CHAPTER II:

DIZZY SEARCH:

1) The Rainbow
2) Women in Love
3) Aaron's Dog
"But there is also consistent movement in his writing from naturalism to symbol, from actuality to myth." 1

The period of The Rainbow, Women in Love and Aaron's Rod is the period when Lawrence moves from naturalism to symbol, from writing biographical actuality to a strange blend of fact and imaginative dialectic. This transition is both strenuous and dizzy. Dr. Arnold Kettle's observations are very relevant to Lawrence's novels of this period:

"In even the greatest writers of the age - Conrad, Lawrence, Joyce - the battle of the novelist with his raw materials tends to be an unequal one. Hence, for all the brilliance, the sense of strain, the lack of confident relaxation (the relaxation of a Fielding or a Tolstoy), the excessive intensity and the constant tendency to topple over the verge of sanity into mistiness or obscurity or hysteria." 2

However, there are certain advantages also. As Dr. Arnold Kettle himself says in regard to a section of The Rainbow (Chapter III):

"In its sense of dialectical nature of love and hatred, of contradictions and paradoxes, which are the very essence of human relationships, such a passage is comparable only to the finest metaphysical poetry." 3

For the sake of convenience, the thematic movement of the three novels may be briefly stated thus:

**The Rainbow:** Men and women relationship: the relationship of Tom and Lydia on the whole is satisfactory, but that of Anne and William is slightly complicated, because man requires a "purposive" (creative) activity beyond women.

**Women in Love:** Birkin also wants this "purposive" activity, through which he can attain a certain gem-like separateness. Gerald seems to have "purposive" activity, but it is willed, as against instinctive, and hence self-destructive. Thomas Critch and Hermione are sordid examples of living a "mental" life at the expense of the instinctive (blood) being. Roerke represents a corrupt

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3. Arnold Kettle: Op.Cit, p. 119; and
Cf. F.R. Leavis: D.H. Lawrence, 1957, p. 21 "They (Women in Love and The Rainbow) present a difficulty that is a measure of their profound originality."
nihilistic sensual life —
the (sensual) counterpart of the mental
life of Hermione and Thomas Critch: the
two facets of Dark Corruption.

Aaron's Rod: Aaron has a healthy life, but purposive
(creative) activity requires fuller play;
he finds the benevolent and man-to-man love
mode of Lily unsuitable.

The conclusions that Lawrence draws are recorded in
_Fantasia of the Unconscious_ (1922), which is largely a
clarification, classification and confirmation of the
erlier (1913) belief in the blood, or a plea for a mode
of instinctive life, hinted in his letter to Earnest Collings.
Just as _Sons and Lovers_ marks the end of one phase in
Lawrence's life, _Fantasia of the Unconscious_ marks the
completion of another phase. From the position of _Fantasia
of the Unconscious_, Lawrence made but little shifting. In
his last phase, Lawrence's writings indicate no new material
but a transition from the symbol to myth mode of expression.

II

_The Rainbow_ was begun soon after _Sons and Lovers_,
in the year 1912, and the seventh and final draft was ready
by March 1915. Lawrence was perfectly correct in his
apprehension that the novel would be most annoying to
readers.4

He admits that he is in a period of transition,\textsuperscript{5} and that he does not know what the novel is clearly about, or how the novel is progressing or should progress.\textsuperscript{6} The novel is here coming really unwatched out of one's pen. But he is sure only that there is plenty of fire beneath his writing, and that his novel would probe the utmost depths of human being.\textsuperscript{7} He is also sure that he cannot write in the same hard, violent language of \textit{Sons and Lovers} and has no more interest in creating vivid scenes in the accumulating manner.\textsuperscript{8} Not that he dislikes the earlier method, which was liked by his friends and critics, but, "unfortunately," he has to follow the law of his own growth. There is almost no choice left regarding form, as form is not a personal affair like style,\textsuperscript{9} and Bennett's idea of form is good for copying the old novel.\textsuperscript{10} One has to stand before almighty God, allowing the creative fire to go through oneself as in prayer.\textsuperscript{11}

It is significant that Lawrence could give a synopsis of \textit{Sons and Lovers}, whereas he could not even indicate the course of \textit{The Rainbow}. Equally suggestive is that he could

\textsuperscript{5} Op.Cit. p. 178.
\textsuperscript{6} Op.Cit. p. 119.
\textsuperscript{7} Op.Cit. p. 177.
\textsuperscript{8} Op.Cit. p. 260.
repeatedly declare in his letters and elsewhere the message of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, while he could not say about *The Rainbow* anything more than that "the old order is done for, toppling on top of us: and that it is no use the men looking to women for salvation, nor the women to sensuous satisfaction for their fulfilment."\(^\text{12}\) If writing *Sons and Lovers* is mainly a catharsis, writing *The Rainbow* is an imaginative exploration and realization, through expression. If *Lady C. Chatterley's Lover* has an element of writing to an already conceived thesis, *The Rainbow* is distinguished by a complete absence of any preconceived theory.

"The novel is not, as a rule, immoral because the novelist has any dominant idea or purpose. The immorality lies in the novelist's helpless, unconscious predilection .... If the novelist puts his thumb in the pen, for love, tenderness, sweetness, peace, then he commits an immoral act; he prevents the possibility of a pure relationship."\(^\text{13}\)

Writing to Ernest Collings in March 1914, Lawrence says: "Unless one is so pure by instinct that one does the right thing without knowing, then one must know what one is after."\(^\text{14}\) Here, *This in The Rainbow*, he has to follow his instinct. He says it is such a difficult thing to write something that is really new, and he further.

\(^{13}\) *Selected Literary Criticism*, Heinemann, 1956, p.110.
"I have begun the novel for about the 7th time.
I know it is quite a lovely novel really — you know that the perfect statue is in the marble, the kernel of it. But the thing is the getting it out clean." 15

In a sharp retort to Edward Garnett, on 5th June 1914, he hints at a description of the method he has employed. His form is: "the profound intuitions of life added one to the other word by word according to their illogical conception, will give us general lines of an intuitive physiology of matter." 16 And he continues: "Again I say, don't look for the development of the novel to follow the lines of certain characters, the characters fall into the form of some other rhythmic form, as when one draws a fiddle bow across a fine tray delicately sanded, the sand takes lines unknown;" or the same idea in clearer terms:

"A history of the Brangwen character through its development developing crises of love, religion and social passion, from the time when Tom Brangwen, the well-to-do Derbyshire farmer, marries a Polish lady, widow of an exile in England, to the moment when Ursula, his granddaughter, the leading shoot of the restless, fearless family, stands waiting at the advance post of our time to blaze a path into the future." 17

Another important point he makes in the same letter to Edward Garnett is that he is not interested in the old-fashioned human element, which causes to conceive a

character in a moral scheme and make him consistent. "The certain moral scheme is what I object to,"18 what Lawrence is really doing is partly turning that "fundamental pathetic faculty for receiving the hidden ways that come from the depths of life, and transferring them to the un receptive world. It is something that happens below the consciousness and below the range of the will.19 And this is not unrelated to his idea of form. He hates the Flaubertian idea of form—

"the will of the writer to be greater than, and the undisputed lord over, the stuff he writes;" and "this craving for form is the outcome not of artistic conscience, but of a certain attitude of life.20 And in such a form there is nothing of the unexpectedness of the living.21

A close analysis of this all-analytical, exhaustive novel, though a difficult task, is amply rewarding. There are three concentric circles of experience round the man and woman relationship. Tom Brangwen, a Marsh farmer, marries Mrs. Lensky, a Polish widow, working as a house-keeper to the rector; Anna, Tom's step-daughter, marries her cousin William; the third-unfinished circle is that Ursula, daughter of Anna and William, has her first love affair with

Skrebensky and, at the close of the novel, refuses to marry him. Along with the imaginative working out of the man-woman relationship mainly through religion, love and mating, there is the dominant motive of family chronicle, and also a continuous, rather tedious, minute-to-minute mental diary of the protagonists. At times, the wood is lost for trees, and the effect is what Huxley calls a violent intense monotony. 22 The exauatива method is at the cost of a judicious artistic selection. The removal of the surplusage is not done to the required degree. Chapters like "The Widening Circle," where Lawrence describes Ursula's experience as a school teacher, are not successfully integrated into the thematic structure of the novel.

