STATES OF ESTRANGEMENT:
ALIENATION IN THE NOVELS OF D.H. LAWRENCE, 1912-1917

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B.A., Simon Fraser University, 1978
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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
in
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
(English)

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standards

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
February 1986
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Date \underline{23 April 1986}
Abstract

The general intent of this dissertation is to investigate the correlation between urban industrialism and the failure of individuals, particularly women, to achieve personal fulfillment and autonomy. Specifically, it analyzes a selection of Lawrence’s novels, the settings of which are most often an oppressive and alienating society; the main characters, and how they perceive themselves, each other and their environment; and the conflict between the desire to reject and the pressure to conform to moral convention and economic necessity. My first chapter establishes the socio-historical context in which Lawrence wrote these novels, and discusses alienation, not as a sociological or psychological theory, but as a symptom of contemporary urban experience, the subtle yet concrete effects of which I contend with in the chapters following. Alienation, then, as I define it, is a pervasive phenomenon within the novels, and an experience, therefore, unique in many respects to Lawrence’s characters. At the same time, however, it, and the characters themselves, are familiar, for they represent a common social experience as well.

The body of this work analyzes the specific nature of that experience, which I see as being of two basic varieties or states: social alienation—the sense of being a foreigner amongst one’s contemporaries—and personal or psychological estrangement—the sense of being identified exclusively in
terms of social roles, morals, and conventions. My dissertation attempts as well to discuss and to determine the plausibility of those alternatives Lawrence offers as solutions to the problems of estrangement, aborted relationships and repression, alternatives which become an integral and important part of his novels because of the way they inform the characters and reflect the enigma and contradictions of urban social experience.

Because Lawrence changed after WW I, largely in fact as a result of that war, from a novelist concerned with the suffering, the often frustrated goals, the complexities of individuals to one primarily concentrating on the reformation or the mystical transcendence of society, my work will examine only those novels written before and during the war (that is: from 1912 to 1917), novels which are as well, I think, his finest, most complex works: The Trespasser, Sons and Lovers, The Rainbow, and Women in Love.
He smiled faintly, thinking ... Yet he was tense, feeling that he and the elderly, estranged woman were conferring together like traitors, like enemies within the camp of the other people. He resembled a deer, that throws one ear back upon the trail behind, and one ear forward, to know what is ahead.

"People don’t really matter," he said, rather unwilling to continue.

D.H. Lawrence, Women in Love

But now he had succeeded—he had finally succeeded. And once or twice lately, when he was alone in the evening and had nothing to do, he had suddenly stood up in terror, not knowing what he was. And he went to the mirror and looked long and closely at his own face, at his own eyes, seeking for something. He was afraid, in mortal dry fear, but he knew not what of. He looked at his own face. There it was, shapely and healthy and the same as ever, yet somehow, it was not real, it was a mask. He dared not touch it, for fear it should prove to be only a composition mask.

D.H. Lawrence, Women in Love
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Preface

Among his peers—especially those British novelists and poets writing immediately before and during WW I—D.H. Lawrence stands out as a unique and exemplary figure, for several reasons. Primarily, of course, he is known and esteemed (and sometimes condemned) for having freed sexuality from the chains of Victorian mores, but just as importantly, I think, he should continue to be noted for his energetic condemnation of what he saw as the inhumanity of contemporary society, his refusal to be awed by authority, even when that authority lay in the hands of an aristocracy he in some ways admired, and his irreverent disregard for the often beguiling propaganda espoused by political, financial and moral leaders intent upon quelling dissatisfaction and civil unrest. So, too, can he be admired, although perhaps to a lesser degree, for his proposals to vanquish inhumanity: sometimes prophetic, sometimes problematic as well, but at least until the end of the war always having as their genesis the desire to reinstate humanistic values and the integrity particularly of such beleaguered notions as individuation, love, and honest rather than repressed and repressive relationships. Of those characteristics I have just mentioned, however, none has particularly inspired me to write the work which follows, although my attraction to Lawrence is related, I suppose, to all of them. What I have found most instructive, even at times
enlightening, is his unerring and poignant portrayal of
individuals caught in an increasingly fragmentary and con­
fusing environment, an environment made even more alienating
during WW I by a militarism which in many respects was only
an intensified version of the dehumanizing bureaucratization
and mechanization being generated by profit-oriented
industrial capitalists long before the war began.

