, mindless, utterly sensual. It is so sensual as to be final, supreme.” Gerald says with resentment that Birkin likes “the wrong things” (87) In one of his essays Lawrence wonders at this “living relationship between man and his object”: “An Egyptian hawk, a Chinese painting of a camel, an Assyrian sculpture of a lion, an African fetish idol of a woman pregnant, an Aztec rattlesnake, an early Greek Apollo, a caveman’s paintings of a Prehistoric mammoth, on and on, how perfect the timeless moments between man and the other Pan-creatures of this earth of ours!” (“Him . . . 434). Is this “African fetish idol” the same as the statue from the West Pacific mentioned above?

To a charlatan like Hermione, Birkin’s act of copying a Chinese drawing of geese instead of attempting “something original” does not make sense. But he tells her that “one gets more of China, copying this picture, than reading all the books.” He explains to her how by copying the drawing he wants to know what centres the artists live from, what they perceive as “the centrality of a goose in the flux of cold water and mud,” and what can be called “the lotus mystery,” the heat of a goose’s blood entering their own blood “like an inoculation of corruptive fire” (99). In the chapter “Moony,” Birkin remembers a West African wooden statuette which he had seen at Halliday’s so often. It was a woman with an elegant body, a face “crushed tiny like a beetle’s” and “protuberant buttocks”. She was one of Birkin’s “soul’s intimates”. Like the statue from West Pacific, she also had “thousands of years of purely sensual, purely unspiritual knowledge behind her.” It was “mindless progressive knowledge through the senses, knowledge arrested and ending in the senses, knowledge in disintegration and
dissolution" (285-86).

Portraits of Some Artists

In Lawrence's fiction, of the several characters with artistic talents, quite a few of them are the protagonists of novels. Siegmund of *The Trespasser* is a violinist, Aaron Sisson of *Aaron's Rod* is a flautist and Paul Morel of *Sons and Lovers* is a painter. In *The Trespasser* Lawrence expresses great sympathy for Siegmund. The flautist has a wife who, as in the case of most artists, does not value his art. But, in their teens, when they ran away and got married, Beatrice was also interested in music; Siegmund was "mad on the violin" and she "played rather well" (97). Siegmund's relationship with his art was always alive, and Helena, being a fellow-artist could understand how he infused the instrument "with his life." "Grasping his violin, he seemed to have his fingers on the strings of his heart and of the heart of Helena. It was his little beloved that drank his being and turned it into music". She recalls how "during the last nights of the season, when Siegmund's fingers had pressed too hard, when Siegmund's passion and joy, and fear had hurt, too, the soft body of his little beloved, the violin had sickened for rest". After Siegmund's death, his violin, desired of Helena, was kept "out of sight" by his wife in the lumber room, where it lay "in its red silk shroud," covered with "white dust." "It was worth twenty pounds, but Beatrice had not yet roused herself to sell it". The commerce of everyday life is unmindful of what happens to art. "After two dead months the first string snapped and the second broke near Christmas, but no one heard "the faint moan of its going." "The fragrance of Siegmund himself, with which the violin was steeped, slowly changed into an odour of must" (12).

There has been much debate on the development of the artist theme in *Sons and Lovers*. In Kuttner's view, "Paul never becomes a real artist. He uses his painting to please his mother and to court his women, but in the crises of his life his art means
nothing to him either as a consolation or as a satisfying expression” (73). But Maurice Beeve holds that in the novel, in addition to the mother-son relationship and the son’s relationship with other women, there is a third important theme which he calls “the liberating force of artistic creativity.” However, Beeve admits that “Paul Morel’s relationship to himself and his art is less apparent to the reader than his relationship to the women in his life.” According to him, the two earlier versions of the novel, which Lawrence called “Paul Morel,” were presumably closer to the bildungsroman tradition than is the finished version, in which “the artist theme” tends to be subordinated to Paul’s role as a son and lover. Beeve argues that if the novel is intended “to illustrate the case of a young man defeated by an Oedipus complex,” we cannot explain “the fact that Paul becomes a friend and protector of the father-surrogate, Baxter Dawes, that he deliberately kills his mother, or that, with Clara at any rate, there is little evidence of sexual inhibition” (179). He contends that “however little we may hear directly of his art in Sons and Lovers, Paul Morel is clearly a true artist” and there is a blending of the artist theme with the Oedipus theme. He argues quite powerfully to establish that like Joyce’s portrait of Stephan Dedalus, Lawrence’s portrait of Paul Morel is also a bildungsroman.