Tom Brangwen descends from a family where the quick of life is ever flowing, and the contact with mother earth is a constant factor. Tom, a fair peasant lad of nineteen, finds himself lying with a prostitute, and is very much perturbed over it. Brangwen considers woman as a conscience-keeper (the same phrase is used to describe the Paul-Miriam relationship at one point) and the symbol of further life, which comprised religion and love and morality. Those depend

22. Cf. "There is (in The Rainbow) the excessive intensity, the lack of relaxation which gives the book, as a whole, an obsessive quality, all rather high-pitched and overwrought!" Arnold Kettle, Op.Cit. p.131.
on her for stability.

Tom lost his mother when he was twenty-three, and at twenty-nine he married Mrs. Lensky who was thirty-four. Tom's interest in Mrs. Lensky and their natural encounter, and Tom's simple proposal are very interestingly and dramatically presented. She has an "ugly-beautiful" mouth, and she has a certain strange reserve. They are drawn together without much self-annihilating inhibition. The beginning of their "relatedness" and the gradual intensity are most precisely described and in these contexts one remembers Huxley's description of the Lawrencean gift — "an extraordinary sensitiveness to what Wordsworth called unknown nodes of being, and a prodigious power of rendering the immediately experienced otherness in terms of literary art." Short sentences vividly recreate the scenes: "He was watching her, without knowing her. Only aware of her standing, the unknown yet related to him."  

"In the beginning, the meeting was a getting into extreme oblivion, a plunge and flow in the darkest sleep. It was the entry into a new universe. But gradually an over-much reverence and fear of the unknown changed the nature of his desire into a short of worship, holding her aloof from physical desire."

"She would not take Tom as a separate power, and Tom would be irritated to find her slip into a sort of sombre exclusion, a curious communion with mystic powers. "Nevertheless, the secrets of the woman are the man's adventure."  

Tom's relationship with Anna, the step-child, is on the whole a happy one till Anna takes Will law as her lover. Then, the usual mild conflict between love and parental authority appears. Tom's relationship with his wife is on a slightly different footing when she has her first child by him. When he sees her nursing his child, happily absorbed in it, a pain went through him like a thin flame. For he perceived how he must subdue himself in his approach to her. He wanted again the robust moral exchange of love and passion, such as he had in the beginning. "He had to learn the bitter lesson of life. He had to take less than what he wanted. And he had to learn that she could take him only in her own way and to her own measure." 29

This partly forced him to seek other centres of living. He had a secret desire to make Anna a lady. He feels let down when he finds his brother as the lover of a rich lady. He feels dissatisfied with his own life. His wife, however, mysteriously, knows his dissatisfaction, and there is a real powerful reunion. Their coming together, after two years of married life, was much more wonderful to them than it had ever been before. "It was entry into another cycle of existence, it was the baptism to another life, it was the complete confirmation." 30

perfect understanding, Anna was free to play as she liked.

This is only the first circle, or the first phase of exploration into the man-and-woman relationship. The modern woman, Ursula, is yet to be born with all her complications. There is love, mating, and a sense of the unknown through religion. Mrs. Tom likes (it is revealed retrospectively) her first husband as well as Tom, though the two are poles apart in their behaviour and nature. Mrs. Tom worships God as a mystery, never seeking to define what He is. She has attained a certain worldly wisdom, as shown in her advice to Anna to look upon love as a thing cultivated and struggled for, and not as a thing descending from heaven.

With Anna, the second circle of exploration begins. Here the conflict is not simple, but complicated and violent. Anna was perfectly "related" to her parents, but there was a "pathetic baffled appearance on her face." She feels a certain boredom; and she tries regular church-going as an escape from the encroaching boredom; but it is of no use with the arrival of her cousin, William, she experiences a new life. "In him the bounds of her experience were transgressed." The first step of love quickly leads to the successive ones, and they marry in spite of parental opposition. William at twenty-six is the father of four children.

The conflict between Anna and William is relieved.
William is, in the very beginning, described as some mysterious animal that lives in darkness. He has a special love for the church. Under his influence, Anna suddenly changes and becomes independent. He offers her the image of the Phoenix as a gift. For some time they are in their world of love, completely separated from the actual world. But the conflict becomes obvious before long:

"What was much deeper, she soon came to combat his deepest feelings. What he thought about life and about society and mankind did not matter very much to her; he was right enough to be insignificant. The deep root of his enmity lay in the fact that she jeered at his soul. He was inarticulate and stupid in thought. But to some things he clung passionately. He loved the church. If she tried to get out of him what he believed, then they were both soon in a white rage." 31

The problem of mind versus body is already noticeable:

"William did not believe in fact that the water turned into wine. He did not want to make a fact out of it. Indeed, his attitude was without criticism. It was purely individual. He took that which was of value to him from the written word, he added to his spirit. His mind he let asleep." 32

"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. He was no Christian." 33

"She, almost against herself, clung to the worship of the human knowledge. Man must die in 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."

"He, on the other hand, blind as a subterranean thing, just ignored the human mind and ran after his own dark-souled desires, following his own tunnelling nose." 35

Anna is irritated by William's absorption in the church ritual. The church is the background against which William and Anna are contrasted. The church does not mean anything to Anna; it is dead. But William finds everything in it. She is naturally hostile to the church which has made him ignore his own self, herself and the rest of the world.

This hostility becomes active, and finally shakes William very uncomfortably. They visit the Cathedral on their way home from Baron Skrebensky. The description of the church is magnificent. It calls forth the Lawrentian conceptual as well as descriptive powers.

It is interesting to examine the working of Lawrence's imagination, and to note how Anna and William react differently to the Church. William's response is the real vibration of the blood:

"Away from time, always outside of time! Between east and west, between dawn and sunset, the church lay like a seed in silence, dark before germination."

silence after death, containing birth and death, potential with all the noise and transition of life, the cathedral remained hushed, a great, involved seed, whereof the flower would be radiant life inconceivable. Spanned round with the rainbow, the jewelled gloom folded music upon silence, light upon darkness, fecundity upon death... Through daylight and day-after-day he had come, knowledge after knowledge, and experience after experience, remembering the darkness of the womb, having prescience of the darkness after death." 36 "And there was no time nor life nor death, but only this, this timeless consummation, where the thrust from earth met the thrust from the earth and the arch was locked on the keystone of ecstasy." 37.

But to Anna the altar was barren, its light gone out. God burned no more in that bush. It was dead matter lying there." 38 She too could have felt the ecstasy but "she hung back in the transit, mistrusting the culmination of the altar. She was not to be flung forward on the lift and dive of passionate flights, to be cast at last upon the altar steps as upon the shores of the unknown." 39

Under Anna’s penetrating and ruthless attack, William realises that there are many things which the Church does not include:

"He listened to the thrushes in the gardens and heard a note which the cathedral did not include. There was a life outside the Church... And temple was never perfectly a temple, till it was ruined and mixed with the winds and the sky and herbs." 40

Anna throws herself into a trance of motherhood. She keeps herself fresh and ignorant by constant child-bearing. "If her soul found no utterance, her womb had." Anna's victory left William to relax his will, and he is a little uncertain of himself, when a sensuous encounter with an unknown girl in the theatre rejuvenates his physical desire and brings him back to Anna in a final reunion. He abandons "the moral passion for a pure gratification." There was no tenderness, no love, only lust for discovery, exorbitant gratification in the sensual beauties of her body. Love had become a sensuality, violent and extreme as a death; love was given to supreme immoral absolute beauty in the body of woman. Was it a shame? The situation is left there without any irritable reaching after any conclusion. However, the development of the next circle does not completely approve of this position; nor does the author's message of The Rainbow in his letter to Lady Ottoline seem to confirm this direction as a healthy one.

The third layer begins with Ursula being more independent, socially and mentally, and more daring and articulate than either Anna or Mrs. Tom. Her father's influence was the dawn in her awakening; her grandmother was helpful in emphasizing the importance of the individual.

She hated her mother’s muddled domesticity and childbearing.