Having written extensively about the effects of industrialism upon Victorian novelists before coming to
Lawrence, I also became intrigued by the place he had
assumed, albeit more subtly than, say, Dickens or Gaskell,
within an already lengthy and established British lineage of
artistic protest against the social oppressiveness and
cultural deprivation of industrialism and in support of the
alienated victims such a phenomenon inevitably produces. In
light of these concerns, then, the specific intent of my
work has been to investigate the failure of individuals, in
the face of devastating social conditions, to achieve
personal fulfillment and autonomy. In a selection of
Lawrence’s novels, the rationale for which I will describe
shortly, I have tried as well to determine the reasons for
such failure by looking at how the main characters perceive
themselves, each other and their environment, and how they
are affected by an overwhelming conflict between the desire
to reject and the pressure to conform to moral convention
and economic necessity. Before undertaking that task, how­
ever, I have endeavoured to establish the socio-historical
context in which Lawrence wrote these works, and to define the concept of alienation, not as a sociological or psychological theory, but as a symptom of contemporary urban experience, the subtle yet concrete effects of which I contend with in the chapters following. In other words, alienation, as I shall use the term, is a pervasive phenomenon within the novels, and an experience, therefore, unique in many respects to Lawrence's characters. At the same time, however, the states or varieties of estrangement these individuals suffer, and the characters themselves, are familiar, for they represent a common social experience.

Lawrence did not just describe that experience, however; from reading the essays and letters as well as the novels, it becomes clear that throughout his life he also contemplated and sought ways to rectify the shortcomings of society and of the individuals who define it. As problematic as they sometimes are, the results of this effort, based on the notion that the individual, each individual, must improve before society can develop in a meaningful, humanistic way, constitute the real concern of my research: the universal value of Lawrence's fiction and the establishment of art generally as a source of insight whereby we may continue in a personal way to question and even improve our own lives.

The body of this work analyzes the specific nature of social alienation—the sense of being a foreigner among one's contemporaries—and of personal or psychological
estrangement—the sense of being identified exclusively in terms of social roles, morals and conventions at the expense of personal awareness and development. I also discuss the plausibility of those alternatives Lawrence specifically offers within these novels as solutions to the problems of estrangement, aborted relationships and repression, alternatives which become an integral and important part of the works, for besides graphically and sympathetically depicting the nature and effects of contemporary alienation, he implicitly asks: Is this to be our future? Are we to accept as inevitable a life of continuing, even increasing dehumanization in the service of developing technology, in which exile, physical and psychological, is our only means of escape? Must we submit to resignation, in other words, or total rejection, possibly to the point of madness? Or is there, can there be hope, not of the religious, but of the social kind: hope in terms of a society, a community in which people, not machines, relationships, not economics, provide the basis of a fundamentally secure and meaningful life?

These are the issues and the questions which inform my analysis of Lawrence’s characters, their relationships, and the enigma and contradictions of urban social experience as it existed (and still exists), and as he portrayed it in some of his fiction. Because he changed after WW I, largely in fact as a result of that war, from a novelist concerned with the suffering, the often frustrated goals, the complex-
ties of individuals to one primarily concentrating on the reformation or the mystical transcendence of society, I have examined only those novels written before and during the war (that is: from 1912 to 1917), novels which are as well, I think, his finest, most complex works: The Trespasser, Sons and Lovers, The Rainbow, and Women in Love.

