Man and Woman

Man is what his relationships are. The quality of man's relationships determines the quality of his life. The 'central clue' to human life, according to Lawrence, is the relation between man and woman. This relationship is, however, subject to constant change. It is never stagnant. But it is, and will always remain, the most important relationship for humanity.

Lawrence had a high opinion of marriage, not as a social bond, but as a lifelong relationship between man and woman; and his attitude towards sex was full of reverence.

Your most vital necessity in this life is that you shall love your wife completely and implicitly in entire nakedness of body and spirit. Then you will have peace and inner security, no matter how many things go wrong.

Maladjustment between men and women and modern man's unhealthy attitude towards sex has, according to Lawrence, led human society to a state of atrophy. He believed that only a healthy relationship between man and women could get humanity out of this state of

1. In Morality and the Novel, Lawrence writes:

"The great relationship, for humanity, will always be the relation between man and woman. The relation between man and man, woman and woman, parent and child, will always be subsidiary.

And the relation between man and woman will change for ever, and will for ever be the new central clue to human life."


atrophy. He explored the man-woman relationship in all his novels, using fully his experience of life and his talent as an artist. It is, in fact, the dominant theme of his major novels.

To Lawrence the writing of his novels was a voyage of discovery of life. This voyage of discovery of life begins with the writing of The White Peacock, the first of his novels. The White Peacock depicts the misery of human life as a result of the failure of man-woman relationship. Lettie, an educated and well brought-up girl is attracted to George, a healthy farmer. George's animal vigour fascinates Lettie, even though she mocks him for being "like a stalled ox, food and comfort, no more." George is roused from his 'animal existence' to mental consciousness through his contact with Lettie and her brother Cycil, an educated young man. Under their influence he even makes efforts at self education. He wants to be worthy of Lettie whom he loves. Lettie loves George despite or rather because of his "solid, healthy, easy-moving content. They have great physical passion for each other. This has been illustrated by the descriptions like the following:

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3. Speaking about the England of his day, he writes: "And I am so sure that only through a readjustment between men and women, and making free and healthy of this sex, will she (England) get out of the present atrophy." (The Collected Letters, p. 204.)


5- Ibid. p.114.
She looked up, and found his eyes. They gazed at each other for a moment before they hid their faces again. It was a torture to each of them to look thus nakedly at the other, a dazzled shrinking pain that they forced themselves to undergo for a moment, that they might the moment after tremble with a fierce sensation that filled their veins with fluid, fiery electricity.

Or again:

Their eyes met in the briefest flash of a glance, then both turned their faces aside. Thus averted, one from the other, they made talk. At last she rose, gathered the books together, and carried them off. At the door she turned. She must steal another keen moment: 'Are you admiring my strength?' She asked. Her pose was fine. With her head thrown back, the roundness of her throat ran finely down to the bosom which swelled above the pile of books, held by her straight arms. He looked at her. Their lips smiled curiously. She put back her throat as if she were drinking. They felt the blood beating madly in their necks. Then suddenly breaking into a slight trembling, she turned round and left the room.

However, Lettie does not marry George. She marries Leslie, the sophisticated son of a rich mine owner, for whom she never had any real passion. Physical passion of Leslie could never carry away Lettie even when they were engaged. After their first sexual encounter, she is disgusted and ashamed of herself:

Tears suddenly came to her eyes. 'What did you come back for?' She said, averting her face from him. He looked at her.

'I knew you were angry— and—,' he hesitated.

'Why didn't you go away?' she said impulsively. He hung his head and was silent.

'I don't see why— why it should make trouble between us, Lettie,' he faltered. She made a swift gesture of repulsion, whereupon, catching sight of her hand, she hid it swiftly against her skirt again.

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6. The White Peacock, pp. 43-44.

7. Ibid., p. 44.
'You make my hands—my very hands disclaim me' she struggled to say.

He looked at her clenched fist pressed against the folds of her dress.

'But —', he began, much troubled.

'I tell you, I can't bear the sight of my own hands', she said, in low, passionate tones.

'But surely, Lettie, there's no need—if you love me—'

That she does not really love him is obvious. She even tells him so:

'Love—love—I don't know anything about it. But I can't—we can't be—don't you see—oh, what they say—flesh of one flesh.'

Yet she marries him and is 'settled' in a secure but meaningless life. She abnegates her own self and lives her life at second hand. She escapes the responsibilities of her own development by taking refuge in motherhood. She tells George that her infant son is her 'work':

"When I have to sign my name and occupation in a visitor's book, it will be "Mother". I hope my business will flourish".

Cyril, the narrator of the story, comments:

"There was a touch of ironical brutality in her now. She was, at the bottom, quite sincere. Having reached that point in a woman's career when most, perhaps all of the things in life seem worthless and insipid, she had determined to put up with it, to ignore her own self, to empty her own potentialities into the vessel of another or others, and to live her life at second hand. This peculiar abnegation of self is the resource of a woman for the escaping of the responsibilities of her own development." 11.

Not only is thus Lettie's life wasted, George also meets his doom. After being rejected by Lettie, he marries Meg, a

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10. Ibid., p. 323. 11. Ibid., pp. 323-324.
voluptuous barmaid. She is 'soft' and 'warm' and he feels happy with her for some time. However, he soon discovers that his wife does not love him. She loves only her children. She does not even respect him. He tells Cyril that his wife never found any pleasure in him as she did in the kids. It is a fact, however, that George too had never really loved his wife. It was, in fact, in a drunken state that he had proposed marriage to her. Their natures contradicted each other. She often complained that he did not care for her or for her children:

"He often made a beast of himself drinking; he thought more of himself than he ought, home was not good enough for him, he was selfish to the back-bone, he cared neither for her nor the children, only for himself."12

She too did not care for him and found all her satisfaction in her children. Cyril comments:

"A woman who has her child in her arms is a tower of strength, a beautiful, unassailable tower of strength that may in turn stand quietly dealing death."13

Thus was Meg 'quietly dealing death' to George. He is gradually alienated from everything and everybody and only looks forward to death "like a condemned man!"14

Why does Lettie prefer Leslie to George? Critics have made much of the fact that George is too slow in claiming Lettie. She could not have gone on waiting indefinitely till he summoned up

enough courage to propose marriage to her. The following passage
is often quoted in support of this view:

"No, my dear, no. The threads of my life were un-
twined; they drifted about like floating threads of
gossamer; and you didn't put out your hand to take
them and twist them up into the chord with yours. Now
another has caught them up, and the chord of my life
is being twisted, and I cannot wrench it free and un-
twine it again — I can't. I am not strong enough.
Besides, you have twisted another thread far and tight
into your chord; could you get free?"

"Tell me what to do — yes, if you tell me."
"I can't tell you — so let me go."

George's indecision may have been a contributing factor in Lettie's
decision to marry Leslie, but the real reason lies in the psycho-
logy of Lettie herself. She is one of those women who won't allow
their man a distinct individuality of their own. Her man must be
like a child to her of whom she can take complete charge. Such a
woman not only abnegates her own self, but also denies the distinct
soul of her man. When Lettie tells Leslie that she does not want
to marry him, he weeps like a child and expresses his complete
dependence on her. She takes pity on him as she would have taken
pity on a terrified, dependent child. That clinches the issue
between them:

"Why?" he whispered, like a child that is told some
tale of mystery.

She looked at him, as he lay propped upon his elbow,
turning towards her his white face of fear and perplexity,
like a child that cannot understand, and is afraid, and
wants to cry. Then slowly tears gathered full in her eyes,
and she wept from pity and despair. ——— The tears were
running down his cheeks. She felt him trembling, and the

15. See(i) D.H. Lawrence; An Eastern View; Chaman Nahal (Delhi: Atma
(ii) Conflict in the Novels of D.H. Lawrence; Yudhishtar (Edin-
sound of his voice alarmed her from herself. She hastily smeared the tears from her eyes, got up, and put her arms round him.  

(Emphasis mine)

George - Lettie relationship is central to the novel. There are other relationships also in the novel, but they are only slightly different versions of the same relationship. Cyril is as unhappy towards the end of the novel as George, even though he is not completely shattered. His relationship with Emily has come to nothing due to her and his own inhibition. The incident of the father Breadsal has been regarded by many critics as unnecessary and irrelevant. Breadsal had been a sensual man hated by his refined wife. When he left for 'other pleasures', she had 'rejoiced bitterly'. Her daughter Lettie was then a baby of three years and her son Cyril was five. After eighteen lonely and drunken years he dies leaving a handsome amount for his wife and children. When Lettie's mother receives his letter informing her that he was dying, she feels guilty: "--- he had a right to the children, and I've kept them all the time". It is not just the cruelty of fate. She realizes that she too was guilty of cruelty against her husband: "--- I have felt in myself a long time that he was suffering --- I have been cruel to him". Cyril observes on the death of his father: "The death of the man who was our father changed our lives. It was not that we suffered a great grief; the chief trouble was the unanswered crying of failure".

The "unanswered crying of failure" remains the chief trouble of all the characters of the novel. The story of Lettie's father and her mother hints at the possibilities of Lettie - George relationship, had they got married to each other. That he would have been as miserable as he was with his wife, Meg, had he married Lettie, is realized by George also. Referring to Lettie, Cyril asks George: "What if you'd had her?" George replies: "We should have been like a cat and dog!"

Annable's tragic story powerfully illustrates the misery of human life due to the failure of man-woman relationship, though it has been regarded by some critics as irrelevant. Annable is introduced into the novel when Lettie, Cyril, Emily and Leslie are having a walk in the wood and are talking about the 'mysterious snowdrops':

'What do they mean, do you think?' said Lettie - - -
'What do you think they say - what do they make you think, Cyril?' Lettie repeated.

'I do not know. Emily says they belong to some old wild lost religion. They were the symbol of tears, perhaps, to some strange-hearted Druid folk before us'.

'More than tears', said Lettie, 'More than tears, they are so still. Something out of an old religion, that we have lost. They make me feel afraid.'

'What should you have to fear?' asked Leslie.
'If I knew, I shouldn't fear,' she answered.

'Look at all the snowdrops'— they hung in dim, strange flocks among the dusky leaves—look at them — closed up, retreating powerless. They belong to some knowledge we have lost, that I have lost and that I need. I feel afraid. They seem like something in fate. Do you think, Cyril, we

22. Anthony West refers to it as "a short story which has been incorporated into the book for no reason at all" (Anthony West, D.H. Lawrence, Arthur Barker Limited, London 1956, p. 109.)
can lose things of the earth — like nasturtiums, and those old monstrousities — but things that matter — wisdom?"

While they are thus talking about the snowdrops, they hear "a quiet, sardonic voice": "A dove-cot, my eyes if it ain't! It struck me I heered a coo in', an' 'ere's th' birds. Come on, sweet hearts, it's th' wrong place for billin' an' coo in', in th' middle o' these 'ere snowdrops. Let's 'ave yer names, come on!"

It is Annable, the gamekeeper, who is free from all inhibitions in the inhibition of language. (It may be noted that all other characters in the novel are inhibited.) When he leaves them, we have this conversation about him:

'Course fellow that', said Leslie when he had rejoined Lettle, 'but he's a character'.

'He makes you shudder', she replied 'but yet you are interested in him. I believe he has a history'.

'He seems to lack something', said Emily.

'I thought him rather a fine fellow', said I.

'Splendidly built fellow, but callous — no soul', remarked Leslie, dismissing the question.

'No', assented Emily. 'No soul — and among the snowdrops'.

These civilized people of rural England regard this man as having no soul. He, on the other hand, regarded civilization as "the painted fungus of rottenness". He scorned religion and mysticism. He thought that mankind had declined into "fool and weakness and rottenness". His motto was "Be a good animal, true to your animal instinct." Graham Hough calls Annable "the first bearer of the Lawrencean philosophy". "Be a good animal" is not Lawrence's

philosophy and annable cannot be regarded as the "bearer of the laurentian philosophy". but his story, like the 'snow drops', does hint at the possibility of the fulfilment of life for the different characters of the novel including annable himself. in the actual process of living, the past experiences which would the psyche of a person become a millstone round his neck. the mind, that should serve as an instrument for change and adjustment with new situations, often becomes the carrier of the dead weight of bitter and unpleasant memories. all that has been acquired through the mental days and years becomes an impediment in the way of real living. annable, who has broken away with his past and is outwardly living the life of a natural man, is, nevertheless, inwardly immersed in his past. his past experience with lady christabel has made him not only a hater of culture and civilization, but a hater of womanhood also. in the churchyard scene of the chapter "a shadow in spring", we have the following:

A peacock, started from the back premises of the hall, came flapping up the terraces to the churchyard. ---

The keeper (annable) looked at me and smiled. he nodded his head towards the peacock, saying: 'mark at that damned thing!' 'the proud fool!' — look at it! perched on an angel, too, as if it were a pedestal for vanity. that's the soul of a woman — or it's the devil! 'that's the very soul of a lady', he said, 'the very, very soul. damn the thing, to perch on that old angel. i should like to wring its neck'. ---'just look', he said, 'the miserable brute has dirtied that angel. a woman to the end, i tell you, all vanity and screech and defilement'. so

annable relates the story of his past life to cyril. he had got married to one lady christabel or rather the lady had made him

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marry her in 'a sloppy French novel' style. Within three years of their marriage the lady got tired of him. She got 'souly'.

She called him her 'animal'. (The author refers to Lettie as the 'souly'sort. She calls George her 'animal'). He put up with that for some time. Then he 'got some servants clothes and went'. He was supposed to have died. The lady married again, but died soon afterwards. Annable, while relating the story of this 'unfortunate misalliance', tells Cyril that he felt as if he were 'at an end too'. And soon he dies in an accident. He had been an unhappy man and dies an unhappy death. His life was a miserable failure. As a reaction to his experience with Lady Christabel, he pretended outwardly to be a 'mindless' animal, but inwardly he was suffering from deep mental conflict that destroyed his spirit and hastened his end. Emily's comment that he had 'no soul' applies equally to all other characters of the novel. George is roused to mental consciousness through his relationship with Lettie. But his sharpened mental consciousness creates only depression and neurosis in him. All humans are supposed to possess a soul. But only those who can dive deep 'inside' themselves and do what their soul wants them to do, can really live a blissful life. Ironcally, men and women, who are guided only by their mind and do not hark to the voice of the soul, always act like 'chess-men' and do only what others expect them to do. After Lettie is engaged to Leslie, she tells George: "You see,

31. The White Peacock, p. 177. 32. Ibid. 33. Ibid.
34. Ibid., p.177. 35. Ibid.
I couldn't help it. George says, "No, why not?" To which Lettie replies: "Things! I have been brought up to expect it—everybody expected it — and you're bound to do what people expect you to do—you can't help it. We can't help ourselves, we're all cheat-men."

Anthony West has observed that all the subsequent novels of Lawrence are "concerned with restating the themes of The White Peacock." This is an overstatement. However, it is true that one can get some idea of his basic vision of life from his very first novel, though it does not, by any means, contain his complete vision. His total view of human life can be grasped only after a careful study of all his novels.

Lawrence was for some time obsessed with a specific problem of man-woman relationship. In his personal life, he had suffered terrible frustrations in his relationships with "souly" women. However, the word "souly" can be misleading. "Souly" women in Lawrence's writings represent "dreaming" women, who are incapable of warm, physical love. Since the soul manifests itself in the body as well as in the spirit, physical love is as much an aspect of the soul as the spiritual love. The so-called "souly" women are, in fact, mind-dominated persons and are not really in touch with their souls. They are capable of only 'mental' love or 'dream love' and have psychological abhorrence of the body. This 'dream love' drives their lovers to despair and sometimes even to destruction. While this is

one of the themes of *The White Peacock*, it is the sole theme of *The Trespasser*, though the two novels have entirely different settings.

Through love, the self seeks new possibilities for its fulfilment. Love is a great liberating force which creates possibilities of change and chances for the beginning of new phases of life. But love also exposes the individual to new risks. Siegmund, the protagonist of Lawrence's second novel, *The Trespasser*, exposes himself to such a risk when he accepts the invitation of his pupil, Helena, and decides to spend a few days with her on the Isle of Wight. His married life with his wife, Beatrice, has been joyless. He is thirty-eight years old and disconsolate. He wants to find joy with Helena. He wants to "blind himself with her, to blaze up all his past and future in a passion worth years of living." But this decision has not been an easy one for him. Even though he is unhappy in his home, yet he loves his children. He is conscious of the fact that if he breaks with his wife, his children will suffer. But he wants to forget everything for the present and spend a few days with Helena:

"This was one of the crises of his life. For years he had suppressed his soul, in a kind of mechanical despair doing his duty and enduring the rest. Then his soul had been softly enticed from its bondage. Now he was going to break free altogether, to have at least a few days purely for his own joy!"

It must be understood that if Siegmund's mechanical mind had suppressed

his 'soul' and he had been doing his 'duty' and 'enduring the rest'
and now his 'soul' had been 'enticed from its bondage', where had the
urge to 'break free altogether' come from? Certainly not from the
Soul. It was the false urge of his mind. The soul is never in
bondage. It is always free and knows no fear. It is not bound by
conventions or ideals. It is always present and is spontaneous.
It is simple and has no layers. It sends forth only creative desires
and not the destructive ones. The mind and the psyche are complex
and have innumerable layers. They are, in fact, the barriers that
stand in the way of the living being in his effort to come into
contact with his soul and thereby realize his self. The author has
used the word 'soul' too often in The White Peacock and The Trespasser,
but he has used it in the general sense—meaning an amalgam of the
mind and the spirit.

Sieg mund's mind had bound him in a false relationship with
Beatrice. Now it was urging him on to seek pleasure with Helena.
The urges of the 'conditioned' mind were bound to lead to conflict
and disaster. His experience with Helena in the Isle of Wight is
far from being joyous. Helena is a dreaming woman. She loves the
dream of life and not the real life itself. She loves the Siegmund
of her dreams and not the real Siegmund in flesh and blood. Her
love is not kind, but cruel to him:

With her the dream was always more than the actuality.
Her dream of Siegmund was more to her than Siegmund him-
self. He might be less than her dream, which is as it may.
However, to the real man she was very cruel." 40

The real living people for her were just 'vulgar, ugly and stupid.' "She ought to be rejoiced at me, but she is not, she rejects me as if I were a baboon under my clothing", says Siegmund sadly to himself.