Salgado is also of the view that Lawrence’s novel, “being centrally concerned with the formative years and growth into full awareness of a single character,” is an outstanding example of bildungsroman. Since the central figure is an artist, it may also belong to the “convenient sub-division sometimes called kunstlerroman,” like Joyce’s A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. However, a close scrutiny of the novel leaves one with the feeling that the artist theme is not fully developed in the novel and it is submerged by the relationship themes. And at the end of the novel, as Salgado says, Paul “turns away from the mother and the drift towards death”, and sets his feet towards
“the faintly humming glowing town, quickly,” but such a turn does not exclusively suggest any artistic quest (A Preface 106).

Both as a man and as an artist Will Brangwen’s life in The Rainbow is a failure. As Draper puts it, Will accepts his “unadventurous existence, with occasional blind rages, and with at times a tragic quality about him.” When he attempts to use his artistic gifts again, “he finds that his best things are merely reproductive” (Draper 69). “He fails to become really articulate, fails to find real expression.” In spirit, he is “uncreated” (206). Lawrence captures Will’s plight through a series of metaphors of budding and flowering arrested in the beginning itself. “He was aware of some limit of himself, of something unformed in his very being, of some buds which were not ripe in him, some folded centres of darkness which would never develop and unfold whilst he was alive in the body” (210).

The amateur ‘artist’ Rico in St. Mawr is described as “being an artist,” which means, he is not, in Lawrence’s sense, an artist (Leavis 238). As Aldington puts it, Rico “buys his way into the reputation he does not deserve – a type of literary and artistic fraud Lawrence detested” (Introd.7). Rico had written to Lou that he would “probably” marry a girl from Victoria. “He didn’t commit the probability, but reappeared in Paris, wanting to paint his head off, terribly inspired by Cezanne and by old Renoir” (13). Mrs Witt, with her queer democratic New Orleans sort of conceit,” had “a savage contempt” for Europe and considered Rico as “part of the show.” As Aldington observes, Lawrence uses Rico’s mother-in-law Mrs Witt “to carry his venomous hatred for Rico and his own hatred and criticism of an England which had grown alien to him” (7). “Rico is the antithesis of St. Mawr; he represents the irremediable defeat of all that St. Mawr stands for” (Leavis 238). In sharp contrast with the power and energy of St. Mawr, Rico is shown as a man lacking organic wholeness: “if his head had been cut off
like John the Baptist's, it would have been a thing complete in itself, would not have missed the body in the least.” Lewis, the groom, recognized in Rico, the “fear of some deficiency in himself, beneath all his handsome young-hero appearance” (26-27). The marital life of Lou and Rico, like that of Cameron Gee in “Two Blue Birds,” exemplifies what marriage should not be. “It was a strange vibration of nerves, rather than of the blood. A nervous attachment, rather than a sexual love. A curious tension of will, rather than a spontaneous passion.” Their marriage soon “became more like a friendship, Platonic” and they shrank away from sex and “became like brother and sister.” “And the lack of physical relation was a secret source of uneasiness and chagrin to both of them” (14).

The short story “Two Blue Birds” presents a satirical commentary on the married life of a successful writer called Cameron Gee. The story begins with an ironical punch: “there was a woman who loved her husband, but could not live with him. The husband, on his side, was sincerely attached to his wife, yet he could not live with her” (479). What kind of love and attachment they had is made clear as the story progresses. Keeping a thousand miles between them “geographically,” Mrs Gee had her “gallant affairs” in the south with her admirers, and Cameron sitting “in the greyness of England” had all his requests “too gladly fulfilled” by his “very competent, quite young, and quite good-looking” secretary Miss Wrexall. The husband and wife each had only “a private feeling of bitterness about the other” and “there was a silent, ceaseless tension between them, that never broke, even when they were a thousand miles apart” (485).

Mrs Gee comes home, which is now being run by “the adoring secretary” of her husband and her mother and sister, “the secretarial family.” The rest of the story is the encounter between the secretary and the “wolf-like” wife with her innuendoes, like the
two little blue tits fighting and fluttering round what Mrs Gee sees as "the pretty but common little feet of the little secretary" (487). The writer, who is caught between them, is "looking enigmatical, Hamletish." He can ask the little birds, "Fight your little fight, and settle your private affairs elsewhere, my dear little gentlemen," but cannot set his own house in order. Mrs Gee finally walks away saying she is afraid "no man can expect two blue birds of happiness to flutter round his feet, tearing out their little feathers" (492).

