CHAPTER THREE

WOMEN CHARACTERS IN

THE RAINBOW AND WOMEN IN LOVE
CHAPTER III
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3. 1. PRELIMINARIES

*The Rainbow* (1915) captures the pain and anguish of each woman as they come to possess the fruit of union with a man. As the daughter gains voice over the ailing mother, the readers come to see how much time leads the mind towards something new. All characters seek illumination in love, and different from conventional romance novels. *The Rainbow* traces not the journey of one person, but the journey of an understanding. D. H. Lawrence’s feeling for and understanding of his female characters is astounding, particularly when compared with that of other writers of his time.

*The Rainbow* is a family chronicle relating to the history of the ancient Brangwen family of March Farm, on the Derbyshire-Nottinghamshire border. Lawrence wrote about parent-child relationships and family dynamics. *The Rainbow* delves into the thoughts and feelings of the Brangwen family and their loves. It shows how beautiful life really is and does it in the most meticulous fashion. The Brangwen women display an air of grace and wonder as they examine the numerous changes occurring around them. Their character is the most beautiful aspect of the book. Anna and Ursula are dear protagonists and are hard not to love for their spry and dissenting yet caring personalities. The beginning of the novel is absolutely brilliant. The novel begins with the early life of Tom Brangwen, a simple, poorly educated farmer. Tom Brangwen is of the first generation. He is decent enough but alone and feels a void that only a woman can fill. Tom is
a man of the soil, and he lives alone on his farm with only an old woman for his company and housekeeper.

The novel concludes with Ursula emerging from a long spell of illness and distress, complete with an implied miscarriage, to ponder at a rainbow arching symbolically over the hideous industrial landscape, which provides the setting for all their lives. Ursula finds her rainbow at the end though her journey continues in the next book *Women in Love*. The story deliberately has no finality in its close, because Lawrence intended to continue with Ursula and Gudrun in *Women in Love*.

*Women in Love* (1920) was written in its first form in the Tyrol in 1913. It was altogether re-written and finished in Cornwall in 1917. So that it is a novel which took its final shape in the midst of the period of war though it does not concern the war itself. The bitterness of the war may be taken for granted in the characters.

Ursula and Gudrun Brangwen are two sisters living in the Midlands of England in the 1910s. The sisters are occupants of the coal-mining town of Beldover, and their relationships dominate the novel, as they try to forge new types of liberated personal relationships. They meet two men who live nearby, Rupert Birkin and Gerald Crich. The men they choose are trying to do the same thing – so the results are problematic and often disturbing. Ursula, a teacher herself, is in love with the school inspector Rupert Birkin, an alienated intellectual who articulates many opinions associated with the author, who is initially involved with Hermione Roddice (a dominating lady with whom he is not happy). The unfortunate Hermione of *Women in Love*, who is probably the most abused character in all of Lawrence, savagely criticized by her lover, Birkin, for wanting sensuality in “that loathsome little skull of yours that ought to be cracked like a nut”. Lawrence is venting his sadistic hatred of such women here; some of his energies are sadistic.
Ursula and Birkin become involved and Gudrun is an artist, eventually begins a love affair with Gerald. Gerald Crich, a friend of Birkin, is the other main character, an industrialist. He is weighted down by the deaths that have occurred in his family (he accidentally caused his brother’s death at an early age and feels guilty when his sister too dies, by drowning). Gerald takes over the running of the mine from his father but his initially strong position is weakened by his relationship with Gudrun that in time is made difficult by emptiness in him. Ursula and Rupert, meanwhile, are married, and the novel continues to explore their happier relationship. Gerald and Gudrun are torn apart by sorrow and the latter’s flirting with the sculptor Loerke in the Alps while the four central characters holiday together. Some saw the novel as filled with depravity and vice, but Lawrence maintained that it was his finest work. The author himself is present in the novel as the character Rupert. (Ross, 1982:114).

The plot is based on relationships between men and women, these relationships affect the daily life; the incapacity of expressing the feelings at the right time is a constant trouble, in the same way that the necessity of being affirmed by a corresponded love.

The four central characters, the Brangwen sisters and their partners debate themselves between love and hate; between sexual desire and doubt... The importance of sex is reflected in the novel through the conception of a full sexual relationship as an expression of pure love. (Clarke, 1969:130).

All four are deeply concerned with questions of society, politics, and the relationship between men and women. At a party at Gerald’s manor house, Gerald’s sister, Diana, drowns. Gudrun becomes the teacher and mentor of his youngest sister. Soon Gerald’s coal-mine-owning father passes away as well after a drawn-out illness. Birkin asks Ursula to marry him, and she agrees. Gerald and Gudrun’s relationship, however, becomes stormy. The
four vacation in the Alps. Gudrun begins an intense friendship with Loerke, a physically puny but emotionally commanding artist. Gerald, enraged by Loerke, by Gudrun’s abuse and by his own destructive nature, tries to murder Gudrun. In failing, he retreats back over the mountains and falls to his death in the snow.