Helena is one of those creatures who are frightened by the 'mindlessness' of the great force of life. She is frightened by the mindless passion of Siegmund:

Presently she laid her head on his breast, and remained so, watching the sea, and listening to his heart-beats. The throb was strong and deep. It seemed to go through the whole island and the whole afternoon, and it fascinated her: so deep, unheard, with its great expulsions of life. And the world a heart? Was there also deep in the world a great God thudding out waves of life, like a great heart, unconscious? It frightened her. 42

Siegmund wants warm love from his beloved. Helena cannot give it to him. Helena detests the male in him. Siegmund is disappointed and sad. Helena realizes the cause of Siegmund's disappointment with her. But instead of responding to his love with joy, she offers herself as a sacrifice at the altar of his 'profane' love:

She turned, lifted her hands to him. The lace fell back, and her arms, bare to the shoulder, shone rosily. He saw her breasts raised towards him. Her face was bent between her arms as she looked up at him afraid. Lit by the firelight, in her white, clinging dress, cowering between her uplifted arms, she seemed to be offering him herself to sacrifice." 43

(Emphasis mine)

41. The Trespasser, p. 41.
42. Ibid., p. 47.
43. Ibid., p. 35.
She offers the sacrifice to the 'brute' in Siegmond in order to have the Siegmond of her dreams to herself. To Helena, a passionately beating heart is brutal like the mindless life-force; and she instinctively wants to protect herself from it.

The roaring thud of the waves reminded Helena of a beating heart. She clung closer to him, as her hair was blown out damp, and her white dress flapped in the wet wind. Always, against the rock, came the slow thud of the waves, like a great heart beating under the breast. There was something brutal about it that she could not bear. She had no weapon against brute force. 44

Siegmond as a passionate lover is to her like 'the heart' and the 'brute sea'. This is not her Siegmond. She hates the 'brute' in him. 45 However, when he is passive and sad, she turns to him again with love. But it is not the love that a woman offers her man; it is just pity and compassion that any woman with a mother's heart might offer to a disconsolate child.

He lay still on his back, gazing up at her, and she stood motionless at his side, looking down at him. He felt stunned, half-conscious. Yet as he lay helpless looking up at her some other consciousness inside him murmured: 'HAUNA—Dee—Mother!' She stood compassionate over him. Without touching him she seemed to be yearning over him like a mother. 47

Siegmond had never been a great fighter. He had had few interests and had missed many opportunities in life. And now with Helena he had sought new possibilities for the fulfilment of his self. He had set out for the adventure of love. But what he had got was only pity.

44. Ibid., p. 51. 45. Ibid., p. 51. 46. Ibid. 47. Ibid., p. 74.
He was now apprehensive about the outcome of this adventure. Helena's psychology of love and that of Siegmund has been illustrated by their reactions on seeing the carved figure of Christ on the cross in a Roman Catholic church in the fields. Helena's heart swollen with emotion on seeing the figure of Christ. It filled her with the yearning and pathos of Christianity. Siegmund, on the other hand, is reminded of the tragedy of Christ who had loved humanity in an abstract manner and sacrificed himself for it.

Ironically, Siegmund saw a parallel in Christ's 'great' tragedy to his own 'small' one.

'Thirty years of earnest, love; three years' life like a passionate ecstasy — and it was finished. He was very great and very wonderful. I am very insignificant, and shall go out ignobly. But we are the same; love, the brief ecstasy, and the end. But mine is one rose, and His all the white beauty in the world'.

Siegmund felt his heart very heavy, sad, and at fault, in presence of the Christ. Yet he derived comfort from the knowledge that life was treating him in the same manner as it had treated the Master, though his compared small and despicable with the Christ—tragedy. 48

Siegmund had wanted real and personal love from Helena. What she gave him was abstract, 'dream' love. When she found that he was disappointed and unhappy, she offered herself as a sacrifice at the altar of his earthly love. She behaved like a little Christ. Her love was a sort of Christian love which ironically resulted ultimately in the 'crucifixion' of Siegmund and not his 'resurrection' into a 'whole' life. Hampson, an acquaintance of Siegmund observes: "The best sort of women — the most interesting — are the worst for us." These

48. Ibid., p. 79.
deep, interesting women don't want us; they want the flowers of the spirit they can gather of us. We, as natural men, are more or less degrading to them and to their love of us; therefore they destroy the natural man in us — that is — us altogether."

Helen Corke, with whom Lawrence had been in love for some time, is the prototype of Helena of The Trespasser. Her diary of her experiences with a lover, who had hanged himself out of frustration in love with her, had provided the material for The Trespasser. Helen Corke writes:

"My early religious training had divided soul and body, and presented the body as inferior, rightly subordinate to the soul. The literary patterns of the period mostly enhanced this teaching. They tended to exhibit physical passion as a gross manifestation, linking man with the animal, but in the case of man, properly controlled by reason and the will. Love was either divine or human. Religion imposed no prohibition against spiritual intimacy, for which it claimed complete essential detachment from bodily functions."

After being disillusioned with Helena, Siegmund returns home. His wife rejects him and he finds it impossible to live with her. He had become a selfish sinner in the eyes of his own children. His 'trespass' had made him a stranger in his own house. He cannot go back to Helena because she may accept him only out of 'pity', and 'Christian' pity cannot sustain him in his life. Everything appears to him to be unreal in the world. He feels completely alienated from life. He feels angry contempt for everything. Life appears to him to be like a prison and for him there remains only one way to escape from this prison — he

49. The Trespasser, p. 84,
could cut himself off from life. A powerful death-wish overpowers him and he hangs himself to death.

_The Trespasser_ is not a great novel. It lacks the perfection that is required of a great work of art. Lawrence himself did not have a high opinion of this novel. But, it does succeed in highlighting the devastating influences of the beliefs that equate the spirit with the soul and teach men and women to regard the body as inferior to the spirit and the physical passion as a gross manifestation.

Lawrence has, in his novels, used the words like 'soul', 'spirit', 'spiritual' in the sense they are used in common language. It is but natural. He couldn't have done otherwise. But it does create some difficulty in understanding the portrayal of life in these novels. As a common term the word 'spirit' connotes the soul. In common parlance, if a man or a woman is described as 'spiritual', it conveys the impression that the man or the woman is 'godly' or closer to 'divinity' than other common mortals. The truth, however, is that, in comparison to the body, the 'spirit' is not closer to the soul. Nor is it a superior manifestation of it. Both, the body and the spirit, are the expressions of the soul. But neither of the two can be said to be identical with it. The soul is the vitalizing element which makes life possible. It is "an inscrutable, undefinable, vivid quick, giving us off as a life issue". The living soul is not

51. _The Trespasser_, p. 185.
52. In his essays, however, these words carry their full weight and significance.
spirit'. The spirit, according to Lawrence, is "merely our mental consciousness". Lawrence's so-called souly or spiritual women are mind-dominated creatures, who, consciously or unconsciously want to dominate their men. This urge to dominate takes two forms. One is the passion 'to have all', to 'grasp everything into supreme possession'. The other is 'to be everything, through supreme acceptance'. This second form impels one to offer oneself as sacrifice at the altar of what one wants to conquer. In both the cases, it is a materialistic urge: "the submission of love is at last a process of pure materialism, like supreme extension of power". Helena, like Lady Christabel and Lettie and even Mag of The White Peacock, is one of the 'souly sort'. Lettie marries Leslie because he throws himself into her arms like a helpless child and is willing to be dominated by her. In course of time Mag becomes 'mistress and sole authority' in her house and George 'as father' is reduced to the status of 'first servant'. Mag becomes 'authoritative' and 'as she moved about the room she seemed to dominate everything, particularly her husband'. The author makes it amply clear in The Trespasser that Helena does not love Siegmund, she only wants to be loved madly. The unconscious motive behind Helena's offer of 'sacrifice' at the altar of Siegmund's physical

54. Ibid.
55- Ibid.
56- Pheonix, p. 715.
57. Ibid.,
58. Ibid.,
60. Ibid, p. 353.
passion is the desire to conquer him. The irony, however, is that while it is Helena who offers herself as a sacrifice to Siegmund's profane love, it is Siegmund himself who gets 'crucified'. The symbol of 'the carved Christ upon His cross' in the novel has meaning only in this sense: "The King-god and the crucified-God hold the same bubble in their hands."

Is love of humanity the same as real, warm, individual love? Non-sense. It is the moonshine of our warm day, a hateful reflection.

Possessive spouses or parents are consciously or unconsciously motivated by the same passion as the 'lovers' who do not love but offer themselves as sacrifice at the altar of love. The passion to 'be all' is ultimately the same thing as the passion to 'have all'.

The so-called spiritual women whose minds have hopelessly camouflage their souls from their living selves are the main preoccupation of Lawrence in his first two novels. The world of his third novel *Sons and Lovers* is also shaped to a large extent by a 'spiritual' woman. As the novel opens, Gertrude Morel, who has been married for eight years, is expecting her third baby. She has had a middle class background and she thinks herself to be superior to the wives of the miners in the drab locality of 'the Bottoms', where she has shifted recently. She has inherited a proud, unyielding temper and a fierce variety of puritanism from her father's family. At the age of nineteen she had a romance with an educated young man who later rejected her in favour of

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61. *The Trespasser*, p. 79.
his forty-year-old landlady. When she was twenty-three she met Walter Morel at a Christmas party. Morel, an illiterate miner, was a handsome man of twenty-seven. His virility and liveliness, his warm non-intellectual humour, and his use of the dialect fascinated her. They were married at the next Christmas, and were perfectly happy with each other for some time. But this happiness was very short-lived. Her disillusionment began when she discovered that Morel had lied to her that the house in which they were living belonged to him. He was in fact in debt. Moreover, he is given to drink which puts some strain on their domestic budget. Walter Morel is not a clever man and is incapable of sophistication. Mrs. Morel likes discussing religion and philosophy. Walter listens to her obediently, but he cannot participate in any such discussion. This frustrates her attempts at finer intimacy with him. He is sensuous, earthy, non-intellectual and un-inhibited by rigid puritanism. Mrs. Morel tries to force her puritan morality on him. She nags and nags, and he often loses his temper and sometimes even beats her. They quarrel often and every quarrel diminishes Walter Morel's self-assurance. As she cannot change him, she ignores him. He is now in full retreat from any moral growth. He is afraid to face her. His manhood is bruised and Gertrude Morel's will triumphs. She actually casts him off. She hates him and even imparts this hatred to her children. The children become hostile towards their father, and this hostility is flamed by Mrs. Morel. The complete erosion of Morel's authority in his own house is illustrated by an incident in the third Chapter of the book. Morel wants to discipline William,
the eldest son. But Mrs. Morel prevents him from giving him a beating. Morel resents this interference in his parental authority, but acquiesces to the superior moral authority of his wife. He has now lost all respect and authority in his own house and has been reduced to the status of a bonded labourer whose duty it is to earn money for the family. He is reduced to "more or less a husk" and Mrs. Morel and the children treat him as "an outsider". For her emotional satisfaction Mrs. Morel turns to her children. Her eldest son, William, now moves to the centre of the stage. William is a talented boy and the mother looks to him as a young man who will make "the world glow again for her". William too reciprocates this love fully. But she regrets that many young girls who meet him at the local dances are captivated by his good looks. Mrs. Morel wants him to rise in life and move toward the middle class. William gets a job in a London firm. She is very sad at the time of his departure: "She loved him so much. More than that she hoped in him so much. Almost she lived by him". However, William's success is quite in tune with her plans. She hopes that the dreams that had remained unfulfilled in her marriage with Morel will now be fulfilled through William. William, too, is not only deeply attached to his mother, but is also under the powerful influence of her mind and thought. When in London he falls in love with a 'modern' girl, whom he calls 'Cyp', he cannot help comparing her with his mother. He finds her 'shallow' in comparison. Yet he loves her passionately and wants to marry her. When he brings her home, Mrs. Morel is jealous of her. She does not want that William should marry her. The poor young man is torn with conflict between his love for his mother and his passion for his beloved. This
inner conflict becomes unbearable for him. He falls ill. His mother
goes to see him in London. She finds him delirious, and he dies soon
after in her arms. Mrs. Morel is terribly distraught over William's
death. It is only when Paul, her second son, takes dangerously sick
with pneumonia that she is able to bring herself out of the deep
sorrow over the death of her eldest son. She realizes that she should
have watched the living, not the dead. She nurses Paul with great
love and care, and it saves not only Paul's life but also her own
mental balance. Paul had always been attached to her. Being a
physically weak child he always 'trotted after his mother like her
shadow'. She too had been paying special attention to him in order
to make up for bringing him into the world unloved. At the time of
his birth she had been so much disgusted with life due to the
strained relationship with her husband that she had really not wanted
this child. But it was only after William's death that she focuses
all her attention and thoughts on Paul. Now she wants the fulfilment
of her self through her second son. Paul too feels that his life and
achievements have meaning only in relation to her. Thus she comes
to exercise a strong spiritual hold on him. When he grows up, this
spiritual bondage incapacitates him from establishing healthy
adult relationship with any woman.

Shared love of nature and learning brings Paul closer to Miriam
Lievers, a sixteen-year-old pretty girl. Initially the love between
him and Miriam is a boy-girl idyll. But even this is resented by
Mrs. Morel. She is in no way prepared to allow a maturer love to
develop between them. She senses danger to her own relationship with
her son. Her heart cries: "She's not like an ordinary woman, who can leave me my share in him". She regards Miriam to be one of those women "who will want to suck a man's soul out". She fears that a complete love relationship between Miriam and her son will leave "no room, not a bit of room" for herself in the mind and soul of Paul. So she fights for the 'soul' of her son. She derides the girl whenever Paul talks about her. She reminds her son of her unhappy married life by telling him that she "never had a husband — not really". He too is deeply aware of his mother's unhappiness with his father, whom he hates. He does not want to see his mother unhappy due to his relationship with Miriam. He is not prepared to go against the wishes of his mother. Thus the strong mother-pull stands in the way of his completely giving himself up to Miriam in love. And Miriam is aware of it. However, Miriam too is inhibited in her approach to sex. She has inherited her type of inhibition from her family, especially from her mother. She tells Paul: 'Mother said to me: "There is one thing in marriage that is always dreadful, but you have to bear it". And I believed it'. Her attitude towards love and sex is typically Christian: 'O Lord, let me not love Paul more. Keep me from loving him, if I ought not to love him --'. But, Lord, if it is Thy will that I should love him, make

64. Sons and Lovers, (Heinemann: London), 1936, pp. 192, 193. All future references to the book are to this edition.
65. Ibid., p. 160.
66. Ibid., p. 213.
67. Ibid.,
68. Ibid., pp. 200–201.
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64. Sons and Lovers, (Heinemann : London), 1966, pp. 192, 193. All future
references to the book are to this edition.

65. Ibid., p. 160.

66. Ibid., p. 213.

67. Ibid.,

68. Ibid., pp. 290-291.
We love him — as Christ would, who died for the souls of men. Make me love him splendidly, because he is Thy son'. This attitude may be regarded as 'spiritual', but it is certainly neurotic. The awareness of physical passion makes both Paul as well as Miriam feel uneasy. It makes Paul even feel guilty. He is confused and unhappy. He 'knew' that "the deepest of his love belonged to his mother". But he also realizes that Miriam is a dreaming woman:

'She was prepared for the big things and the deep things, like tragedy. It was the sufficiency of the small day-life she could not trust'.

Like all dreaming women, Miriam does not want to love in the normal way. Her "eternal and abnormal craving is to be loved". She isn't 'positive'; she is 'negative'. He tells Miriam that they ought to break off. But he does not put the blame for the failure of their relationship entirely on her. He knows that the fault lies as much in himself as in her.

"I know", he cried, "you never will! You'll never believe that I can't—can't physically, any more than I can fly up like a skylark—"

"What?" she murmured. How she dreaded.
"Love you". 74

Graham Hough writes: "Paul thinks that he is a clear-headed, rational creature, irritated by the obscure complexities of Miriam's nature. But in fact he is in a far more complex emotional tangle than she; and the matter for such a reading of the situation is presented quite

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69. Ibid., pp. 171-172. 70. Ibid., p. 215. 71. Ibid., p. 216. 72. Ibid., p.215. 73. Ibid. 74. Ibid., pp. 221-222.
fully at the same time as his own quite different view." The fact, however, is that while Paul is very much aware of the 'complexities of Miriam's nature', he is not totally unaware of the 'more complex emotional tangle' that he himself is in. He is not self-righteous. A terrible conflict is going on within him; and he is all along using his mind as a tool to pierce through the layers of his psyche.

Miriam's diagnosis of Paul's problem is that he has his 'higher' self and his 'lower' self. Her diagnosis is not much different from that of those critics who interpret Lawrence's novels in terms of conflict between the flesh and the spirit. The only difference is that while some of these critics believe that Lawrence was all for 'flesh', Miriam thinks that if Paul's 'lower' desires are burnt away through Clara, she might then have him altogether for herself. Clara Dawes is a sensuous woman, and Miriam had noticed that, when he had met her once, he had appeared excited. Miriam brings Paul and Clara together and Paul goes all out for passion with Clara. Mrs. Morel is not hostile to her because she thinks that Clara will take his body and leave his soul to her. However, he does not break off completely with Miriam. He talks to Clara about his relationship with Miriam. He tells her that Miriam wanted only a spiritual communion with him. Clara tells him that he is mistaken and suggests that he should put her to the test. Paul goes back to Miriam. He tries to analyse the mutual reticences in his relationship with her. She, at length, consents to have him. But he remains dissatisfied and is angry.

He feels that Miriam holds her vital self back from him. Thus she fails the test. It is, however, a victory not for Clara but for Mrs. Morel. Paul tells his mother that he will break off completely with Miriam, and she is glad to know it. But the struggle with Miriam leaves Paul's ego shattered. She tells him for the first time in no uncertain terms that it is he who had always fought her and never really let her 'take' him. She, however, still hopes that he will return to her after getting rid of his passion through Clara. Paul goes back to Clara and Mrs. Morel is happy. She thinks that Clara will take his body and leave his soul to her. Paul's mind too is temporarily at rest as he stops his self-analysis for the time being. His passion with Clara goes on smoothly for some time. His relationship with her is exclusively physical. She offers him that 'intensity of passion which Miriam could not'. However, Paul is not content with her love for long. Mrs. Morel comments: "But you'll tire of her, my son; you know you will". Their passion soon gives way to dissatisfaction and uncertainty.