"She hated religion, because it lent itself to her confusion. She abused everything. She wanted to become hard, indifferent, brutally callous to everything but just the immediate need, the immediate satisfaction. To have a yearning towards Jesus, only that she might use him to pander to her own soft sensation, use him as a means of reacting upon herself, maddened her in the end. There was then no Jesus, no sentimentality." 44

However, a little later, Ursula realises that:

"All the religion she knew was but a particular clothing to human aspiration. The aspiration was the real thing — the clothing was a matter almost of national taste and need .... In religion there were the two great motives of fear and love .... Christianity accepted crucifixion to escape from fear.... In philosophy she was brought to the conclusion that the human desire is the criterion of all truth and all good. Truth does not lie beyond humanity .... The motive of fear in religion is base, and must be left to the ancient worshippers of power. We do not worship power, in our enlightened souls. Power is degenerated to money and Napoleonic stupidity." 45

Though she is dissatisfied with religion with and society, yet she is not in a position to criticise them. 46 She leads a dual life: the everyday life of routine activity is separated from her desire for fulfillment, and often the second supersedes the first. The same duality is noticed regarding religion: fascination for the myth and a deep call to the blood from the unknown set against her pervading hatred of formal duty, sense of sin, vulgar attempts to

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humanise Christ and religion, resurrection overshadowed by Crucifixion.

Why should making love in a cathedral be a sin? Is it not the ideal place for lovers, the drawing together of man and woman? She is drawn by Skrebensky. She is "palpitatingly, exquisitely vulnerable." The bud of first love attains at moments the fourth dimension. Her love brings a sense of her own importance; she is in love with herself. Both of them love self-assurance, though Ursula has it to a higher degree than Skrebensky. Love intensifies and heightens their senses. She feels in "her femaleness certain secret riches, a reserve, the price for freedom."

Her experience of love enforces in her a complete antagonism to social imposition and personal authority of any kind. Skrebensky returns to his duty as a soldier in Africa. In the meanwhile, Ursula is becoming an intimate friend of Miss Inger, a teacher in her school. Their friendship finds a parallel in the Birkin and Gerald relationship of the next novel. Ursula, after the initial spell of Miss Inger, revolts against her insidious dark corruption; and Ursula's disillusion is complete after the marriage of Miss Inger with Ursula's Uncle, Tom. "The body of love of Ursula was killed after Miss Inger."

Miss Inger and Tom are worshippers of the machine, traitors to the quick of life. "There, in the monstrous mechanism
that held all matter, living or dead, in its service, did Miss Inger achieve her consummation and her perfect unison, her immortality. 47

She discovers these trends even in Skrebensky when he returns from Africa. Now Ursula is studying in a training college. She has a more or less satisfactory physical relationship with Skrebensky. She finds a "dark powerful vibration encompassing her." 48

But when Skrebensky suggests the idea of marriage, Ursula's antagonism to social imposition gets the upper hand. Marriage implies a social status; further, she feels that Skrebensky is fatalistic, mechanical and without a sufficient intrinsic integrity. She does not feel that he can really take her to "that unknown". Skrebensky does not stand Ursula's test and is rejected. Skrebensky, in a hurry, marries the daughter of his boss. Ursula is in a delirium for some time, and a little later she realises her mother's wisdom: "Suddenly she saw her mother in a just and true light. Her mother was simple and radically true. She had taken life that was given. She had not, in her arrogant conceit, insisted on creating life to fit herself." 49 The delirium, however, is, for Lewrentiaa

characters only a difficult phase of transition and growth.

Thus one finds in *The Rainbow* the process of gradual development of Lawrence's belief in the blood. Tom and his wife are, more or less, naturally related to each other, without any pronounced inhibition or antagonism. The cerebral ego or any of the life-defeating theories or social conventions are but occasional obstacles. In *Anna and William* the conflict is pronounced. The Church is the disturbing element in their relationship. Anna hates William's love for the Church, as she wants William's love exclusively for herself, but William's love for the Church is genuine. This is basic in many of the conflicts appearing in the succeeding novels of Lawrence. In *Women in Love*, Birkin resolves the conflict by insisting on "star-equilibrium" and integral separateness of individual being. Aaron's creative urge through his flute is a further variation of William's love for the Church. The incompatibility of the domesticity and the creative urge drives Aaron to run away from home. In *Kangaroo*, both pairs have an understanding about not trespassing upon certain domains.

50 Cf: "The most complete and satisfactory of the relationships is that achieved by Tom Brangwen and his Polish wife Lydia." Arnold Kettle, *Op.Cit.* p. 115.
of the partner. But in *The Rainbow*, the conflict is still at a less evolved stage, and it is resolved by Anna through a "violent trance of child bearing." Ursula's conflict with Skrebensky, however, is more sophisticated. She dislikes her mother's trance, and also Miss Inger's sensuous corruption. Her hatred of the social conventions goes to the extent of even preventing a natural consummation in marriage. But her problem is taken over to *Women in Love*.

In a curiously remote way, the Paul-Miriam relationship is here reversed, and geared on a little less sentimental plane. Ursula has all that Miriam does not possess. Miriam's misty religious dread and scruple is counterpoised by Ursula's ruthless attack on Church and Society. Miriam's horror and dislike of sexual making is countered by a fearless overdose of sexual appetite. If it is Paul who turns down Miriam's suggestion of marriage, it is Ursula, in *The Rainbow*, who rejects Skrebensky.

Just as *Sons and Lovers* is a movement towards life after a delirium, *The Rainbow* ends, after a strange dream of horses and a delirium, in a vision of the earth's new architecture.

“*And the rainbow stood on the earth. She knew that the sordid people who crept hardcasesd 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 hoary covering of disintegration, that new, clean naked bodies would issue to a new germination, 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."52

It is characteristic of Lawrence that in his novels a mystical triumph or poetical hope always transcends the tragic suffering. He hates fatalistic acquiescence and Bennett's way of acceptance. He wants tragedy to be a kick against misery and suffering.53 As Graham Hough suggests, the Lawrentian mode is idyllic and not tragic. If he cannot ignore misery and the triumph of the undesirable, he hates them intensely; if he cannot suffer facing the ugly problems, he by-passes them by way of wishful thinking, or by the force of the protagonist's sheer willing. There are his long short-stories like The Fox or The Captain's Doll, where the undesirable, anti-life elements die of accidents; and the accidents in those given contexts are nothing but the impact of a terrible will. That is a limitation of Lawrence the artist, and is a pointer to the kind of artist that Lawrence is.54

52. The Rainbow, Phoenix, 1957, p.495.
54. Cf. "And his (Lawrence's) vision of the destiny of man, for all the conflict and destruction by the way, reaches consummation not in the tragic but in the idyllic mode. In the vision of some quasi-pastoral perfection in the past or the future, with the really terrifying conflicts all vanished away." Graham Hough, The Dark Sun, 1956, p.258. and also ... continued on p.69.
III

*Women in Love*, begun in 1914 and finished in November 1916, is considered to be a sequel to *The Rainbow*. Ursula, who at the close of *The Rainbow* rejects her first lover Skrebensky, meets the school inspector Birkin at the beginning of *Women in Love*, and her way to matrimony with Birkin through the course of the novel is smooth and happy. Her sister Gudrun, who is just mentioned in *The Rainbow*, plays an important role in *Women in Love*. She meets Gerald, an industrial magnate, and the meeting is fated to result in an unhappy death for Gerald and an uncanny entry into the world of dark corruption for Gudrun.

Here, in *Women in Love*, the novel has become decidedly discursive in form. Lawrence has come, both as novelist and man, a long way since the completion of his *Sons and Lovers*. But there is really no break from his earlier mode of thinking and feeling. It would hardly be a paradox to say that *Women in Love* is not, after all, dissimilar to Lawrence's first novel, *The White Peacock*, in mode or general approach. The difference is in the toughness of

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"Reality and mysticism battle into the very last sentence of the book (*The Rainbow*). Lawrence's hatred of factories fights with his realization of the need of them; his sense of men’s separateness struggles with his rejection of separation, his contempt of the people with his love of them. He cannot resolve contradictions." Arnold Kettle, Op.Cit. p.134.

55. Cf: "Women in Love is an unique achievement in which
texture and increased density of significance, the soapy adolescent emotionalism being replaced by hard metaphysical thinking. The hesitant tone is succeeded by incisiveness coupled with daring.

In The White Peacock, the lives of two people are watched with keen interest: George, the rustic farmer, gives up his attempts to marry Lettie, the sophisticated lady, and marries Meg, the sartor, in haste, ending his life as a drunkard, sunk in utter oblivion. Lettie leads the conventionally happy life, but she has her rings of hollowness, insufficiencies and yearnings. Cyril feels vaguely discontented to find Emily married and settled in life. All the while, there has been an unceasing search for true relatedness and fulfilment. There is a tinge of sadness about the fate of everyone in the novel. The mild regret about human life is absorbed in youthful reaction to beautiful Nature.

