CHAPTER II

“Familial Relationships”

Thematic studies deal with the study of themes, motifs and types. They lead to the discovery of how the problems of societies and individuals as well as groups are transformed into literary characters which are both typical and individualistic, like the protagonists of great literary works. Thematic study includes the study of such aspects as theme, character, dialogue, vision and message. Moreover, any attempt to estimate the social relevance of a writer must rely primarily on themes. They show to what extent the writers are alive to contemporary reality. The thesis explores the theme of relationship – an individual with an individual and an individual with the society in select novels of D.H. Lawrence. The quality of man’s relationship determines the quality of his life. Among the human relationships man and woman relationship is the most important for humanity. The man-woman relationship is the dominant theme of Lawrence’s many of the novels. However, before this theme can be examined, it is necessary to establish what Lawrence considers to be the underlying cultural factor determining the destructiveness in the love relationships: the Christian teaching of self-denial. Christianity has led the individual to deny his Self, his distinct personality, his instinctive individuality. He becomes a ‘sacrificed,’ ‘selfless’ creature. Lawrence sees modern industrialism, nationalism and education as secular extensions of Christianity: in all of them, the individual no longer counts. He becomes a mere unit in the great machinery of industrialism, in the impersonal institution of nationalism, and in the education system with its falsified Truths and ‘vulgar authority.’ A ‘dissociation of sensibility’ has taken place. Individuals have
lost the capacity to respond spontaneously with the ‘whole’ man. They become ‘not me’ creatures. Because modern man has denied Selfhood, the love between man and woman, which should receive first place, is frequently replaced by parent-child love. The woman cannot love and respect the weak man with the destroyed Self. In her desperate attempt to find the fulfillment that she cannot find with her husband, she turns to her children. They become the substitute lovers to which she ‘sacrifices’ herself. By turning to her children, she humiliates her husband and thus further destroys him, as well as herself. And the children, too, become ‘crippled’ as the result of such a parent-child relationship they feel obligated to return the sacrificial love to the parent and thereby rob themselves of love that should find expression elsewhere. Not only does the weak man fail to maintain the love and respect of the woman, but also he frequently fails to establish a wholesome relationship with other men.

According to Lawrence, a man must unite with other men for the ‘purposive, creative activity’ of building world. The weakling has no distinct Selfhood to bring to this man-to-man friendship. In a study on select novels of D.H. Lawrence, it is examined that the relationship either between or among is usually destructive; a form of death occurs for either the man or woman, or both. Frequently they bring a destroyed Self to the relationship and a further destruction takes place. Occasionally, the destruction in the man-woman relationship is a purgation through which the individual becomes free; through destruction he experiences are birth to a capacity for a new, spontaneous love.

Lawrence’s philosophy of human-relationships incorporates a comprehensive set of elements that he has suggested in many essays, articles and even in his letters. In the context of this thesis his philosophy of human-relationships is being taken as
essentially rooted in three fold frame work. The frame work is based on the three stages of development of successful relations. The first step of the first facet of Lawrence’s philosophy of relationships in the coming together of the partners is in response to the call of the ‘Holy Spirit’. By ‘Holy Spirit’ Lawrence means the power of ‘intuition’ within us. The second stage involves mutual understanding between the partners of the relationship resulting in the resolution of their conflicts. The final stage involves the integration of the spirit with the flesh and mind, and achievement of a stage of bliss and fulfillment. These three suggested facets of the growth of a sound human relationship are inter-related. *Sons and Lovers*, *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* are based on the tangle of human relationships which Lawrence essentially sees in terms of relationship in which man and woman achieve fulfillment. Lawrence believed that an extra ordinary man and an extra-ordinary woman can create a new world. Only those relationships succeed which are not based on halfness but the whole of man and the whole of woman.

The need for a ‘mental attitude toward oneself and things in general’ which ‘makes one try to abstract some definite conclusions’ (Lawrence, 57) is the best illustrated in *Sons and Lovers*. Although *Sons and Lovers* forms the story of modern man’s search for self-fulfillment, it essentially is the story of all sensitive and thinking men and women in search of a better and more meaningful life (Yudhishter, 82). D.H. Lawrence’s *Sons and Lovers* has many of the marks of the novel that the novelist has to get out of his system in order to come to grips with his real imaginative vision. From all historical evidence one can ascertain the date of *Sons and Lovers* as between 1910 and 1913. A letter that Lawrence wrote to Sydney S. Pawling (18 October 1910) reads as follows:
… I will give you – with no intermediary this time – my third novel, 

*Paul Morel* (the title of *Sons and Lovers*), which is plotted out very interestingly (to me), and about one-eighth of which is written

(Salgado 21).

Another letter addressed to Edward Garnett (3 April 1912) also gives evidence to the date of composition of *Sons and Lovers*: ‘… I shall finish my Colliery novel this week – the first draft. It’ll want a bit of revising. It’s by far the best thing I’ve done’ (Ibid. 23).

*Sons and Lovers* was finally published in 1913 to which fact Lawrence’s letter to Edward Garnett, 19 May 1913, bears witness.

The copy of *Sons and Lovers* has just come. I am fearfully proud of it. I reckon it is quite a great book. I shall not write quite in that style anymore. It is the end of my youthful period. Thanks a hundred times.

(Richard, 47-48)

When Lawrence had written about two-thirds of his story, he sent the manuscript to Jessie Chambers and asked her to tell him what she thought of it. Jessie Chambers thought that the whole thing was some-how tied up. The characters were locked together in a frustrating bondage, and there seemed no way out. It was a strain reading the manuscript and it was extremely tired writing. Jessie writes,

I was sure that Lawrence had had to force himself to do it. The spontaneity that I had come to regard as the distinguishing feature of his writing was quite lacking. He was telling the story of this mother’s married life, but the telling seemed to be at second-hand, and lacked the living touch. … He gave the boy Paul a box of paints, and the
mother’s heart glowed with pride as she saw her son’s budding power.

… The character Lawrence called Miriam was in the story, but placed in a bourgeois setting. (52)

From the beginning, Lawrence maintained the theme of the story as being the mother’s opposition to Paul’s love for Miriam. After giving the manuscript a close and careful perusal Jessie finally suggested that Lawrence should write the whole story again and keep it true to life. Two reasons prompted Jessie to make these suggestions. The first one was that, the theme, if treated adequately, had in it the stuff of a magnificent story. It only wanted setting down, and Lawrence possessed the miraculous power of translating the raw material of life into significant form. The second reason was that Jessie sincerely felt that Lawrence might free himself from his strange obsessed relationship with his mother, if he put the reality into a story. She thought he might be able to work out the theme in the realm of spiritual reality, where alone it could be worked out, and so resolve the conflict in himself. Since he had elected to deal with the big and difficult subject of his family and the interaction of the various relationships, Jessie felt he ought to do it faithfully. She writes:

The particular issue he might give to the story never entered my head. That was of no consequence. The great thing was that I thought I could see a liberated Lawrence coming out of it. Towards Lawrence’s mother I had no bitter feeling, and could have none, because she was his mother. But I felt that he was being strangled in a bond that was even more powerful since her death, and that until he was freed from it he was held in check and unable to develop. (Jessie 34)
Jessie Chambers Wood, the real-life prototype of Miriam, has recorded an incident which took place in 1910. The incident in question illustrates the author’s insight.

The day before his mother’s funeral we went for a walk together. … At the end of that same walk, as we stood within a stone’s throw of the house where his mother lay dead, he said to me!

‘You know, J., I’ve always loved mother.’

‘I know you have,’ I replied.

‘I don’t mean that,’ he answered. ‘I’ve loved her – like a lover – that’s why I could never love you.’ (Edward, 479)

All Lawrence’s novels are more or less autobiographical in the sense that they deal with the events as well as the emotions of his own life, but *Sons and Lovers* is the most autobiographical of all of them. The chief characters and the central situation are quite clearly taken from the novelist’s own early life. It will come as no surprise to readers to learn that Lawrence senior was a miner in Eastwood, uncouth and often drunk, with no formal education, but a certain openness of nature and zest for life which made him popular among his workmates. This man married a woman who was in many ways his direct opposite. To begin with, she was a crucial rung above him on the social ladder, belonging to the shabby-genteel lower-middle class. The mother deprived of the resources to which her upbringing had accustomed her was soon disillusioned in those which her married life had seemed to offer. She tried with desperate resolution to realize vicariously through her children those ideas of success, happiness and social esteem of which she herself had been thwarted. Small wonder, then, that her married life was a continual battle with her husband, relieved by the
solace she found in her children, especially her sons, and ending only with her death by cancer after more than twenty-five years of married misery.