But Clara was not satisfied. Something great was there, she knew, something great enveloped her. But it did not keep her. In the morning it was not the same. They had known, but she could not keep the moment. Clara had left her husband Baxter Dawes because he had been brutal to her. But now she feels that in the matter of sex Baxter was preferable to Paul. "You can't come out of yourself, you can't," she tells him, "Baxter could do that better than you." Both of them realize that they will not stay together permanently. Clara realizes that Paul will never surrender his will to her.

76. Sons and Lovers, p. 329. 77. Ibid., p. 354. 78. Ibid., p. 362.
So there went on a battle between them. She knew she never fully had him. Some part, big and vital in him, she had no hold over; nor did she ever try to get it, or even to realise what it was. Together they had received the baptism of life, each through the other; but now their missions were separate. Where he wanted to go she could not come with him. They would have to part sooner or later. 79

In the meantime it becomes known that Mrs. Morel has cancer. She is struggling with death and her suffering makes Paul suffer terribly. Clara cannot provide any comfort to him now. Even though she gives herself to him, there is hatred in her eyes. His mother's suffering becomes unbearable for Paul and he hastens her end by administering an overdose of morphine to her. After her death, life become empty for Paul. For Clara, he is insignificant now. She wants to go back to her husband; and it is Paul himself who re-unites the estranged couple. The world appears to him to be unreal without his mother. He thinks of Miriam once again. He meets her and the old struggle with her is fought out to the finish. She offers herself to him as a sacrifice as she had done before. And he does not want her sacrifice. They part and he again thinks of his mother. The novel ends thus:

"Mother!" he whispered — "mother!"

She was the only thing that held him up, himself, amid all this. And she was gone, intermingled herself. He wanted her to touch him, have him alongside with her.

But no, he would not give in. Turning sharply, he walked towards the city's gold phosphorescence. His fists were shut, his mouth set fast. He would not take that direc- tion, to the darkness, to follow her. He walked towards the faintly humming, glowing town, quickly. 80

79. Ibid., pp. 360-361. 80. Ibid., p. 420.
Sons and Lovers was Lawrence's first novel to receive praise at the hands of reviewers and critics. But it has also been criticized through the decades for its lack of form. The novel was originally named Paul Morel by the author. William Heinemann had declined to publish it in July, 1912, as he felt that the novel was "unsatisfactory from several points of view"; and the first fault that he found in it was that "it lacks unity". Lawrence had to defend his novel against the charge of its lack of form. After being rejected by Heinemann, Lawrence made some alterations and cuts in Paul Morel, but essentially the novel remained the same. By this time he had been exposed to the influence of Frieda, who was well acquainted with the theories of Freud; and it was due to this influence that the name of the novel was changed to Sons and Lovers. Frieda had analysed the situation, that had been explored by Lawrence in the novel, in terms of Freudian psychology. Freud's theories were not known to Lawrence when he wrote the novel and, in fact, these theories were unknown in England at that time. But Frieda's analysis provided an attractive theoretical basis for the defence of the 'form' of the novel. Lawrence wrote the well known synopsis of the novel to Edward Garnet in November, 1912:

It follows this idea: a woman of character and refinement goes into the lower class, and has no satisfaction in her own life. She has had a passion for her husband, the children are born of passion, and have heaps of vitality, but as her sons grow up she selects them as lovers—first the eldest, then the second. These sons are urged into life by their reciprocal love of their mother—urged on and on. But when they come to manhood, they can't love, because their mother is the strongest power in their lives, and holds them... As soon as the young men come into contact with women, there's split.

82. Ibid.
83. The woman with whom he had eloped.
William gives his sex to a frizzle, and his mother holds his soul. But the split kills him, because he doesn't know where he is. The next son gets a woman who fights for his soul — fights his mother. The son loves the mother — all the sons hate and are jealous of the father. The battle goes on between the mother and the girl, with the son as object. The mother gradually proves stronger, because of the tie of blood. The son decides to leave his soul in his mother's hands, and, like his elder brother, goes for passion. He gets passion. Then the split begins to tell again. But, almost unconsciously, the mother realizes what is the matter, and begins to die. The son casts off his mistress, attends to his mother dying. He is left in the end naked of everything, with the drift towards death.84

This synopsis is clearly based on a neat Freudian analysis of the situation provided by Frieda. Lawrence was anxious that the novel should be published and become a success. He accepted Frieda's analysis in the hope that it provided a good defence of the novel against the charge of its lack of a well planned structure. But, ironically, the synopsis has been used by critics to prove that Lawrence is unskilled in construction of the novel and that he takes too many liberties with the form of the novel. If it is accepted that the novel follows closely the idea contained in the synopsis, then one is bound to find many glaring contradictions in it. The theme of the arresting of the protagonist's development due to mother-fixation and the consequent split in his loves, if carried to its logical conclusion, should have led to Paul's madness or suicide at the close of the novel. The theme itself suggests that Paul himself or his abnormal attachment to his mother is responsible for the split between his physical and spiritual love. But in the novel Miriam is, in fact, shown to be as much responsible for the failure of their relationship as Paul himself. Again it is Clara's

inadequacy as much as Paul's which is responsible for the failure of the Paul-Clara relationship.

A careful study of the novel will, however, reveal that it does not follow closely the idea contained in the summary given by Lawrence to Edvard Garnet. Referring to the summary, Keith Sagar observes in his D.H. Lawrence: Life into Art:

"The novel is much more ambivalent than this account suggests. This 'split' theory oversimplifies the death of William. The battle takes place more between Miriam and Paul than between Miriam and Mrs. Morel. The ending is much more complex than 'the drift towards death' suggests. Lawrence is here describing not so much the novel he has written as the novel he would prefer to have written, or the novel he would write if he were to begin again from scratch." 25

Dr. Sagar is right in his observation that the novel does not follow closely the idea contained in the summary. But it is impossible to believe that Lawrence would have later written a Sons and Lovers fundamentally different from the one that we have today in spite of Frieda's confirmation of the view. Frieda writes in Not I, But the Wind that Lawrence had said in later life: "I would write a different Sons and Lovers now; my mother was wrong, and I thought she was absolutely right". Lawrence may have thought in his early life that his mother was 'absolutely right.' But Mrs. Morel of Sons and Lovers is not absolutely right. The author has not shown her to be absolutely right. The overall impression that the novel leaves on the mind of the reader is that of an unhappy family, the unhappiness being caused not so much by the drinking habit of Walter Morel as by the intolerance

of Gertrude Morel. It is true that Walter comes home often drunk.

But Mrs. Morel completely ignores the fact that he has to work terri-
ibly hard inside the pits for the whole day and would like to have a
few light-hearted moments with his pal. After the initial romance of
marriage was over, the love talk with his wife or the philosophical
talk, to which he could only listen to, could not relieve him of his
tensions of the day. And where could he join his fellow labourers
after the day's hard labour except at the pub? A close reading of the
novel leaves no doubt that Mrs. Morel is more responsible for the
destruction of their marriage than Walter Morel. She marries Walter
because he is quite her opposite in temperament. She later hates him
for being quite unlike her. Her middle-class sensibility is outraged
when she learns that her husband has lied to her about owning the house
and about the unpaid furniture bills. She cannot forgive the poor
miner who has told some innocent lies to hide his poverty from the
lady whom he loves and has just married. Her fanatical behaviour
almost tortures him. The author makes the following remark which is
illuminating:

"The pity was, she was too much his opposite, she could
not be content with the little he might be; she would have
him the much that he ought to be. So, in seeking to make
him nobler than he could be, she destroyed him." 87

It is true that Walter sometimes loses his temper and even beats her.
But it is also true that it is Gertrude Morel who turns him into a
beast by her constant nagging. Once Morel clips off the locks of
his son William and Mrs. Morel becomes furious. She regards this act
as sacrilegious: "This act of masculine clumsiness was the spear

87. LOOK AND LOVERS, p. 83.
through the side of her love for Morel." "I could kill you, I could", she cries. When she is pregnant with her third child, Morel comes home after a pleasant walk with one of his close companions whom she hates. His wife's confrontation comes as an anti-climax to his pleasant experience of the walk. He drives her out of the house after a violent argument. On another occasion her nagging provokes him to tell her that she should wait on him. Her reply is: 'Never, milord I'd wait on a dog at the door first'. He flings a drawer towards her. She is hit by the corner of the drawer and blood trickles out from her eyebrow. But after every unpleasant incident Walter appears to be penitent. He is even tender to her. But she never forgives him, and is always resentful. Finally she becomes indifferent to him. Her greatest sin, however, is that she alienates her children from their father. They become hostile to him and this hostility is fanned by her.

It is not that Mrs. Morel had got nothing from her husband. Later in the novel Paul tells Miriam:

"My mother, I believe, got real joy and satisfaction out of my father at first — that's what one must have, I think, — the real, real flame of feeling through another person — once, only once, if it only lasts three months. See, my mother looks as if she'd had everything that was necessary for her living and developing." 91

But Mrs. Morel develops only in one direction. Her original make-up does not undergo any change through her relationships with her husband and her sons. Her original make-up only hardens.

Mrs. Morel's experience of "real joy and satisfaction" with her husband lasts only for "three months". She had fallen in love with...
Mcelt Morel because he was "so full of colour and animation". He had rich fund of "soft, non-intellectual, warm" humour. He had appeal to her to be noble because "he risked his life daily, and with gaiety". He "thee'd and thou'd" her as she had never been done before. He had "that rare thing, a rich, ringing laugh". She had seen him dancing "as if its were joyous in him to dance". She had "thought him rather wonderful, never having met anyone like him". He was quite opposite of her father who "preferred theology in reading, and who drew near in sympathy only to one man, the Apostle Paul; who was harsh in government, and in familiarity ironic". She was fascinated by the "dusky, golden softness" of Morel's "sensuous flame of life." She watched him and for once fell for the affirmation of life that she found in him. But she herself was 'puritan', 'high minded', and 'really stern', like her father. She loved ideas and was considered intellectual. What she liked most of all was an argument with an educated man. Her life was "baffled and gripped into incandescence by thought and spirit". Her later career confines that she belongs to the same 'species' of cerebral women who have been called 'spiritual' or 'souly' by Lawrence in his novels. It is in fact suggested in the first chapter itself when she, pregnant with Paul, has communion with the white moon and the white lilies in the garden, after being shut out of the house by her drunken husband.

The moon was high and magnificent in the August night. Mrs. Morel, seared with passion, shivered to find herself out there in a great white light, that fell cold on her, and gave a shock to her inflamed soul. She stood for a few moments helplessly staring at the glistening great

93. Ibid., p.9. 94- Ibid. 95- Ibid., p.11. 96. Ibid., p.9.
97. Ibid. 98. Ibid., p.10. 1. Ibid., p.10. 2- Ibid. 3- Ibid.
rhubarb leaves near the door. Then she got the air into her breast. She walked down the garden path, trembling in every limb, while the child boiled within her. For a while she could not control her consciousness, mechanically she went over the last scene, then over it again, certain phrases, certain moments coming each time like a brand red-hot down on her soul, and each time she enacted again the past hour, each time the brand came down at the same points, till the mark was burnt in, and the pain burnt out, and at last she came to herself. She must have been half an hour in this delirious condition, then the presence of the night came again to her. She glanced round in fear. - - - 

She hurried out of the side garden to the front, where she could stand as if in an immense gulf of white light, the moon streaming high in face of her, the moonlight standing up from the hills in front, and filling the valley where the bottoms crouched, almost blindingly. There, panting and half weeping in reaction from the stress, she murmured to herself over and over again: 'The nuisance! the nuisance!'

She became aware of something about her. With an effort she roused herself to see what it was that penetrated her consciousness. The tall white lilies were reeling in the moonlight, and the air was charged with their perfume, as with a presence. Mrs. Morel gasped slightly in fear. 4

(Emphasis mine)

The moon in Lawrence's novels is the symbol of mental consciousness as it is in Hindu metaphysics and astrology. The word 'white' indicates purity in the pejorative sense and is meant to stand for avoidance of life. The moon and the 'whiteness' have been used again and again by Lawrence as symbols suggesting the coldness of the mechanical mind and self-destructive denial of life. The name of his


5. "The mind, the moon, the thought processes, the intellect, the determination, the moods, the reflection, the ego and the self-consciousness are made of the same stuff." See Vicharandrodyn, Pandit Pitambar Ji, (Vrajwaliabhi Hariprasad Bagirath Ji), Bombay 1914, p. 439.
first novel is The White Peacock, and Lettie, the heroine of the novel, is a 'White Peacock' and so is Lady Christabel. Annable tells Cyril that Lady Christabel had begun 'to get souly' after the initial romance of their marriage was over. The author refers to Lettie in the Novel as one of the 'souly sort'. Blasphemous as it may seem, Lawrence uses the word 'white' pejoratively to describe the tragedy of Christ in The Trespasser, suggesting avoidance of life or even death-wish on the part of Jesus Christ Himself.

They crossed a stile and recognized, on the right of the path, the graveyard of the Catholic chapel. The moon, which the days were paring smaller with envious keen knife, shone upon the white stones in the burial-ground. The carved Christ upon His cross hung against a silver-grey sky. --- 6

(Emphasis mine)

Siegmund, who has been gripped by the death-wish due to the treatment he had received from two women, compares his tragedy to the tragedy of Christ.

'But we are the same; love, the brief ecstasy, and the end. But mine is one rose, and His all the White beauty in the world.' 7

(Emphasis mine)

In other novels too, as we will see later, the moon stands for mental consciousness and 'whiteness' suggests coldness, avoidance of life and even death-wish.

It will be interesting to compare Mrs. Morel's communion with the moon and the White Lillies to Juliet's communion with the sun in Lawrence's short story, "Sun". The "great white light that fell cold" on Mrs. Morel gave "a shock to her inflamed soul". "Mechanically"

6. The Trespasser, p. 79. 7. Ibid.
she went over the scene of her fight with her husband over and over again. The "presence of the night" made her glance round "in fear". She stood in "an immense gulf of white light, the moon streaming high in face of her." Still she murmured: 'The nuisance! the nuisance!' The tall white lillies made her gasp "in fear". On the other hand, after her communion with the sun, Juliet's will and mental consciousness relaxed. She experienced the Soul Communion. Her conscious self became "almost an onlooker". It was a state where 'fear' could not enter. It gave her power which was greater than and beyond her conscious self.

Something deep inside her unfolded and relaxed, and she was given. By some mysterious power inside her, deeper than her known consciousness and will, she was put into connection with the sun, and the stream flowed of itself, from her womb. She herself, her conscious self, was secondary, a secondary person, almost an onlooker. The true Juliet was this dark flow from her deep body to the sun.

She had always been mistress of herself, aware of what she was doing, and held tense for her own power. Now she felt inside her quite another sort of power, something greater than herself. Now she was vague, but she had a power beyond herself. 8

Mrs. Morel remained always "mistress of herself, aware of what she was doing, and held tense for her own power", even after her communion.


Dr. T.R. Sharma writes: "Imparting human attributes to the sun, the Hindus depict him as free from all inhibitions." (Essays on D.H. Lawrence, ed. T.R. Sharma, Shalab Book House, Meerut 1967, p. 249.)
with the moon and the white lilies. This communion is shared by the unborn child Paul in her womb. He grows into a hyper-sensitive and highly self-conscious boy. His abnormal attachment to his mother stands in the way of his achieving real emotional fulfilment with either the 'spiritual' Miriam or the 'sensual' Clara. However, though he is born with the millstone of ideas and ideals of his mother round his neck and nurtures these ideals for a long time, yet he does not stop developing in spite of his great emotional suffering. While Mrs. Moral is always sure of the rightness of whatever she does, Paul is always unsure. He blames Miriam for the failure of his relationship with her, but he blames himself equally.

'If you could want me, and not what I can reel off for you!'

"I!" she cried bitterly — "I! Why then would you let me take you?"

"Then it's my fault," he said, gathering himself together, he got up and began to talk trivialities. He felt insubstantial. In a vague way he hated her for it. And he knew he was as much to blame himself."

Paul observes that Miriam looks "like a nun singing to heaven" and that she has "an eternal maidenhood" about her, but he also feels

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9. Lawrence has been profusely praised for this scene in Sons and Lovers by the western critics, but its significance has not been fully grasped by them.


10. Sons and Lovers, p. 194.
that "his own love was at fault, not hers." "I can only give friend-
ship", he tells her, "it's all I am capable of — it's a flaw in my
make-up". To realize one's own faults and inadequacies is the first
step towards any worthwhile development of a human being. Paul's final
break-up with Miriam has, however, valid reason:

She could only sacrifice herself to him — sacrifice herself everyday, gladly. And that he did not want. He
wanted her to hold him and say, with joy and authority:
"Stop all this restlessness and beating against death.
You are mine for a mate." She had not the strength. Or
was it a mate she wanted? or did she want a Christ in him.

He felt, in leaving her, he was defrauding her of life.
But he knew that, in staying, stifling the inner, desperate
man, he was denying his own life. And he did not hope to
give life to her by denying his own." 12

Interestingly, T.S. Tomlinson has likened Baxter Dares to Paul's father:

Baxter Morel:

"Like Morel, Dares is presented as a man defeated and
humbled by Paul's sophistication --- But like Morel too,
Baxter has something about him that is instinctively surer,
more self-contained, than anything or anybody in the new
sophisticated later generation." 11

Paul hates his father due to his excessive attachment to his mother.
But he does make amends for this psychic abnormality in an un-conscious
way. He is solicitous for Baxter Dares, in whom his unconscious self
has the image of his own father, and re-unites him to his estranged
life.

Paul cannot extricate himself from the stranglehold of his
father as long as she is alive. But he is not totally unaware of the

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11 Sons and Lovers, p. 208. 12 Ibid., p. 221. 13 Ibid., p. 418.
Critics on D.H.Lawrence, ed. W.T. Andrews, George Allen and Unwin,
healthy influence of this excessive and crippling mother-love.