Here, in Women in Love, Lawrence's prodsings into the mystery of life reach the most intense point accessible to his imaginative exploration. If at all Lawrence has

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the characters are caught in their disjointed wholeness; and the wavering episodic movement, the abrupt transitions of the story, leave the book with the kind of unity - massively and cumulatively present in spite of much that would seem at first to preclude it." John Holloway, The Pelican Guide to English Literature, ed. Boris Ford, Vol.7, 1963, p.83.
ever attained a vision of Evil, if at all he has come near the tragic vision of life, it is here in *Women in Love*. The quality and complexity of his exploration here is remarkable. Critics have rightly said that Lawrence in *Women in Love* is exposing the evil influence of industrialism. It is slight, however, when compared to the insinuating, subtle, and horrible dark corruption represented by the African woman in the wooden carving as well as by Gerald, Gudrun and Loerke at the end of the novel.

Writing about the thematic structure of *Women in Love* one feels the difficulty of organization. It is, however, advisable to start with the continuity of *The Rainbow* into *Women in Love*. Ursula, who rejects Skrebensky at the end of *The Rainbow*, is gradually finding herself "related" to Birkin, as the school inspector. Ursula, compared to Skrebensky, is emancipated. She rejects marriage with Skrebensky because marriage implies social convention. But she finds in Birkin a man who is far ahead of her in free thought and feeling. Ursula has still a belief in love, if not in marriage. Love should be for her a matter of unspokenable intimacies. She believes in an absolute surrender to love. She thinks that love surpasses the individual. Love, for her, is still at the emotional level.

56. Cf: "The Novel (\*\*\*\*\*) is a very ambitious book whose substance consists of the elucidation of the themes of human destiny at a given moment in history in terms of the conditions in which the four main characters find themselves" E. Vivas, *D.H. Lawrence*, 1961, p.211.
Birkin considers this love as a meaningless emotional hotch-potch. He does not consider love as an absolute.

"Love is one of the emotions like all others — and so it is all right while you feel it. But I can't see how it becomes an absolute .... It is only a part of any human relationship, no more .... Love isn't a desideratum — it is an emotion you feel or you don't feel according to circumstances." 57

"At the very last, one is alone, beyond the influence of love. There is a real impersonal me, that is beyond any emotional relationship .... We want to delude ourselves that love is the root. It isn't. It is only the branches. The root is beyond love, a naked kind of isolation, an isolated me, that does not meet and mingle and never can." 58

He further says:

"There is a final me which is stark and impersonal and beyond responsibility. So there is a final you (Ursula). And it is there that I would want to meet you — not in the emotional, loving plane — but there beyond, where there is no speech and no terms of agreement. There we are two stark unknown beings, two utterly strange creatures." 59

Love is not really "meeting and mingling but an equilibrium, a pure balance of two single beings— as the stars balance each other." 60 It is a state of being where he does not know what he wants of her. He says:

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"I deliver myself over to the unknown, in coming to you. I am without reserve or defences, stripped entirely into the unknown. Only there needs a pledge between us that we will both cast off everything, cast off ourselves even, and cease to be, so that which is perfectly ourselves, can take place in us." 61

Birkin does not care for Ursula, the social being, or Ursula's self-image:

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I want to find you where you don't know your own existence, the you that your common self denies utterly.

'And you mean you can't love?' asked Ursula.

'Yes, if you like. I have loved. But there is a beyond where is not love.' 62

Hermione asks Ursula about Birkin.

"To what does he want you to submit?"

"He says he wants me to accept him non-emotionally, and finally — I really don't know what he means. He says he wants the demon part of himself to be mated physically — not the human being." 63

Birkin ridicules Ursula's idea of love as freedom. Such freedom is anarchy. "Love is a direction which excludes all other directions. It is a freedom together, if you like." 64

He further expresses his belief that:

"the world is only held together by the mystic conjunction, the ultimate unison between people - a bond. And the immediate bond is between man and woman." 65

The critics, who disapprovingly speak of Lawrence as a mere champion of sex, might do well to remember that Birkin hates sex: "it was such a limitation." He wants sex to revert to the level of other appetites, to be regarded as a functional process, not as a fulfilment. He disapproves of mere sensual experience. He believes in sex marriage. But beyond this he wants a further conjunction. It is difficult, no doubt, to correlate the Birkin's various assertions. But it is not an impossibility to get a coherent picture of his vision. There is no absolute, except that of one's individual being and of the existence of the "other being". This makes it imperative that all other relatednesses are, however innately necessary, only limited, and not absolute; the relatednesses may be perfect in the given context, attaining thereby the fourth dimension. The need for a man-to-man relationship, for example, cannot be made superfluous by any full and perfect man-and-woman relationship. As a matter of fact, the close of the novel clinches this point.

These ideas may appear abstract and only misleading. But for all their metaphysical abstractions, they are but 65. Op. Cit. p. 143.
genuine expressions of the deep-felt yearnings of the human heart. It is really an attempt to meet "the absolute need which one has for some sort of satisfactory mental attitude towards oneself and things in general," and to abstract some definite conclusions from one's experience. 66

There are other interesting irritations caused by Birkin's theories and illustrations. He shows the superiority, the arrogance and self-sufficiency of the male cat over the female. Ursula is disgusted with all this "male dignity and higher understanding."

Despite these open hostilities and differences, there is an undercurrent of mutual attachment. Birkin decides all of a sudden to propose to Ursula, and dashes to her house, to blurt out the matter to William Brangwen (Ursula's father). Ursula neither rejects nor accepts the offer on the spot, to the indignation of her father. After the apparent fiasco of the proposal, Birkin is in pure opposition to everything. In this context, the need for a man-to-man relationship becomes all the more imperative. Birkin and Gerald wrestle, which brings strange satisfaction to both of them — Blutbruderschaft. "Man-to-man" or "woman-to-woman" when "man-to-woman" has temporarily failed, is a recurring pattern, Ursula in The Rainbow has, for a time, great intimacy with Miss Inger, when her first lover has been away from England.

Miss Inger and Ursula they dive and swim, naked, to the strange satisfaction of their hearts. Even in *Sons and Lovers*, there is a mild form of this: after Miriam and Clara, even Baxter becomes the centre of Paul’s attention for some time.

However, a little later, Ursula harangues Birkin on his incapacity of love, and asks him to go back to his "spiritual brides like Hermione." She throws away the ring given by Birkin. But this violent quarrel is only a storm before a unique fulfilment, blissful reunion, perfect "star-equilibrium, which alone is freedom." The superficial, verbal differences are brushed aside, and a rich new circuit, a new current of "passional electrical energy" is established by a release from "the darkest poles of the body."

"It was dark fire of electricity that rushed from him to her and flooded them both with rich peace and satisfaction. 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."

"She closed her hands over the full rounded body of his loins, as he stooped over her, she seemed to touch the quick of the mystery of darkness that was bodily him. She seemed to faint beneath, and he seemed to faint, stooping over her. It was a perfect passing away for both of them, and at the same time the most intolerable accession into being, the marvellous fullness of immediate gratification, overwhelming, overflowing from the source of the deepest life force, the darkest, deepest, strangest life force of the human body at the back and base of the loins."

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"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, stillly and blithes, smiling at him. He stood before her, glimmering, so awfully real, that her heart almost stopped beating. He 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 in his body, more mysterious and potent than any she had imagined or known, more satisfying, ah, finally, mystically — physically satisfying. She had thought that there was no source deeper than the phallic source. And now, behold, from the smitten rock of 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 richness." 69

This is a significant passage, worth quoting at length. For it defines Lawrence's idea without much recourse to biblical and other symbolism and metaphor. Later, in The Escaped Cock, there is an elaborate explanation and description of similar masters, but on the symbolical plane of the parable, drenched in dreamy fluid.

It is significant that there is more than the phallic source, and that it comes from the smitten rock of man's body. Further, it is the daughters of men coming back to the Sons of God, the strange inhuman Sons of God who are in the beginning. The innate movement of the picture is striking, though a description of it in finite words is well-nigh impossible.

"Wedlock", "Manifesto" and "New Heaven and Earth" of Look! We have Come Through (1912-1917) indicate a similar development. In the beginning there is a sense of the incapacity of the two to fuse into one:

"And yet all the while you are you, you
are not me.
And I am I, I am never you.
How awfully distinct and far off
from each other."