In Aaron's Rod, Aaron, the musician, played both the flute and the piccolo. As an esteemed player he was in request at concerts and dances. But there was no happiness in his relationship with his wife. He was particularly unhappy on the Christmas Eve with which the novel begins. There was "a hard opposing core" in him that neither the whisky nor the woman at the Royal Oak could dissolve or soothe. That night his heart was "hard and cold as ice." He went to Shottle House and stayed with the Bricknells and did not go home to his wife and daughters even though it was Christmas Eve. As a great artist Aaron always found solace in his art. During his stay at Milan his mind and soul were "in a whirl" as they witnessed the Italian national police battering the crowd with truncheons when there was a commotion caused by the red rebels on the streets. When he came back to his room, "he took his flute and played he knew not what. But strange, strange his soul passed into his instrument. Or passed half into his instrument" (225).

Aaron, with all his working-class background and occupation as a checkweighman, could "go on so swimmingly in cultivated, sophisticated, and distinguished society" (Leavis 39). He had not only talents as a flautist but also a fine sense of appreciation of the great in the other realms of art. While watching in Florence the creations of Michael Angelo, Bandinelli and Benvenuto Cellini, he felt as though he
had reached “a perfect centre of the human world.” He said with passion that “Florence, passionate, fearless Florence had spoken herself out” (253-54).

As implied by the title, the novel *Aaron’s Rod* has to do more with the artist’s instrument and what it symbolizes than the artist himself. Obviously, the rod, besides its reference to the art of music, has also phallic connotations, as suggested by Maurice Beebe (146). What begins as an ambiguous reference to the phallus in the beginning of Aaron’s connections with the Italian Marchesa assumes more obvious but symbolic connotations as his relationship intensifies and culminates in his sexual union with the lady. Both the Marchese and the Marchesa were musically talented. The man, who is often referred to as “a gnome,” (which obviously reminds one of Loerke) played the pianoforte and his wife was a singer. The lady could not sing to the friends on that day as “the bird of her voice” had flown. Her husband told Aaron that his flute “might call out the bird of song” — “as thrushes call each other into challenge.” And the lady said she would “very much like to hear Mr Sisson’s flute”; it was an instrument she liked “extremely.” Though, of course, there is no intended double entendre in this conversation, there is obviously dramatic irony in it. Already Aaron’s eyes, which appreciated her softish brown hair and fair skin, had sensed that “her bosom would be white.” And the author writes: “Why Aaron should have had this thought, he could not for the life of him say” (262-63).

In their subsequent meetings and appreciation of music there was more than musical interest between them, and, as the wife in the more serious relationship between Helena and Siegmund, here the intruder (or the trespasser?) is the husband. The happiness and understanding brought on the Marchesa by Aaron’s flute made her feel “as though she had been freed into free sunlight after years and years of imprisonment in a dark enchanted castle of feelings and moral necessity.” But her husband was there:
“a little jailer.” If only the “little gnome” would “throw away the castle keys,” which he clutched “so tight”! (272). Aaron felt the woman’s beauty exercise a power over him; he thought her “wonderful, and sinister.” The woman sitting there in “goldish stockings,” “shoes blue and gold” and “gold-threaded gauze” appears “as if she were dusted with dark gold dust upon her marvellous nudity” (291) and the whole description anticipates her husband’s reference to Cleopatra a little later. When Aaron said he did not have much feeling about innocence during their conversation about the innocence of Botticelli’s Venus, the Marchese said he was “the sort of man who wants to be Antony to Cleopatra.” Then the Marchesa became Cleopatra to him; he wanted to be Antony (293-94).

In his room when he looked at the flute, “he remembered that Lilly had called it Aaron’s rod.” In his “powerful male passion” he felt his “black rod of power, blossoming again with red Florentine lilies and fierce thorns” (301). But, when he really had the woman in her own room, he felt the woman clinging to him “almost like a sister, a younger sister! Or like a child!” “In the dark sightlessness of passion, she seemed almost like a clinging child in his arms.” The description is shocking when read with Aaron’s reference to Botticelli’s Venus as “a bit baby-faced,” (293) and Aaron and Lilly’s agreement with the Marchese’s perverse idea about possessing girls when they are young and his comment that the will of “a baby of one year, if it be a female,” is “made up” and “it will force a man” (288). One wonders whether Lawrence is inclined to paedophilia, a charge sometimes brought against Dostoevsky.