Title of the Novel: *Women in Love* is an inadequate title. The novel concerns itself with far more than simply women in love; far more than simply women in love. Two violent love affairs are the plot’s focus, but the drama of the novel has clearly to do with every sort of emotion, and with every sort of spiritual enthusiasm. Gerald and Birkin and Ursula and Gudrun are immense figures, monstrous creations out of legend, out of mythology; they are unable to alter their fates, like tragic heroes and heroines of old. The mark of Cain has been on Gerald since early childhood, when he accidentally killed his brother; and Gudrun is named after a heroine out of Germanic legend who slew her first husband. The pace of the novel is often frenetic. (Lawrence, 1921:66).

3. 2. WOMEN CHARACTERS IN *THE RAINBOW*: LYDIA LENSKY, ANNA BRANGWEN, URSULA BRANGWEN AND WINIFRED INGER

**LYDIA LENSKY**

Lydia Lensky, the widow of Paul Lensky is a Polish emigrant towards whom Tom Brangwen is attracted and whom he ultimately marries in utter disregard of her seniority in age and her superiority in every other field of life. Lawrence himself had married Frieda, a German, older to him. Evidently he made Lydia share quite a few significant things with Frieda. Apart from this, he gave her his own mother’s name. (The name of Lawrence’s mother was Mrs. Lydia Lawrence). Lawrence must have felt a great fascination for this character.
**Her Physical Appearance:** When Tom meets her for the first time, she is dressed in black and looked rather small beneath her black cloak. *Her face is pale and clear. She has thick dark eye-brows and a wide mouth, curiously held.* Her mouth, in particular, is an ugly-beautiful mouth, and is a great source of attraction for Tom. In their very first meeting Tom intuitively realizes that she is the woman for him, and she vaguely recognizes this fact as well.

**Her Past:** The daughter of a Polish landowner, Lydia married Paul Lensky. She learnt nursing and became some kind of an emancipee. When Paul was moving about, inciting his countrymen to a revolt against the foreign yoke, Lydia followed him almost like a shadow. Even such a calamity as the death of her two children from diphtheria did not deter her from her patriotic pursuits. However, the revolt against the Russians failed and they had to fly to England. Here Lydia gave birth to her third child, a girl whom they named Anna. Paul who had been shocked by the failure of the revolt ultimately died, leaving Lydia all alone in a foreign land with the people around her apparently cold and hostile. It was the church that saved her from starvation.

**Meeting with Tom Brangwen:** The advent of Tom Brangwen in her life brings about a remarkable change in it. In the very first meeting, she recognizes him to be a man for her, but it is actually after her visit to the Marsh kitchen that the voice of her body rises strong and insistent and she realizes that she wants him as the man who has come ‘nearest to her for awakening’. Giving herself up to him would be safety, she realizes. She is also enchanted by the blue, steady livingness of his eyes.

**Her Married Life: Love-Hate Rhythm:** On the first night after marriage, when Tom takes her up in his arms, she is soothed by the stress of his embrace and stands still, relaxed, against him, mingling into him. They are
together in an elemental embrace beyond their foreignness. But this feeling does not last. The very next morning they feel foreign and unknown to each other.

Her married life with Tom is characterized by a kind of love-hate rhythm. She feels Tom’s unbounded passion for her and is gratified: but she is also aware of a ‘solid power of antagonism’ underneath, and it irritates her. They live suspended in a kind of tension. Often Tom gets furious with this ‘small, ugly-mouthed’ woman who has ‘nothing to do with him’. And she too does not take it lying down; she turns on him like a tiger and there is a fierce quarrel. Each quarrel ends in a sweeter reconciliation.

**ANNA BRANGWEN**

Anna and William (Will in short) Brangwen are the second generation where Lawrence makes more explicit his belief in the power of womanhood. Anna is the daughter of Lydia and her real father was a Polish physician who died young. She remains a controversial character. As a child, Anna Brangwen exhibits the same kind of foreignness, separateness, and sense of superiority, as does her mother, except on the farm. She has an indomitable spirit that she carries over to her adulthood. Her strong sense of independence and desire for freedom emerge when she refuses to allow Will to dominate her. She can also be quite selfish, regarding her own needs when she tries to destroy her husband’s passionate connection to the church. Anna wants to be the only interest in Will’s life, but she then gets irritated. As Anna grows into womanhood, they manage to have children, one of whom is Ursula, who will return as a mature woman in Lawrence’s sequel, *Women in Love*. One of the most powerful influences of the novel that provoked the most outrage is that of Anna, when she dances naked and slowly during pregnancy in her room before the firelight in perfect self-sufficiency, as Will watches in dismay. And she becomes an earth mother
loving her man, home and land. She is the mother of the heroine, Ursula Brangwen.

**Her love for William:** Anna’s love for, and subsequent marriage with, William Brangwen ties in with the continued dominance of patriarchal system in English society of the time. It is in this generation’s marital relationship that Lawrence creates a flood of nonconformist questioning of tradition. Anna openly expresses her doubts about the validity of religious traditions of creations. We read her defiant words “It is impudence to say that Woman was made out of Man’s body, when every man is born of a woman”. Anna herself is living proof of the inadequacy of the patriarchal Genesis myth, for Will is forced to acknowledge that his wife was “everything to him, she was his life and his derivation. He depended on her. If she were taken away he would collapse as a house from which the central pillar is removed”. (Kinkead-Weekes, 1989:121-138).