"Let them praise desire who will,
but fulfilment will do,
real fulfilment, nothing short.
It is our ratification,
Our heaven, as a master of fact.
Immortality, the heaven, is only a projection
of this strange
but actual fulfilment,
here in the flesh.
So, another hunger was supplied,
and for this I have to thank one woman.

Plunging as I have done, over, over the brink
I was have dropped at last headlong into naught,
plunging upon
sheer hard extinction;
I have come, as it were; ceased from knowing;
surpassed myself.
that can I say more, except that I know what it
is to surpass myself."

"She has not realised yet, that fearful thing, that I
am the other;
She thinks we are all of one piece.
It is painfully untrue.
I want her to touch me at last, oh, on the root
and quick of my darkness,
And perish on me as I have perished on her.

Then, we shall be two and distinct, we shall have each our separate being
and that will be pure existence, real liberty.
Till then, we are confused, a mixture, unresolved, unextricated one from the other.
It is in pure, unutterable resolvedness, distinction
of being that one is free,
not in mixing, merging, not in similarity.
When she has put her hand on my secret,
darkest sources, the darkest outgoings,
when it has struck home to her, like death,
"this is him",
She has no part whatever,
It is the terrible other,
when she knows the tearful other flesh, oh, darkness
unfathomable and fearful, contiguous and concrete,
when she is slain against me, and lies in a heap like
one outside the house,

I shall be cleared, distinct, single as if burnished
in silver,
having no adherence, no adhesion anywhere,
one clear, burnished, isolated being, unique,
and she also, pure, isolated and complete,
two of us, unutterably distinguished, and in
unutterable conjunction.
Then we shall be free, freer than angels, oh, perfect.
After that, there will only remain that all men
detach themselves and become unique,
Conditioned only by our pure single being,
having no laws but the laws of our being.

We shall not look before and after.
We shall be, now.
We shall know in full.
We, the mystic NOW."71.

The Birkin-Ursula course runs smooth now. Ursula’s
father is angry, and strikes Ursula in a fit of rage. The
break between daughter and parents is complete; Ursula comes
to Birkin’s room and lives with him. They resign their jobs
and undertake a continental tour.

71 Op. Cit. pp. 258-252.
The picture of Birkin is not complete without the contrasting sketch of Hermione Boddice. Hermione has been a friend of Birkin's for years. She is a rich woman of the new school, full of "intellectuality," and nerve-worn with consciousness. She was passionately interested in reform, and her soul was given to the public cause. Her father was a baronet, and her brother is a M.P. She has external superiority; she is a medium for the culture of ideas. All the while she seeks to make herself invulnerable, inaccessible. But she always feels vulnerable. There is always a secret chink in her armour. She does not know what it is. But it is really a "lack of robust self;" she has no natural sufficiency. "She is a priestess without belief." She wants "conjunction" with Birkin to make up this deficiency. But she is constantly outwitted by Birkin. Once, when she dilates upon "spontaneity" and "pure animalism," she is violently attacked by Birkin. Birkin tells her that all her animalism and spontaneity are deliberate, obscene things to be found in her head only. When Ursula asks how can any one have knowledge that is not in one's head, Birkin asserts that one should have knowledge in the blood, "when the mind and known world is drowned in darkness -- everything must go -- there must be a deluge -- then you find yourself in a palpable body darkness, a demon."72 With the arrival of Ursula, Hermione

is completely loathed and forgotten by Birkin. Hermione
does not really play an important rôle in the novel; but
she, on the one hand, provides a contrasting background to
Birkin's life and ideas by her contrasted being, and on
the other, lends amplitude to the theme of corruption.

Before the major theme of dark corruption is examined,
it would be useful to take a brief glance at the minor
tributaries. Thomas Crich is an old man, owning the mines.
His life is given to humanitarian and public benevolent
deeds. But his relationship with his own wife and children
is unsatisfactory. His love is bestowed, in a senile way,
on Winifred, the child with "amazing instinctive critical
faculty, and a pure anarchist and a pure aristocrat at once."
He has a vision of the instrumentality of mankind and of
power. Public charity and unique apathy to the sufferings
of real men and women can go together! Even in his slow death
there is an air of greed and meanness.

Gudrun and Gerald play a very important rôle in the
novel. Gudrun, Ursula's sister, has certain artistic
talents. She has had training in Paris. In The Rainbow,
it is mentioned that she lives her religious life by proxy.
When she comes home after her studies in Paris, she is on
the look-out for a man to come her way. When she sees Gerald
at the marriage of his sister, at once she has a foreboding
that her life is bound up with his life. Right from the
start, ill omens are present. When she talks to him for the first time, dances wildly before the bulls, and says she is in love with Gerald at the water party, Diana and her lover die of drowning. Then Gudrun is invited to be Winifred's teacher, she knows she is nearer the danger. After the death of Thomas Crich, Gerald thinks of marrying Gudrun, but the proposed marriage is held in abeyance. Gudrun and Gerald join Ursula and Birkin on their continental tour.

Gerald is intended right from the beginning for a special treatment. Disapproval of his life and action and what he stands for, is always accompanied by a certain fascination for his being. He had shot his brother as a child; perhaps, it was an accident-willed or pure, no one is certain. He stands for modern industry, ruthless efficiency, and soulless, terrible purity. He is a wonderful production expert. He is the God of the machine, and the productive will of man is the Godhead. He is always in a trance of activity. What he wants is "the pure fulfilment of his own will in the struggle with the natural conditions." And when these centres of living are dried up, he finds relief in debauch with desperate women.

74. "Will the man invented by machine be like Gerald?"
Birkin describes Gerald and Gudrun as "people born in the process of destructive creation." Gerald, who subordinates every organic unit to mechanical purpose, has tremendous power, but is life-destroying. He believes in an order where the strong subjugates the weak. Ursula once attacked Gerald for torturing the mare near the level-crossing. His totem is the wolf.

Early in the novel, he spends a night in London with Minette, a frail, fallen dissolute girl, always bullied by the London Bohemian artist, Julius Halliday. He finds in Halliday's studio a wooden carving of a woman sitting in child-birth, conveying "the extreme physical sensation, beyond the limits of mental consciousness." Gerald, who wants "to keep certain illusions, certain ideas like clothing," disapproves of it, and asks if it is not obscene. Birkin replies that it conveys the complete truth, and it is "pure culture in sensation, culture in the physical consciousness, really ultimate physical consciousness, mindless, utterly sensual. It is so sensual as to be final, supreme." After the death of his father, Gerald is at a loose end. This is a recurring movement in Lawrence's novels. When a man is frustrated or shaken by the sight of death, he dallies with the idea of sheltering under the love of a

woman. Gerald, in darkness, gropes his way to Gudrun's house, symbolically stumbles upon graves in the churchyard, and finally enters Gudrun's unbolted room unnoticed by anyone in the family. (A similar thing happens in *The Virgin and the Gypsy*). He finds in her infinite relief. Into her he pours 'all his pent up darkness and corrosive death' and becomes whole again. She is 'the great bath of life' and he worships her. "Mother and substance of all life she is. And he, child and man, receives of her, and is made whole."

"He is infinitely grateful, as to God, or as an infant is at its mother's breast." She, while feeling an overwhelming tenderness for him, has a dark, under-stirring of jealous hatred that he should lie so perfect and immune while she is tormented with "violent wakefulness".

Gudrun and Gerald decide to go abroad and to experiment a living together. They have moments of passion and frenzy. They are introduced to Herr Loerke. Herr Loerke is a little man with the boyish figure and "the round full, sensitive looking head, and the quick, full eyes, like a mouse's". "His voice was mature, sardonic, his movements had the flexibility of essential energy, and of a mocking penetrating understanding." "He must be an artist, nobody else can have such a fine adjustment and singleness."
The "silent upper world of snow and stars and powerful cold," the presence of Loerke like a gnome, bring about the inevitable consequences. Ursula is tired and uncomfortable here; and suddenly Ursula and Birkin decide to leave that snowbound place, and move to the warmer south. The snow and the ever-waiting presence of Loerke have awakened in Gudrun what has been untapped so far. Gudrun is driven by a strange desire, "to plunge on and on to the well of white finality;" and she feels her consummation is "over the strange blind, terrible well of rocky snow, there in the navel of the mystic world, among the final cluster of peaks."