Though he developed hatred towards the woman after the act was over (quite unlike Connie and Mellors in Lady Chatterley’s Lover), the “naked desire” came again. “His flute, his Aaron’s rod, would blossom once again with splendid scarlet flowers, the red Florentine lilies” (313). She curled on his naked breast “in a sort of little ecstasy”
but Aaron felt “remote” and “silent” once again. He was not Antony; he was not tempted; “at the bottom of his soul he disliked her” (319). Aaron’s rod finally got broken in a trampling in a cafe. As told by his mentor Lilly, he threw the broken rod into the stream, but “the loss was for him symbolic. It chimed with something in his soul; the bomb, the smashed flute, the end.” But Lilly said, “It’ll grow again. It’s a reed, a water-plant. You can’t kill it” (331).

Sir Clifford Chatterley of Wragby Hall was an “ambitious” writer, who, like Rico of St Mawr, was trying his hand at ‘being an artist.’ He wrote “curious very personal stories about people he had known, “but there was “no touch, no actual contact” with them. “It was as if the whole thing took place on an artificial earth’” (16). As for ambition, Clifford was a good match for the Irishman Michaelis, who wrote “smart society plays,” but was gradually disliked by the smart society itself as “a down-at-heel Dublin rat.” “The bitch-goddess” of Success roamed snarling and protective round Michaelis’ heels but it would not accept Clifford, who “wanted to prostitute himself” to her (20-21). Soon the author shifts the canine imagery to the men themselves: “They were two alien dogs which would have liked to snarl at another, but which smiled instead, perforce” (24). However, when Success smiled on Clifford with his latest book, Michaelis made him a central figure in a play and Clifford was gratified. But Connie knew both men were making only “a display of nothingness” and in both it was “a prostitution” to the bitch-goddess of Success, whose “seal and stamp” was money. Clifford’s book brought him a thousand pounds (50-51). In The First Lady Chatterley, Constance describes how soon money becomes “honey” for him and how his Plato and his painting leave him “as an attack of measles might leave him.” He turns to the industry with a passion “to build up a fortune and make himself really a personage in the county” (202).
Like Loerke in the last section of *Women in Love*, in the last pages of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* there is an artist called Duncan Forbes, whose pictures were all “ultra-modern,” filled with “tubes and valves and spirals and strange colours.” Mellors considered them “stupid” and “pretty sentimental”; they show “a lot of self-pity and an awful lot of nervous self-opinion.” It was this artist, a friend of their family, chosen by Sir Malcolm to play the father of the child in Connie’s womb to avoid the scandal about Connie and the gamekeeper and to facilitate the process of Connie’s divorce from Clifford. But, not knowing what kind of person he really was, the artist, who had once been “rather depressingly in love” with Connie, laid down the condition that Connie should agree to his old request and pose as a model for him if he should pose as the child’s father. The whole matter was brought to an abrupt close when Mellors in bitter temper said that the artist should do them “in a group, Vulcan and Venus under the net of art” and that he had been a blacksmith before becoming a gamekeeper. To Mellors the artist was “a little black pup with a corrugated distemper” (286-87).

**Language and the Art of Fiction**

As an art, “the novel is a perfect medium for revealing to us the changing rainbow of our living relationships” (“Morality . . .131). In this sense the novel mediates between the reader and the universe. And the word ‘medium’ is also used in the sense of the material of art, which is, for the novel, the language in which the narrative takes shape. In Lawrence’s fictional oeuvre, as critics like Widdowson see, there is a movement from the early ‘realist’ work (upto and perhaps including *The Rainbow*) to the ‘modernist’ phase, of which “the masterwork” seems to be *Women in Love*. Correspondingly, in the later novels there is greater adventure and greater mastery of language in discourse.
“For Bakhtin, and for Lawrence, the novel is the only form of writing capable of doing justice to the complex interaction and interinanimation of the discourses and voices, the languages of the social world.” Bakhtin uses the term “polyphony,” derived from music, to mark an important characteristic of Dostoevsky’s novels. It is “a plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses . . . each with its own world which are combined in a dialogic relation.” (Burden162). As Wayne Booth puts it, “novelists can maintain a kind of choral vitality, the very words conveying two or more speaking voices.” (qtd. in Booth 162). Considering *Women in Love* as a polyphonic novel in the Bakhtinian sense, Burden points out the “many levels and instances” of dialogics in the novel. Lawrence, in the casual conversation between Ursula and Gudrun in the opening chapter, does not merely present a dialogue between the sisters, but also addresses the reader. The italics in their conversation about marriage (‘Ursula,’ said Gudrun, ‘don’t you *really* want to get Married?’; ‘You don’t think one needs the *experience* of having been married?’ she [Gudrun] asked.) are the author’s guide to the reader about the pronunciation of these spoken words. At the first instance, the intonation marks the communication of “a shared set of social and cultural values” between the sisters. At another level, the irony is addressed to the reader. Lawrence must have intended this kind of talk between the sisters to be “trite and superficial,” because “consummate marriage was sacred to him” (172).