**Her Dynamic Character:** Another trait found in Anna Brangwen is her dynamic personality. She is a modern emancipated and intellectual woman. She is more dynamic even than her husband. She shares advanced ideas with Will. She speaks the things to her husband, which a timid woman cannot say. She bravely prefers Will. Anna has the capacity to excite appreciation in others. She has the courage to speak about her love for Will.

Thus, it is clear that Lawrence has portrayed Anna’s character in an authentic way. As the story enters the second generation, Lawrence focuses on the most grasping character of the book viz. Anna Brangwen.

**URSULA BRANGWEN**

Ursula is the oldest daughter of Will and Anna. She is a shy girl who blossoms in the novel. Ursula becomes a schoolteacher in a grim urban school; falls in love and leaves Anton Skrebensky and returns home to her
family and the friendship and love of her sister Gudrun. These two girls will be the main characters in *Women in Love* the sequel to *The Rainbow*. Ursula develops a lesbian relationship in this novel but is clearly bisexual in orientation.

The first character is Ursula Brangwen, who is a well-developed character from the beginning to the end of the novel. The development of Ursula’s character is very unpredictable and an interesting study. Ursula Brangwen has undergone some experiences, which later become the driving force of her abnormal sexual development. This establishes her as a well-developed character. Ursula’s character is similar to Louie Burrows. She plays a vital role in *The Rainbow*. Ursula remains one of the finest creations of D. H. Lawrence. Her character has great dramatic significance. Besides the history of a family over three generations, the key character is Ursula. In the early 1900s just before World War I, she is a “feminist” before her time. We find that she rejects marriage, engages in premarital sex, conducts a homosexual affair, and “objectifies” men. She is also non-religious and probably never has children. (Mudrick, 1959).

Ursula is nothing like her mother or her grandmother. She resents her parents’ provinciality and her mother’s complacency of being kept at home to be a baby-making machine and a domestic servant. Falling in love with a young man named Anton Skrebensky, she is unwilling to accept the dullness of being a wife. She rejects the sanctimoniousness and hollowness of religion.

**Charming Personality:** Ursula Brangwen is extremely pretty. She has a slim figure. She is light as a bird and ethereal like a fairy. Her courageous eyes, serene brow and well-set mouth signify her character. In short, Ursula possesses magical charm and a bewildering personality, which at once take possession of Anton’s heart and soul.
Well-Educated and Intelligent: Ursula is a well-educated teacher and intelligent modern girl, struggling to achieve independence in a man’s world. (Paul, 1998:38). She hated religion, because it only confused her.

Her Love for Anton: The young Anton Skrebensky, the son of the Skrebenskys enters Ursula’s life. An engineer in the army, he meets her at the age of twenty-one, “a slim, smoldering girl, deeply reticent, yet lapsing into unreserved expansiveness now and then…” She is sensitive in the extreme, always tortured, always affecting a callous indifference to screen herself. Soon Ursula and Anton become lovers. She loves Anton and is deeply devoted to him. There are long passages in the book about Ursula’s relationship with Anton Skrebensky. Much of it is intertwined with descriptions of the forces of Nature or the beauties of Creation – descriptions for which Lawrence had a special affinity; devices that dramatize the character’s inner lives. Ursula is usually not so desperate that she cannot afford to want freedom in her life, something that conflicts very much with Anton. Even so, though she is fortunate in some respects, as a young woman she still has a limited range of possible choices other than marriage. The most obvious alternative is teaching school. One of the most powerful sections in the book, in my opinion, is her experience of teaching in a working class school and the dilemma she faces there: having to sacrifice some of her principles not even to succeed, but just to get by. (Kinkead-Weekes, 1986:39).

Love-Relationship: Ursula’s love for the Polish young man Anton Skrebensky is D. H. Lawrence’s inversion of the command of dominance between patriarchal-and-matriarchal values. Ursula falls for a man from her maternal line of descent (Lydia was Polish). Lawrence renders the relationship a failure. Love-and-Power becomes Love-or-Power in Ursula’s case. She loses her ability to love a man and be loved in return. It is sad that
in her search and rebellion against the traditional gender roles, she loses sight of the human need to bond.

The individualistic spirit of the new age, of which Ursula Brangwen is the prime representative, keeps our young heroine from following the long-established tradition of marital slavery and dependence. Ursula becomes a teacher at a school and, despite her weaknesses, persists in living on her own instead of giving up her studies and job for her love.

**Her Negation of Religion:** The first instance of Ursula’s negation of Biblical teachings is her natural reaction against her younger sister, Theresa. Theresa hits Ursula’s other cheek turned to her in response to the first blow. Unlike the devoted Christian action, Ursula reacts like a normal child by shaking the wee offender in a subsequent quarrel. Ursula develops into a highly individualistic character giving her creator (Lawrence) a free hand to explore a taboo subject: homosexuality. The gravity of Ursula’s passion for her teacher Miss Winifred Inger and the description of their physical contact are aggravated by Miss Inger’s negation of the falsehood of religion.

Thus, the above discussion of the traits of Ursula’s character shows that Ursula is really the central figure of the novel. Most of the book is about the youth and coming of age of Ursula Brangwen. The book follows the lives of her Grandfather and parents, but that’s mostly background, setting the stage for Ursula. All the characters and the main events in the novel rotate around Ursula.