This particular novel of D.H. Lawrence makes interesting reading not only because of the vivid autobiographical details but more because of the variety of abnormal bond (Oedipus complex, hatred toward the father, homosexuality, illegal love-relationship with a married woman and the normal lad-girl love turned abnormal) which are described with such original and realistic style.

The attempt to study these abnormal bonds by an individual with others should certainly be based on Christopher Hanson’s opinion of Lawrence. Hanson believed that to Lawrence, the relationship of the characters with each other was more significant than the events of the description of the characters themselves.

The reader would certainly benefit by obtaining a deep and sympathetic understanding by these lines: ‘There began a battle between the husband and wife – a fearful, bloody battle that ended only with the death of one …’ (SL, 23). These lines are a description of the relationship that existed between the Morel’s parents in the story. To understand the relationship between Gertrude and Walter Morel would be understanding their abnormalities in the behaviour of the different characters. The quoted lines are so profound and realistic that they immediately arrest and capture reader’s attention and keep him/her pondering for quite a space of time.

In the opening chapter of the novel, Lawrence describes Mrs. Morel as coming, ‘Of a good old burgher family famous independents who had fought with Colonel Hutchinson and who remained stout Congregationalists’ (SL, 15). Gertrude Coppard had no idea what a miner’s life would be like. She was teaching in a private school and hoped to marry a young man whose ambition was to become a minister.
One really wonders as to what attracted Gertrude to the ordinary Nottingham coal miner. But the answer to the question could be sought from the following passage: …

The dusty golden softness of this man’s sensuous flame of life, that flowed off his flesh, like the flame from a candle … seemed to her something wonderful beyond her (SL, 18). Gertrude met this young miner Walter Morel, who attached her by his ‘rich, ringing, laugh and his soft, non-intellectual warm humour’ (SL, 17). Walter was attracted to her because, to him she was ‘that thing of mystery and fascination, a lady’ (SL, 17). As declared by Suman Prabha Prasad, in her study of Thomas Hardy and Lawrence, both Walter and Gertrude are attracted to each other because of the novelty and contrast that they find in each other and it is inevitable that a marriage between persons who have nothing in common should lead to dissatisfaction on both sides.

Therefore, what started as an extraordinary and happy married life nevertheless got entangled into the ordinary and age-old manner of a family strife. The man, of course, was of sanguine temperament, warm and hearty but unstable and lacked principle. He deceived his wife and lied to her. The conversation that ensued between Gertrude, a bride of barely six months and the elder Mrs. Morel is enough evidence to show the deliberate lies that Walter Morel had uttered to his wife. He had told her that the house they lived in and the one next door were all his. But a few minutes of conversation between Gertrude and her mother-in-law reveal the fact that the house was not only his mother’s but also that it was heavily mortgaged.

So the woman of ‘character and refinement’ goes into the lower class, and has no satisfaction in her own life. She had had the passion for her husband, so the children are born of passion and have heaps of vitality. Though Gertrude is disappointed, yet,
She still had her high moral sense, inherited from generations of Puritans. It was now a religious instinct, and she was almost a fanatic.

… If he sinned she tortured him, and if he drank she wielded the lash unmercifully. (SL, 24)

Gertrude could never be content with the little her husband might be, she would have the much that he ought to be. Mrs. Morel’s religions is presented here as ‘a moral obligation to face reality, to be responsible for one’s life, to have integrity’ (Sagar, 23). Her demands are sufficiently convincing.

What appeared as an unsigned review in the ‘West Minster Gazette’ (14 June 1913) is true, when it said:

The heroic figure of this novel is not Paul Morel, who occupies the central position of the book, and through whose experience the major part of the story is told, but his grim little mother, who had married beneath her and was forced to turn her sons for the satisfaction of her instinct for devotion which had been so cruelly wasted on her husband.

(Draper, 60)

In Sons and Lovers, Lawrence still realizes the same question, ‘on what basis do two people marry?’ As in The White Peacock, Sons and Lovers does not offer a clear answer. However, Sons and Lovers offers in an obscure way a prescription that a marriage of passion is preferable to a marriage of stability and security, even though a marriage of passion ends in mutual hatred. The tension that developed between the parents rose to a crescendo and finally reached the children and alienated them from the father. The children failed to understand that the clashes between the parents were due to sharp differences in their class outlook. The father ceased to be of any account
in the life of his family and, ‘There was a feeling of misery over the entire house. The children breathed the air that was poisoned and they felt dreary. They were rather disconsolate, did not know what to do …’ (SL, 56). The mother’s ambition, unfulfilled in the husband, reached her sons. She is left to struggle with poverty and accept all the human and emotional responsibility for the family. In this sense, she is ‘a model housewife and mother’ (Sagar, 23) and ‘a brave, even a great woman’ (Kate, 248). The unhappy woman beats about for her insatiable satisfaction, seeking whom she may devour and she turns to her child. She throws herself into a last and great love for her son, a final and fatal devotion. The devotion would have been the richness and strength of her husband, and is poison to her boy.

The mother thus withdrawn more and more completely from the father dominates her son’s affections, aspirations and mental habits. And as the children grow up she selects them as lovers, first the eldest and then the second. In one of his letters to Edward Garnett, Lawrence writes,

> These sons are urged into life by their reciprocal love of their mother, … urged on and on. But when they come to manhood, they can’t love, because their mother is the strongest power in their lives, and hold them. As soon as the young men come into contact with women there is a split. (Salgado, 25)

Hence Gertrude Morel, because of her emotional disappointment with her husband, develops not only a strained relationship but also an abnormal connection with her sons. This unusual and abnormal bond is seen developed in the sons of the Morel parents due to the tension that prevailed between the father and mother. Since the mother was intellectually stronger than the father, she was able to take the sons to
herself and hold their feelings in her away. Mrs. Morel offers to her sons, as Raymond Williams puts it, ‘a projected idea of what a good life would be, what getting on would be.’ (SL, 175)

William the eldest in whom the mother harboured great hopes of achievements goes to London having secured a job. But soon great disappointment meets the mother who invests all her love and aspiration on this son of hers. For Williams had met a charming brunette young lady at a dance, after whom the men were running thick and fast. When William brought home his fiancée, the mother’s disapproval is obvious enough and William resented it and continued his relationship with the girl. But in the mind of William the ‘mother-fixation’ is already developed and this strife between the mother and the fiancée Lily Western to hold William becomes too much to bear. The mother strives hard to hold his soul, and succeeds. Hence Williams gives his sex to the friable. However, the split kills him because he does not know where he is. The poignant magnitude of the abnormal mental condition, which came over William, is most apparent as one reads the passage that precedes his death. There seemed to develop a mental condition in the mind of William, when he and Lily Western were exposed to his mother. The boy gets locked up in a frustrating bondage with his mother and there seemed to be no way out for him. When he came down at Easter, he discussed his sweet heart endlessly with his mother:

You know, mother, when I’m away from her I don’t care for her a bit. I shouldn’t care if I never saw her again. But then when I’m with her in the evenings I am awfully fond of her. (SL, 150)

Shortly after William’s death, the final transference of Mrs. Morel’s central bond of love is made to Paul. Mrs. Morel, since the funeral of William, had
withdrawn from life as was herself losing the will to live. But, Paul falling
dangerously ill evokes all the dying emotions in her heart and she determines to live
to save her son. Mrs. Morel identifies her life with Paul’s and often says ‘we,’ when
she refers to Paul. She feels that Paul’s successes become hers, ‘our victory.’ She
feels ‘Life for her was rich of promise. She was to see herself-fulfilled. Not for
nothing had been her struggle’ (SL, 183). She appropriates her son’s success, the fruit
of ‘her struggle’:

She saw that our chance for doing is here, and counted with her. Paul
was going to prove that she had been right; he was going to make a
man whom nothing should shift off his feet; he was going to alter the
face of the earth in some way which mattered. Wherever he went she
felt her soul went with him. Whatever he did she felt her soul stood by
him, ready, as it were, to hand him his tools. (SL, 222)

She is certain that Paul is going to redeem her life by being independent and powerful
enough to affect the world.