He does want to free himself from this unhealthy pull:

Then sometimes he hated her, and pulled at her
ceaseless. His life wanted to free itself of her.
It was like a circle where life turned back on it-
selves, and got no farther. She bore him, loved him,
kept him, and his love turned back into her, so that
he could not be free to go forward with his own life,
really love another woman. At this period, unknowingly,
he resists his mother's influence. 15

Paul tells Mrs. Morel, "I think there must be something the matter
15 with me, that I can't love." His mother suggests that probably he
hasn't yet met the right woman. Paul retorts: "And I never shall
17 meet the right woman while you live." Paul, thus, does realize
the situation he is in. The mother also realizes now "what is the
situation he is in." But she is too hardened in her original make-up, and it
is too late for her to change. She can only get out of the way by
dying. And that is what she does. After the death of his mother,
18 "there was nothing left" for Paul. He feels lonely and "his soul
oscillates, first on the side of death, then on the side of life,
doggedly." But finally he rejects the way of death, the path which
by Freudian prescription he is destined to walk. Instead he moves
"quickly" towards life symbolised by the "humming, glowing town".

In his literary biography of Lawrence, Dr. Keith Banger observes:
"Lawrence himself soon realized the crudity of psychoanalytical
interpretations of literary works when the Freudians got hold of

21.

Sons and Lovers". He then quotes from Lawrence's letter written to Barbara Lee:

"You know I think 'complexes' are vicious half-statements of the Freudians: sort of can't see wood for trees. When you've said 'uterus complex', you've said nothing; -- A complex is not simply a sex relation; far from it -- My poor book: it was, as art, a fairly complete truth; so they carve a half lie out of it, and say 'Voila'. Swine!"

The limitation of Freudians is their inability to conceive of any self beyond the 'Id'. The true identity of man is his Soul. All the rest is acquired from 'matter' that is subject to change. The man who can dive deep enough within himself and find that the soul desires can always change his material existence, however conditioned his mind and psyche may be. Through his suffering Paul realizes, even though faintly, that ultimately one has to rely on one's own deep self for 'right and wrong'. In chapter V of the novel we have the following:

Paul and his mother now had long discussions about life. Religion was fading into the background. He had exshoved away all the beliefs that would hamper him, had cleared the ground, and come more or less to the bedrock of belief that one should feel inside oneself for right and wrong, and should have the patience to gradually realize one's God. Now life interested him more. 23

The realization of one's God is the realization of one's own Self. Paul Morel had realized, even though faintly, that in order to live, one has to realize one's own Self. And then "life interested him more". It is this realization, however faint, on the part of Paul that explains the much criticized ending of the novel.

22. Ibid., pp. 93-94.
Sons and Lovers is central to the understanding of D.H. Lawrence's vision of man's life. Till he completed this novel he had not assumed the role of the prophet. By the time he started writing The Rainbow he had formed his own strong beliefs. His later novels, including his masterpieces like The Rainbow, Women In Love and Lady Chatterley's Lover, are based on these 'beliefs'. Sons and Lovers is his most important novel. It is a great work of art; and it is based on his direct experience of life. As an artistic presentation of the truth of human life, it is superb.

About The Rainbow Lawrence had said: "Whatever else it is, it is a voyage of discovery towards the real and eternal and unknown land." This discovery of 'the real and eternal and unknown land' is in fact the discovery of the Self. Paul Morel had only faintly realized that one should feel "inside oneself for right and wrong, and should have the patience to gradually realize one's God". The entire career of Ursula Brangwen is a voyage in quest of the Self. This quest is carried on by her in her relationships with her fellow human beings.

The Rainbow deals with the living relationships of the three generations of Brangwen men and women. Tom Brangwen of the first generation is refined in an instinct, but in 'mental-things' he is at a disadvantage. The narrator, in the very beginning, makes it clear that Tom is as free from the habits and preconceptions of the mind as is practically possible for a human being to be so. He is sent to grammar-school against his wishes. But deliberate learning is beyond him. He is conscious of the fact that most of his classmates are

mentally superior to him. But deep inside him he knows that the so-called mental superiority of his class-fellows is nothing but "mechanical stupidity."

Tom has great respect for womanhood. To him the woman is the symbol for further life which comprises "religion and love and morality". Man depends on woman for his stability. She is the "anchor and the security". She is "the restraining hand of God". He regards love as "the most serious and terrifying business". It is his innate desire to find "the embodiment of all his inarticulate, powerful religious impulses" in the woman he would love and marry.

Yet he never forms a mental image of his future wife. He is instinctively attracted to a Polish widow, Lydia Lensky. She is a foreign woman totally unknown to him before he meets her for the first time and falls in love with her. On seeing her he says involuntarily: "That's her". Lydia Lensky's fascination for him is the result of the surge of spontaneous desire in him and not due to any mental calculation on his part. It is the desire that has come directly from his soul. He is conscious of his inferiority to her in "almost every way of distinction". But at the same time he is aware of "an inner reality, a logic of the soul, which connected her with him".

He marries her and they seem to have found fulfillment through physical intimacy. But soon there are moments of tension in their married life. They sometimes quarrel. He finds that she is unknown to him even after marriage. His contact with her is like contact with "the unknown, the unaccountable and incalculable". He is bewildered and sometimes desperate. But, with the passage of time, out of the very 'unknown' emerges an understanding of another order.

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1. Ibid. 27. Ibid., p. 13. 28. Ibid. 29. Ibid., p.14. 30.Ibid., p.24. 31. Ibid., p.33. 32- Ibid. 33. Ibid., p. 53.
between them. After two years of married life they 'came together' and it is "much more wonderful to them than it had been before". She still speaks a foreign language. She is still 'unknown' to him. But they discover a new world together:

It was the entry into another circle of existence, it was the baptism to another life, it was the complete confirmation. Their feet trod strange ground of knowledge, their footsteps were lit-up with discovery. Wherever they walked, it was well, the world re-echoed round them in discovery. They went gladly and forgetful. Everything was lost, and everything was found. The new world was discovered, it remained only to be explored.

They had passed through the doorway into the further space, where movement was so big, that it contained bonds and constraints and labours, and still was complete liberty. She was the door-key to him, he to her. At last they had thrown open the doors, each to the other, and had stood in the doorway facing each other, whilst the light flooded out from behind on to each of their faces, it was the transfiguration, glorification, the admission. 35

Lydia too is grateful to Tom Brangwen because through him she has "come to her own". She is sorry for her first husband. He had never really 'known her' and he had 'scarcely lived'. He had never received 'what she could give him'. He had failed in his political mission and so everything had failed for him. For him life had been merely an 'ideal'. So he had no fulfillment in life. Lydia regrets: "I ought to have known, I ought to have been able to say to him: 'Don't be so bitter, don't die because this has failed. You are not the beginning and the end'. But I was too young, he had never let me become myself, I thought he was truly the beginning and the end. So I let him take all upon himself." Tom too is not the beginning and the end. He too dies. But while he was alive he had "come to her and taken from her". He had allowed himself to get lost in her in order to find himself in her. He had become "immortal in his knowledge.

Ibid., p.91. 35- Ibid., p. 91. 36. Ibid., p. 256. 37. Ibid., p.257
Ibid., p.255-256. 38. Ibid., p. 90.
with her. She too had found her place "in life and in immortality" through her relationship with him.

Will Brangwen and Anna of the second generation fell in love with each other and got married at an early age. They enjoy their honeymoon for some days. During these days they live "like conscientious gods", shunting out the outside world completely. They indulge in sexual gratification to the full measure. But after lying "buried like a seed in darkness" during these days of sensual passion with Will, Anna wants to return to the outside world. She wants to give a tea-party. This upsets Will Brangwen. He wants to have done with the outside world. He hates her for forcing him to return to the day time activities: "She would admit the outside world again, she would throw away the living fruit for the ostensible rind. He began to hate this in her". This is the beginning of antagonism between them. He wants to be always with her. His constant hovering near her irritates her. She wants him to turn back to his work. He returns to her again and again. So she turns on him "blindly and destructively", and he behaves like "a mad creature, black and electric with fury". A constant battle goes on between them. They quarrel often but always make it up.

One day it seemed as if everything was shattered, all life spoiled, ruined, desolate and laid waste. The next day it was all marvellous again, just marvellous. One day she thought she would go mad from his very presence, the sound of his drinking was detestable to her. The next day she loved and rejoiced in the way he crossed the floor; he was sun, moon and stars in one.
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10. Ibid., p. 255. 41- Ibid. 42. Ibid., p. 140. 43-Ibid., p. 141. 44. Ibid., p. 143. 45. Ibid. 46. Ibid. 47- Ibid., p. 164.
to be merely a matter of social duty, and never of her soul. They talked about her soul, but somehow her soul was not brought in at all.

When her husband was raised by the thought of the churches, she said to him: 'I hate it for not fulfilling anything in her. The Church told her to be good; very well, she had no idea of contradicting what it said. The Church talked about her soul, about the welfare of mankind, as if the saving of her soul lay in her performing certain acts conducive to the welfare of mankind. 57

ill's mindless approach to the Church irritates her:

He engaged her more than ever. Church had an irresistible attraction for her, and he paid no more attention to that part of the service which was Church to her, than if he had been an angel or a fabulous beast sitting there. 58

It is afraid of him sometimes, as if some dark power was trying to hold her. Sometimes they quarrel over trivial things. He says that he is the lord and master of the house. He explains that she does not respect him. She tries to assert her right to do whatever she liked in her home. Every time, however, a conflict ends ‘in her victory’.

When Anna is pregnant and tells Will about it, he feels that if she was fulfilled, he himself remained unfulfilled and unsatisfied. "Was he not entitled to satisfaction from her, and was his heart all raging desire, his soul a black torment of unfulfilment. Let it be fulfilled in him, then, as it was fulfilled her. He had given her fulfilment. Let her rise up and do her." 59 Now he is cruel to her. Yet he is ashamed of himself for being able to come to fulfilment with her. Yet being ashamed of himself, he becomes more cruel to her.

Anna had wished to reach 'the unknown' through her relationship

Ibid., p.154. 58. Ibid. 59. Ibid., p. 179.
with Will. But that does not happen. Yet her spirit yearns for the 'beyond'. She wants to reach 'the unknown' without or despite him:

She had her moments of exaltation still, rebirths of old exaltations. As she sat by her bedroom window, watching the steady rain, her spirit was somewhere far off.

She sat in pride and curious pleasure. When there was no one to exult with, and the unsatisfied soul must dance and play, then one danced before the unknown. 60

she is oblivious of him. But when he is in the house, she dances 61 'his nullification'. She dances for the Lord, and not for him.

And she tells him so. It hurts him. It leaves a permanent scar on his psyche:

The vision of her tormented him all the days of his life, as she had been then, a strange, exalted thing having no relation to himself. 62

He reacts by shutting his mind and becoming 'impervious'. He becomes insistent on sex. She feels that he is denying her spirit and that his physical will is weighing her down. Then she turns on him and fights him fiercely.

He was not to do this to her, it was monstrous. What horrible hold did he want to have over her body? Why did he want to drag her down, and kill her spirit? Why did he want to deny her spirit? Why did he deny her spirituality, hold her for a body only? And was he to claim her careness? 63

To her he seemed to represent "some vast, hideous darkness". 64

She now refuses to sleep with him and he suffers terribly. She appears to him to be "a monster, the principle of cruelty". They fight

60. Ibid., p. 179. 61. Ibid., p. 180. 62. Ibid., p. 181.
63. Ibid., p. 182. 64. Ibid. 65. Ibid., p. 183.
fiercely and repel each other. At length something gives way in him. He becomes submissive. His physical will is broken. They become friends again even though both of them are subdued now. But before they settle down to a more relaxed life together, she shakes the foundations of his blind faith in the Church too. During a visit to Skrebenskys, the polish friends of Anna's mother, they visit the Lincoln Cathedral. At the sight of the Cathedral Will is filled with ecstasy. His 'soul' is consummated. Anna too is awed by the Cathedral. But she feels a sense of confinement in it. The stones of the Cathedral close her in. She feels "a sense of being roofed in". She claims "the right to freedom above her, higher than the roof". She scoffs at his passion for the Cathedral. She makes fun of his blind faith and shatters it. The Cathedral loses its wonder for him.

She had got free from the Cathedral, she had even destroyed the passion he had. She was glad. He was bitterly angry. Strive as he would, he could not keep the Cathedral wonderful to him. He was disillusioned. That which had been his absolute, containing all heaven and earth, was become to him as to her, a shapely heap of dead matter — but dead, dead.

He had felt, before, that the alter at the Cathedral was "the mystic door, through which all and everything must move on to eternity". But now he realizes that the doorway was "too narrow". In fact, it was "false". He is completely disillusioned. Gradually he relaxes his will. He accepts the fact that his wife "had conquered really". He lives now simply by her physical love for him. She too is more gentle to him now. She even respects him because he serves her "so simply and completely". He lives the life of an "obedient" husband.

66. Ibid., p.200  67. Ibid.  68. Ibid., p. 202.  69. Ibid., p. 203.  70. Ibid.  71. Ibid.  72. Ibid., p. 204.  73. Ibid., p. 205.
occupied with "his wife, his child, the Church, the woodwork, and his wage-earning". Yet he suffers inside him. He is acutely aware of the fact that he was unready for fulfilment and he would remain so throughout his life.

He was aware of some limit to 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. He was unready for fulfilment.

Anna too gets all her satisfaction in child bearing and child rearing, and relinquishes "the adventure to the unknown".

It is worthwhile to contrast Will-Anna relationship with the relationship between Tom Brangwen and Lydia. Tom and Lydia achieve fulfilment of a higher order. Their relationship gives them a sense of meaning in their lives. It provides them the sense of transcendence, immediacy of experience, and transformation. Why do Will and Anna fail to achieve so much? The answer lies in their essential, elemental natures. Will has a secret fear of the mind.

Anna rightly believes that "he did not want things to be intelligible". He preferred things he could not understand with the mind," says the narrator. This is one of the chief causes of Anna's bitterness against him.

And she was bitter against him, that he let his mind sleep. That which was human, belonged to mankind, he would not exert. He cared only for himself.

His fear of the mind makes him an escapist. The pleasures of flesh with Anna and the blind faith in the Church are merely the means of escape for him. He always runs away from his mind. His fear of the

74. Ibid., p. 207. 75. Ibid. 76. Ibid., p. 193.
77. Ibid., p. 154. 78. Ibid., p. 161. 79. Ibid., p. 169.
mind makes adjustment to the external world difficult for him.

Anna is at the other extreme. She wants to reach 'the unknown' through knowledge. She worships human knowledge and believes in the omnipotence of the human mind.

She almost against herself, clung to the worship of the human knowledge. Man must die in the body, but in his knowledge he was immortal. Such, somewhere, was her belief quite obscure and unformulated. She believed in the omnipotence of the human mind.

Tom Brangwen of the first generation is different. He is aware of his disadvantage of poor mental abilities, but at the same time he is confident enough to regard the mental superiority of some of his classmates as 'mechanical stupidity'. Deep inside him he feels that for the profound things of life he must seek guidance from something deeper in him than the mind. His greatest guide is his intuition. It is his intuition that enables him to recognise Mrs. Lensky as the woman he must marry, as he sees her for the first time. However, he is in no way a mindless creature. Nor is he in dread of the mind as Will Brangwen is. Into Tom's intense moments of living the mind just does not enter. He is the kind of man who has subordinated his mind and psyche to the soul, without being conscious of it.

80. Writing about the uses of the mind in *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*, Lawrence observes: "It provides us with endless appliances which we can use for the all-too-difficult business of coming to our spontaneous-creative fullness of being. It provides us means to adjust ourselves to the external universe. It gives us further means of subduing the external, material-mechanical universe to our great end of creative life. And it gives us plain indications of how to avoid falling into automatism, hints for the applying of the will, the loosening of false, automatic fixations, the brave adherence to a profound soul-impulse. This is the use of the mind — a great indicator and instrument". (Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious, William Heinemann Ltd., London 1923, pp.133-127.)

Mindlessness is, however, no pre-condition for the fulfilment of the self. But the mind must lead to the transcending of the mind. Then only can one realize one's self and live in one's self, and interact with others as a matter of joy and play. That is the kind of fulfilment of the self that Ursula of the third generation of Brangwen wants to achieve. She embarks on the voyage of discovery of the self with the mind as her compass. She carries forward the adventure into 'the unknown' which her mother, Anna, had 'postponed'.

Ursula has unquenchable thirst for knowledge since her very childhood. She wants to read great books and know 'big, free people'. She does not like the crowded life at home. The 'muddled domesticity' of her home is hateful to her. For her Sunday is a blessed day. On Sundays her spirit wanders in dreams. Her father Will Brangwen gets deep satisfaction from the paintings relating to scenes from scriptures without questioning the validity of the concepts behind these paintings. But she does not accept them unreservedly. Sundays give her delight and the Biblical stories fascinate her, but she questions such concepts as appear to her to be absurd.

Ursula has a great sense of wonder. In her early years she is fascinated by the story of Christ and by the scriptures. But soon she is disillusioned. The scriptures cannot satisfy her for long. They cannot give her what she seeks — a 'life with a blessing', the life in touch with the 'living mystery'. As she grows up she becomes increasingly aware of the responsibility of her own life.

82. "Anna was absorbed in the child now; she left her husband to take his own way. She was willing now to postpone all adventure into unknown realities. She had the child, her palpable and immediate future was the child. If her soul had found no utterance, her womb had". (The Rainbow, p. 203.)
"She became aware of herself, that she was a separate entity in the midst of an unseparated obscurity, that she must go somewhere, she must become something. And she was afraid, troubled. Why, oh why must one grow up, why must one inherit this heavy, numbing responsibility of living an undiscovered life? Out of the nothingness and the undifferentiated mass, to make something of herself! But what? In obscurity and pathlessness to take a direction! But whither? How take even one step? And yet, how stand still? This was torment indeed, to inherit the responsibility of one's own life."

The stories from religious books, which fascinated her earlier, appear untrue to her now. They are mere myths and tales and illusions. She comes to realize that what one does not experience in daily life is not true of oneself. The Sunday world of religious make-believe is unreal. The weekday world, on the other hand, is the world of deeds and action: "The weekday world had triumphed over the Sunday world. The Sunday world was not real or at least not actual. And one lived by action."

Deep inside her, Ursula feels that religion is not something apart from the experiences of her daily life. Life and religion cannot be separated into watertight compartments, the one to be opened only on every seventh day. Her task is now to "learn the week-day life." It is, however, not an easy task by any means. She is dissatisfied with everything. She is confused and frustrated. She mistrusts everything and everybody. Above all she mistrusts her own self. The state of mind that she is in at this stage of her life has been described by the narrator in the following words:

"She was at this time a nuisance on the face of the earth, with her spasmodic passion and her slumberous torment. She seemed to go with all her soul in her hands, yearning,

83. The Rainbow, p. 281. 84. Ibid., p.282. 85. Ibid.
to the other person. Yet all the while, deep at the bottom of her was a childish antagonism of distrust. She thought that she loved everybody and believed in everybody. But because she could not love herself nor believe in herself, she mistrusted everybody with the mistrust of a serpent or a captured bird. Her starts of revulsion and hatred were more inevitable than her impulses of love.