In another scene in the novel, language seems to appropriate the power of physical action and become a substitute for real bodily contact. To Gudrun, who was filled with nostalgia, the voices of the colliers “sounded out with strong intonation, and the broad dialect was curiously caressing to the blood. It seemed to envelop Gudrun in a labourer’s caress” (128). Minette’s speech is characterized by her mispronunciation of r’s like w’s and a “slightly babyish” lisping “which was at once affected and true to her
character” (69). She calls Rupert Birkin ‘wupert.’ She asks Gerald, who has explored the Amazon, “Were you vewy much afwaid of the savages?” (73). Burden shows how “the comedy derives principally from the lisp” Lawrence gives this particular character who is nicknamed “the Pussum” (177). Minette’s speech could be considered a “carnivalesque” feature of the novel. As Burden observes, in the scene at the Pompadour Cafe, Halliday’s reading of Birkin’s letter in “the sing-song, slow, distinct voice of a clergyman reading the Scriptures,” and Minette interjecting, “Oh, he was always talking about Corruption,” provide “one of the best examples in Lawrence of what Bakhtin called ‘double-voiced speech’, where one discourse is framed in another, and thus given a new sense of significance” (Burden 179; *Women . . .* 432-33).

Lydia Blanchard makes an analysis of the language of sexuality in *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* in the light of her critical reading of the French philosopher Michel Foucault’s argument that “by bringing sexuality into the clear light of language we have succeeded only in controlling and thus repressing it.” Foucault picks holes with Lawrence for saying in “A Propos” that it is “now our business [. . .] to realise sex. Today the full realisation of sex is even more important than the act itself.” Blanchard also draws attention to the argument of many critics “that Lawrence would have done well to listen to himself, to his own bitter indictment of a sterile Wragby that destroyed sex by talking about it” (121-22). They, like Sanders, see a “contradiction” in “using the tools of consciousness to define and defend the unconscious” (182). Defending Lawrence Blanchard says that Lawrence’s interest in the full conscious realization of sex was “part of a broader interest in the relation between language, sexuality, power and knowledge,” and a work like *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* “clarifies much of what we now understand about language and its peculiar relation to sexuality” (123).
Lawrence’s understanding of language-sexuality relationship was complex. He knew the difficulty of capturing spontaneous, living experience in words. So Mellors wrote in his final letter to Connie: “Well, so many words, because I can’t touch you. If I could sleep with my arms round you, the ink could stay in the bottle” (301). But it is also true that no discourse, including Foucault’s *History of Sexuality*, would be possible, if writers stopped writing saying that the experience will lose from its expression in language. In order to circumvent the problem, Lawrence exhausted the language of sexuality “to return that language to the area where he had always argued it belonged – to the darkness, to silence, to oblivion” (125). Thus, *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* becomes an unconventional fictional writing which, “drawing simultaneously on a variety of genres” makes extraordinary demands on the reader.

Blanchard says, in *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, Lawrence has not only operated a language of love, “but has also shown the limits of such a discourse, even at its most eloquent and persuasive.” It frees the reader from both the repressions of sexuality and the constraints of language through “the tension” it creates by drawing on traditional genres even as “it calls those forms into question.” Following Alan Sheridan’s view that when one can “say things in a new way,” one can “see things in a new way,” Blanchard says that it is his “attempt to see sex in a new way that underlies Lawrence’s desire to say it in a new way – but not because one must or should talk about sex.” Like Foucault, Lawrence knew sex loses its power in language. However, as Derrida says, though it would be impossible to free ourselves from language “without denying our own historic situation,” we can “resist it as far as possible.” And *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, as Blanchard sees it, is a study of “the tension” between the need to bring sexuality into discourse and the recognition that “the recreation of sexuality in language must always, at the same time, resist language” (131-33).