The novel ends with her miscarriage as she is chased by a herd of horses in the rain. Sitting alone and watching a rainbow in the sky, we are told about Ursula Brangwen: “she saw in the rainbow the earth’s new architecture, the old, brittle corruption of houses and factories swept away, the world built

D. H. Lawrence uses varied ways to express Ursula’s feelings and experience through the passage. Each of the techniques he uses, create a different impact on the reader, all expressing Ursula’s thoughts and feelings.

In the novel we are interested in Ursula’s parents and her family life, how Ursula wants to be different from her mother who keeps on reproducing. Anna has sound views on child rearing, especially in a time that was governed by the heinous idea of “spare the rod and spoil the child”, and the reader is really keen to see how Lawrence deals with this character. It is really interesting to see a female character in those times strive for a more independent life.

The most important character is that of Ursula Brangwen who has in turn several characters revolving around her life. One of the unique features of The Rainbow is Lawrence’s treatment of characters. Sometimes it becomes impossible to determine which character is the true protagonist. In the beginning you feel that Tom Brangwen is important and soon after the focus shifts to his stepdaughter Anna. In place of emphasis on characters, Lawrence traces a circuitous journey through three generations-alternating voices of three generations of Brangwen women. Each of these three women is given their space to find the path of their own rainbow. The word “journey” itself is repeated frequently enough, and the torch of change is constantly being passed along. The journey traces from the Polish widow, Lydia Lensky to her Brangwen husband, Tom, her daughter, Anna Lensky/Brangwen to another Brangwen, Will, and eventually to the “heiress” of Brangwen memories – Ursula.
WINIFRED INGER

Another character, which plays an important role in Ursula Brangwen’s life, is Winifred Inger. Winifred Inger becomes the turning point in Ursula Brangwen’s life, and also undergoes some changes affecting the story of *The Rainbow*. Lawrence initially presents Ursula Brangwen’s affair with her teacher as a good thing, but he later on depicts Ursula’s disgusted feeling about it. Winifred had a powerful influence on Ursula; it is possible that the independent element in Ursula came from her.

**Her Personality:** Winifred Inger is beautiful, clever, “proud and free as a man, yet exquisite as a woman.” Unfortunately, once the woman has some sort of hinted-at sex (undoubtedly swampy, mallow, and creamy), Lawrence immediately evokes physical disgust and Ursula fobs Winifred Inger off on her even more repugnant industrialist uncle. Ursula is crushed when Winifred marries Ursula’s uncle. But the switch is dodgy, too sudden, and the action reported rather than explored.

Thus, there is the “Shame” chapter in *The Rainbow* Lawrence initially presents Ursula Brangwen’s crush on her teacher Winifred as a good thing. If we read fiction to glean some knowledge of the human heart and mind, and one vision or moral keeps repeating itself, it’s easy to take it as the truth and shudder at “the grinning travesty of sex,” and to conclude, with Lawrence, that lesbianism is the sickness, man the cure.

3. 3. THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN TOM AND LYDIA, WILL AND ANNA AND URSULA AND ANTON

*The Rainbow* is about the living relationships of men and women, the struggle to achieve peace and fulfillment one with another within the colossal compass of the ranged arch of the visible universe. The crucial relation in the novel is between a man and a woman in marital and sexual experience. In *The Rainbow*, love between man and woman is the main subject of Lawrence. And he traces this relationship over three generations
of the Brangwens. To be precise, there are three major relationships that have been depicted, the relationships between Tom and Lydia, Will and Anna and Ursula and Anton. It is unquestionably acknowledged that of these three relationships, the one between Tom and Lydia is the most successful one. In fact, it is held out as a norm against which can be measured the success or failure of the other two.

Lawrence’s idea of a successful man-woman relationship is embodied in the central symbol of the rainbow. The rainbow connects the earth with the sky, the physical with the spiritual, the female with the male, and yet keeps the two quite distinct. The man and the woman must fulfill each other too physically, but each one of the partners must also enable the other to transcend his or her limited self and achieve a higher form of being. There must be successful polarization between the two.

Thus, the basic problems of The Rainbow, the man-woman relationship, the effect of industrialization on a rural community, the disintegrating effect of the parental maladjustment on the life of the children, are the same as those of Sons and Lovers. (Paul, 1998:169).

In The Rainbow we meet numerous attempts as love relationships, including some, which Lawrence evidently views as distortions of the central quest for a full male-female love, such as the homosexual affair between Ursula and Winifred or the perverted marriage of convenience between Tom Brangwen and Winifred. The central story is of three couples in successive generations: Tom and Lydia, Will and Anna, and Ursula and Anton. Our extract for analysis describes a late stage in the relationship of Will and Anna, after the birth of four of their children. Briefly, Anna had established dominance in their marriage by becoming engrossed in childbirth, so that Will no longer competes, and ‘In the house, he served his wife and the little matriarchy’. (Lawrence, 1915:193). However, he makes
advances to a young girl while out in Nottingham, and almost embarks on an adulterous affair. The change in their relationship that both Will and Anna sense following this event leads to a period of renewed sensuality between them:

…He was quite ousted himself, and sensually transported by that which he discovered in her. He was another man reveling over her…Their children became mere offspring to them; they lived in the darkness and death of their own sensual activities. Sometimes he felt he was going mad with a sense of Absolute Beauty, perceived by him in her through his senses. (Lawrence, 1915:220)

Here, Lawrence describes the couple’s relationship over an extended period of time: only Will’s and Anna’s inner lives are narrated, and external events, over an unspecified period of months or years, play no part at all. The couple’s children are mentioned as ‘mere offspring’ to them; and Lawrence and the reader join them ‘in the darkness and death of their own sensual activities’ where they ‘lived’.