I have in most cases documented those four novels internally, using Penguin editions throughout, the pagination of which remains the same for all printings. Within a chapter primarily devoted to a single novel, I document references to that work by page number alone, and for reasons of economy use the following abbreviations when referring to other of the four novels with which this work is most concerned: T: The Trespasser (1912); SL: Sons and Lovers (1913); R: The Rainbow (1915); WL: Women in Love (completed in 1917, although not published until 1920). Unless otherwise specified, I have used as the source of Lawrence's letters the Cambridge edition: The Letters of D.H. Lawrence, eds. James T. Boulton, et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979- ), although by recording the date and recipient I allow the reader, where applicable, to use other sources, such as those edited by Harry T. Moore and Aldous Huxley. As with the novels, in order to minimize the disruption footnotes can create, I have usually documented the letters within the body of the work.
Finally, during the development and writing of this project, and afterwards, I was assisted by several persons whose criticism has been invaluable. I would like at this time to thank, and express my debt, firstly to John Doheny, who was involved from the outset, and whose questions concerning the nature of my research and more importantly my intentions prevented me from drifting onto tangents or assuming too much. As well, I am indebted, for their suggestions and support, to Jack Stewart, John Wilson Foster, Keith Alldritt, Mark Spilka and Paul Delany, and to the friends and colleagues, especially Maggie Berg, Michele Leggott, Janet Baron and Fakrul Alam, who were so willing to discuss my work with me, and to listen while I articulated my anxiety, doubts and ideals.

Financially, I was assisted in my research by two University of British Columbia Fellowships and a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Fellowship. Again, I acknowledge my indebtedness.
1: The Final Aim: Lawrence, Culture and Alienation

Modern society is a mill
that grinds life very small
The upper millstone of the robot-classes,
the lower millstone of the robot-masses,
and between them, the last living human beings
being ground exceeding small.

D.H. Lawrence, "Give Us the
Thebaid"

I am a part of the great whole, and I can never escape. But
I can deny my connections, break them, and become a frag­
ment. Then I am wretched.

D.H. Lawrence, Apocalypse

If there was any phenomenon during Lawrence’s lifetime
which evoked a response comparable to the vehemence with
which he criticized the general tendency of the populace to
be apathetic, socially identified and nominally intellectual
at the expense of personal relationships and instinctive,
especially sexual, vitality, it was the process whereby
self-improvement changed, within industrial society, from a
spiritual to a materialistic concept. By the end of WW I,
at which time mass production had attained a previously
unknown efficiency, but was in danger of being without a
marketplace now that war machinery was no longer required, the shift to materialism becomes most apparent and most irrevocable. Bicycles, automobiles, suburban housing, new furniture, factory-made clothing, the new appliances required in the conversion from coal to gas and electricity: these possessions, with the aid of effective advertising, soon revitalized the peacetime economy, for they, it was popularly believed, were the acquisitions necessary to modern "self-improvement."

In Lawrence's view, any changes the war itself had produced had not fundamentally altered society; rather, as a kind of catalyst, it had intensified the rate at which social conditions and values were changing. Everything, that is, which existed during and immediately following the war had existed before, including motorcars, airplanes, typewriters, sewing machines, vacuum cleaners, contraceptive devices, radio-telegraphy, motion pictures, psychoanalysis, the Labour Party, and import reductions, the result of a shrinking British empire and a concomitant reliance upon entrepreneurs of other nationalities. In addition to these, the first decade of the new century was affected as well by the more abstract consequences of advanced scientific research: the questioning of traditional theology, morality and institutions such as marriage, and a burgeoning, innovative arms race of sufficient potential that even the future became suspect. Gudrun and Loerke, for example, as perhaps
representative of their generation, can cheerfully discuss the past and the present, but as for "the future, that they never mentioned except one laughed out [sic] some mocking dream of the destruction of the world by a ridiculous catastrophe of man's invention: a man invented such a perfect explosive that it blew the earth in two ... or else the people of the world divided into two halves, and each half decided it was perfect and right, the other half was wrong, and must be destroyed; so another end of the world" (WL, 510).