So she wrestled through her dark days of confusion, soulless, uncreated, unformed."

But her journey in search of the truth of herself has already begun.

"How to act, that was the question? Whither to go, how to become oneself? One was not oneself, one was merely a half-uttered question. How to become oneself, how to know the question and answer of oneself when one was merely an unixed something-nothing, blowing about like the winds of heaven, undefined, unstated."

The 'religion' of Christ no longer satisfies her as it denies the here and now of life. The love of Christ, the Son of God, appeals to her to be mere sentimentality. Now she craves for the breast of Son of Man. At this period the young Skrebensky comes into her life. She is sixteen years old and he is twenty-one. He is an orphan. In his boyhood his school had been his home and now his 'real home' is the army. The outside world has been 'always more naturally a home' to him. It is natural, at this stage, for Ursula, for whom the mind is the guide and knowledge the highway to the 'unknown' mystery of life, to be attracted to 'rootless' Skrebensky. He gives her "a sense of the vast world, a sense of distances and large masses of humanity"

86. Ibid., p.226. 87- Ibid., p.282. 88- Ibid., p.234.
89. Ibid., p.291. 90. Ibid. 91. Ibid.
Skrebensky too is mad with desire for her. But this desire is only for the "possession of her body". They become 'reckless' in their love-play. The narrator comments on their passion for each other in the following words:

"But under it all was a poignant sense of transience. It was a magnificent self-assertion on the part of both of them, he asserted himself before her, she felt herself infinitely male and infinitely irresistible, he asserted himself before her, she knew herself infinitely desirable, and hence infinitely strong. And after all, what could either of them get from such a passion but a sense of his or her own maximum self, in contradistinction to all the rest of life? Wherein was something finite and sad, for the human soul at its maximum wants a sense of the infinite?"

Their first sexual encounter takes place meaningfully under the full moon, the Aphrodite, the goddess of conscious and wilful sex. As Skrebensky's love is mere lust, the experience leaves him reduced to 'nothingness'. Even physical love becomes a battle of wills.

She stood for some moments in the overwhelming luminosity of the moon, ...
And timorously, his hands went over her, over the salt, compact brilliance of her body. If he could but have her, how he would enjoy her! If he could net her brilliant, cold, salt-burning body in the soft iron of his own hands, net her, capture her, hold her down, how madly he would enjoy her. He strove subtly, but with all his energy, to encompass her, to have her. And always she was brilliant and burning and hard as salt, and deadly. Yet obstinately, all his flesh burning and corroding, as if he were invaded by some consuming, scathing poison, still he persisted, thinking at last he might overcome her. Even, in his frenzy, he sought for her mouth with his mouth, though it was like putting his mouth into some awful death. She yielded to him, and he pressed himself upon her in extremity, his soul groaning over and over.

She took him in the kiss, hard her kiss seized upon him, hard and fierce and burning corrosive as the moonlight. She seemed to be destroying him. He was reeling, summoning all his strength to keep his kiss upon her, to keep himself in the kiss.

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2. Ibid., p.300. 33. Ibid., p.301.
But hard and fierce she had fastened upon him, cold as the moon and burning as a fierce salt. Till gradually his warm, soft iron yielded, yielded, and she was there fierce, corrosive, seething with his destruction, seething like some cruel, corrosive salt around the last substance of his being, destroying him, destroying him in the kiss. And her soul crystallised with triumph and his soul was dissolved with agony and annihilation. So she held him there, the victim, consumed, annihilated. She had triumphed; he was not any more.

(Emphasis mine)

Ursula too is hurt by the experience: "But there was a wound of sorrow, she had hurt herself, as if she had bruised herself, in annihilating him". In the meantime war is declared against the Boers in South Africa and there is the possibility of Skrebensky's being sent there. As his 'love' for Ursula is nothing more than lust for her body, he now becomes totally indifferent to his relationship with her. He himself is not unaware of the fact that true desire for in her is lacking him. The narrator describes his rumination in the following words:

"Why could not he himself desire a woman so? Why did he never really want a woman, not with the whole of him: never loved, never worshipped, only just physically wanted her."

In fact, he is incapable of any meaningful relationship because he: dead to his own 'intrinsic life'. He lives for such ideals as the state, the nation, the society and the community. For him the soul of the individual has no importance.

He went about his duties, giving himself up to them. At the bottom of his heart his self, the soul that aspired and had true hope of self-effectuation lay as dead, still-born, a dead weight in his womb. Who was he to hold important his personal connection? What did a man matter personally? He was just a brick in the whole great social fabric, the nation, the modern humanity.
So Skrebensky left the girl out and went his way, serving what he had to serve, and enduring what he had to endure, without remark. To his intrinsic life he was dead. And he could not rise again from the dead. His soul lay in the tomb. His life lay in the established order of things. He had his five senses too. They were to be gratified. Apart from this, he represented the great, established, extant idea of life, and as this he was important beyond question.

The good of the greatest number was all that mattered. That which was the greatest good for them all, collectively, was the greatest good for the individual.

No highest good of the community, however, would give him the vital fulfilment of his soul. He knew this. But he did not consider the soul of the individual sufficiently important. He believed a man was important in so far as he represented all humanity.

He is busy and he does not come to see her before his departure. In fact, he wants to go away from her because "the male in him was scotched by the knowledge that she was not under his spell nor his influence". However, on the eve of his departure he meets her and she asks him: "You will come back to me?" His answer is "Yes". And he means it, but "as one keeps an appointment, not as a man returning to his fulfilment".

When Skrebensky is gone she develops an 'intimacy' with her class-mistress, Miss Inger. Winifred Inger is a scientific humanist for whom the human desire is the criterion of all truth. For her "truth does not lie beyond humanity, but is one of the products of the human mind and feeling". The lesbian relationship with Miss Inger only creates a sense of deadness in Ursula. She wants to get rid of this relationship. Miss Inger meets her match in Uncle Tom for whom the greatest truth is the machine. It is Ursula who brings them together and finally leaves both of them.

97. Ibid., pp. 326-327. 98. Ibid., p. 329. 99. Ibid.

1. Ibid., p. 341.
After passing her matriculation she comes home where she has to fight daily battles with her mother. She soon realizes that her life at home is without "meaning or worth". So she decides to do something. She gets the job of a school teacher. But in order to succeed or even to be able to continue in the job, she has to use her will to subdue her pupils and make them obey her. She does succeed in imposing a mechanical discipline on her class, but in the process she does violence to her own soul. She is disgusted and kicks the job. After leaving the teaching job, she enters a college. She is full of enthusiasm for learning and knowledge. She tells herself that her "real exploration would begin in college". She regards the professors as the priests of the temple of knowledge. For her they are "the initiated". The key to "the beginning and the end of the mystery" is in their possession. She yearns for "so many dawns that have not yet risen". And her soul cries for the unrisen dawns. Gradually, however, she discovers that the system of education at college merely aims at giving material success.

Gradually the perception stole into her. This was no religious retreat, no perception of pure learning. It was a little apprentice shop where one was further equipped for making money. The college itself was a little, slovenly laboratory for the factory.

In the University "the religious virtue of knowledge was become a flunky to the god of material success". She sees the teachers of the college in their true colours. They are not priests initiated into the deep mysteries of life. They are only "middle-men handling wares" they have become "so accustomed to" that they are "oblivious of them". The so-called learning is meant merely to enable one to

2. Ibid., p. 356. 3. Ibid., p. 436. 4. Ibid., p. 431. 5. Ibid., p. 43. 6. Ibid., p. 435. 7. Ibid. 8. Ibid., p. 436.
earn more money and improve one's social position. Ursula is not interested in this cheap stuff as it does not in any way lead to the realization of the mystery of life — the mystery of herself; "Had she not gone to hear the echo of learning pulsing back to the source of the mystery? — The source of mystery!"

Thus she makes a series of rejections. She seems "always negative in her action". But it is inevitable. To say "not this, not this" is the inevitable reaction of a sincere seeker of truth of life through mental knowledge, after every little discovery made by him or her. The realization of every smaller truth is, however, a step forward towards the realization of a greater truth. Thus Ursula's march towards her goal continues. And her goal is to know what she is.

In every phase she was different. Yet she was always Ursula Brangwen. What did it mean Ursula Brangwen? She did not know what she was.

Her quest, however, is not in vain. Through the negative process of rejections she realizes that the 'dark' region of 'Infinite light' of the self is beyond the domain of mental knowledge. She has a strange experience while examining a cell under her microscope. While looking at the live cell she recalls the conversation that she had a few days back with Dr. Frankstone, a woman professor of Physics in her college, on the mystery of life. The professor had said: "I don't see why we should attribute some special mystery to life — do you? — May it not be that life consists in a complexity of physical and chemical activities, of the same order as the activities we already know?"

9. Ibid.  10. Ibid., p. 437.  11. Ibid.
science? I don't see, really, why we should imagine there is a special order of life, and life alone —" She had not been satisfied. The cell under the microscope starts an intense mental activity within her:

"But the purpose, what was the purpose? Electricity had no soul, light and heat had no soul. Was she herself an impersonal force, or conjunction of forces, like one of these? She looked still at the unicellular shadow that lay within the field of light, under her microscope. It was alive. She saw it move — she saw the bright mist of its ciliary activity, she saw the gleam of its nucleus, as it slid across the plane of light. What then was its will? If it was a conjunction of forces, physical and chemical, what held these forces unified, and for what purpose where they unified? For what purpose were the incalculable physical and chemical activities nodalised in this shadowy, moving speck under her microscope? What was the will which nodalised them and created the one thing she saw? What was its intention? To be itself? Was its purpose just mechanical and limited to itself? It intended to be itself? But what self?"

Then this state of intense mental activity changes into another state:

"Suddenly in her mind the world gleamed strangely with an intense light, like the nucleus of the creature under the microscope. Suddenly she had passed away into an intensely-gleaming light of knowledge. She could not understand what it all was. She only knew that it was not limited mechanical energy, nor mere purpose of self-preservation and self-assertion. It was a consummation, a being infinite. To be oneself was a supreme gleaming triumph of infinity."

12. Ibid., p. 440.
13. Ibid., p. 441.
14. Ibid.
The Hindu would call it the state of Bliss (Ananda) in which the seeker has communion with the self (Atman).

15. "What is meant by bliss? No explanation of the word Ananda (bliss) can be regarded as wholly satisfactory, for it has reference to that which transcends time, space and causality—the unfathomable mystery which lies beyond the range of human understanding. Let the Indian speak for himself. "We must remember that in the Upanishads we are in an atmosphere of pure intellect, so that we must guard ourselves against giving to the word bliss or joy the colouring or flavour it received when we pass into the world of love and passion, of action and its fruition. Ananda rather means perfection and fulness. Here the ocean of light and thought is full, fathomless, shoreless, motionless, without the disturbance of a single ripple. No limitation of the slightest element of unreality or non-being corrupts that essence of pure and perfect Being. No limitation of the slightest shade of unreason or ignorance casts a shadow upon that pure and perfect light of Reason. No limitation of the feeblest flickering of desire or death can mingle with that pure and perfect bliss. Perfect Being, perfect reason, perfect bliss—these constitute the essence of Brahman. This much is explanation of the word; but it seems to me that the word really proceeds out of a silence which we shall in vain attempt to penetrate or analyse. Reason here is lost in the sense of the infinite. The search after the ideal is no mere matter of metaphysical speculation to the Rishi of the Upanishads. By the hardest tapas he has passed from one stage of thought to another; risen to a higher and still higher realization of the mystery of Being—and now, when he has penetrated into the very heart of the mystery, the deep, eternal silences are around him and the darkness of Infinite Light dazzles his vision, and, lost in wonder and ecstasy, he can only exclaim—'From whence all speech with the mind, turns away unable to reach it.'"


5. "Atman is recognized as the only Reality. Thus the Brihad-Aranyaka says: 'there is no seer beside him, no hearer beside him, no perceiver beside him, no knower beside him. This is thy self, the ruler within, the immortal', a beautiful passage (from Katha Upanishad) says: 'To the wise who perceive him (Brahman) within their own self, belongs eternal peace, not to others. They feel that highest, unspeakable bliss saying, this is that. How then can I understand it? Has it its own light or does it reflect light? No sun shines there, nor moon nor stars, nor these lightnings, much less this fire. Then he shines everything shines after him: by his light all the world is lighted.'"

Ursula is by now almost transformed. She is more confident now.
She perceives a 'dark' reality of life which is outside the 'lighted' area of everyday experiences and activities. She is still involved with the activities of the everyday life. But her approach is different now:

"Her soul was sure and indifferent of the opinion of world of artificial light .... Her everyday self was just the same. She merely had, another stronger self that knew the darkness.

This curious separate strength, that existed in darkness and pride of night, never forsook her. She had never been more herself. It could not occur to her that anybody, not even the youngman of the world, Skrebensky, should have anything to do with her permanent self. As far her temporal, social self, she let it look after itself."17

Now she is perfectly sure of herself. She is 'perfectly strong'.

When Skrebensky returns from South Africa, she welcomes him. She wants to implicate her whole soul with him. It is to be a relationship with "the undifferentiated man" in him and not with "the young man of the world". But at the very first sight of him, she knows instinctively, though somewhat vaguely, that they are "enemies come together in a truce". He is a man "made up of a set of habitual actions and decisions", who always side-tracks his own soul. Yet, she gives him all the opportunity in the world to prove himself. She explores further the possibility of reaching fulfilment with him through sex. But after every physical contact with him, her love becomes "more hopeless". She is completely disappointed with him: "She knew him all round, not on any side did he lead to the unknown".


21- Ursula's sexual relationship with Skrebensky after his return from South Africa can be better appreciated after examining the sexual relationship of her reincarnation (Ursula of Women in Love) with Birkin in Women in Love. It may be noted that The Rainbow and Women in Love were originally conceived by Lawrence as a single novel to be called The Sisters. (See page 94. )

He proposes marriage to her, but she challenges him to prove himself.

He felt as if the ordeal of proof was upon him, for life or death. He led her to a dark hollow. 'No here,' she said, going out to the slope full under the moonshine. She lay motionless, with wide-open eyes looking at the moon. He came direct to her without preliminaries. She hold him pinned down at the chest, awful. The fight, 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, lay with his face buried, partly in her hair, partly in the sand, motionless, as if he would be motionless now for ever, hidden away in the dark, buried, only buried, he only wanted to be buried in the goodness darkness, only that, and no more. 23

After this experience "they were like two dead people who dare not recognize, dare not see each other." This fight at the sexual plane confirms the death of their relationship. Krenbrensky marries his Colonel's daughter and goes away to India. Ursula does not even know about his marriage. She, however, realizes with a shock that she is with child by him. A great conflict rages inside her and she writes him a letter in which she admits her 'foolishness' and 'conceal in rejecting him. She begs to be accepted by him and promises to be a dutiful wife to him. She thinks that she had been wrong and arrogant in wanting 'that other thing', the 'illusory conceited fulfillment' which she thought she could not have achieved with him: "Who was she to be wanting some fantastic fulfillment in her life? Was it not enough that she had her man, her children, her place of shelter under the sun? Was it not enough for her, as it had been enough for her mother? She would marry and love her husband and fill her place simply. That was the ideal." After posting the letter she experiences a sense of peace. But this sense of peace is 'unnatural'. So it does not last long. Soon she finds a storm raging.

within her. She wishes to escape from this storm, because this storm could lead to a revulsion—to change of decision regarding her joining Skrebensky. She wishes that she could get his letter at once so that she could join him and be 'engaged in fulfilling her fate'. But that was not to be. The 'unknown' forces of life within her reassert, as is symbolised in her encounter with the horses when she is returning home after a long walk out in the rain. She tries to avoid these powerful horses and return to "high road and the ordered world of man". She thinks that her way is clear and she can escape. But she is seized of a strange fear. Still she moves forward "as if in a trance". She, somehow, succeeds in climbing into the boughs of an oak tree and drops to the other side of the hedge. She climbs the fence and sits on it leaning against the trunk of a thorn tree. She is totally exhausted, but she now experiences a state of complete tranquility and peace.

As she sat there, spent, time and the flux of change passed away from her, she lay as if unconscious upon the bed of the stream, like a stone, unconscious, unchanging, unalterable, while everything rolled by in transience, leaving her there, a stone at rest on the bed of the stream, inalterable and passive, sunk to the bottom of all change.

In this state she feels "certain, passive". Somehow she reaches her home where she remains ill for a fortnight; but her soul "lay still and permanent", and "under all her illness, persisted a deep, inalterable knowledge".

Ursula has now discarded all that is unreal like the 'free' and 'naked' kernel that strives "to take new root, to create a new knowledge of Eternity in the Flux of Time". She realizes that anton

26. Ibid., p. 488. 27. Ibid., p. 499. 28. Ibid. 29. Ibid., p. 430. 30. Ibid. 31. Ibid. 32. Ibid., p. 492.
Skrebensky is unreal and belongs to the unreal past. She will not go to him. She is glad that there would be no child. But even if there would have been a child, she would have brought it up herself and not gone to Skrebensky. The social decorum does not matter anymore. She is 'herself' and 'alone'. She is on the threshold of 'the unknown'. She grasps the creation of 'living God' in everything she sees. But sometimes she experiences great agony when she loses touch with the sacred mystery of life. She experiences the agonies of separation of the mystic when he loses contact with his 'beloved'—'the living God': "Sometimes great terror possessed her. Sometimes she lost touch, she lost her feeling, she could only know the old horror of the husk which bound in her and all mankind". In these moments she can only see 'stiffened bodies' of the colliers and the 'terrible corruption' around her.

But by now she has travelled a long way in her voyage of the discovery of truth. The great voyage has educated her emotionally and spiritually. She realizes that the 'brittle corruption' of the world is not the reality. She sees a rainbow forming itself in the horizon.