Lawrence sometimes conveys the movement of his character’s mind and emotion in actual time, as we read. For example, Will begins with generalized term ‘her beauty’, but seems to realize suddenly that her beauty is plural – many beauties – before become increasingly excited as he obsessionally focuses on how many ‘separate, several’ beauties there are in each part of her body. This sentence seems to take us along with Will on his journey of sensual discovery. Anna’s body is a landscape in ‘plain’ and ‘hillocks’, which connects with Will’s wish to ‘bury himself’ in her and his birdlike ‘lit’ on her, as well as relating to her as half of ‘the world’ or ‘the moon’.
It is difficult to compare one relationship with another in *The Rainbow*: each couple achieves a measure of success, but none are final. In each case, we can gain some understanding of where these different kinds and levels of relationship fit in to Lawrence’s overall ideas, by looking first at the relationship itself: what is included and what is excluded from Will’s and Anna’s relationship? Lawrence tells us clearly that everything except a kind of sensual combat is excluded from their relationship. This is far from a full and whole relationship.

We remember that Will felt ‘naked’ and as if ‘in a new world’ during their honeymoon; and they had violent quarrels and conflicts in the months after their marriage, which culminated in him giving up the ‘master-of-the-house’ idea, until finally he burned his craving and, to complete Anna’s victory, their first child was born. Anna gradually destroyed his mystic religious passion and his mystic creative passion in his carving. The new sensual activity described in this extract has a liberating effect on Will:

> “His intimate life was so violently active, that it set another man in him free. And this new man turned with interest to public life, to see what part he could take in it.” (Lawrence, 1915:220)

There is only one element in the extract we have studied that depicts this sensual obsession as a breakthrough for Will: he has always adhered to the ‘broken arch’ of Gothic form, we are told, and have feared the absolute. Now, in his sexual relationship with his wife, he ‘had given way’ and ‘gave himself’ to ‘Absolute Beauty’. So now the absolute ‘round arch’ exists – even if only on a primitive level of sensuality – in Will and Anna’s relationship. The ‘round arch’ is a potent symbol in *The Rainbow*, an alternative version of the arch of the rainbow itself, which symbolizes a gateway to a wider world beyond, and a challenge to each individual to continue traveling forwards in a sort of life-journey. The perfect and absolute rainbow arch also symbolizes a complete union, a perfected male-
female relationship, which is visible and journeyed towards, but – like a real rainbow – is also unreachable. So, in this limited sense, Will comes to life again: he begins to take his place in moving the world forward. His passionate creative feelings are never revived; but he does have influence, ideals and worthwhile work again, as a teacher.

From the beginning, a very special relationship exists between Ursula and her father Will. Will dissatisfied with Anna, turns to Ursula for his emotional fulfillment. Anna defies his efforts to dominate her, to be in possession of her. By deriding his faith in the church, she almost makes him feel ashamed of himself. He is overburdened by a sense of profound inadequacy. The chief note of his relationship with his daughter is that of possession: “He waited for the child to become his… It was his own… So that the father had the elder baby… She was a piece of light that really belonged to him, that played within his darkness”. Thus there is something strained and distorted in Will’s love of Ursula. It is too narrow, too possessive, and too personal. It is the kind of love, which cannot keep its distance from its object and hence consumes it. Naturally it does not exert any healthy influence on Ursula.

There are long passages in The Rainbow about Ursula’s relationship with Anton Skrebensky. Much of it is intertwined with descriptions of the forces of Nature or the beauties of Creation – descriptions for which Lawrence had a special affinity; devices that dramatize the character’s inner lives. Ursula is usually not so desperate that she cannot afford to want freedom in her life, something that conflicts very much with Anton. Even so, though she is fortunate in some respects, as a young woman she still has a limited range of possible choices other than marriage.

Skrebensky is no doubt physically attractive, but as David Daiches points out, ‘he is too little of a whole personality ever to be able to achieve a proper relationship with a woman’. To begin with, he places too much emphasis on the purely physical. This aspect of his personality is made
It is evident that though Skrebensky can satisfy Ursula sexually, he is incapable of giving the kind of maleness demanded by her. She owns his body and enjoys it with the delight and carelessness of a possessor. But after each contact, her anguished desire for him, or for that which she never has from him, is stronger and her love is more hopeless. She realizes sadly that he arouses ‘no fruitful fecundity’ in her. He seems added up, finished.

The Rainbow’s relatively early date places it in what we see to be the first phase of Lawrence’s career, which is marked by the kinds of idyllic claims for male-female relationships and the married state that many Lawrence critics have stressed. Biographically speaking, this period was dominated by Lawrence’s avid seeking of a wife, whom he found in Frieda Weekley, and by his attempt to perfect his relationship with her. (Fernihough, 2001:36).