The Oedipus complex developed in the son due to the over-dominance of the
mother makes *Sons and Lovers* a novel of abnormal, mental and psychological
conditions. There is more clearly seen when one understands the story of Paul the
hero himself. For he is not only governed by the Oedipus complex but is also an
ardent father-hater, a man unable to have a normal love relationship with his beloved,
and also one who has a most disgusting illegal love affair with a married woman. The
novelist presented Paul Morel as an abnormal creature and was determined to present
him to the readers as such. However the reader’s sympathy is all with Paul because
even though one knows that he maintains an abnormal and obnoxious relationship
with his mother, yet one has to understand that he was born in an atmosphere that was charged with disillusion and disappointment. The mother was disappointed with the marriage she had made with Walter Morel and in turn the father was disillusioned having spent all his initial passion and attraction for Gertrude and the mother is unduly attracted to the son, Paul for more than one reason.

In the first place, she wants to make amends to Paul for having committed an injury to him. She believed he was conceived unwillingly out of a loveless relation. Secondly, Paul was more delicate than the other children, so his illness tended to further her concentration on him. Often Mrs. Morel would look down at the baby Paul, whose birth she had dreaded like a catastrophe because of her feeling for her husband. It is obvious that one can understand the mother lavishing much of her affection and attention on this child of hers. If the attitude of the mother was this, the reaction of the child was nothing different. One must always remember that Paul was born in an atmosphere of parental violence. When he was a baby the father had hurled a drawer at the mother thus injuring her, so that the blood trickled down upon the child’s head.

He was turning drearily away, when he saw a drop of blood fall from the averted wound into the baby’s fragile glistening hair. Fascinated, he watched the heavy dark drop land in the glistening cloud, and pull down the gossamer. Another drop fell; it would sink through to the baby’s scalp. He watched fascinated, feeling it soak in; then finally his manhood broke. (SL, 54)

This particular passage has got a symbolic significance in the relationship and behaviour between the Morel mother and Paul. The final withdrawal of Morel as
father and husband is marked by the words ‘finally his manhood broke.’ Thus the union between Paul and the mother is marked by the death of William.

What was developing as a poetic, delicate and charming relationship between Paul and the mother springs forth into maturity, when soon after the death of William, Paul makes his mother takes a new interest in life due to his critical illness. And his mother in striving to save her second son goes to bed with him and thus saves him from death. Lawrence ends the description of the incident with the following words:

Paul loved to sleep with his mother. Sleep is still most perfect, inspite of hygienists, when it is shared with a beloved. The warmth the security and peace of soul, the utter comfort from the touch of the other, knits the sleep, no that it takes the body and soul completely in its healing. Paul lay against her and slept, and get better, whilst she always a bad sleeper, fell later on into a profound sleep that seemed to give her faith. (SL, 87)

Thus a strange and unusual relationship is struck between the son and mother and very soon the interaction between mother and son is complete and Paul lives in his mother and her in him. The emotional correspondence between mother and son is striking. ‘His heart contracted with pain of love of her and she always felt a mixture of anguish in her lover for him’ (SL, 90).

On the other hand, one is readily on the defensive against criticisms levelled against Lawrence. One has to agree with A.B. Kuttner when he says, ‘Paul is by no means a degenerate, but merely an exaggeration of the normal, unhealthy nursed into morbid manifestations by an abnormal environment’ (83). Paul loved his mother too dearly because Mrs. Morel lavished all her affection upon her son. And most mothers
lavish a good deal of affection upon their sons and it is only natural for sons to love their mothers dearly.

One can understand that the boy is forced into an effort of feeling full consciousness for his mother, all that a grownup man might feel for the wife of his heart. The whole life of Paul is steadily but surely anchored in the mother. And all that he wants to do is to

... quietly to earn his thirty or thirty-five shillings a week somewhere near home, and then when his father died, have a cottage with his mother, paint and go out as he liked, and live happy ever after. (SL, 128)

This is not a normal attitude any normal boy would have towards his future. A natural instinct would be to strike out for himself, be adventurous and emulate, and to surpass the father, fall in love and marry the girl of his heart. This is the first obvious instance of the undoing of the normal self in Paul.

More serious complications arise in the behaviour of Paul when he is exposed to the world around him. He is for most of the time in a state of ignorance and bewilderment about himself. He emerges as a sensitive and intelligent boy, immensely responsive to the world and the people around him. During the trip to Nottingham to get him his job, the mother’s uninhibited eagerness create an embarrassment in the boy which can’t be said abnormal behaviour but a condition caused by adolescent self-consciousness. But the real problem starts when Paul exposes himself to feminine charms outside home and family. He, in reality, attempts to emancipate himself from his mother by centering his affections upon some other woman.
The relationship between Paul and Miriam is in many ways the most difficult in the novel, partly because of the psychological and emotional complexities in it. From the very beginning, the relationship between Paul and Miriam is strained and abnormal because Mrs. Morel’s hostility is aroused. But the unnatural relationship between the two young people is not completed because of the mother’s disapproval, and also because of Miriam’s personality and temperament. Fear, pain and pathos from a large part of Miriam’s character, and are made manifest in the scene describing Miriam feeding the hen. ‘At last, Miriam let the bird peck from her hand. She gave a little cry – fear and pain because of fear – rather pathetic’ (SL, 159). This is the first encounter between Paul and Miriam and their whole relationship is over-shadowed.

The bond of love that exists between Miriam and Paul will not be accepted by either of them, and Miriam in her bewilderment prays, ‘O Lord, me not love Paul Morel. Keep me from loving him if I ought to love him’ (SL, 162). The mother’s anxiety for her own position in her son’s heart drives the poor boy to distraction and he becomes a psychological abnormality.

Paul’s allegiance to the mother creates in him a fear of Miriam. He knows that Miriam is honest, clean and straight in her intentions of relationships with him. He also knows that passion counts the least with her. Paul writhes under his mother’s accusing bitter words and surprisingly hates Miriam for it. But Mrs. Morel does not stop there. She makes the final, ruthless, cowardly appeal:

‘And never – you know, Paul …
I’ve never had a husband … not … really.’

He stroked his mother’s hair, and his mouth was on her throat.
'Well, I don’t love her, mother’s he murmured, bowing his head and hiding his eyes on her shoulder in misery. His mother kissed him, a long fervent kiss. (SL, 178)

The mother who made such a loud ado when Paul went to Miriam almost rejoices when he discards her and forms an acquaintance with Clara Daves, a married friend of Miriam, separated from her husband. Nevertheless Clara’s relationship with Paul has brought about a marked change in his attitude towards his mother. He realized at last she had destroyed his life’s happiness. Then,

Sometimes he hated her and pulled at her and pulled at her bondage.

His life wanted to free itself of her. It was like a circle. Life wanted to turn back upon itself and got no further. She bore him, loved him, kept him, and his love turned back into her, so that he could not be free to go forward with his own life, really love another woman. (SL, 126)

One could absolutely in agreement with J. Middleton Murray when he says that Sons and Lovers is the story of Paul Morel’s desperate attempts to break away from the tie that was strangling him (85). All unconsciously his mother had roused in him the stirrings of sexual desire; she had, by the sheer intensity of her diverted affection, made him a man before his time. And as in the words of Eliseo Vivas, the struggle to be released of the bondage, damaged Paul’s desire for normal sexual relations.

This problem of Paul which shows every sign of rounding off and brightening, with the death of his mother, however after all fails to free Paul from his mother. And on the other hand it actually and eventually resulted in the completion of union by removing all earthly obstacles. Their union became ideal. This made most explicitly in the following lines:
“Mother” he whispered … “mother,” she was the only thing that held him up himself amid all this. And she was gone, intermingled herself.

He wanted her to touch him, have his alongside with her. (SL, 180)

But why does Lawrence choose this aspect of abnormal relationship for a theme of his novels? Lawrence was always an autobiographical writer, and aspects of his personality, his belief and his experiences appear in his novels. But Sons and Lovers is very much a special case. What Graham Hough says in the Dark Sun is an absolute answer to all the doubts: ‘Sons and Lovers’ is a catharsis achieved by reliving an actual experience – re-living it over and over again’ (62).