The Edwardian years, then, a time of extensive and undeniable change, were also not surprisingly a time of fierce resistance to change, or often more accurately, of refusal to accept change. Forms, as a result, tended to become more important than the values they once embodied: forms of morality held without conviction, political, social, even artistic conventions upheld at times with absurd stubbornness, institutions defended more staunchly than the ideas and ideals they were meant to propagate. This reaction was no doubt partly the result of a nostalgic response to the death, after so many years on the throne, of Queen Victoria, a nostalgia mixed with anxiety as the emblem of Victorian well-being, of an epoch, died during what was to become the symbol of a new, uncertain and unsettling age: the Boer War. Brief but historically significant, the Edwardian was to be an age marked by pervasive apprehension and strife. If the previous decades had been the Age of
Science, this, certainly from Lawrence's point of view, would be the Age of Anger.¹

Most complex and confusing was the response to the new technology. Although it tended to be opposed by both reactionaries and radicals, the latter were ambivalent and more selective. Where technological innovation could lessen the burden of workers, for example, and when it could provide pleasure, it was obviously better received. And yet, as becomes graphically clear in the chapter of Women in Love titled "The Industrial Magnate," or at the end of The Rainbow, the same process of modernization, efficiency and at least partial elimination of hardship could simultaneously result in adversity of a different kind: unemployment, the dehumanization of the workplace, a dramatic reduction in a sense of craftsmanship, fragmentary and repetitive assembly line labour. Even in less industrial kinds of work, such as teaching, efficiency at the expense of human response, if we can believe Ursula's experience, was still the norm. Undoubtedly there were many who felt, as Paul Morel does, that they had become prisoners of industrialism, for to most people, except the entrepreneurs who profited from it, industrialization progressed at the expense, in one way or another, of individuals and individual desires, such as autonomy, free will or creativity. Men and women continued to work intolerable hours under conditions hardly different from those of their Victorian predecessors.²
As to changing these conditions, many people—and certainly Lawrence was one—felt helpless in the face of what was perceived as an entrenched status quo, a feeling more frustrating in light of an increased literacy which allowed the general populace to be better informed of their situation. Nor did many potential reformists expect support from Parliament. In terms of humanistic reform the Liberals, who had achieved a majority in 1906, often tended to be seen as being more conservative than the Conservatives, particularly in their defense of laissez-faire individualism and their repression of groups espousing social change. Any legislature beneficial to the working class, or to women, that was passed at this time, therefore, tended to be the result of effective if depressingly prolonged lobbying by an increasingly popular and, from by-elections to replace aging Whigs, expanding Labour opposition. Those benefits, however, were minimal compared to the insidious actions of a party, the Liberals, and specifically a Prime Minister, Asquith, notoriously, even cruelly, opposed to disruptive organizations such as the Suffragettes and the trade unions. It was Asquith, for example, who first deployed troops against striking miners, an incident Lawrence recreates as part of Gerald Crich’s childhood.

Protest, and Draconian measures intended to counter protest, were not uncommon, for the anger of the age could not be stifled. Sides were drawn: a determined if no less confused and anxious status quo—the politicians, entre-
preneurs and others in positions of power—battling the Irish, the unions, the Suffragettes and unorganized groups: the young, the brash and insolent and often violent critics of convention, tradition, and any other form of dehumanization. Ironically, it was the effects of Victorian humanist victories—a more pervasive and greater literacy, marginally improved standards of living and working, for the middle if not the lower classes—which had planted the seeds of this new unrest. The old conventions and beliefs in a class system, in a "man's world," a world of conquest and stoicism, a world considered to be the irrefutable domain of Anglo-Saxon men assisted in their efforts by a sympathetic God: all of this was crumbling. And yet the traditionalists fought fervidly, with a sense of duty, to resist the inevitable, convinced that it was change which created social deterioration and decline.