Oedipal love and its harmful effects on one’s personality are discussed in great detail in Sons and Lovers. In fact, Oedipal love is the central motif of that novel. But in The Rainbow also, Lawrence has discussed it in three relationships. In the first generation, Tom Brangwen has a mother-fixation, which results in his sexual insufficiency. He is so much haunted by the mother image that he is not able to push his relationships with his girls to their desired development. Next we find it in the Tom-Anna relationship. During Lydia’s pregnancy and later during her preoccupation with the newborn child, Tom diverts his love towards his stepdaughter Anna. The relationship is charged with great intensity, but only momentarily. After Tom’s satisfactory adjustment with his wife, the undesirable intensity of this relationship automatically fades away. It is in the case of Will-Ursula
relationship that we find a detailed discussion of the Oedipus Complex. Frustrated in his marriage, Will looks to the child Ursula for his emotional fulfillment. Since it is a very strained and perverse kind of love, it sustains him all right, but it has a ‘deadening’ effect on Ursula’s sensibility. She becomes too moody and sensitive.

3. 4. WOMEN CHARACTERS IN WOMEN IN LOVE: URSULA BRANGWEN AND GUDRUN BRANGWEN

URSULA BRANGWEN

Ursula is a 26-year-old teacher in a Midlands school. Her life is mundane. She is an intellectual who falls in love with the mercurial Rupert Birkin. Ursula is said to be a fictional recreation of Lawrence’s wife Frieda. She is fiercely independent but craves the warmth of a sexual/spiritual relationship with a man.

Ursula is the oldest of the Brangwen sisters. Her character is serious, responsible, a little shy and respectful. Her relationship with her father and sister is good but sometimes they have disputes. She is a schoolteacher who enjoys her job. She has an inferiority complex and needs to be reaffirmed in a continual way. (Seltzer, 1920:89).

Ursula’s role in saving Birkin from dissolution is, then, far greater than she can know. Not only must she arouse and satisfy his spiritual yearnings, she must answer to his physical desire as well: she must, in a sense, take on the active, masculine role in their relationship. (Significantly, it is Ursula who presses them into an erotic relationship after the death of Diana Crich and her young man. It is she who embraces Birkin tightly, wanting to show him that she is no shallow prude, and though he whimpers to himself, “Not this, not this,” he nevertheless succumbs to desire for her and they become lovers. Had Ursula not sensed the need to force Birkin into a physical relationship, it is possible their love would have become as spiritualized, and consequently as poisoned, as Birkin’s and Hermione’s). Ursula’s role in
saving Birkin from destruction is comparable to Sonia’s fairly magical redemption of Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment*, just as Gerald’s suicide is comparable to Svidrigaylov’s when both men are denied salvation through women by whom they are obsessed. (Bradshaw, 1998:65).

**GUDRUN BRANGWEN**

Gudrun Brangwen is the artistic younger sister of Brangwen. Gudrun has studied and worked abroad as a sculptress. Gudrun enters into a tempestuous affair with the owner of the town mining company. Her affair with the aristocratic Gerald Crich will end in tragedy. Gudrun wears bright clothing and is more outgoing than her sister Ursula. She too is independent wanting to go beyond sex or domestic life with a life partner. She may have been based on Lawrence’s New Zealand writer friend Katherine Mansfield.

Gudrun is an extrovert and prefers a bohemian life because she is an artist. She travels frequently and loves to live abroad. She is a schoolteacher like her sister but she doesn’t work very much, because she lives from her earnings of her paintings. Her relationship with Gerald Crich is only a pastime to her. (Worthen, 1989:26).

Thus, Gudrun is very variable; she plays with Gerald causing him a kind of pain she is not capable of understanding. At the end of the novel she feels something for him but it doesn’t matter to her, she doesn’t hesitate in abandoning him for another man. In fact, that she doesn’t realize what she wants. Gudrun couldn’t understand why “one’s whole feelings were different, why one lived in another sphere. Later she realizes that this was the world of the powerful, underworld men who spent most of their time in the darkness. Gudrun is an artist of considerable talent herself, one who works in miniatures, as if wishing to see the world “through the wrong end of the opera glasses.” It is significant that she expresses a passionate wish to have been born a man, and that she feels an unaccountable lust for deep
brutality against Gerald, whom in another sense she loves. Far more interesting a character than her sister Ursula, Gudrun is fatally locked into her own willful instinct for making herself the measure of all things: her vision is anthropomorphic and solipsistic, finally inhuman.

Each unhappy family may be unhappy in its own way. In *Women in Love*, Lawrence struggled to get at the sameness that is characteristic of all happy families. First, it’s highly debatable whether the female characters “prevail” at the end of *Women in Love*. The last scene and especially the last line shows Rupert asserting his right, in the face of Ursula’s strongly expressed opposition and disgust, to an “open” marriage that would accommodate his desire for an equal love with a man – i.e., his bisexuality.

Even if the female characters did prevail, Lawrence has asserted that it is “natural” for women to be subjugated to men; that it is the inherent nature of women to be masochistic; that women are “closer” to nature and the animals than are men. He not only makes sweeping generalizations, he posits that certain characteristics are inherent to all women.