Lawrence felt that the root cause of unhappiness and the suffering in modern life lay in the maladjustments in human relationships and people’s being cut off from one another. The Rainbow along with his other novels does not offer sex as the solution to the problems of modern man, on the contrary, it affirms that sex is not and cannot be the answer to the issues raised by the complexity of modern civilization. The solution suggested in the novel is that man and woman must rise above the level of physically to mutual understanding and fulfillment of the whole being-flesh and spirit together. The novelist himself states that sex alone is not the answer but ‘with sex as the accepted prime motive, the world drifts into despair and anarchy.’ (Lawrence, 106)

Moreover, The Rainbow typifies to a large extent Lawrence’s whole concept of the human relationship. Marriage and sex relationships are the very core of man-woman relationships and these occupy the central place in the novel also. Lawrence views marriage as an alternating rhythm of love and hate, attraction and repulsion, quarrel and reconciliation. Lawrence always sees the woman as a child bearer as in
conflict with the woman as wife. That is why ‘tension between woman as – mother and man – as lover is inevitable’ (Daiches, 154).

By the time Lawrence was writing *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, it seems that he was no longer interested in the externalities of characters, but concerned with the mysterious inner movement of his characters’ instincts, impulses and emotions in the environment of a living tradition. This examination of their inner worlds will have revolutionary implications in the manner in which he now will present the relationship between man and woman and their rejection of the old sexual order.

After Lawrence finished *Sons and Lovers* late in 1912, he began writing a novel he had first named *The Sisters* and then *The Wedding Ring*. However, after considerable rewriting the recreating, it is divided into two volumes, *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*. The last page of the manuscript has a note, ‘End of Volume I’. *The Rainbow* came out in September 1915, in November the authorities ordered it to be withdrawn. During most of 1916 Lawrence wrote *Women in Love*, and completed it before the year was out. Embittered by the suppression of *The Rainbow* and shaken by the continuance of the war, Lawrence almost totally recast the remaining material of *The Sisters*. He put some of his recent experiences into the new book, fictionally disguised, and some of his recent friends recognizably caricatured. The novel was not printed till 1920, in America where it was issued into a limited edition; it was published in the regular way in England the following year.

Lawrence’s reaction to the suppression of *The Rainbow* was most violent and painful to him. This can be seen from an extract of his letter addressed to Edward Garnett from Lerici, dated 22 April 1914.
… it is no good unless you will have patience and understand what I want to do. I am not after all a child working erratically. All the time, underneath, there is something deep evolving itself out in me. And it is hard to express a new thing, in sincerity. And you should understand, and help me to the new thing, not get angry and say it is common, and send me back to the tone of the old *Sisters*. In the *Sisters* was the germ of this novel: woman becoming individual, self-responsible, taking her own initiative. But the first *Sisters* was flippant and often vulgar and jeering. I had to get out of that attitude, …But you should see the religious, earnest, suffering man, in me first, and then the flippant or common things after (27).

Lawrence was quite aware of the unacceptable material that he had put in the novel *The Rainbow*. But in spite of what the world thought of his book, he yet stubbornly had a deep faith in his own intuition and ardently loved his workmanship.

In a letter to Garnett on 11 March 1913, Lawrence wrote:

> I am a damned curse unto myself. I have written rather more than half of a most fascinating (to me) novel. But nobody will ever dare to publish it. I feel I could knock my head against the wall. Yet I love and adore this new book. It’s all crude as yet, like one of Tony’s clumsy pre-historical beasts – most cumbersome and floundering – but I think it’s great – so new, so really a stratum deeper than I think anybody has ever gone, in a novel. (Draper, 84)

The letter shows that his exploration in *The Rainbow* is the hidden and obscure part of the self which he calls the ‘carbon’ of character. Lawrence describes the carbon-
character as inhuman, entirely beyond deliberate self-determination (Gavriel, 130), and what she is altogether separate from her social existence.

Still, out of necessity, the early section of *The Rainbow* shows how the social world impinges on the characters’ unconscious inner lives, because the things characters do and say in the everyday life are themselves the products of the socially everyday life are themselves the products of the socially conditioned world, the world of ‘varying physical properties’ (Daniel, 115). Therefore, in the first few chapters, Lawrence is not limited by a static, ‘inhuman,’ ‘psychological,’ or ‘material’ conception of character as a ‘phenomenon’ apart from social life.

*The Rainbow* is the story of Lawrence’s sexual failure. The two men, who succumb to the woman, are one man, himself. ‘The Rainbow’ is the symbolic sense of a harmony between spirit and flesh, is as far away as ever at the end of the book. It shines over the first generation where man is really man, and he does not need to arrogate authority over woman; it begins to be remote in the second, where the woman begins to establish the mastery; in the third, where woman is not only victim but triumphs, it fades into the dim future. Ursula, the woman, becomes the protagonist; the man is secondary, an attribute of the woman. However, Ursula is an unconvincing character in *The Rainbow*. She is a composite figure, made of the hated sexual woman, and some of Lawrence’s own manly experiences. Thus she is made to carry most of his experience as a school master and of his own disappointment with the University; and more important, she is made to undergo a sort of physical-mystical experience, an annihilation of the personality. When in the last chapter the horses stampede upon her, she dies and rises again in a new world; she becomes the mouth-piece of Lawrence’s own vision.
In this frame-work of a story, Lawrence has put much intriguing facts and experiences which hold the reader in thrall. Repeatedly in this unique work, readers are made to confront with a sexual experience of an abnormal kind and one cannot avoid it or treat it in lighter sense. James Douglas, a journalist and critic, write in *The Star* (22 October 1915) about Lawrence’s *The Rainbow*:

> I think it was Jourbert who said that fiction has no right to exist unless it is more beautiful than reality that in literature the one aim is the beautiful, and that if we once lose sight of what we have the more frightful reality. *The Rainbow*, a novel by Mr. D.H. Lawrence, reminds me of Jourbert’s saying. It is certainly not more beautiful than reality. It is indeed more hideous than any imaginable reality. The thing is done so coldly, so pompously so gravely that it is like a savage sight. There is not a gleam of humour in the fog of eloquent lubricity. The thud, thud, thud of the hectic phrases is intolerably wearisome. They pound away like engines grinding out a dull monotonous tune of spiritless sensuality. (Draper, 93)

This particular quotation is, no doubt, absolutely true of Lawrence’s *The Rainbow*. However, one cannot say that the hideous, monotonous spiritless sensuality is really dull or weariness. Certainly at times the mental and spiritual abnormalities do become intolerable. But one cannot be carried away by their gravity but have to see into their reason and reality.

If the characters in the novel, especially those of the third generation, are abnormal and psychic in their behaviour, the novelist’s very style and manner of description is something bordering on abnormal perversity. According to Lawrence,
one has two identities – the inauthentic social self and the authentic personal self, which is ‘mental’ consciousness and ‘blood’ consciousness respectively. Lawrence emphasizes that the social self is a dead husk or shell; only the essential being, the inner core self, the blood consciousness is truly alive (Howe, 29), because it is free in being unconditioned by social or even genetic constraints (Lawrence, 214). However, *The Rainbow* deals with the transition between one state of awareness and the other, form blood to mind, and vice versa.

To show the effect on marriage of the transitional period in England from an agrarian to an industrial society and its process of disintegration, Lawrence briefly describes the earliest Brangwen marriage in the preindustrial era before 1840, a strong union of Alfred Brangwen and a daughter of the ‘Black Horse’: They were two very separate beings, vitally connected, knowing nothing of each other, yet living in their separate ways from one root (*RB*, 13).

The passing away of this earth-bound marriage is a gradual process once the Brangwen people, especially their women, have glimpsed an alternative life of the mind and of refined manners. The Brangwen women are more intelligent and strong-willed than the men. Ambition and aspiration are associated with women as in *Sons and Lovers*.