To them, women in the workforce appropriating male jobs were the source of current social problems, as were unions undermining patriotism and capitalist democracy, socialism marking the end of Christianity, even the new art, espousing sexual licentiousness and other forms of decadence, threatening the holiest of institutions: marriage. And yet, in a world where freedom of choice—in terms of education, employment, individual, (and for the Irish, national) development—was increasing at an unsatisfactory rate, these protesters, especially the women, were not to be deterred.
For women, particularly, the struggle to greater equality tended to be the most bitter, if determined, because it was exacerbated by the possibility that even if they wanted to, they could not stand alone, that autonomy and freedom were not theirs to seek. Furthermore, the most fearful consequence of attempting to survive alone was that while they could not of course enjoy the benefits of marriage, neither could they fully enjoy those of independence, even if they attained that status. With significantly lower wages, they often could not afford to live away from their parents' homes—that is, to escape dependence upon fathers—and even if they did, they would continue to depend upon men for their livelihood. In short, for a shrinking but still large proportion of the female populace, the single person could expect a life of menial work, limited opportunity for advancement, and little sense of fulfillment.

Such was the approximate context within which Lawrence lived and wrote. I would hasten to add, however, that what I have been describing tends to be closer to what he would have written than to an objective historical account. While Lawrence was an astute observer of life around him, he was not a detached analyst of Edwardian social structure. His focus was on the forces of alienation, the progressive loss of control by the individual over his life, the conventions and practices of a male-dominated society, the anger, so dramatically expressed in the decade before the Great War, of women, Irish nationalists, and unionized workers against
those who denied them self-expression, autonomy, dignity. Because he believed that relations between men and women and between rich and poor were deteriorating, he was prevented from seeing his era, so full of contradictions, as a whole (a view perhaps only the historian is granted).

Women were not angry because the laws were more oppressive or because work opportunities were shrinking but because fairer laws governing divorce, separation, married women’s property and the gradual opening of clerical jobs were making more women conscious of the hypocrisy and inequality which remained. Nor were workers angry because their lot was worse than that of their fathers; indeed, the two decades before 1914 saw real wages roughly stabilize after a quarter of a century of significant improvement. They were angry because expectations of a better life had been raised and left unsatisfied. The Liberal Ministry after 1908 had doubled the proportion of the national wealth spent on welfare, granting, for example, pensions to the aged, medical and unemployment insurance to labourers, and minimum standards of payments. But none of these measures, significant and progressive though they were, dampened the angry mood of the country. The time had passed when Liberal compromises, half-hearted measures and minimalist policies could suffice. Newly-won freedoms and widened horizons had awakened opportunities for more, appetites the Edwardian establishment was unwilling or unable to satisfy. It was
not a liberating movement, therefore, which Lawrence (and countless others) saw, but only the repression remaining.

II

Lawrence, then, was not an objective historian or sociologist. He tended to ignore the myriad complexities and contradictions of the world in which he lived, and consequently his judgement of change in the social and economic structure of his time was astute yet simplistic. At the same time, however, his perceptions of people were subtle and profound. Perhaps that was because he was not coldly analytical, not a social analyst, that he could look so deeply into one of the fundamental issues of our time: the growing sense that the bureaucratizing, fragmentary, materialist spirit of advanced industrialism was robbing people of mastery over their skills, their bodies, their human relationships, even while it was widening opportunities and creating and distributing unprecedented wealth.

Lawrence tended to be most astute, and sensitive, in his observations of the plight of workers, especially women, who constitute some of his strongest, most complex characters. Their experience, their struggles and anxieties often had been his own, and certainly they echo his criticism, especially of institutions such as government and marriage. Although not opposed to the concept itself, he criticized contemporary marriage as apathetic insularity and
stasis, the "old way of love" as "a dreadful bondage, a sort of conscription" (WL, 223). Nor was he particularly fond of government, education or industrialism. And yet, like Carlyle and Dickens before him, Lawrence's criticism of society was moral rather than political. Any constructive suggestions for improvement which he offered, especially in the earlier novels, were personal and concentrated on the development of the individual alone or with usually no more than one other person.