And the rainbow stood on the earth. She knew that the sordid people who crept hard-scaled and separate on the face of the world's corruption were living still, that the rainbow was arched in their blood and would quiver to life in their spirit, that they would cast off their horny covering of disintegration, that new, clean, naked bodies would issue to a new generation, to a new growth, rising to the light and the wind and the clean rain of heaven. She saw in the rainbow the earth's new architecture, the old, brittle corruption of houses and factories swept away, the world built up in a living fabric of Truth, fitting to the over-arching heaven.34

33. Ibid., p. 494. 34. Ibid., p. 495.
The rainbow that Ursula sees towards the end of the novel is a symbol of hope. It is also a pointer to what is 'beyond'—the sacred mystery of life, that can be experienced but not explained. Only profound awareness of this sacred mystery and a permanent connection with it enables man to live a true life. It is what Ursula's story in The Rainbow suggests.

Lawrence wanted Women in Love to be regarded as a sequel to The Rainbow. He wrote so in his foreword to Women in Love. Though the two novels have separate plots, yet the assumption that the Ursula of The Rainbow is the same person as the Ursula of Women in Love will only be helpful in a better understanding of her character and the meaning of the two novels.

The spirit of Ursula of The Rainbow was 'troubled and uneasy', yet it was always alert. Her voyage of the discovery of life never came to a halt. She had her vision of reality and hope, but the voyage was still to go on. In the same manner Birkin's (Women in Love) spirit is troubled and uneasy. He finds that he is living in an age of dissolution. Men have lost their integrity which keeps life real. Life has become dreary. Men have become liars. They are insincere to their own lives. They shirk the responsibility of life. Life has become mere show. It has been reduced to a lie. He speaks about the falseness and foulness of life, in the society of his time, to his friend, Gerald, in the following words:

"We are such dreary liars. Our one idea is to lie to ourselves. We have an ideal of a perfect world, clean and straight and sufficient, so we cover the earth with foulness: life is a blotch of labour,"

like insects scurrying in filth, so that your collier

can have his pianoforte in his parlour, and you can have

a butler and a motor car in your up-to-date house, and

as a nation we can sport the Ritz, or the Empire, Gaby

Deslys and the Sunday newspapers. It is very dreary".36

The 'trouble' with Birkin is that he does not want to live a super-

ficial life. He wants a real life. But, what is a real life? He

asks Gerald: "Tell me, what do you live for?" And again: "What do

you think is the aim and object of your life, Gerald?" 37 He does

not expect any satisfactory answer from Gerald. In fact, he does

not know the answer himself. He appears to be confident of nothing.

But he talks tentatively about "the finality of love." 38 And he

means the finality of love with one woman. He suggests that the

'perfect union with a woman' may make 'the centre and core' of one's

life. For Gerald, on the other hand, life 'doesn't centre at all'.

According to him, life is 'artificially held together by the social

mechanism'. As the story develops, we find that his social role

is all that matters to Gerald. So he is fated from the very beginning

His thoroughly materialistic philosophy of life leads inevitably

to boredom. His very life becomes a boredom to him. He seeks

release from this boredom through distractions of power, work, and

sex. But these distractions fail him one by one. He had acquired

many ideas during his education and travels. He had some ideas

regarding the reform of industry as well. He gets his chance

of putting his ideas into practice. His father's coal-mines provide

a real adventure to him. He wants to extract coal from the earth very

36. D.H.Lawrence, Women in Love, Central Book Depot, Allahabad, 1944,
p.54. All future references to the novel are to this edition.

37. Ibid., p.55. 38. Ibid., p.56. 39. Ibid., p.57. 40. Ibid.
profitably and he succeeds in doing so. To him, the miners are mere instruments: "As a man as a knife: does it cut well? Nothing else mattered". Thus workers are reduced to robots by him. All work becomes efficient, but mechanical and joyless. Initially the workers resent the reforms, but gradually he subdues them to his mechanical will. Soon they accept "everything with some fatal satisfaction". He achieves his ideal. But now there is nothing to do. There is only a blank ahead. It appears that he has nothing to live for. He feels terribly lonely. He goes to Birkin for consolation; but it is like going to Church without any faith. He needs someone desperately to relieve him of his gloom. In Gudrun he has already recognized a match for himself. In fact, both of them have recognized a mysterious affinity between them. After the death of his father, Gerald's loneliness becomes unbearable and he goes to Gudrun's house, in the dead of night, to get relief. The sexual encounter has been described in the following words:

"He had come for vindication. She let him hold her in his arms, clasp her close against him. He found in her infinite relief. Into her he poured all his pent-up darkness and corrosive death, and he was whole again. It was wonderful, marvellous, it was a miracle. This was the ever recurrent miracle of his life, at the knowledge of which he was lost in an ecstasy of relief and wonder. And she, subject, received him as a vessel filled with his bitter potion of death. She had no power at this crisis to resist. The terrible frictional violence of death filled her, and she received it in an ecstasy of subjection, in throes of acute, violent sensation."

The wilful 'lover' steals into the house of his 'beloved' during night to relieve himself of his loneliness and depression. The beloved has no 'power' at this moment of crisis in his life

41. Ibid., p.232. 42. Ibid., p.240. 43. Ibid., p.361.
to 'resist' him. She submits to him and he is relieved. But such relief could only be temporary. Since Gudrun too is a will-dominated creature, the fight for supremacy ensues between the 'lovers'. Both of them know that it will be the fight to the finish. One of the two has to triumph over the other and subjugate the other's will to his or her own.

Gerald just cannot yield. He is incapable of relaxing his will. His leaving Gudrun alone would mean a sort of defeat for him which he can never accept. He would destroy her than be denied. This battle of wills, however, results ultimately in the annihilation of Gerald himself. The will to live of this creature of will breaks down. He dies in 'cold', 'white' snow. But he does not come to terms with death even at the moment of dying, as he had never come to terms with life when he was alive. The pure instrumentality of the human individual had been all that mattered to him. For him, a human being had been like any other machine. And he faces his death as if it is 'cold' mechanical murder:

"Yet why be afraid? It was bound to happen. To be murdered! He looked round in terror at the snow, the rooking, pale, shadowy slopes of the upper world. He was bound to be murdered, he could see it. This was the moment when death was uplifted and there was no escape.

Lord Jesus, was it then bound to be — Lord Jesus! He could feel the blow descending, he knew he was murdered. Vaguely wandering forward, his hands lifted as if to feel what would happen, he was waiting for the moment when he would stop, when it would cease. It was not over yet.

He had come to the hollowed basin of snow, surrounded by sheer slopes and precipices, out of which rose a track that brought one to the top of the mountain. But he wandered unconsciously, till he slipped and fell down, and as he fell something broke in his soul, and immediately he went to sleep."44

It is not an affirmation and not a prayer. It is mechanical break-

down of will to live.

Birkin's affirmation of life makes him seek the 'centre of his life'. He wants to live and he says, "I want to love". But he wants neither romantic love nor 'Christian love'. By love he means a sincerer relationship between fulfilled individuals. He seeks the way of freedom through love. He believes that such love could be the 'centre' of one's life. However, his own path of love is full of snares. He is tempted towards the cult of the purely sensual, 'mindless' experiences. This mindless sensuality is symbolised by the West African Statuette for which he feels great fascination. It appears to him to convey 'a complete truth'. But this attraction towards the utterly sensual culture, which he sometimes calls 'pure culture in sensation', is not permanent with Birkin. He somehow transcends this state of his being. On a later reflection on the African statuette that he had seen at Haliday's flat, he associates it with 'mystic knowledge in disintegration and dissolution'. He rejects the 'inverted culture', represented by these Statuettes, which he calls the process of submergence in dark sensuality that destroys life. He also rejects the North-European 'white', 'cold' sensuality as seen in the case of Gerald who indulges in self-obliteration through extreme sensations with Gudrun.

Suddenly he found himself face to face with a situation. It was as simple as this: fatally simple. On the one hand, he knew that he did not want a further sensual experience—something deeper, darker, than ordinary life could give. He remembered the African fetish he had seen at Haliday's so often. There came back to him one, a statuette about two feet high, tall, slim, elegant figure from West Africa, in dark wood, glossy and suave. It was a woman with hair dressed high, like a melon-shaped dome. He remembered her vividly: she was one of his soul's intimates. Her body was long and elegant, her face was crushed tiny like a beetle's, she had rows of round heavy collars, like a column of quoits, on her neck. He remembered her: her astonishing cultured elegance, her diminished beetle face, the astounding long elegant body, on short, ugly legs, with such protuberant buttocks, so weighty and unexpected below her slim
long loins. She knew what he himself did not know. She had thousands of years of purely sensual, purely unspiritual knowledge behind her. It must have been thousands of years since her race had died mystically: that is, since the relation between the senses and the outspoken mind had broken, leaving the experience all in one sort, mystically sensual. Thousands of years ago, that which was imminent in himself must have taken place in these Africans: the goodness, the holiness, the desire of creation and productive happiness must have lapsed, leaving the single impulse for knowledge in one sort, mindless progressive knowledge through the senses; knowledge arrested and ending in the senses, mystic knowledge in disintegration and dissolution, knowledge such as the beetles have, which live purely within the world of corruption and cold dissolution. This was why her face looked like a beetle's: this was why the Egyptians worshipped the ball-rolling scarab: because of the principle of knowledge in dissolution and corruption.

There is a long way we can travel, after the death-break: after that point when the soul in intense suffering breaks, breaks away from its organic hold like a leaf that falls. We fall from the connection with life and hope, we lapse from pure integral being, from creation and liberty, and we fall into the long, long African process of purely sensual understanding, knowledge in the mystery of dissolution.

He realised now that this is a long process—thousands of years it takes after the death of the creative spirit. He realised that there were great mysteries to be unsealed, sensual, mindless, dreadful mysteries, far beyond the phallic cult. How far, in their inverted culture had these West Africans gone beyond phallic knowledge? Very, very far. Birkin recalled again the female figure: the elongated, long, long body, the curious unexpected heavy buttocks, the long imprisoned neck, the face with the features like a beetle's. This was far beyond any phallic knowledge, sensual, subtle realities far beyond the scope of phallic investigation.

There remained this way, this awful African process to be fulfilled. It would be done differently by the white races. The white races, having the arctic north behind them, the vast abstraction of ice and snow, would fulfill a mystery of ice-destructive knowledge, snow-abstract annihilation. Whereas the West Africans, controlled by the burning death-abstraction of the Sahara, had been fulfilled in sun-destruction, the putrescent mystery of sun-rays.

Was this then all that remained? Was there left now nothing but to break off from the happy creative being, was the time up? Is our day of creative life finished? Does there remain to us only the strange, the awful afterwards of the knowledge in dissolution, the African knowledge, but different in us, who are blond and blue-eyed from the north?
Birkin thought of Gerald. He was one of these strange white wonderful demons from the north, fulfilled in the destructive frost mystery. And was he fated to pass away in this knowledge, this one process of frost-knowledge, death by perfect cold? Was he a messenger, an omen of the universal dissolution into whiteness and snow?  

Birkin rejects purely mindless, purely sensual, existence. He is, in fact, frightened by it. He abhors the unintegrated sensuality. He hates the sensuality which is not connected with the rest of the being. In the novel the sexual relationship of Gerald and Gudrun represents unintegrated sensuality. Gerald's death 'by perfect cold' is the climax of a process of disintegration that is indicated in the novel all along.

Birkin thinks of another way of life. This "other way" recognizes the lonely state of the "free and proud singleness" of the individual. In other words, it recognizes the paramountcy of the individual soul. Yet it accepts the individual's "obligation of the permanent connection with others". Birkin calls it the way of freedom in love. Love leads to the fulfilment of the individual self. But love in itself is not the end of life. Birkin wants fulfilment in his life through a permanent relationship of love with Ursula. He wants to make a 'definite pledge' with her. He makes the marriage proposal to her, but it is not immediately accepted. Ursula doubts the sincerity of his love as he believes in the supremacy of the individual soul over everything else. She, on the other hand, believes that love is more important than the individual. To her, love is everything.

She was prepared to fight him for it. For she believed in an absolute surrender to love. She believed that love far surpassed the individual.

45. *Women in Love*, pp. 263-265. 46. Ibid., p.263. 47. Ibid. 48. Ibid.
He said the individual was more than love, or than any relationship. For him, the bright, single soul accepted love as one of its conditions, a condition of its own equilibrium. She believed that love was everything. Man must render himself up to her. Let him be her man utterly, and she in return would be his humble slave whether she wanted it or not. 49

Ursula's concept of love is not acceptable to Birkin. Such love, he thinks, is tainted by self-consciousness and possessiveness. He is frustrated. He is overcome by a mood of casualness and drift. But this mood is temporary. His essential self does not allow him to continue with this mood for long. He tries to win Ursula over to his own position, but fails to convince her. She criticizes him vehemently. She tells him that he is merely a clever person without any sincerity of feeling and purpose. She suspects that by 'freedom' Birkin means licence in sex life: "I tell you it's dirt, dirt, and nothing but dirt. And it's dirt you want, you crave for it". She suspects that it is a case of moral perversity masquerading as spirituality. He thinks her to be 'horrible'. He sometimes doubts the reality of his own position. Nevertheless, he is open and spiritually alert. Ursula too has, by now, come a long way in her quest of real life. One day they go for an outing together. During the outing, they have a bout of argumentation and quarrelling. However, they make up soon and drive together to a Cathedral. At the Cathedral they experience a strange feeling for each other. The experience has been described by the narrator in the following passage:

She looked at him. He seemed still so separate. New eyes were opened in her soul. She saw a strange creature from another world, in him. It was as if she were enchanted, and everything was metamorphosed. She recalled again the old magic of the Book of Genesis, where the sons of God saw

49. Ibid., p.276. 50. Ibid., p.321.
the daughters of men, that they were fair. And he was one of these, one of these strange creatures from the beyond, looking down at her and seeing she was fair.

He stood on the hearth-rug looking at her, at her face that was upturned exactly like a flower, a fresh luminous flower, glittering faintly as if there were no speech in the world, save the silent delight of flowers in each other. Smilingly they delighted in each other's presence, pure presence, not to be thought of, even known. But his eyes had a faintly ironical contraction.

And she was drawn to him strangely, as in a spell. Kneeling on the hearth-rug before him, she put her arms round his loins and put her face against his thighs. Riches! Riches! She was overwhelmed with a sense of a heavenly order of riches.

"We love each other," she said in delight.
"More than that," he answered, looking down at her with his glimmering easy face.

Unconsciously, with her sensitive finger-tips, she was tracing the back of his thighs, following some mysterious life flow there. She had discovered something, something more than wonderful, more wonderful than life itself. It was the strange mystery of his life-motion, there at the back of the thighs, down the flanks. It was a strange reality of his being, the very stuff of being, there in the straight downflow of the thighs. It was here she discovered him one of the sons of God such as were in the beginning of the world, not a man, something other, something more.

This was release at last. She had had lovers, she had known passion. But this was neither love nor passion. It was the daughters of men coming back to the sons of God, the strange inhuman sons of God who are in the beginning.

It was all achieved, for her. She had found one of the Sons of God from the beginning, and she had found one of the first most luminous daughters of men.

She traced with her hands the line of his loins and thighs, at the back, and a living fire ran through her, from him, darkly. It was a dark flood of electric passion she released from him, drew into herself. She had established a rich new circuit, a new current of passion of electric energy between the two of them, released from the darkest poles of the body and established in perfect circuit. It was a dark fire of electricity that rushed from him to her, and flooded them both with rich peace, satisfaction.
"My love", she cried, lifting her face to him, her eyes, her mouth open in transport.

"My love", he answered, bending and kissing her, always kissing her.

She closed her hands over the full, rounded body of his loins, as he stooped over her. She seemed to faint beneath, and he seemed to faint, stooping over her. It was a perfect passing away for both of them, and at the same time the most intolerable accession into being, the marvellous fulness of immediate gratification, overwhelming, outflowing from the source of the deepest life-force, the darkest, deepest, strangest life source of the human body, at the back and base of the loins.

After a lapse of stillness, after the rivers of strange dark fluid richness had passed over her, flooding, carrying away her mind and flooding down her spine and down her knees, past her feet, a strange flood, sweeping away everything and leaving her an essential new being, she was left quite free, she was free, in complete ease, her complete self. So she rose, stilly and blearly, smiling at him, she stood before her, glistering, so awfully real, that her heart almost stopped beating. She stood there in his strange, whole body, that had its marvellous fountains, like the bodies of the sons of God who were in the beginning. There were strange fountains of his body, more mysterious and potent than any she had imagined or known, more satisfying, oh, finally, mystically, physically satisfying. She had thought there was no source deeper than the phallic source. And now behold, from the smitten rock of the man's body, from the strange marvellous flanks and thighs, deeper, further in mystery than the phallic source, came the floods of ineffable darkness and ineffable riches.51

(Emphasis mine)

The above passage has baffled many critics. It has even provoked very hostile criticism of Lawrence. Middleton Murry describes it as "cruelest kind of sexuality" and "subhuman and bestial, a thing that our forefathers had rejected when they began to rise from the slime".52 Murry regards this passage as unquotable. For him, it is "utterly unintelligible". Jeffery Meyers interprets the scene as anal inter-
course. This "anal intercourse", according to Jaffery Meyers, "sublimates Birkin's homosexual desires by satisfying them in an alternative and even more perverse way". Meyers further observes that Birkin "merely substitutes anal marriage for homosexual love". Reacting to the passage quoted above and other passages in the novel, G. Wilson Knight observes that the novel describes "in imaginative terms certain sexual encounters of an abnormal kind". Even sympathetic critics of Lawrence fail to appreciate this passage which is crucial to the understanding of the whole novel. Frank Kermode regards the whole Chapter "Excursus", in which this passage occurs, a total failure. Keith Sagar, in his book, The Art of D.H.Lawrence, praises the flower imagery before and after this scene in the chapter. This crucial scene, he ignores totally.