The women were different … the women looked out from the heated, blind intercourse of farm-life, to the spoken world beyond … The woman wanted another form of life … something that was not blood-intimacy. Her house faced out from the farm-buildings and fields, looked out to the road and the village with church and Hall and the world beyond. She stood to see the far-off world of cities and
governments and the active scope of man, the magic land to her, where secrets were made known and desires fulfilled. … (RB, 8-10)

This deep-rooted desire to expand one’s self and to connect it with the outer world is expressed within a social context. Stimulated by the contrast between her husband and the vicar, the Brangwan woman wants to give her children – the complete nature that should take place in equality with the living, vital people in the land, not be left behind obscure among the labourers …

squire’s lady at Shelly Hall, … the finer, more vivid circle of life. (RB, 10)

She inspires by her desires with the above said for her children. What she values in the superiority of outward fineness is the promise of a ‘higher form of being’ as F.R. Leavis observes. In this regard, the title of the book, The Rainbow is a symbol of the connection between earth and human aspiration, a promise that the individual can develop and achieve a higher form of being without losing the intimate relationship which the men of Brangwen share with the natural world. However, Lawrence seems to infer that by their ambition the women take possession of the inner lives of their husbands, thus bringing disharmony and imbalance to their marriages.

Following the cycle of life, Lawrence moves to the related particular lives of succeeding generations – the marriage of Lydia and Tom Brangwen, and then that of Anna and Will Brangwen, as well as the relationship between Ursula and Skrebensky. Each generation takes up the struggle afresh, and has a different starting-point and different conscious objectives. In all three generations chronicled by The Rainbow women are independent and lacking separate being. Men in The Rainbow come to women in an indirect search for strength-of-self, hoping to be saved from threatening disintegration.
The general progress of these women goes from initial denial of the traditional ‘blood-intimacy,’ through the resulting conflict with men, and ultimately to Lawrencian men and women of the modern age. These women play important roles in *The Rainbow* because they lead the way out of the primal intimacy with the earth into the new discovery of self. Through the passing generations of the Brangwen women Lawrence shows the changing and developing process of their self-awareness to be the ‘woman becoming individual, self-responsible, taking her own initiative’ (Lawrence, 165). Such development of the individual is the goal of life, and the central character manifesting the process of the individual perfection would be Ursula Brangwen of the third generation who is to fulfill the ambitions of her ancestors.

Lydia Branchard observes that *The Rainbow* is the story of thousands of young women who have struggled like Ursula to define themselves in terms of, as well as in reaction against their mothers and their mother’s value (76), the Victorian morality.

There is every conceivable aspect of passion, and perversity, handled and treated to great lengths in the novel. There is Lesbianism, Electra-complex; erotic, ecclesiastical, alcoholic perversions abound from start to finish in the novel. Nevertheless some emotions and behaviours are so vividly and imaginatively described that it is difficult to understand an artist like Lawrence who is not content to leave them so just done once. The material for a good story is spoilt not so much by the orgy of sexiness, but by the endless repetitions which could well have been avoided. The abnormal relationships of men and women are exposed not only through the portrayal of characters but also through verbal descriptions in *The Rainbow*. He describes a girl as having eyes ‘bright, like shallow water,’ at one place, and as ‘pellucid eyes, like shallow water,’ in the next. Elsewhere the readers are told
of a pair of lovers that a kiss ‘knitted them into once fecund nucleus of the fluid darkness’ at one instance, and that, ‘it was bliss, the nuclearating of the fecund darkness,’ in the next.

*The Rainbow* reveals that latent savage in its characters, though none of the Brangwens, three generations of them, is primitive. There is a solid background, comfortable living, refinement, education and religion, all the proportionate quantities, yet something comes into them which might be equal to degeneracy. In the three generations of the Brangwens in *The Rainbow*, love between man and woman in the first generation is most successful. Tom Brangwen inherits from his ancestors a mode of living which is connected to the earth. He has taken it into his blood that his physical self became all powerful and his conscious self was practically non-existent, with one exception. Tom is affected by his mother’s conception of a higher form of being, and yet his sense of the outside world is vaguely associated with foreignness. Tom has a spontaneous recognition of real things, and a knowledge ‘at the bottom of his soul’ that the business of love was … the most serious and terrifying of all’ (*RB*, 20).

When Tom Brangwen sees Lydia Lensky, the widow of a Polish refugee with a little daughter, he knows immediately that she possesses the strength and refinement which he seeks. He is sure that she would bring him completeness and perfection, because the foreignness in her represent the ‘conscious’ world Tom aspires for. To Tom, Lydia is not just a lady and a foreigner, but an object of awe and wondering conjecture. To him she is a romantic mystery in her firm separateness. And the mystery of sex, that dimension of human experience which belongs to the blood-consciousness, is heightened by the mystery of the foreigner in Lydia. So the
strangeness and foreignness is for Tom Brangwen a condition of depth and wholeness in his unconscious response as for his relationship is concerned.

The marriage of Tom’s unconscious rural world to Lydia’s ‘over-conscious’ foreign one is accepted as ‘natural,’ ‘fated,’ and ‘ordained.’ Tom gains self-knowledge in his sexual consummation with Lydia after two years of their marriage, and accepts the conditions of Lydia’s being – Lydia’s otherness – thereby making their relationships harmonious. Then they go each his or her own way again, transfigured, separate, yet firmly bound together as the other’s gateway to life:

He did not know her any better, any more precisely, now that he knew her altogether … They did not think of each other – why should they? Only when she touched him, he knew her instantly, that she was with him, near him, that she was the gateway and the way out, that she was beyond, and that he was travelling in her through the beyond. (*RB*, 87-88)

In fact, Lydia’s ‘otherness’ forces Brangwen ‘to assert and then establish his own identity, his essential separateness of being’ (Mark, 97). According to Mark Spilka, the relationship between Tom and Lydia is precisely opposite to the surface domestic tranquility. For though they have bound together their essential selves they have not done so by easy domesticity. The difference of language and culture becomes strength as well as weakness for both of them, especially for Tom. For this difference keeps them from any conceptual knowledge that might distort their relationship, and at the same time this difference prevents Tom from understanding what Lydia feels and desires.

For, Lawrence, as one can mainly visualize in the novel, is concerned to achieve a truth and explore human experience. He has aspired to reach at a
profonder level than ordinary social and psychological probabilities. It was more than anything else an attempt at realization of self and understanding it. He writes quite truthfully:

Now you will find her and me in the novel, I think, and the work is of both of us … but primarily I am a passionately religious man, and my novels must be written from the depth of my religious experience. … You should see the religious, earnest, suffering man in me first, and then the flippant or common things after. (Draper, 91)

Up to the point of the description of the first generation, the story is quite normal. It relates the story of the Brangwens who have established for generations as a yeoman family on the borders of Nottinghamshire among the coal-miners, a vigorous and strong willed breed. The figure of the farmer Brangwen is very convincing, and his marriage to a Polish woman, true to life. His daughter Anna has reality more so than his grand-daughter Ursula. There is all the material for a good fiction, but just when the reader settled down comfortably in great anticipation of enjoying a good family story, bang comes the unpleasantness by way of crude sex and details of distasteful descriptions.

The progressive involvement of the first relationship of Lydia and Tom establishes the recurrent patter of marriage through the succeeding generations, widening in scope and intensity and varying within the individuals and the times. Through Lydia’s connection with impersonal forces Lawrence implies that one may have a conscious awareness of the world, but one must have a vital connection with the cosmic forces that drive all life. With this implication, Lawrence describes the relationship between Lydia’s child Anna and Will Brangwen.
To begin with the researcher confronts abnormal relationship and behaviour of the character Anna whose emotions and attitudes border on exaggerated mania. The description of Anna dancing to God and experiencing carnal feelings towards Christ sitting in the Church during a religious service makes the reader really wonder as to whether there could really be a limit to the abnormal perversity that Lawrence could indulge in describing. No human being in his normal bent of mind can ever accept the way Anna gets emotionally involved in religious excess which presents her as almost a bad woman. She has passion towards her husband and conceives and bears children for him; however, there seems to be no real fondness or normal relationship between Will and Anna. This is mainly due to Anna’s preoccupation with abnormal religious involvement.