In terms of the eccentricity of his visions of reform, Lawrence reveals a certain similarity to the Fabians. He of course was not a member, for he tended to avoid most organizations, and specifically criticized Fabians such as Shaw and Wells as being overly intellectual, "flat," lacking in spontaneity, and too didactic. Certainly Wells could be accused of some such characteristics, especially intellectualism, but the basis of Shaw's ideology, not unlike Lawrence's, was a belief in the development within individuals of what he called the "Life Force," a combination of vitality and will. More generally, Lawrence possessed, as did the majority of this Society's members, an eclectic heterodoxy and later, a vision of the world governed by intellectually superior and therefore more expert leaders than those so often elected by the indiscriminating masses. As well, the Fabians, in their eclecticmism, individually and even as a group, were able to avoid one of the major crises
most would-be reformists eventually experience when a decision must be made favouring either party allegiance or personal conviction, for they were at best a loosely organized, multifactional society. Moreover, as social idealists, many shared with Lawrence an ignorance of political, and especially bureaucratic, matters, which tended to make them utopian idealists rather than reformists with plausible political alternatives. And if the Fabians were as a group more scientifically inclined than Lawrence, whose sexual ideology was in many respects a reaction against science, their contribution, like his, lay in their ability to be insightful social critics, capable of perceiving the complexity of contemporary conditions, and their real sources, hidden beneath layers of symptoms such as mechanization, oppression, alienation: sources, having to do with human nature, which had existed long before the rise of industrialism.  

Of course, Lawrence could never have become a Fabian; his faith, especially in his own vision, his purposiveness, the resoluteness of his conviction were all derived from a refusal or even an inability to compromise. He was suspicious and highly critical of groups, and even more so of protest, or militancy in general. As we see in Women in Love, The Rainbow, and his "Study of Thomas Hardy," he believed that change was primarily an individual matter, and that as individuals developed, so too would society, as a
collective of individuals, improve. Even after the war, when he began formulating a more specific reformist ideology, espousing radical political and social change, he avoided discussing methods of change. He could not condone union action, in spite of his sympathy for the workers, his understanding of their plight, and his appreciation of the need for dramatic and immediate reform. To take matters into their own hands was barbaric, and even were they to succeed, they would probably, as had happened in Russia, replace one bully as leader with another. The masses, he was convinced, the "herd," as he often called them, could not possibly make decisions beneficial to a single individual, for unlike an individual, a group is not capable of reason. "Every man," he once wrote, "has two selves among his manifold Self. He has a herd-self, which is vulgar, common, ugly, like the voice of the man in the crowd. And he has a better self, which is quiet, and slow, and which is most of the time puzzled. From his better self, he is almost dumb. From his herd-self, he shouts and yells and rants." Clearly, it was time for the better self to be heard.

Lawrence was similarly suspicious of the Suffragette Movement as promoting a war between the sexes and thus completely antithetical to his own quest for reconciliation and harmony. He was again even more critical of the militancy of their campaign; in letters to Louie Burrows, her-
self closely associated with the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU), he rather condescendingly and snidely dismissed their rallies as little more than entertaining spectacles. Writing to her, for example, on 28 March, 1909, the day after a series of Croydon by-election campaign speeches during which the Conservative candidate, a vehement anti-suffragist named Sir Robert Hermon-Hodge, was verbally attacked by members of The National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies, Lawrence described the scene as composed of "Suffragettes in thousands and tens of thousands processing and crying in the wilderness." While Hermon-Hodge, a "handsome man of culture," spoke, he was "tortured for three long hours" by a small group of particularly vocal protesters. "Think of fifty fools chanting together," Lawrence suggested, "while the words of hot, painful conviction were crushed on your lips. Yap to yourself ‘Hodge, Hodge, Hodge, Hodge’ some thousand times, and imagine fifty throats yapping in unison whilst you uttered the cry of your heart. Speak your deep convictions to somebody, and let them insult you and heckle you and call you a liar." And when a woman climbed to the podium to assist him, to quell the crowd, she "lifts her arms to them for respite—in vain. Their souls are lusted with cruelty."