The fact, however, is that the passage does not describe either anal intercourse or even sexual intercourse in the normal way. The author, here, tries to describe how Ursula and Birkin have the realization of their true desire for each other. From their deepest selves they get the message that their desire for each other is true. True desire is the urge of the soul and, therefore, a means of contact with the soul itself. Thus the passage describes the spiritual experience


55. Ibid. 56. Ibid.


of a man and a woman who are seriously thinking of getting married and establishing a permanent and unbreakable connection with each other. This spiritual experience finally confirms the authenticity of their relationship. Birkin had always been "damned and doomed to the old effort at serious living". For him serious living does not mean living in accordance with the so-called 'ethical' or 'moral' norms laid down by society or custom or tradition. It means living in tune with his deepest self. His spirit had been 'troubled' and 'uneasy', yet it had been always 'alert' and subtly expectant. He had had his 'temptations' to 'let go' and follow the course of drift, yet his essential self had always asserted. Now after much suffering and struggle his fate and effort become identical. And so is the case with Ursula. Immediately before the passage quoted above we are told that Birkin and Ursula reach Southwell Minister—the Cathedral that Ursula's father had loved. The life and career of Ursula Brangwen of The Rainbow is thus recalled. It had been a voyage of the discovery of the truth of life. It had been the career of a person whose spirit was troubled and uneasy, but who never gave up her moral effort. After the confirmation of the genuineness of their desire for each other, they drive together to the Sherwood Forest, where they stop for the night in their car. It is here that they have a real sexual intercourse.

He extinguished the lamps at once, and it was pure night, with shadows of trees like realities of other, nightly being. He threw a rug on to the broken, and they sat in stillness and mindless silence. There were faint sounds from the wood, but no disturbance, no possible disturbance, the world was under a strange ban, a new mystery had supervened. They threw off their clothes,

and he gathered her to him, and found her, found the pure lambent reality of her forever invisible flesh. Quenched, inhuman, his fingers upon her unveiled nudity were the fingers of silence upon silence, the body of mysterious night upon the body of mysterious night, the night masculine and feminine, never to be seen with the eye, or known with the mind, only known as a palpable revelation of living otherness.

She had her desire of him, she touched, she received the maximum of unspeakable communication in touch, dark, subtle, positively silent, a magnificent gift and give again, a perfect acceptance and yielding, a mystery, the reality of that which can never be known, vital, sensual reality that can never be transmuted into mind content, but remains outside, living body of darkness and silence and subtlety, the mystic body of reality. She had her desire fulfilled. He had his desire fulfilled, for she was to him what he was to her, the immemorial magnificence of mystic, palpable, real otherness.]

And this sexual union gives them access to the 'living otherness' of life. This "living otherness" is the mysterious source of primal power of life which has been, many times, referred to as 'the mystery' 'the unknown reality' etc. in the novel (Women in Love) and the earlier novel The Rainbow.

It may be surprising and even shocking for many that an experience of divine nature could in any way be associated with sex. However a reference to the 'Tantra' of Hinduism may be interesting in this context. Explaining the term 'Shaktikundalini', Swami Lakshmanjoo, a living saint of India, writes: "The term kundalini refers to Siva's power of emission (visargasakti) which, in as much as it is universal, is identical with selfhood (Ahanta) in its fullest expansion". He further observes:

The 'tantric' yogi also realizes this saktikundalini. He realizes it as the essence of desire (Kamatattva) through the contemplation of the power of desire (Kama kala) during the secret rite (caryakarna) at that moment of immersion (samvosa) which is the penetration (sanghatta) of siddha and yogini.

Swami Lakshmanjoo quotes Abhinaugupta (Tantraloka-3.146): "This phoneme 'emission' (Visarga) which is the phoneme 'ha' in the state of latency is termed 'Kamatattva' in the 'Kulagobhvaratantra'. The fullness of desire (Kama) is realized in penetration (Sanghatta)." In 'tantric' terminology, the secret act of love between the 'siddha' and the 'yogini' is called 'Mahamilapa'. The 'tantric' yogis attain the state of perfect equilibrium (sthitih) through the sex act (Mahamilapa). The realization of the 'Shaktikundalini' comes only in the state of perfect equilibrium (stithi).

The two lovers, Birkin and Ursula, who have realized their true desire for each other, experience the state of perfect equilibrium.

62. "Kundalini Vijnanarqhasya", Koshur Samachar, Vol. XIX, No. 12, Dec., (1981), p.5. The swami, however, warns: "None but those of the highest spiritual development, who are fully established in the recognition of their all inclusive identity (paripuranasvatma) are qualified for this secret rite".

63. Ibid., p.5.
through the act of love. In this state of perfect equilibrium, they

In — — Love Was Once A Little Boy, Lawrence writes:
"Desire is a living stream. If we gave free rein, or a free course, to our living flow of desire, we shouldn't go far wrong. It's quite different from giving a free rein to an itching, prurient imagination. That is our wiliness.

The living stream of sexual desire itself does not often, in any man, find its object; its confluent, the stream of desire in a woman into which it can flow. The two streams flow together, spontaneously, not often, in the life of any man or woman. Mostly men and women alike rush into a sort of prostitution, because our idiotic civilization has never learned to hold in reverence the true desire-stream. We force our desire from our ego; and this is deadly.

Desire itself is a pure thing, like sunshine, or fire, or rain. It is desire that makes the whole world living to me, keeps me in the flow connected. It is my flow of desire that makes me move as the birds and animals move through the sunshine and the night, in a kind of accomplished innocence, not shut outside of the natural ... paradise. —

Everything that exists, even a stone, has two sides of its nature. It fiercely maintains its own individuality, its own solidity. And it reaches forth from itself in the subtlest flow of desire.

It fiercely resists all intrudes, at the same time it sinks down in the curious weight, or flow, of that desire which we call gravitation, and imperceptibly, through the course of ages, it flows into delicate combination with the air and sun and rain.

At one time, men worshipped stones; symbolically, no doubt, because of their mysterious durability, their power of hardening, resistance, their strength of remaining unchanged. Yet even then, worshipping men did not rest till he had erected the stone into a pillar, a menhir, symbol of the eternal desire, as the phallic itself is but a symbol.

And we, men and woman, are the same as stones; the powerful resistance and cohesiveness of our individuality is countered by the mysterious flow of desire, from us and towards us.

It is the same with the worlds, the stars, the suns. All is alive, in its own degree. And the centrifugal force of spinning earth is the force of earth's individuality; and the centrifugal force is the force of desire. Earth's immense centrifugal energy, almost passion, balanced against her furious centrifugal force, holds her suspended between her moon and her sun, in a dynamic equilibrium.

So instead of the Greek: know thyself: we shall have to say to every man: 'Be Thyself! Be Desirable!' — and to every woman: 'Be Thyself! Be Desirable!'

Be Thyself! does not mean assert thy ego! It means be true to your own integrity, as man, as woman; let your heart stay open to receive the mysterious inflow of power from the unknown: know that the power comes to you from beyond, it is not generated by your own will; therefore, all the time, be watchful, and reverential towards the mysterious coming of power into you.

Earlier in the same essay, however, he warns: "But don't, dear, darling reader, when I say 'desire!', immediately conclude that I mean a jungleful of rampaging Don Juans and raping buck niggers. When I say that a woman should be eternally desirable, don't say that I mean every man should want to sleep with her, the instant he sets eyes on her." —Phoenix II, Unpublished, Uncollected and Other prose works by D.H. Lawrence, ed., Warren Roberts and Harry T. Moore, Holt, Rinehart, 1954, pp. 455-456.
realize the primal power of life which is also identical with the
Soul of man or woman or any other living being. Incidentally, Birkin
and Ursula perform the secret rite of the act of love in the dark-
ness of night in Sherwood Forest. This is in sharp contrast to
the sexual battle that is fought between Skrebensky and Ursula in
The Rainbow. The sexual encounter between Skrebensky and Ursula
takes place twice under the full moon, the goddess of self-
conscious and possessive love. Both of them are not only self-
conscious but also terribly conscious of each other's bodies.
In Women in Love, the bodies of Birkin and Ursula, at the time
of their sexual union, are the bodies of 'mysterious night',
'never to be seen with the eye, or known with the mind.' They
attain the state of perfect equilibrium which is known to Hindu
'tantrics' as 'sthiti'. The narrator has used the phrases like
'perfect acceptance', 'stillness and mindless silence', 'the
mystic body of reality', 'a perfect revelation of living other-
ness', 'living body of darkness', 'a mystery', 'the immemorial
magnificence of mystic, palpable, real otherness' to describe the
state in which this man and this woman realize the primal power
of life within them — the same primal power that is within all
created beings. This, in other words, is the state of self-
realization. Self-realization is attained in the state of perfect
equilibrium. In this state there is neither physical conscious-
ness nor mental consciousness. It is the state where the will
and the ego are not, where there is no 'Before' and 'After',
where there is only 'Now'. This state is known only to those who
have experienced it, and not to others. No words and phrases
can explain it. However, if anything in everyday experience could
explain it, then the metaphor of dreamless sleep could, perhaps, be used to do so. In dreamless sleep the mind is perfectly silent and still. In deep sleep there is no past and no future, no hopes and no fears. The dreamless sleep or deep sleep is not the state of 'sthiti', but it is the best metaphor that could be used to explain it. The self-realization can be attained only when the mind is completely silent and still. The self-realization can be had only in a state of 'perfect equilibrium' or 'sthiti'. The 'tantrics' hold the 'kundalini' identical with Selfhood, as it is also identical with the power of emission of the Cosmic Being. And the image they use for the 'kundalini' is the image of a coiled snake. The metaphor of dreamless sleep and the image of the coiled snake has been used by Lawrence too in his writings to convey the same meanings. In The Plumed Serpent, Hamon sings:

"The great snake coils and uncoils the plasma of his fold, and stars appear, and voids fade out. It is no more than the changing and easing of the plasma.

"I am, says his sleep.

"As a man in deep sleep knows not, but is, so is the snake of the coiled cosmos, wearing its plasma.

"As a man in deep sleep has no tomorrow, no yesterday, nor today, but only is, so is the limpid, far-reaching snake of the eternal Cosmos, Now, and forever Now.

"Now, and only Now, and forever Now.

"But dreams arise and fade in the sleep of the Snake.

"And worlds arise as dreams, and are gone as dreams.

"And man is a dream in the sleep of the Snake.

"And only the sleep that is dreamless breathes I am.

"In the dreamless Now, I am.

"Dreams arise as they must arise, and man is a dream arisen."
"But the dreamless slumber of the Snake is the plasm of a man, of his body, his soul, and his spirit at one.

"And the perfect sleep of the Snake _I Am_ is the plasm of a man who is whole.

"When the plasm of the body, and the plasm of the soul, and the plasm of the spirit are at one, in the Snake _I Am_."

The literal meaning of 'kundalini' is the coil of a snake or a coiled Snake. It is interesting to note that Lawrence also has used the image of the coiled-snake while referring to the integral self. According to the Hindu 'Tantra', the seat of the 'kundalini', in terms of the human body, is at the back and base of the loins. While describing the state of bliss that Birkin and Ursula attain in each other's embrace, the narrator refers to their deep awareness of "the source of the deepest life-force, the darkest, deepest, strangest life-source of the human body, at the back and base of the loins". This "source of the deepest life-force, the darkest, deepest, strange life-source of the human body, at the back and base of the loins" is, indeed, what is known as the 'kundalini' to the Hindu 'trāntics'.

Birkin and Ursula get married soon. The narrator leaves the read in no doubt that it is true marriage of a man and a woman — the marriage that results in resurrection for both of them. Birkin and Ursula understand that they have been made for each other, not because they find similarity of temperament or affinity of ideas between them, but because Birkin becomes aware, deep within himself, that Ursula is his true mate and 'knows' himself to be fit to unite with her, and Ursula too, through the mirror of her soul, recognises in Birkin the man fit to be her mate. In their union they transcend their old existences. They are now a new man and a new woman. In fact, his being and her being are consummated into a 'new oneness' transcending the duality o

66. _Women in Love_, p.329  
67. Ibid., p.388
by allowing herself to be fascinated by a dark little Australian named Graham. Miss Frost views Graham as a man of 'dark' nature and, therefore, unworthy of trust. However, Alvina's fascination for Graham is not love as Miss Frost or anyone else in Woodhouse knows it; it is something primitive. It is pure sensuality. Alvina Houghton's insurrection is, as has been rightly observed by Keith Sagar, against the social being. She revolts against her own view of herself and also against her social self. But, what is her "own real self"? What happens when high-mindedness in her gives way to sensuality?

The mighty question arises upon us, what is one's own real self? It certainly is not what we think we are and ought to be. Alvina had been bred to think of herself as a delicate, tender, chaste creature with unselfish inclinations and a pure, "high" mind. But high-mindedness had really come to an end with James Houghton, had really reached the point, not only of pathetic, but of dry and anti-human, repulsive quixotry. In Alvina high-mindedness was already stretched beyond the breaking point. Being a woman of some flexibility of temper, wrought through generations to a fine, pliant, hardness, she flew back. She went right back on high-mindedness. Did she thereby betray it?

We think not. If we turn over the head of the penny and look at the tail, we don't thereby deny or betray the head. We do not adjust it to its own complement. And so with high-mindedness. It is but one side of the medal — the crowned reverse. On the obverse the three legs still go kicking the soft-footed spin of the universe, the dolphin flirts and the crab leers.

So Alvina spun her medal, and her medal came down tales. Heads or tails? Heads for generations. Then tails. See the poetic justice. 70

Nature had been for too long suppressed in men and women of the race and the society to which Alvina belonged. Now it wanted to set the

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balance right. Alvina, being an extraordinary girl, is chosen by 'Nature' to become the vehicle of change. Extraordinary people have extraordinary fates. But, extraordinary careers are often perilous. The hidden hope of fulfilment with Brahm comes to nothing when he goes away to his own country, Australia. Alvina is too 'deep' for the young men of Woodhouse, and so they do not like her. She too is not interested in these 'common' young men. She is not interested in 'mere marriage'. What she wants is 'a profound and dangerous inter-relationship' with a man. For a long time she does not meet such a man. She is already about twenty-eight years old. Under the circumstances an ordinary girl would have got married to any man of her class or taken up a job in order to become, at least, economically independent. But Alvina does neither. She does not abandon the hope of 'finding love, a man' one day. And at last the man of her soul's desire does 'arrive'. She meets Cicio, a young Italian, who works with Misha-Rea-Tavara Troupe which comes to give performances at the Pleasure Palace run by her father, James Houghton. Alvina knows that Cicio is socially inferior to her and the very opposite of what in Woodhouse may be called a high-minded person. But she is attracted by the 'dark, mysterious glamour', which she perceives on the face of this young man. This 'dark stranger seems to her 'to be the only passionately good-natured man she had ever seen'. Somewhere inside her she feels that she can trust him. Mrs. Duke calls Alvina attavistic for responding to Cicio whom she regards as mere animal. Alvina too, sometimes, thinks that Cicio may after all be 'just stupid and bestial'. But he
appeals to something deep inside her which is "beyond the usual self". "The clean modelling of his dark, other-world face", that sends "the deep spasm across her", decides her. Deep inside her she 'knows' that Cicio is not just an animal, he is 'something else'. He has a strange "demon quality". He possesses the "sensual secrets" by means of which he exercises a "strange mesmeric power over her". She does not resist him. She submits to him. They marry and he takes her to Califano, his native village in Italy. The primitive life around her in Califano fascinates her. She feels as if she has "gone beyond the world into the pre-world". She feels as if she is lost in the pagan world of the past. The "terrific beauty" of the place enraptures her. But she is also frightened. She feels that it is "impossible for her to become one with it altogether". She wants Cicio to take her to England or to America. But Cicio is called up to join the army, as Italy had entered the war. He promises her that he will come back and then they will together go to America or any other place. The novel ends there on a rather tragic note. The heroine is not given the opportunity to adjust her "high-mindedness" to her "sensuality". The novelist ends Alvina's story when her quest for fulfilment has reached the stage of 'suspense' (The last chapter of the novel is appropriately entitled "Suspense"). The suspense is not resolved. Miss Pinnagar had called Alvina 'a lost girl' when she had noticed that she (Alvina) had become intimate with Cicio. Towards the end of the novel Alvina too feels that she is lost in an alien land. The heroine of 'Insurrection' becomes a 'lost girl'. One tends to agree with the following observation of Anthony West regarding the novel:

76. Ibid., p. 146. 77. Ibid., p. 185. 78. Ibid., p. 330.
"The worst of Lawrence's books, it is bad only relatively. There are no hints that she (Alvina) will ever find a way out, and there is no suggestion that physical fulfilment is enough to withstand the bare rock and the frozen water. The book is simply sawn off when it has reached the length of a novel, it reaches no conclusion: Alvina really is a Lost girl."

The suppression of the Rainbow in 1915 and the difficulties that Lawrence had experienced with the publication of Women in Love had made him more 'wise'. He wanted The Lost Girl to be "quite unexceptionable, as far as the censor is concerned", so that it could be easily published and not suppressed after its publication. As a result, the full length novel, which he had started as a pot-boiler but developed into a serious work, finally remained only half-a-novel as far as its theme is concerned.

Lawrence has used "the ship" as a metaphor to describe marriage in which the 'authority' has been assigned to man and the 'obeidence' to woman. Marriage is neither a matter of mere social convenience, nor a means of mere sensual gratification. The ship of marriage must carry the man and the woman to the ultimate destiny of life — the fulfilment and the realization of the Self. Marriage is a matter of the Soul. The decision of a woman to marry and submit willingly to a man must be the decision of her soul. In Kangaroo Somers tells Harriet that in a marriage the man is the lord and master of the woman.

You can't have two masters to one ship. And if it is a ship: that is, if it has a voyage to sail, a port to make, even a far direction to take, into the unknown, then a master it must have. Harriet said it wasn't a ship, it was a houseboat, and they could lie so perfectly here by the pacific for the rest of time — or be towed away to some other lovely spot to house in. She could imagine no fairer existence. It was a houseboat.

But he with his, no, no, he almost drove her mad. The bark of their marriage was a ship that must sail into uncharted seas, and he must be the master, and she must be the crew, sworn on. She was to believe in his adventure and deliver herself over to it; she was to believe in his mystic vision of a land beyond this charted world, where new life rose again.81

(Emphasis mine)

But, a marriage is a true marriage only when the woman feels it her bliss to belong to the man whom she has married. The lordship of man in marriage implies that a woman should enter into the bond of marrying with a man in whom she recognizes a higher soul. In other words, the man should have attained a higher level of self-realization than the woman. Neither sensual gratification nor the so-called love can always and for ever provide the wind to the sails of the ship of marriage. The story of Lottie and Aaron in Aaron's Rod illustrates this fact.82 In The Plumed Serpent, Kate, the twice widowed European woman, who has come to Mexico in quest of fulfillment, regards Teresa's relationship with her husband, Ramon, as a slave-master relationship. Once she asks Teresa why she is sacrificing herself at the alter of Ramon's love. Teresa tells her that there is something between herself and Ramon that is neither 'sacrifice' nor 'love'. What it is, she cannot explain. But the reader can understand that she is talking about soul-intimacy between herself and Ramon, even though she treats

82. See chapter III, pp. 140, 145.
him as her lord and master.

'I am sorry if I was rude', she said.
'No', said Kate. 'Apparently it is I who am wrong.'