With Anna, Lawrence shows the continuance of life, the movement from one stage of development to another. He describes Anna’s development from a self-possessed child to an idealistic young woman, to a passionate lover, and finally to a great mother figure. As Anna grows up she comes to depend more and more on her step father who stands ‘like a rock’ between her and the world. She inherits her step-father’s aspiration for the outside world. She calls the conscious, outside world:

… the real world where kings and lords and princes moved and
fulfilled their shining lives, while queens and ladies and princesses
upheld the noble order. (RB, 99)

Then, when she falls in love with Will, the relationship between father and daughter has to come to an end. For Anna wants a life of her own, the fulfillment of herself. But Anna, who is still too much like Lettie who does not know where the way out lies, has not the means to escape in Lawrence another novel The White Peacock. So
she lays hold of Will as a means of escape from the atmosphere of the rich, inarticulate Brangwen intimacy of Marsh Farm to a different world: ‘In him the bounds of her experience were transgressed: he was the hole in the wall, beyond which sunshine blazed on outside world’ (RB, 114).

The combination of Will and Anna is more complex and potentially antagonistic than that of Tom and Lydia because of the radical disparities between their natures. Anna possesses her mother’s characteristics – pride, separateness, independence and a strong will to dominate. She even comes out with new ideas too: ‘… when every man is born of woman, what impudence men have, what arrogance!’ (RB, 174). Accordingly, she refuses to acknowledge her husband as ‘master-of-the-house.’ Anna’s denial of patriarchy is, in a sense, a proclamation of her independence, thus establishing matriarchy in the Brangwen family: ‘She felt like the earth, the mother of everything’ (RB, 208). The implications of the simple speech made by Tom Brangwen at Anna’s wedding is full of traces of Brangwen’s traditional associations with elemental ‘blood-intimacy’ and it infers total harmonic relationship between man and woman as each achieves fulfillment in the other. It emphasizes earth bound marriage, man-woman-natural wisdom marriage, excluding the spiritual side of man, and foretelling the problems between Anna and Will. There is no such implication as victory – the man over woman or the woman over the man. The essence of Tom’s speech the ‘man being a man’ and the ‘woman being a woman’ (RB, 137), shows Lawrence’s life-long belief that man should be manly and woman womanly, that the two are separate and opposed. The speech is the first generation’s limitation and achievement that is Tom’s reconsideration of his premarital desires and final satisfactions in his successful marriage with Lydia.
Just after their marriage Will and Anna have some blissful days together in their cottage, completely beyond the touch of time or change, barely aware of the world of human activity going on somewhere in the far distance. But soon Anna wants to return to the outside world which Will considers hostile to love, abruptly ending their pastoral, private life. Anna gradually resists him because he wants her ‘to be dark, unnatural,’ while she wants ‘to be happy, to be natural, like sunlight and the busy daytime’ (RB, 170).

According to Lawrence’s polarity, the marriage of Anna and Will is not balanced, because Will has discovered the lower level of blood-intimacy and is dominated by it, while Anna tires of his demands and seeks the upper level of intelligence and spiritual discovery. Will’s tendency to espouse spiritual and religious ideals and Anna’s contrary tendency to make mockery of the religious life produce a sense of hostility between them and in their sexual relations, too. But neither of them are aware why there is ‘such a battle between them’ (RB, 165). Anna comes to realize that Will is ‘a blind thing, a dark force, without knowledge,’ and that they are ‘opposites, not complements’ (RB, 169).

The struggles of Anna and Will are ‘debilitating and self-consuming’ which seem to be contrary to the struggles of Lydia and Tom. Lydia and Tom used their struggles positively to create ‘something rich, durable and even triumphant’ (Niven, 74). By mutual tolerance the relationship of Tom and Lydia achieve harmony, whereas Anna and Will build disharmony between themselves, because neither has the generosity nor wisdom to acknowledge and accept the opposing will and soul of the other. The result of their lust is Anna’s wished to be freed and Will’s desire to continue his life style in a world where he dominates. Anna’s dissatisfaction with life
stems from her inherent desire to search for that unknown something of an element of freedom, not restricted by the church or duty, but something beyond. What her soul seeks is not social duty, but something for himself (Vivas, 212).

Anna's unsatisfied yearning for the beyond is satisfied in her daughter, Ursula, who does reach the Promised Land her mother,

… from her Pisgah mount, could only a glimpse a faint gleaming horizon, a long way off, and a rainbow like an archway, a shadow-door with faintly coloured coping above it. (RB, 195)

Anna becomes a door to new life for the next generation to venture still further, although she herself ceases to move further. In The Rainbow, readers have the description of Anna’s daughter Ursula as being obsessed with Electra-complex the feminine counterpart of Oedipus complex. Ursula’s unquestioning attraction and affection towards her father is every inch the female version of Lawrence’s own devotion to his father. The following passage gives a full and clear indication of the excessive affection that existed between Will Brangwen and his daughter Ursula.

So Ursula became the child of her father’s heart. She was the little blossom, he was the sun. He was patient, energetic, inventive for her. He taught her all the funny little things; he filled her and roused her to her fullest tiny measure. She answered him with her extravagant infant’s laughter and her call of delight. (RB, 201)

Will Brangwen was a woodcrafts man by taste and profession and Ursula’s intense interest in the wood carvings of her father are clear evidence to her blind devotion of him. Anything that her father made was perfect and beautiful. Ursula, who is so greatly overcome with her devotions to her father primarily and her
preoccupation with religion secondarily, is thus unable to establish any satisfactory normal relationship with members of the opposite sex. All her physical attraction for Anton Skrebensky, and her seeming love for him, dissolves into a vacuum due to her intense preoccupation with her father on one hand and religion on the other. The beginning of her new formed love relationship for Anton is quite thrilling and novel to Ursula.

She was thrilled with life. For the first time she was in love with a vision of herself. She saw as it were a fine little reflection of herself in his eyes. And she must act up to this; she must be beautiful. Her thoughts turned swiftly to clothes, her passion was to make a beautiful appearance. The family looked on in amazement at the sudden transformation of Ursula. (RB, 205)

This is sharp contrast with the later period when all Ursula’s initial fascination for Anton and the idea of love wanes, and the picture presented is quite despondent. She was not there. Patiently she sat, under the cloak, with Skrebensky holding her hand. But her naked self was away there beating upon the moonlight dashing the moonlight, with her breasts and he knew, in meeting, in communion. She had started to go in actuality, to fling away her clothing, and flee away from this dark confusion and chaos of people to the hill and the moon. (RB, 207)

One does wonder what could have happened to the psychology of Ursula that has absolutely deterred her from love, happiness and ultimately normalcy. Lawrence subtly hints at the reason while describing Ursula as listening to a sermon sitting in the church. The preacher was discussing the book of Genesis, and God bless Noah
and his sons thus: ‘Every moving thing’s that liveth shall be meant for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things’ (Genesis 9:5). But Ursula was not moved by the history. Multiplying and replenishing the earth bored her. It altogether seemed merely a vulgar and stock-raising sort of business. She was left quite cold by Maa’s stock breathing lordship over beasts and fishes. This revolt against God, her surfeit and weariness of this God and her father made Ursula weary and she was gradually booming benumbed in her feelings towards Anton, which of course did affect him. And when Anton leaves for war the impact of Ursula’s attitude is seen reflected in his reaction towards her.

“Don’t leave me – come back to me,” she said.

“Yes,” he said holding her in his arms.

But the male in his was scotched by the knowledge that she was not under his spell nor his influence. He wanted to go away from her. He rested in the knowledge that tomorrow he was going away, his life was really elsewhere … the centre of his life was not what she would have. She was different … there was a breach between them. They were hostile words. (330)

This is a similar experience to what Lawrence himself confronted with Jessie. Lawrence could neither be happy with Jessie nor without her. His soul seems to have yearned for more. Ursula’s abnormal and unusual relationship and most disgustful attitude towards her father and God himself not only drives her away Anton but to a passionate lesbian attachment with her class mistress, Miss Inger. Winifred Inger is intellectually superior and her cultural enlightenment is impressive enough to have at first a great effect on Ursula.
It was a strange world the girl (Ursula) was swept into, like a chaos, like the end of the world. She was too young to understand it all. Yet the inoculation passed into her through her love for her mistress. (*RB*, 297)

The love itself is diagnostic in respect of Miss Inger, whose passion for Ursula goes with an attitude towards men that she states in terms of advanced feminist thought. The two women maintain their relationship with deep understanding. Their lives seem suddenly fused into one inseparable. Ursula went to Winifred’s lodging, spent her only living hours there. This particular narration shows that Lawrence both as an artist and a novelist kept his novels vividly alive, and honest, and not attempting at a series of parlour tricks which have become vogue.