All the while she is subtly and incessantly goaded by the dark, corrupt world of Loerke. Loerke is sneakingly waiting for the right time to come to Gudrun. Loerke is a "pure, unconnected will, steadfast stoical and momentous." In the last issue, he cares for nothing and is troubled about nothing, makes not the slightest attempt to be at one with anything. There is a strange cruelty in him. His picture of a naked girl, small, finely made, sitting on a great naked horse has great suggestive force. Birkin makes revealing statements about Loerke. He is many stages ahead of either Gerald or Birkin in hatred of society and of ideals.

He is "gnawing at the roots of life." "He lives like a rat in the river of corruption." 31

In the fight between Loerke and Gerald over Gudrun, the prize, Gerald is bound to be defeated. Gerald and Gudrun quarrel, and they decide to separate. Gerald is, of course, furious at being defeated by a puny creature, an apology for a man. He has wealth, social standing and physical strength. But Loerke knows a secret beyond these things. "The greatest power is one that is subtle and adjusts itself, not one which blindly attacks." 32

"Loerke had an understanding where Gerald was a calf. He, Loerke, could penetrate into the depths far out of Gerald's knowledge. Gerald was left behind like a postulant in the ante-room of this temple of mysteries, this woman. But he, Loerke, could he not penetrate into the inner darkness, find the spirit of woman in its inner recess and wrestle with it there, the central serpent that is coiled at the core of life?" 33

Gudrun has reached the highest range of pure "sensational" experience (which is limited) with Gerald, and there is no going further. Knowing him finally, she is like Alexander seeking new worlds. There is only

"the inner individual darkness, sensation with the ego, the obscene religious mystery of ultimate reduction, the mystic frictional activities, of diabolic reducing down, disintegrating the vital organic body of life." 34

Even the way of Gerald is a process of death.

"He was limited, born, subject to his necessity, in the last issue, for goodness, for righteousness, for oneness with the ultimate purpose. That the ultimate purpose may be the perfect and subtle experience of the process of death, the will being kept unimpaired, that was not allowed in him. And this was his limitation."85

Now Gudrun and Lœrke seem to "creep down some ghastly tunnel of darkness; from their verbal and physical nuances they get the highest satisfaction in the nerves, from a queer interchange of half suggested ideas, looks and expressions and gestures," which are quite intolerable, though incomprehensible, to Gerald. It is significant that Gudrun and Lœrke talk of the past, but never of the future.

While on the snows, Gerald hits Lœrke, but is hit by Gudrun. Gerald is about to strangle Gudrun, but leaves her in utter disgust. He moves on and is finally snowed up.

This is a poetical conclusion (which is ever associated with wish-fulfilment) of what has been consistently worked out through the course of the novel. Here, specially in the final section, Lawrence's imaginative sweep reaches the highest point he ever achieved. It is a breath-taking, supremely subtle and discerning vision of corruption. This vision is sufficiently amplified by other variations.

Birkin, in the chapter "Moony," remembers the African fetishes he had seen at Halliday's —

"a statuette about two feet high, a tall, slim, elegant figure from West Africa, in dark wood, glossy and suave. It was a woman, with her dress high, like a column of quails, on her neck. He remembered 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 she did not know himself. 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 for 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 purely live within the world of corruption and cold dissolution .... 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, far beyond the phallic cult. This was far beyond any phallic knowledge, sensual subtle realities, far beyond the scope of phallic investigation."
"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 fulfil a mystery of ice destructive knowledge, snow abstract annihilation... Gerald 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?"

There is a pencil sketch of Julius Halliday, another variation of the same theme of corruption. Gerald once finds him and his friends moving about naked early in the morning. It strikes him as "broken beauty;" "the animal was not there at all, only the heavy broken beauty. He was like a Christ in a pieta." "On the one hand he's had religious mania, and on the other he is fascinated by obscenity." Actually, the entire London Bohemia is characterised by a certain gesture of rejection and negation.

*Women in Love* stands as a great testimony to the unique powers and achievement of Lawrence as a novelist. It is a highly integrated novel, rich in content, most

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Cf: "The sensual mindlessness, which he (Lawrence) calls the African way is a sort of barbaric equivalent to the sentimental Western idea of love which he feels to be decadent." J.W. Robson, *The Pelican Guide to English Literature*, ed. Boris Ford, Vol. 7, 1953, p. 294.

artistic in presentation. There is no irrelevance intruding upon the central theme of dark-corruption and true-relatedness. The amplification of the major theme is amazing in its subtle variations and artistic interrelatedness within the compass of the novel. With Gerald and Gudrun in the centre, Thomas Critch and his wife, Julius Halliday and Minnette, Loerke, Hermione Roddice around them, the abstract cold snow of the north juxtaposed with hot African dissolution, the vision of dark corruption is complete. The vision is not blunted because of the uncompromising and incorruptible integrity of Lawrence at this phase. That "trembling instability," which Lawrence calls morality, is evident throughout the novel. This cannot be said with the same confidence of the Lawrence of Lady Chatterley's Lover. Here (in Women in Love) is neither the diffident tone of The White Peacock, nor the almost propagandistic assertiveness of Lady Chatterley's Lover. The choice is clearly made without any partisanship.

The picture of Birkin and Ursula, which is counterpoised to the picture of corruption, has not the same imaginative force as the other. Nevertheless, it serves the novelist's purpose. Ursula, who is the only main link between The Rainbow and Women in Love, does not impress the reader here as much as she does in The Rainbow. The farm, the cathedral of The Rainbow, do not appear in
Women in Love; instead, the African fetish in the studio, the workshop of the industrial magnets, the cold snow peaks, loom large in Women in Love. It is not a break but a transition, and the next step. The novels could be read as two separate novels, but the two units are complementary.

With Women in Love, Lawrence's belief in the blood is almost completely formulated. The belief is indicated in two ways: One is the positive side, depicted by the fulfillment of Birkin and Ursula; and the other is the negative side—the very opposite of the belief: Dark Corruption—shown by the contrasting pictures of Gerald and Gudrun and Loerke, Hermione Roddice, Thomas Crich, Julius Halliday, and the African Women. Birkin and Ursula have sex fulfillment, "the demon" fulfillment, but they have attempted to achieve a farther conjunction, an "equilibrium," which points in the direction of a belief in the blood. The contrasting pictures clarify all the possible misunderstanding about a belief in the blood. Knowledge for knowledge's sake, the insidious will, an attempt to live up to the expectation and good opinion of other people are clearly disapproved of in the delineation of Hermione Roddice. Thomas Crich, the industrial magnate, has greed, lust for power, "fulfillment of his will in the struggle with the natural conditions," he assumes the role of the philanthropist as a personal compensation for his unhappy inner life. But it is of no avail. Gerald, his son, is of the same kind, but is more vigorous and
ruthless. His process is that of destruction and death. If Gerald has taken the wrong road of "enow-abstraction", Loerke and the African Woman have taken the equally wrong way of dark sensuous corruption. Lawrence obviously disapproves of mere sensual fulfilment and voluptuousness as much as sheer intellectual exhilaration and cerebral will.

When Lawrence had finished about two hundred pages of The Rain, he did not know what the novel was about. But one suspects that he had dimly in view, right from the beginning, what Women in Love would be like. It is evident in the way the incidents are described and woven together; when Gudrun sees Gerald, she feels that his life is bound up with her; when she dances before the bull and expresses her love, the death of Gerald's sister is revealed. The artistic way of correlating the two wood carvings to the major theme at the various points of the book suggests remarkable organisation. Apart from these, it is suggested in the way the novel is developed and ended.

Some of Birkin's ideas about love — the essential separateness, something beyond the emotional love etc. — are embodied in Lawrence's essay on Love written in 1917. 90

90. "But the love between a man and woman, when it is whole, is dual. It is the melting into pure communion, and it is friction of sensuality, both. In communion, I become whole in love. And in pure, fierce passion of sensuality I am burned into essentiality. I am driven, the matrix into sheer separation distinction. I become my single self, inviolable and unique, as the oms were perhaps once driven into themselves out of the confusions of the earth."