Thus, in Gudrun and Ursula, D. H. Lawrence has created two memorable characters, who while being related and seemingly similar, grow into two diametrically opposite personalities. The characters are well drawn, with their aspirations, dreams and doubts, for example, the character of Ursula shows all these. She is during one more story doubts about her feelings for Rupert, and when she acts like she knows, she needs to be reaffirmed in them.

3.5. THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN URSULA AND BIRKIN AND GUDRUN AND GERALD

*Women in Love* opens with the two sisters, Ursula and Gudrun, conversing. Gudrun asks Ursula, “You don’t think one needs the experience of having
been married?” and Ursula replies, “Not really. More likely to be the end of experience”.

How many novels succeed in portraying a happy marriage without retreating into formula, externalities or sentimentality? It’s not easy. It requires a willingness to delve deep into a realm of meaning that is not only psychological but also spiritual. In *Women in Love* Lawrence took on this challenge with the gravity it deserves – the book is almost as much about death as it is about life. It examines sex, love and marriage always intelligently, always feelingly, from a variety of angles. It’s a dramatic, dialectical novel: the characters debate with one another, and Lawrence debates with himself. The issues are resolved, but barely – and then again, maybe not.

*Women in Love* takes up the story, but across the gap of changed consciousness created by World War I. The women of the title are Ursula, picking up her life, still at home, and doubtful of her role as teacher and her social and intellectual status; and her sister Gudrun, who is not only a teacher but also an artist and a free spirit as well. They are modern women, educated, free from stereotyped assumptions about their role, and sexually autonomous. Though unsure of what to do with their lives, they are unwilling to settle for an ordinary marriage as a solution to the problem. The sisters’ aspirations crystallize in their romantic relationships: Ursula’s with Rupert Birkin, a university graduate and school inspector (and also a Lawrence-figure), Gudrun’s with Gerald Crich, the handsome, ruthless, seemingly dominant industrialist who runs his family’s mines. Birkin and Gerald themselves are deeply if inarticulately attached to each other. The novel follows the growth of the two relationships: one (Ursula and Birkin) is productive and hopeful, if difficult to maintain as equilibrium of free partners. The other (Gudrun and Gerald) tips over into dominance and dependence, violence and death. The account is characterized by the
extreme consciousness of the protagonists: the inarticulate struggles of earlier generations are now succeeded at the verbal level by earnest or bitter debate. Birkin’s intellectual force is met by Ursula’s mixture of warmth and skepticism and her emotional stability. The Gerald-Gudrun relationship shows his male dominance to be a shell overlying a crippling inner emptiness and lack of self-awareness, which eventually inspires revulsion in Gudrun. The final conflict between them is played out in the high bareness of an Alpine ski resort; after a brutal assault on Gudrun, Gerald wanders off into the snow and dies. Birkin, grieving, leaves with Ursula for a new life in the warm symbolic south, in Italy.

Birkin attempts a physical relationship with Hermione, which is a cruel failure, humiliating them both. He goes in desperation to prostitutes. Like Paul Morel he suffers a familiar split between the “spiritual” woman and the “physical” woman, but his deeper anxiety lies in his unacknowledged passion for Gerald Crich. Surely homoerotic yearning has never been so vividly and so sympathetically presented as it is in Lawrence’s Prologue, where Birkin’s intelligent complexity, his half-serious desire to rid himself of his soul in order to escape his predicament, and his fear of madness and dissolution as a consequence of his lovelessness give him a tragic depth comparable to Hamlet’s. He wants to love women, just as he wants to believe in the world’s constructive activity; but how can a man create his own feelings? Birkin knows that he cannot: he can only suppress them by an act of sheer will. In danger of going mad or of dying – of possibly killing himself – Birkin continues his deathly relationship with Hermione, keeping his homoerotic feelings to himself and even, in a sense, secret from himself. With keen insight Lawrence analyzes Birkin’s own analysis of the situation. “He knew what he felt, but he always kept the knowledge at bay. His a priori were: ‘I should not feel like this,’ and ‘It is the ultimate mark of my own deficiency, that I feel like this.’ Therefore, though he admitted
everything, he never really faced the question. He never accepted the desire, and received it as part of himself. He always tried to keep it expelled from him.” Not only does Birkin attempt to dissociate himself from an impulse that is himself, he attempts to deny the femaleness in his own nature by objectifying (and degrading) it in his treatment of Hermione and of the “slightly bestial” prostitutes. It maddens him that he should feel sexual attraction for the male physique while for the female he is capable of feeling only a kind of fondness, a sacred love, as if for a sister. “The women he seemed to be kin to, he looked for the soul in them.” By the age of thirty he is sickly and dissolute, attached to Hermione in a loveless, sadistic relationship, terrified of breaking with her for fear of falling into the abyss. Yet the break is imminent, inevitable – so the action of *Women in Love* begins.

The other relationship in the book – Ursula and Rupert’s – also features male domination and presumes male superiority. Lawrence also has all this quasi-religious mumbo jumbo, most of it in virtually opaque and hideously overwritten prose, about “honest” relations between the sexes. In fact, if any novelist can be said to be making sweeping generalizations about male/female relationships, it is Lawrence.

*Women in Love* must have originally been imagined as Birkin’s tragedy rather than Gerald’s, for though Gerald feels an attraction for Birkin, he is not as obsessed with it as Birkin is; in the Prologue he is characterized as rather less intelligent, less shrewd, than he turns out to be in subsequent chapters.