Ursula’s rainbow significantly represents the connection between her consummated self, painfully evolved through negative experiences, and the unknown realm with which she is not in contact. Ursula, before her encounter with the horses, cannot find happiness in any human relationship because she has known only the willful pleasures of her intellect, the spirit, refusing to admit anything beyond her comprehension.

*Women in Love*, like *The Rainbow*, is about ‘the passionate struggle into conscious being’ (Lawrence, 276) as Lawrence says in “Forward” to *Women in Love*. It is a drama of crisis in which each of four main characters, Ursula, Gudrun, Birkin and Gerald, is involved in the struggle into being through the means of love. Each of these characters has ‘a real, vital, potential self,’ and is free of the fear of social convention.

Lawrence’s *Women in Love* is nothing but the second volume of *The Sisters*. It was split around January 1915 due to its being too unwieldy for a single novel.
A letter written by Lawrence to J.B. Pinker from Chesham, Bucks, dated 7 January 1915, reads as follows: ‘Here is another hundred pages of the novel. I am going to split the book into two volumes; it was so unwieldy, it needs to be in two volumes’ (Clarke, 29).

This is a clear indication as to the origin and date of composition of *Women in Love*. In another letter to Waldo Frank, written from Higher Treverthen, Cornwall, dated 27 July 1917, Lawrence is more explicit about his novel *Women in Love*. One can get a deeper insight into Lawrence’s own attitude to the novel and his anticipation of its welcome into the literary world. He writes,

There is another novel, sequel to *The Rainbow* called *Women in Love*. I don’t know if Huebsch has got the MS yet. I don’t think anybody will publish this, either. This actually does contain the results in one’s soul of the war; it is purely destructive, not like *The Rainbow*, destructive-consummating. It is very wonderful and terrifying, even to me who have written it. I have hardly read it again. I suppose, however, it will be a long time without being printed – if ever it is printed. (Clarke, 30)

These above lines give the readers a clear picture of Lawrence’s determination in writing the novel, as he conceived it in spite of the much disapproval it encountered with.

*Women in Love* is a more artistically controlled novel than *The Rainbow*. Nowhere else does Lawrence achieve such a equable distribution of his creative powers. It can be praised on several grounds for structural simplicity and toughness, for psychological penetration, for the ambitious presentation of men and women in
relation to the forces of modern industrialism, and for its great scenes of untranslatable symbolic power. But it is the combining of all these in an organically related work of art that makes *Women in Love* such a remarkable achievement. Ronald Draper is most correct when he said that it is ‘unjust not to recognize the over-riding richness of achievement in *Women in Love* (Draper, 79).

However, as the reader could carry forth into the novel, the most striking aspect that arrests our attention is the psychological intensions which are dealt with in detail there. No wonder Jon Middleton Murry said,

*Women in Love* is five hundred pages of passionate vehemence, wave after wave of turgid, exasperated writing impelled towards some distant and invisible end; the persistent underground beating of some dark and inaccessible sea in an underworld whose inhabitants are known by this alone, that they writhe continually, like the damned, in a frenzy of sexual awareness of one another. (Clarke, 68)

One does naturally tend to ask the question as to whether Lawrence is a fanatic or a prophet. That he is an artist no longer is certain, as certain as it is that he has no desire to be one; for whatever may be this ‘deep physical mind’ that expresses its satisfaction in ‘a subtle mindless smile’, whether it have a real existence or not, it is perfectly clear that it does not admit of individuality as we understand it. Though the reader is at times filled with aversion and distaste, yet at the end we know one thing and one thing alone, the Lawrence believes, with all his heart and soul, that he is revealing to us the profound and naked reality of life. It was a matter of life and death to him that he should persuade the readers that the writing of the novels was a matter of life and death to the novelist.
*Women in Love* with all its pre-occupation with psychological abnormal relations and behavioural intricacies met with multi-varied reception and criticism.

John Macy writing in the *New York Evening Post Literary Review* says about *Women in Love* that its writer –

> Mr. Lawrence is a tragic poet. He is as dangerous to public novels as Hardy or Meredith. Readers who cannot understand the *tragedy* of *Richard Feverel* or of *Jude the Obscure* will not understand Mr. Lawrence or be interested to read a third of the way through one of his books. The stupidity of the multitude is sure protection against his insidious loveliness and essential sadness. … No writer of this generation is more singular more unmistakably individual than Mr. Lawrence and none is endowed with his unfairly great variety of gifts. (12)

In *Women in Love*, four young people, two men and two women, whose chief interest for them and the readers is an amatory relation. This is indicated by the little of the novel, so simple but yet so imaginative that you wonder why no novelist ever thought of it before. Relations of people, however erotic they may be, are still a tremendous part of life, and Lawrence knew and experienced it more than anyone else. Why then did Lawrence seem to make it all out as some kind of unique phenomenon full of mental abnormalities and worthy of special mention? Abel Chevalley, critic and lexicographer, in his *Le Roman Anglais de Notre Temps* seems to find a reason quite acceptable when he writes:

> When he began to write, the experiments and theories of Freud were making a great stir, and the sexual origin of subconscious images, which govern the conscious mind to so great an extent, still had all the
freshness of a discovery. The literary verjuice of adolescents was passing readily for genius, provided that their psycho-psychological confidences were coloured by a native poetry and a natural power of expression. All the young English novelists have profited, or suffered, from this orientation and D.H. Lawrence more than any of them. (237)

Lawrence seems to have subjected himself in full earnest to the modern conceptions of tragedy in life arising from abnormal mental conditions. His characters never seem to have any form of satisfaction. Each one of them seems to suffer from some form of inertia or the other, preventing them from indulging in any mental or physical absolutions. The reader is constantly made aware of the manifold twist and turns that seem to bother Lawrence’s characters. As Arthur Miller has said that the common man is as apt a subject for tragedy in its highest sense, as Kings were and Lawrence certainly believed that the Oedipus or Electra-complex would apply to everyone in similar emotional situations. This abstract deliberations coupled with personal experience had prompted Lawrence to indulge in such multi-various forms of abnormal character study.

In Women in Love the four main characters Ursula Brangwen, Gudrun Brangwen, Rupert Birkin, and Gerald Crich each is endowed with a peculiar abnormality in behaviour. As Lawrence says, it is ‘wonderful’ when seen through the successful love and marriage of Ursula and Birkin and ‘terrible flying’ at the same time when seen through the destruction and death of Gudrun and Gerald. Lawrence portrays Ursula’s relationship with Birkin as the model of ultimate marriage in which each of them achieves ‘wholeness of being,’ whereas Gudrun’s relationship with Gerald the terrible failure, similar basically to Ursula’s with Skrebensky of The
Rainbow. With the pairings of these couples Lawrence develops the ‘destructive consummating’ theme in The Rainbow more fully in this novel. Ursula and Birkin are key figures who will create a ‘new world,’ establishing Lawrence’s ‘ultimate marriage.’ Gudrun and Gerald are also important in a negative sense. The study of these characters’ psychological and perceptual relationships makes quite interesting reading and these coupled with the mental problems of the minor characters such as Mrs. Crich and Mr. Brangwen intrigues the reader to distraction. There is the problem of homosexuality, sexual frigidity and nymphomania.

In Women in Love Lawrence treats marriages as the novel’s central theme as he did in The Rainbow. Yet they have different focus. However, Women in Love explores in much more depth the question of how a man and a woman establish selfhood in marriage, while The Rainbow takes the whole institution of marriage for granted. Another difference is that Women in Love deals with the contrast between two women in love who struggle to come to terms with themselves – that is, with their work and their sexuality in separate, independent ways; one that leads toward selfhood and the other that leads away from it.