While writing a critical essay on Hardy in July 1914, he was actually trying to clarify his own position to himself. In Hardy, the conflict between the corrupt society and the sensitive individual results in the trial, tribulations, and death of the individual. Lawrence makes another significant point about Hardy when he says that in Hardy's novels the tragedy is the result of the external nature deliberately transgressing into the domain of men, whereas in the works of great artists like Sophocles or Tolstoy, tragedy is the outcome of man transgressing the law of nature. With Lawrence, the conflict between the anti-life society and man, or the conventional conflict of social beings only, is too trivial to be dealt with at length in his novels. Lawrence is chiefly interested in the conflict between the "flesh" and the "will". Regarding the other conflict, Lawrence's position is unique. Every living being is a law unto itself, and by living its genuine separateness together, it automatically and properly becomes related to the surrounding world; or in other words, it naturally becomes part of the inexorable law outside. So, the possibility for tragedy is almost eschewed.

However, there is in Lawrence's descriptions of the snow, of the cathedral, of the spring, a recognition of the dim awe and magnificence of the life of nature. The question of nature transgressing man's world does not arise at all. The attention is always riveted on man involving himself in
the dissolution and death process by perversely ignoring
the holiness and wholeness of the flesh, by developing sheer
"will," and by bartering oneself for absolute ideals.

In Lawrence's novels, the anti-life agents are destroyed.
Even by way of exception, they do not triumph. The last
laugh is not, even accidentally, theirs. That is a serious
limitation in Lawrence. As pointed out earlier, his mode is
idyllic and not tragic.

Anti-life elements are scathingly satirised; they are,
at times, jeered out of existence, and at times their
annihilation is terribly willed by opponents, as the death
of Banford in The Fox. The end of a Lawrence novel always
shows a drift towards life, towards hope. At times, it may
not be a natural development issuing from the given context
of the novel. When Lawrence gets baffled, the cockneyism in
him comes up, and the undesirable elements are simply
written off. Even his reaction to Bennett's resignation and
acceptance that tragedy should be a kick against pain,
indicates the same approach. A true tragedy, of course, is
not just a meek acceptance; tragedy consists in the daring
quest, the dauntless act even in the face of death. Along with
the recognition of the daring spirit, there is the recognition

92. 82. "But the lion and the unicorn were fighting for the
crown... the symbol of the eternal balance between the
two forces—a prize that is worth having as long as it
is never won."
of the death as well. In Lawrence, however "death" remains wilfully unrecognised.

In his critical writings, Lawrence has recognised that the Holy Ghost is not love only, it includes hate as well. Life is the ever balanced conflict between the lion and the unicorn. 92 This truth, at the non-human, abstract, non-moral level is not sufficiently realised in Lawrence the artist. The artist seems to have stressed the resurrection more than either the crucifixion or anything else. It is the Phoenix that is the most important symbol. The dark sensuous corruption of the African or the White Man is recognised and written off; but the permanence of it is by-passed in indifference, or at times ruled out. The inevitability of resurrection is an article of faith with Lawrence, the artist.

V

It is not necessary to consider The Lost Girl (1920) at length here. 93 However, it is appropriate to include the examination of Aaron's Rod (1921) in this Chapter. Aaron's Rod is inferior to Women in Love in general style and thematic structure. However, the theme of men to men (Birkar

92. Cf. "But the lion and the unicorn were fighting for the crown... the symbol of the eternal balance between the two forces - a prize that is worth having as long as it is never won."

93. See Appendix 1.
and Gerald) relationship was but briefly considered in *Women in Love,* so also the theme of gem-like separateness (Birkin's). Both of these themes are better treated in *Aaron's Rod.* Aaron finds, at the beginning of the novel, that too much domestic routine is inimical to his creative expression, and by the end of the novel, he realizes that Sally's "love" talk is not only personally disgusting but unfavourable for creative activity. (In *Kangaroo* also there is the talk of the "love" mode; however, that is at the political level.). As a matter of fact, on a first reading, one feels that *Aaron's Rod* is only a second-hand affair of arranging the loose ends of *Women in Love.*

If at all there is a central theme in *Aaron's Rod,* it may be ascribed as a theme of individual, intrinsic loneliness and creative urge. This is also the only common theme that touches all the important characters in varying degrees. Aaron, a flautist, leaves his wife Lottie and three children, as he requires "free air" to breathe in. He is introduced to a degenerate semi-bohemian circle. Jim is running like a hound after love in the hope of filling a certain innate emptiness and loneliness. Julia is fascinated

94. Of: "Lawrence says here (Aaron's Rod) nothing that he did not say better elsewhere. What is profound in *Women in Love* here becomes superficial or even silly and the tough verbal battles of that book degenerate into nagging or boring tirades" - Anthony Beal, *D.H. Lawrence,* 1964, p. 64-65.
by the poet, Cyril. Josephine is engaged to Jim and finds all men strangely afraid of loneliness. Aaron meets Lilly, who is trying to "possess his soul" in patience. Aaron visits Italy, is seduced by two women, and finally, at the end of the novel, finds his flute broken as a result of the anarchists exploding a bomb in a hotel when he is there. Outlined thus, it may appear an insipid novel, with a loose plot and uncertain characterisation.

Aaron is only 33 years old; he is physically well endowed; his father was a collier; he was brought up as the only child of a widowed mother; he has flauntingly kept up his Midland accent. Verbally, he is rather inarticulate, but he is expressive enough through his flute. He has a curious quality: an intelligent, almost sophisticated mind. But he always suffers from an unacknowledged opposition to his surroundings.

Aaron's married life has its moments of passion and glory, but soon the illusion of cosy happiness is dispelled. He finds that he can neither really worship a woman nor abandon himself to the flood of love. "Piling reproach upon reproach," he adds "adultery to brutality," and suffers from disgust at his domestic situation. The situation is reminiscent of The Trespasser; but the causes are far more

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95. Aaron's Rod, Phoenix, 1954, p.60.
deep-rooted. Aaron's very being is centred in the fact of his "isolate self-responsibility and aloofness." This aloofness and "isolation" is related to his creative urge, which expresses itself through his rod, the flute. The hopeless domestic mess is not congenial to the expression of this urge; nor is the social and individual "relatedness" to Lilly very helpful for creative expression.

The domestic situation has become intolerably painful because of Lottie's (Aaron's wife) nature and beliefs. She was also brought up as the only child of well-to-do parents, and "under all her whimsicalness and fretfulness there was a conviction as firm as steel: that she, as woman, was the centre of creation, and the man was but an adjunct." Lottie had never formulated this belief, but it was formulated for her in the world. There is a constant warfare of wills between Aaron and Lottie. Though she dies "many connubial deaths in the arms of her husband," the life-destroying tension between the two people has not relaxed. It is Aaron who has to break away from this tension, or he has to wither into death.

The children and society are always on the side of Lottie. Aaron's drinking at the bar, his disgust at being jeered at and cold-shouldered by his wife at home, are

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well portrayed, almost with the force and clarity of *Sons and Lovers*. Aaron repeats his attempts at reconciliation; he returns home, but only to go away after exchanging a few words with his wife. Reconciliation is clearly ruled out. 99

The people whom Aaron meets also suffer from various forms of the same malady of loneliness. Aaron, who is drunk, is picked up on a Christmas Eve by Jim Brickness and his party. Jim, who has two children by his divorced French wife, suffers from a curious sense of emptiness. He is either talking like a red-hot socialist, or is making a fool of himself by fretting clumsily about his belly-ache for love. Lilly ridicules him:

"Why are you such a baby?" said Lilly. "There you are, six foot in length, have been a cavalry officer and fought in two wars, and you spend your time crying for somebody to love you. You're a comic." 100

Further, there is random talk about love being life, and love being a vice. The talk is mere sophistry, leading nowhere.

War has become recognisably a factor, in this novel, responsible for the sense of isolation and loneliness. It has touched Jim's life. "Telegram were a necessary part of his life." It has been an obsession in the life of

100. Op.Cit. p. 194.53
Captain Herbertson. War experience has made the mind incoherent and desolate in certain matters, and in a few others, pathetically childish. There is another instance, of Angus Guest, "a war hero with shattered nerves."

Angus says: "We are shattered old men, now, in one sense. And in another sense, we are just pre-war babies." However, war experience is not in the centre of the novel's thematic structure. Only here and there does a thread of it wind its way through the novel.