'Yes, I think you are', said Teresa. 'You think there is only love. Love is only such a little bit.'

'And what is the rest?'

'How can I tell you if you do not know? — But do you think Ramon is no more to me than a lover?'

'A husband!' said Kate.

'Ah!' Teresa put her head aside with an odd impatience.

'Those little words! Those little words! for either a husband. — He is my life.'

'Surely it is better for one to live one's own life!'

'No! It is like sand. It is no good till it is given. I know.

I kept my own life for a long time. As you keep it longer, it dies. And I tried to give it to God. But I couldn't, quite. Then they told me, if I married Ramon and had my part in the quetzalcoatl heresy, my soul would be damned. — But something made me know it was not true. I even knew he needed my soul. — Ah, Senora — a subtle smile came on Teresa's pale face — 'I have lost my soul to Ramon. — What more can I say!' 33

Kate too realizes ultimately that in the final analysis love means the joy of submission. But, why should the woman submit to the man in marriage? Why should it not be the other way round? We find no direct answer to this question in Lawrence's novels. But, these novels do provide an indirect answer. The author sees man-woman relationship and sex as the expression of the joy of life. He sees it as creative and not merely procreative. He sees creation as joy and not merely something

functional. This 'joy' of creation is the result of the union of
the soul with Matter. In human life it gets expression in the union
of man with woman. In the drama of human life, man represents
soul and woman represents the Matter with all its latent powers, but
which come into play only when it comes into touch with the soul.
We find the author emphasizing the ascendency of the soul over Matter
in almost all the novels.

In light of what has been said above, we can, perhaps, better
understand what Lawrence means when he calls Lady Chatterley's Lover
a novel of the phallic consciousness:

As I say, it is a novel of the phallic Consciousness:
or the phallic Consciousness versus the mental-spiri-
tual Consciousness, and of course you know which side
I take. The versus is not my fault; there should be
no versus. The two things must be reconciled in us. 85

And, according to him, the phallic consciousness is "the source of
all real beauty, and all real gentleness". It is "not the cerebral
sex-consciousness, but something really deeper, and the root of
poetry, lived or sung." Perfect beauty (which, of course, includes
real gentleness) is, undoubtedly, the source of joy, which is the
aim of the union between a man and a woman. This joy is not just
pleasure or satisfaction. It is an experience of what Lawrence,

84. In the Sāṃkhya "Matter is often personified as a woman".
(See Hinduisn and Buddhism by Sir Charles Eliot, Vol.II,

85. S. and A. Brewster, D.H.Lawrence, Reminiscences and Correspondence
Cocker, 1931, p. 160.

86. The Collected Letters of D.H.Lawrence, Vol.II,(Ed.) Harry T.Moore,
p. 1946.

87. Ibid., p. 1947.
in his novels, calls 'the beyond', 'the unknown', and sometimes the 'Holy Ghost'. It is the experience of the primal power that is with each created being. It is the experience of the Self. Man perpetuates his race through the sexual act, but it is not its primary aim. The perpetuation of the species or the race for what? God created the Universe for what? God created the universe out of joy, and not for just getting obedience from men and women, animals and insects, the angels and the stars. The sexual act is essentially a creative act. The sexual act must carry the man and the woman beyond the farthest edge of "known feeling" and "being".

Am I here to deposit security, continuance of life in the flesh? Or is that only a minor function in me? Is it not merely a preservative measure, procreation? —

It is so arranged that the very act which carried us out into the unknown shall probably deposit seed for security to be left behind. But the act, called the sexual act, is not for the depositing of the seed. It is for leaping off into the unknown, as from a cliff's edge, like Sappho into the sea. **(Emphasis mine).**

Lawrence's novels, put in chronological order, form a complete 'book of life'. As these novels form a consistent whole — the quest for fulfilment being the common thread that runs through their pages — *Lady Chatterley's Lover* may be regarded as the concluding chapter of this book of life. It is not exploratory in nature in the sense in which his other novels are. The author describes the human situation in the modern world rather bluntly in the opening paragraph of the novel which begins with the words —"ours is essentially a tragic age". The 'what', 'how' and 'why' of this tragic age is adequately dealt with in the previous novels. As the true

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'summing up' chapter of the great 'book of life', Lady Chatterley's Lover refers briefly to the sad human situation in the modern world, and then points to the hope that may still be found in this tragic age. The hope that the novel points to is the simple, but real, relationship between man and woman.

Clifford Chatterley is the product of intellectualism, industrialism, machineism, and war. His paralysis — physical as well as spiritual — is the direct result of these factors. Clifford is wounded in the war. The lower half of his body is paralysed, and he knows that he can never have any sexual life. But, even before he was crippled in the war, he believed that "sex was merely an accident or an adjunct, one of the curious obsolete, organic processes which persisted in its own clumsiness, but was not really necessary". He had married Constance before he went to the war, and had one month's honeymoon with her, but even at that time "the sex part did not mean much to him". Connie had already had the sexual experience before getting married to Clifford. But, sex to her meant only a casual thing. The real thing in the relationship with a man was 'intimate' and 'passionate' talk. Love was only 'a minor accompaniment' to this talk. To her, the "impassioned interchange of talk" mattered 'supremely'. She believed that the freedom of a woman was "more wonderful than any sexual love".

The arguments, the discussions were the great thing; the love-making and connexion were only a sort of primitive reversion and a bit of an anti-climax. One was less in love with the boy afterwards, and a little inclined to hate him, as if he had trespassed on one's


90. Ibid. 91. Ibid., p. 7. 92. Ibid.
privacy and inner freedom. For, of course, being a
girl, one's whole dignity and meaning of life consisted
in the achievement of an absolute, a perfect, a pure and
noble freedom. What else did a girl's life mean? To 
shake off the old and sordid connexions and subjections.

So, initially Clifford's and Connie's outlook on love and life is
more or less the same.

As Clifford is physically wrecked, he needs her to assure himself
that he "existed at all". Connie knows that he won't mind if she is
sexually unfaithful to him. Only he must not 'see' anything.

She knew that he didn't mind whether she were demi-verge
or demi-monde, so long as he didn't absolutely know, and
wasn't made to see. What the eye doesn't see and the mind
doesn't know, doesn't exist.

Clifford is very much successful in the industrial field. For him,
the industry comes before the individual. He also writes stories
and soon becomes almost famous as a writer. He even earns some
money from his writings. His success as an Industrialist and as a
writer gives him satisfaction and his confidence in himself is
restored. Connie and Clifford live a life that is intimate, but
"utterly out of touch". The two years of Connie's life with
Clifford in Wragby has been described in the following words:

Connie and Clifford had now been nearly two years at
Wragby, living their vague life of absorption in
Clifford and his work. Their interests had never
closed to flow together over his work. They talked
and wrestled in the throes of composition, and felt
as if something were happening, really happening,
really in the void.

And thus far it was a life: in the void. For the
rest it was non-existence. -- no substance to her or
anything ... no touch, no contact!

Clifford's intellectual friends often visit him. Connie is amused
by the endless talk of these "highly mental gentlemen". It appears
that all life in these men is concentrated in their minds. Like

93. Ibid. 94. Ibid., p.17. 95. Ibid., p.19. 96. Ibid.
Clifford himself, they are capable of enjoying only mental life. They live the life of 'ideas'. Tommy Bikes, the wisest among them, admits himself that he is "only a mental lifer".

Gradually, Connie feels totally disconnected with real life. Clifford's hypocritical phrases like "our steadily-lived life" and "the habit of intimacy" cannot fill the void in her life.

Poor Connie! As the years drew on it was the fear of nothingness in her life that affected her. Clifford's mental life and hers gradually began to feel like nothingness. Their marriage, their integrated life based on a habit of intimacy, that he talked about: there were days when it all became utterly blank and nothing. It was words, just so many words. The only reality was nothingness, and over it a hypocrisy of words. 97

Clifford tells Connie that to have sex with a man in order to get pregnant was just like going to a dentist. The 'sex thing' itself was nothing. The important thing in life was "the slow building up of an integrated personality, through the years". One could have a love affair if it helped. One could have a child if it helped. But all these things must help in the building of "an integrated life". Connie thinks that Clifford is theoretically right. But, inside her she feels that "life may turn quite a new face on it all". 99

To kill her boredom, Connie has sex with Michaelis, a successful writer, who comes to visit her husband. Michaelis is a 'lonely bird', totally out of contact with his surroundings. He is a man with "a bitter, indifferent, stray-dog's soul". He has cultivated a sombre loneliness for himself. He is the sort of man who always shirks the responsibilities of "togetherness" in life. For him, love is momentary sexual affair. And the sexual act itself is an exercise of the mind. During his sexual intercourse.

97. Ibid., p.52. 98. Ibid., p.27. 99. Ibid. 1. Ibid., p.26.
with Connie he uses all his will power to keep himself "present in her."
For Connie too, sex is basically the affair of the mind. It is the
instrument for exercising power over the man. Since her early girlhood
she knew how to use sex to have power over her lover.

A woman could take a man without really giving
herself away. Certainly she could take him with-
out giving herself into his power, rather she
could use sex thing to have power over him.
For she only had to hold herself back in sexual
intercourse, and let him finish and expend himself
without herself coming to the crisis; and then she
could prolong the connection and achieve her orgasm
and her crisis while he was merely her tool.2

Michaelis makes an insincere marriage proposal to her, which he
knows she will not accept. For once, she almost loves him for the
sexual gratification that she gets from him and might have decided
to divorce Clifford and marry him. But he senses it instinctively
and "brings down the whole show with a smash".3 He accuses her for
using him as a tool for her own gratification. He sneers at her for
keeping on for 'hours' after he had gone off. She is stunned by this
"unexpected piece of brutality". Thus "her whole sexual feeling for
him, or for any man, collapsed".4 However, the fact is that both of
them had been using each other merely as a tool. Neither of them
'knew' the bliss of 'giving' oneself in the union with the other.
But, from the frustrating experience with Michaelis Connie un-
knowingly learns that 'yielding' is essential to love, even to
sexual love. However, there is nothing new in Connie's life to
cling to. And she resigns herself to the "nothingness" of life:
"There was nothing now but this empty treadmill of what Clifford

2. Ibid., p.2. 3. Ibid., p.57. 4. Ibid., p.66. 5. Ibid., p.57.
called the interrelated life, the long living together of two people, who are in the habit of being in the same house with one another.

Yet, she possesses a desire to have the experience of having a baby of her own. But life has already taught her to 'wait' and not to force things:

Nevertheless, Connie had the child at the back of her mind. Wait! Wait! she would sift the generations of men through her scale, and see if she couldn't find one who would do. 'Go ye into the streets and byways of Jerusalem, and see if ye can find a man!' -- Wait! She was in no hurry about the child. That was her own private affair, and the one point on which, in her queer, feminine way, she was serious to the bottom of her soul. She was not going to risk any chance up here, not she! -- It was not a question of love, it was a question of a man, why, one might even rather hate him, personally. Yet if he was the man, what would one's personal hate matter? This business concerned another part of oneself?

(Emphasis mine)

She has now learnt to subordinate her stubborn mind to something deeper — her soul. It is with this psychological transformation that Connie starts going often to the Wragby wood. The gamekeeper, Mellors, who lives in the wood like a hermit, tries to avoid her as far as possible. He does not like the intrusion into his privacy, especially by a woman. Like Annable of The White Peacock, he seems to prefer 'Nature' to human society. Like Annable, again, he has had bitter experience with women. But, unlike Annable, his bitter experiences with modern society in general and women in particular had not turned him into an outright hater of womanhood. There is enough human warmth in him to forget his past, for a while. When Connie Chatterley holds a newly hatched chick in her hands, he notices a tear falling from her eye on to her wrist. Mellors is touched by the sad

of the woman. He feels that there is something "so mute and forlorn about her"; and he is full of compassion for her. This 'compassion' in Mellor's heart manifests itself in sexual desire for Connie:

And he stood up, and stood away, moving to the other coop. For suddenly he was aware of the old flame shooting and leaping up in his loins, that he had hoped was quiescent for ever. He fought against it, turning his back to her. But it leapt, and leapt downwards, circling in his knees.

He turned again to look at her. She was kneeling and holding her two hands slowly forward, blindly, so that the chicken should run in to the mother-hen again. And there was something so mute and forlorn in her, compassion flamed in his bowels for her.

Without knowing, he came quickly towards her and crouched beside her again, taking the chick from her hands, because she was afraid of the hen, and putting it back in the coop. At the back of his loins the fire suddenly darted stronger.

He glanced apprehensively at her. Her face was averted, and she was crying blindly, in the anguish of her generation's forlornness. His heart melted suddenly, like a drop of fire, and he put out his hand and laid his fingers on her knee. 8

During the sexual intercourse that follows, she responds to him only in a passive manner. Yet she feels that it had given her peace.

Mellor realizes that he had once again accepted the responsibility of life. And he tells Connie so:

'I thought I'd done with it all. Now I've begun again'.

'Begun what?'

'Life.'

'Life!' she re-echoed, with a queer thrill.

'It's life', he said. 'There's no keeping clear.

And if you do keep clear you might almost as well die. So if I've got to be broken, I have'. 9

Mellor equates 'giving' himself to a woman in sexual union with 'accepting' life itself with all its responsibilities. Connie too

8. Ibid., pp. 119-120. 9. Ibid., p.122.
asks herself: "Why was this necessary? Why had it lifted a great cloud from her and given her peace? Was it real? Was it real?" A modern woman as she is, she still must know 'it' with her brain — the life that 'natural' men and 'natural' women live and need not 'know'. Nevertheless, her resurrection into life has already begun. She has resigned her will to the forces of life:

Her tormented modern-women's brain still had no rest. Was it real? And she knew, if she gave herself to the man, it was real. But if she kept herself for herself, it was nothing. She was old; millions of years old, she felt. And at last, she could bear the burden of herself no more. She was to be had for the taking. To be had for the taking.

The repetition of the phrase "to be had for the taking" expresses a fundamental change in Connie's psyche — as Julian Moynahan aptly puts it: "This phrase, so often employed cynically, expresses here a change which is in the final analysis deeply spiritual and even religious in implication. A lady yields her favours to a surly gamekeeper; a woman yields up herself to life and is saved. This is an equation the novel as a whole insists upon and which Lawrence's art attempts to sustain. The common experience becomes charged with the most extraordinary significance and the highest value life holds".

2. Ibid., p. 121.
11. Ibid.


American Usage for the word 'favour'.
Gradually Mellors and Connie get into touch with life through tender contact with each other. Connie comes to meet Mellors often in the wood, as at her home, in Wragby. Mrs. Bolton has almost replaced her as Clifford's permanent companion. Sex, for her, is no longer an instrument to be used to have power over someone. It is, on the other hand, the means of closest contact with life through the closest contact with a man. It is a means of surrender to the forces of life and a means of renewal and rebirth:

And she felt him like a flame of desire, yet tender, and she felt herself melting in the flame. She let herself go. She felt his penis risen against her with silent blazing force and assertion and she let herself go to him. She yielded with a quiver that was like death, she went all open to him. And oh, if he were not tender to her now, how cruel, for she was all open to him and helpless!

She quivered again at the potent inexorable entry inside her, so strange and terrible. It might come with the thrust of a sword in her softly-opened body, and that would be death. She clung in a sudden anguish of terror. But it came with a strange slow thrust of peace, the dark thrust of peace and a ponderous, primordial tenderness, such as made the world in the beginning. And her terror subsided in her breast, her breast dared to be gone in peace, she held nothing. She dared to let go everything, all herself, and be gone in the flood. --- till suddenly, in a soft, shuddering convulsion, the quick of all her plasma was touched, she knew herself touched, the consummation was upon her, and she was gone. She was done, she was not, and she was born, a woman. 13

(Emphasis mine)

However, she is still conscious that she had at last 'yielded'; she is conscious of this 'lovely' experience with a man; she is conscious of her individual self as a partner in the sexual act. She now thinks of Mellor's relationship with her as "the sons of god with

the daughters of men." But soon all thought is swept away by the powerful surge of life:

And this time his being within her was all soft and iridescent, purely soft and iridescent, such as no consciousness could seize. Her whole self quivered unconscious and alive, like plasm. She could not know what it was, she could not remember what it had been. Only that it had been more lovely than anything ever could be, only that. And afterwards she was utterly still, utterly unknowing; she was not aware for how long, and he was still with her, in an unfathomable silence along with her. And of this, they would never speak. 14

In their sexual union Connie and Mellors, like Ursula and Birkin in Woman in Love, transcend into a new oneness where everything is silent; all is perfect and one. Temporarily, at least, they are fused into 'the perfect one', wherein there is the 'perfect silence of bliss'. 15

15. See this Chapter, pp. 105-112.

Julian Bynorth has made an interesting observation regarding the sexual experience of Mellors and Connie:

"The insentient outer world denies the primary value of the body's physical life and aspires toward an ideal condition of disembodiment, but in the sex act, where this value is asserted, naked contact between the physical man and woman is more important than anything else. Furthermore, the closest possible contact comes in sexual intercourse, an experience defined by the novel as a fusion into a temporary unity of man with woman, woman with man, the two together with the secret heart of life. The possibility of a rebirth of wholesome feeling is grounded in the sex act because only at the moment of orgasm does the individual escape his self-obsession into identification with the "living Universe". Then he or she returns from his blind mystical illumination — one which is not separable from the powerful sexual feelings which momentarily overwhelm ordinary awareness — he discovers himself to be genuine, as if he had looked into the face of God himself. This is mysticism. I do not assume in making use of the term that such experience is "unreal", only that, like more orthodox varieties of the experience, it will never yield up its meaning to the non-mystic. (P.G. Lawrence: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Mark Spilka, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1963, p.57.)"
uniting him to a "tender, aware woman". And the narrator/author comments: "And as his seed sprang in her, his soul sprang towards her too, in the creative act that is far more than procreative" (Emphasis mine). They live separately and wait patiently to get legally married. Mellor's faith, as Lawrence's own, in man-woman relationship and the creative mystery of "the Unknown" remains unshaken.

20. Ibid., p. 292.

21. Ibid.