The man who had died looked nakedly onto life, and saw a vast resoluteness everywhere flinging itself up in stormy or subtle wave-crests, foam-tips emerging out of the blue invisible, a black-and-orange cock, or
the green flame tongues out of the extremes of the fig-tree. They came forth, these things and creatures of spring, glowing with desire and with assertion... The man who had died looked on the great swing into existence of things that had not died, but he saw no longer their tremulous desire to exist and to be. He heard instead their ringing, defiant challenge to all other things existing . . . And always, the man who had died saw not the bird alone, but the short, sharp wave of life of which the bird was the crest. He watched the queer, beaky motion of the creature . . . (Ross, 1982:68)

That Lawrence might have dealt with the tragic implications of the individual’s failure to find a home for himself in his own nation is indicated by remarks he makes elsewhere, for instance in the introductory essay, “The Spirit of Place”, to Studies in Classic American Literature: “Men are free when they are in a living homeland, not when they are straying and breaking away. Men are free when they are obeying some deep, inward voice of religious belief. Obeying from within. Men are free when they belong to a living, organic, believing community, active in fulfilling some unfulfilled, perhaps unrealized purpose.” The Studies were written between 1917 and 1923.

Community in the old sense is based on property and possessions and must be rejected, and all human relationships not founded upon an immediate emotional rapport must be broken. The community almost by definition is degraded. About this everyone is in agreement – Clifford Chatterley as well as Mellors, Hermione as well as Ursula and Gudrun. “The old ideals are dead as nails – nothing there,” Birkin says early in Women in Love. “It seems to me there remains only this perfect union with a woman – sort of
ultimate marriage – and there isn’t anything else.” Gerald, however, finds it difficult to agree. Making one’s life up out of a woman, one woman only, woman only seems to him impossible, just as the forging of an intense love-connection with another man – which in Lawrence’s cosmology would have saved his life – is impossible. Gerald fell in what his friend Birkin – who is positive side of the soul twins Birkin-Gerald, as Ursula and her sister Gudrun are literally sisters and symbolically the complementary sides of each other’s nature – called a “great shallow or shallow pot”. He died, that is, in an icy womb, as Siegmund had been wounded physically and mortally in his psyche in the warm womb of the sea-cave. Warm or cold, these men were too life denying to live.

Ursula’s role in saving Birkin from dissolution is, then, far greater than she can know. Not only must she arouse and satisfy his spiritual yearnings, she must answer to his physical desire as well: she must in a sense, take on the active, masculine role in their relationship. (Significantly, it is Ursula who presses them into an erotic relationship after the death of Diana Crich and her young man. It is she who embraces Birkin tightly, wanting to show him that she is no shallow prude, and though he whimpers to himself, “Not this, not this,” he nevertheless succumbs to desire for her and they become lovers. Had Ursula not sensed the need to force Birkin into a physical relationship, it is possible their love would have become as spiritualized, and consequently as poisoned, as Birkin and Hermione’s). Ursula’s role in saving Birkin from destruction is comparable to Sonia’s fairy magical redemption of Rasnikov in Crime and Punishment, just as Gerald’s suicide is comparable to Svidrigaylov’s when both men are denied salvation through women by whom they are obsessed.

Thus, Women in Love studies the lives of Ursula Brangwen and her sister Gudrun in relation to the two men Rubert Birkin and Gerald Crich, who are attracted to them. Birkin, who represents Lawrence himself, is an integrated
human being. He has polarized within himself the two centers of consciousness, the blood and the brain. He is the ‘eternal’ male Ursula has been waiting for. He and Ursula find fulfillment in each other. The two together hold out the theory that the sexes must fulfill each other but if the woman attempts to dominate, the mystery of life is travestied and conjugal happiness is jeopardized. Birkin deplores the misery of modern civilization occasioned by the old male principle of domination. He also believes in a life of pure sensation. Crich’s approach to life is purely mental, and so is Gudrun’s. The two fail to experience the satisfying fullness of sense life. And through her desire to dominate Gerald Crich, Gudrun ultimately destroys him.

3. 6. CONCLUSION
Lawrence tried to bring different levels of reality. He stressed that reality is rationalized in different ways by different people and hence, it has multiple levels. His characters strive to express themselves in the prevalent situations, thus conflicts take place and each character is impatient to represent the action in them for which their inner passions drive to it. (Purohit, 1999:17).

One finds that the role of women played a great impact on D. H. Lawrence. He tried to create a balance between male and female relationships, by presenting his father in a favorable light to some extent but the mother is still a dominant figure. Later he swung towards father’s side and he developed a bitter mistrust for females. This reaction was excessive though understandable in relation to his personal history. While discussing the man woman relationships Lawrence emphasized on the distinctness of man and woman. He felt that “a child is either male or female; in the whole of its psyche and physique is either male or female. He being a modern author disagreed with the “liberals” opinion of enlightened moderns. The evolution of his women characters in novels is profound explorations of modern
feminity; and the place of women in society. With the positivity of emotions in women and existing being of men, he involved the levels of human body, known as “sensual” and “spiritual” level; the natural development of which depends on the individual’s psyche. He believed in the wholeness of being which can be achieved by the wise co-operation at these two levels, i.e. the sensual and the spiritual.