But the major problem that underscores the novel seems to be the theory of Blutburderschaft which obsessed Birkin, the prototype of the novelist himself. Ruper Birkin a school inspector is presented in the novel as a character whose love life is three-faced. At the same time he wants to be a husband, a play-boy and a homosexual. The most amazing aspect of the phenomenon is that Birkin seems to realize his extraordinary or more precisely his abnormal interest in life and seems to take no measures to rectify the condition. On the contrary he seems to justify his very act and the need for a wife, a mistress, and a man-lover. The rather abnormal
relationship between Birkin and Gerald is only the reflection of the involvement that Lawrence had with John Middleton Murry. Lawrence could analyse the physical attraction towards men that he had himself experienced.

The love life of Rupert Birkin and Ursula Brangwen ultimately culminating in matrimony is all but too evident in the novel. Though Birkin analyses his inability to love and his urge to maintain his individuality yet one wonders as to why he should develop this strange, abnormal and obnoxious relationship with Gerald. One can understand that Birkin wanting Ursula but not loving her, he does not believe in love for it gives out in the last. The following passage is vivid evidence:

… seeing she was not going to reply he continued, almost bitterly, giving himself away; “I can’t say it is love I have to offer – and it isn’t love I want. It is something much more impersonal and harder and rarer.” (WL, 161)

Birkin is an unusual combination of varying and contradicting emotions and feelings. He wants to be loved and not love wants to be married and yet to be free from all ties. Gudrun rightly remarks, ‘instead of wanting a woman for herself, he wants his ideas fulfilled’ (WL, 326). Birkin wanted to find an eternal equilibrium in marriage by accepting the unison and still leave himself separate, not trying to fuse. Lawrence at one moment presents Birkin as a mouthpiece of his own ideas, and at another he puts him up as a target for satire. He subjects Birkin and his sermon like speeches and letters to a severe attack from every quarter. In the chapter ‘The Excurse’, Ursula vehemently attacking him,
You! She cried. You! you-truth-lover.
You purity-monger! It stinks your truth and your purity. It stinks of the offal you feed on, you scavenger dog, you eater of corpse. You are foul, foul – and you must know it. Your purity, your candour, your goodness. Yest thank you, we’ve had some. (WL, 346)

The long drama of Birkin’s relations with Ursula, which lends itself so little to dramatic presentation in the ordinary sense of the adjective, illustrates, in the doing, the astonishing originality of the novelist’s genius. The drama takes its decisive start in the early chapter called “Classroom”. This chapter opens with that tenderly beautiful evocation of the late afternoon school room which tells us that Lawrence’s memories of his school teaching ways were far from completely distasteful; upon the scene comes the violence Hermione’s arrival and the embarrassed triangle fills the schoolroom with odd tensions. From the beginning the reader is kept guessing as to the real interest of Birkin: whether it is Hermione or Ursula. The deadly sterile element in Birkin’s life centres however upon his relationship with Hermione. As the novel begins his affair with her is already come to an end but it still has something of a hold over him. And it is of considerable importance as indicating the kind of relationship that Birkin’s has cultivated in the past. Birkin feels repulsion against the artificial and self-conscious manner of Hermione and the woman to whom he turns as a relief is Ursula. This aspect in his life is quite normal and human and one could not point out any abnormality in a man having a mistress before his marriage than turning away from her when he had found his life’s love.

Ursula is a woman of impulse rather than of deliberate will. She has a natural affinity with all living things. Both she and Gudrun, for example, are horrified by
Gerald’s treatment of his horse at the beginning of Chapter 9 when he forces it to stand and endure the noise of a clanking coal train at a level-crossing. But the abnormality in Birkin creeps in when he presents certain paradoxical regulations to his married life. Ursula is made an offer of marriage by a man, whom she instinctly likes, but on terms she instinctly rejects. In the end she accepts him seemingly on the spur of the moment. The reader actually breathes a sigh of relief when Ursula finally marries Rupert Birkin. Since one feels that Birkin’s salvation has finally come, but greater tragedy awaits Birkin in his dissatisfaction with the man and woman relationship and also when he desires for a lasting relationship and love with a man. If Birkin is possessed with abnormality and ambiguous nature of being a homosexual, a play-boy and a married man all at the same time Gudrun is capable of baffling the reader with her own quaint natures.

Gudrun’s relationship with Gerald is again one of abnormal peculiarities. She wants to have a lover and goes to the extent of living alone with him the Alpian Mountain, but however could never accept being called Gerald’s wife. The love making between Gerald and Gudrun brings the sleep of complete exhaustion and restoration in Gerald, but it leaves Gudrun tormented with violent wakefulness, cast out in the outer darkness. This is not an indication of Gerald’s failure as a lover but of Gudrun’s own incapacity to enjoy her position as a lover or wife. No doubt this situation has arisen due to the abnormal strange disturbance that Birkin’s appeal for Blutbruderschaft had created in Gerald. There is one moment when they seem as if they might achieve an equal relationship. This occurs after the Highland, Episode when Gudrun and Gerald are in the canoe together on the lantern-lit Willey Water. The moment is destroyed however by the falling of the sister Dinan into the water and
the high piercing shriek of the youngest sister. Gudrun’s ascendancy is even more apparent in the Austrian mountains. Her attraction towards Gerald is most unnatural. She toils with the idea of marrying Gerald not because she loves him but in order to be the impetus behind his great executive ability. But more than Gudrun’s own sexual frigidity it is the fundamental inadequacy of Gerald which proves as a failure for their love. Man allowing women to dominate is quite an abnormality and Gudrun’s dominance in the relationship can give her no satisfaction.

Though the wretchedly obnoxious Bludbruderschaft relationship utterly destroyed Gerald’s prospectus of a married union with Gudrun or for that matter with anybody else, and Brikin’s bliss in marriage with Ursula, yet more surprisingly the strange pledge came to nothing. However Birkin seems to have hoped for a change in matters. Nevertheless at the end of the novel he is left to regret the fact that Gerald’s death has put an effective end to his hopes of union with a man

‘Did you need Gerald?’ (Ursula) asked one evening.

‘Yes’ he said. ‘Aren’t I enough for you?’ she asked.

‘No’ he said. ‘You are enough for me, as far as a woman is concerned. You all women to me. But I wanted a man friend as eternal as you and I are eternal.’ ‘Why aren’t I enough?’ she said.

‘You are enough for me. I don’t want anybody else but you. …

‘I don’t believe that,’ he answered. (WL, 540)

In spite of the theory of Bludbruderschaft being universally accepted as an abnormal mental condition yet there have been critics who have particularly accepted and acknowledged Lawrence’s version of it in Women in Love. This is mostly because Lawrence has portrayed and presented the character of Birkin so true to life
and natural. H. M. Daleski tries to analyse this particular attitude of Birkin as something natural and normal. He writes,

The two kinds of love which Birkin says he wanted should not be distinguished simply as love for a woman and love for a man; what is involved … is a need on his part both for firm singleness and for melting union (Clarke, 165).

The next interesting character which arrests the attention of the reader as a case for study is Hermione Roddice. She is a cultured hostess who has a devouring interest in intellectual life. But she is completely lacking in spontaneity, and everything for her is so forced into consciousness and so subjected to will that there is a total split in her between knowing and being, which threatens to disintegrate her. There is a close resemblance between the character of Hermione and Gerald in that both of them are absolutely undecided with regard to their aspirations and needs. In spite of Hermione’s sophisticated external poise yet deep down in her there is a peculiar twist of mind hard to understand. Known perfectly well Birkin’s own resentment towards her and his obvious attraction for Ursula, Hermione’s reaction to it is positively split. She is one more variation of the constant theme in Lawrence of the clinging dependence – hidden by an appearance of confidence, self-control and independence. At one time Hermione is will to allow Birkin to go from her in fascination of Ursula. But it is obvious that the whole attitude of Hermione is a make-belief play acting when her self-control snaps and she hurls a heavy paper weight at Birkin’s head. This scene, which might have been comic, or melodramatic, is neither; for it is presented as the culmination of a long, festering relationship, and is deeply significant. This scene is immediately followed by the one in which Birkin casts off
his clothing and rolls on the wet leaves. It is queer and slightly comic but more meaningful since it presents to the reader the mental and physical freedom b Birkin realized after getting rid of Hermione. Hermione is a typical nymphomaniac who keeps her craftiness well under disguise due to her utter sophistication but nevertheless she is one of the few characters whom Lawrence has presented as true to life.