Among the first set of people whom Aaron meets at the beginning, are Julia, Jim's sister; Josephine, the artist, to whom Jim is engaged; Robert, Julia's husband; and Cyril Scott, a young poet of twenty-two, to whom Julia is emotionally attached. There is really nothing remarkable about these people. They show all the fashionable interest in Aaron, the flautist. Josephine seduces Aaron. But the incident is without any significant consequence. Julia's love for Scott is just left and forgotten at this point of the novel. Jim and Josephine appear for a moment, a washed-out and discoloured version of Gerald and Gudrun of *Women in Love*. But all these characters are undeveloped, unrelated to the core of the novel. The novel suffers from a lack of rich organisation; there is hardly any unity except that provided by the character of Aaron.
Shore is another well-wrought picture, of Sir Francis and Lady Franks of Bovara. Sir Francis is yet another cousin of Thomas Grich. He childishly exhibits his war trophies and medals. Despite his bank balance and social security, he is haunted by the fear of death. The talk between Sir Francis and Aaron about the bank balance and providence is extremely interesting. Aaron’s strength despite his lack of bank balance, and Sir Francis’s fear of death and encroaching loneliness, are vividly brought out.

Lily is next only to Aaron in importance. Lilly is educated, articulate, and he cuts all social barriers. Despite apparent amity between him and his wife Tanny, all is not well with them. Lilly declares, as a retort to Jim, that love is a vice like drink. At the same time, he says that love is “soul’s respiration,” and when the soul “breathes out it is bloody revolution.” The talk sounds ridiculously puerile and unconvincing. Most of his talk has an air of emptiness. He says that women try always to suffocate men either with a baby’s napkin or a woman’s petticoat. “Women will sacrifice eleven men, fathers, husbands, brothers and lovers for one baby or for her own female self-conceit.” He ridicules Jim for his wanting to have a woman around him to hold his hand. But Tanny retorts that Lilly requires the same help “more than most men.” “But you are,” she continues, “so beastly, ungrateful and mannish. Because I

hold you safe enough all the time, you pretend you are doing it yourself." This argument is similar to Mrs. Morell's in Shaw's Candida.

Lilly tries to play Christ in certain contexts, and learns the bitter experience of Judas being inseparable from Christ. He is once punched by Jim. And when he is nursing the sick Aaron, he feels that he would get another punch from Aaron for interfering with him and not entrusting him to the care of "mechanical," professional doctors. Sonny would interpret the whole affair (this Christ and spreading one's self over humanity) as a trick to have power over Aaron and others. As a matter of fact, Tanny has resisted all the while blindly and persistently.

Lilly's proposal of pursuing his wife to Norway, his constant need for moving from place to place, his unmanly whimpering "in the fashion of Christ" indicate Lilly's loneliness, or a certain innate creative insufficiency. It is really in striking contrast to the dumb but vital Aaron. Aaron has a true insouciance, which is a genuine sign of unvitiated creative vitality. Such an insouciance Lilly, with all his talk of the singleness of man's soul, and getting away from woman's pernicious spell, can ill afford. The stream of slippery words of wisdom at the end of the novel is a pointer to what Lilly lacks and what Aaron abounds in.

Lilly gives a verbal picture of the situation in which Aaron finds himself but is unable to describe. Lilly recognises two dynamic modes of being — one, of power, and another, of love. Men have exhausted the love-urge and are now in the grip of the power-urge. This power-urge is not conscious of its aims; this is the most important qualification, for it differentiates this dark, inevitable creative urge from the conscious cerebral, life-destroying power-urge, which Lawrence depicted in the characters of Gerald and Hermione in *Women in Love*. Man's "single oneness" is his destiny. It is no good trying to act by prescription, and there is no use trying to fix oneself to any one absolute mode. What Aaron should do, his own soul will tell.

Lilly's words seem to be slippery. The problem is left almost as at the beginning. The course of Aaron's action, however, gives a clearer and better picture. Aaron's sex life is curiously separated from his creative life. When he is seduced by Josephine, he remembers Lottie, and feels pangs of conscience overcoming him. And later, when he is powerfully drawn by the Marchesa in Florence, he finds her only a clinging child gone in her own trance, mocking him in some deep and essential way. He has a pure "just unalloyed desire for her. He expects his flute to blossom again with splendid scarlet flowers and the red Florentian lilies.  

But, in truth, it resulted in "throwing cold water over his phoenix newly risen from the ashes of its nest in flames."

"Did he not want it?— the magic feeling of phallic immortality. He did not know. He only knew it had nothing to do with him; and that, save out of complaisance, he did not want it .... But at the same time it simply blasted his own central life. It simply blighted him." 106

Hence, Cleopatra but no Antony. And in this context, the accident that involved the breaking of Aaron's rod is not accidental.

In Women in Love, the problem of sex versus the creative urge or expression is not directly dealt with. Birkin, the school inspector, has no creative urge to the extent that the dumb Aaron has. Aaron has a sufficiently natural attitude to sex, but there is no "sweet flowering of sex" into creative experience. The theme is left there, with the hint that Aaron should do what his soul tells him. The same specific theme is not taken up in the succeeding novels of Lawrence.

It may be said, however, that Lawrence is not as sure of his way in Aaron's Rod as he is in Women in Love. There are many vivid pictures, such as Jim and Julia, Sir and Lady Franks, a railway journey; but they are not powerfully and satisfactorily integrated in the main theme of Aaron's search for freedom from the domestic enclosure, and for a positive

creative loneliness in the contrasting background of people who are afraid of loneliness. Sex has failed; the love-of-Christ mode has failed; the net result of the experience has been a decision to know one's urge and obey it implicitly, which is a further restatement of the belief in the blood.

VI

It may not be inept to quote a few relevant passages from Fantasia of the Unconscious, all the while remembering

"that the shifting kaleidoscopic pattern of his intuitions must always be a richer thing than any fixed doctrine that could be deduced from it." 107

Man seeks dynamic relationship with woman through sex; but he should have a purpose beyond woman. Otherwise, it may mean mere sex-sensation or mere sterile fetish of the ideal. Man should be ultimately himself, and for that he should have the right relationship with woman, and he should also participate in purposive activity.

"But look at sex, in its obvious manifestation. The sexual relationship between man and woman consummates in the act of coition ... We know that in the act of coition, the blood of the individual rises to a culmination, in a tremendous magnetic urge towards the magnetic blood of the female. In the act of coition, the two seas of blood in the two individuals, rocking and surging towards contact, as near as possible, clash into a oneness. There is a lightning flash which passes through the blood of both individuals, there is a thunder of sensation which rocks in diminishing as it crashes down the nerves of each - and then the tension passes."

"The two individuals are separate again. But are they as they were before? Is the air the same as after a thunderstorm as before? No. The air is as it were new, fresh, tingling with newness. So is the blood of the man and woman after successful coition. After a false coition, like prostitution, there is not newness but a certain disintegration."

"But after coition, the actual chemical constitution of the blood is so changed, that sleep usually intervenes, to allow the time for chemical, biological readjustment through the whole system."

"So the blood is changed and renewed, refreshed, almost recreated like the atmosphere after thunder. Out of the newness of the living blood pass the new strange waves which beat upon the great dynamic centres of the newness: primarily upon the hypogastric plexus and the sacral ganglion. From these centres rise new impulses, new vision, new being, rising like Aphrodite from the foam of the new tide of blood. And so individual life goes on."

"Perhaps, then, we will allow ourselves to say what in Psychic individual reality is the act of coition. It is the bringing together of the surcharged electric blood of the male with the polarized electric blood of the female with the result of a tremendous flashing interchange, which alters the constitution of the blood and the very quality of being in both."

"Then the heart craves for new activity. For new collective activity."

"I am sure the ultimate greatest desire in man is this desire for great purposive (religious) activity. When a man loses his deep sense of purposive activity, he feels lost and is lost. When he makes the sexual consummation the supreme consummation, even in his secret soul, he falls into the beginning of despair."

"But when the sex passion submits to the great purposive passion, then you have fulness. And no great purposive passion can endure long unless it is established upon the fulfillment in the vast majority of individuals of the true sexual passion. No great motive or ideal or social principle can endure long any length of time unless based on the sexual fulfillment of the vast majority of individuals concerned."

"It cuts both ways. Assert sex as the predominant fulfilment and you get the collapse of living purpose in man. You get anarchy. Assert purposiveness as the one supreme and pure activity of life, and you drift into barren sterility, like our business life of to-day, and our political life. You become sterile, you make anarchy inevitable. And so there you are. You have got to base your great purposive activity upon the intense sexual fulfilment of all your individuals. That was how Egypt endured. But you have got to keep your sexual fulfilment even then subordinate, just subordinate to the great passion of purpose, subordinate by a hair's breadth only; but still, by that hair's breadth, subordinate."