Lawrence identifies with this man not in support of his political stance but from sympathy. He is the isolated individual, like Lawrence: the stranger in a strange land, the voice of one crying in the wilderness. It is neither
surprising, then, nor contradictory that Lawrence can sym­pathize with women and yet react as he does when they organize. The women he can appreciate, the women in his novels, from Helena Verden to Ursula and Gudrun Brangwen, may be as socially critical as suffragettes, as inclined to equality, independence and free will, they may even be considered feminists, but they remain individuals, their convictions true to themselves, unsullied by mob irrational­ity. Even Clara Dawes, who may be a member of the WSPU (SL, 286), is more closely associated with "the Socialist, Suffragette, Unitarian people in Nottingham" (SL, 316), a group characterized not by militancy or even protest but by its quiet meetings reminiscent of church or literary ses­sions and, from its name, one as concerned with trade unionism and ethics as with suffrage. It would be simplistic, therefore, to suggest that Lawrence disliked suffragettes for being, like Clara, unsuccessful or ir­responsible wives, or lesbians like Winifred Inger. The basis of his disapproval was not stereotype or generaliza­tion but, as I have said, the extent to which any person strayed from personal vision or became insensitive. What he criticizes in Winifred, then, is her idolization of the machine, her failure as a human being, and in that sense her failure even as a lesbian or a feminist.

Clara, on the other hand, is I think sympathetically portrayed; indeed, what she wants, to be "'free and indepen-
dent'" (SL, 285), is no less strident than what Miriam desires—equality with men—and what Paul also seeks. In fact the quest for freedom and independence constitutes a major theme in most of Lawrence's earlier fiction. By *Women in Love* it is even more significant than equality, harmony or the development of an intellectual, sexual dialectic. In the Dawes relationship it is Baxter who is portrayed critically; Clara, like Ursula with Skrebensky, simply leaves a man who is at the time unwilling and perhaps incapable of allowing or attaining a relationship within which she would be able to have the freedom to develop. Clara, then, is a feminist, concerned, as men should be, with the development of those characteristics which will enhance her as a woman and as a person. Her position as a suffragette, in part condescendingly presented by Lawrence—it was, for example, not a commitment but primarily an educative process (SL, 323)—is in the end little more than a challenge to the slightly chauvinistic and, more importantly, the naive Paul Morel. She is not a militant, nor even a fanatic, therefore she poses no threat and can be portrayed sympathetically. She seeks equality, she is a sensuous woman, sexual, even anti-intellectual (which again reduces the significance of her suffragette activities) and as such appreciated at least as much as Miriam by both Paul and his author.

While Lawrence was Carylean in his fear and criticism of "mobs"—unions, suffragettes, socialists, or any other organized movement; even, for example, the cultism of free
love—what he sought, and this does not necessarily contradict the original aims of those groups, was the liberation of the individual—not only the worker or the suffragette, but any individual, man or woman—from those conventions and institutions he considered to be the real sources of oppression and alienation and, he prophesized, the reasons both the British nation and the Anglo-Saxon race would eventually degenerate. Specifically decrying bourgeois materialism, the new concept of "self-improvement," as the root of contemporary social and psychological problems, he wrote in his "Study of Thomas Hardy" that mankind "had made such a mighty struggle to feel at home on the face of the earth, without even yet succeeding. Ever since he first discovered himself exposed naked betwixt sky and land, belonging to neither, he has gone on fighting for more food, more clothing, more shelter; and though he has roofed-in the world with houses and though the ground has heaved up massive abundance and excess of nutriment to his hand, still he cannot be appeased, satisfied. He goes on and on. In his anxiety he has evolved nations and tremendous governments to protect his person and his property; his strenuous purpose, unremitting, has brought to pass the whole frantic turmoil of modern industry. Even his religion has for the systole of its heart-beat, propitiation of the Unknown God who controls death and the sources of nourishment.

"But for the diastole of the heart-beat, there is
something more, something else, thank heaven," and that something, which should be the "final aim of every living thing, creature, or being is the full achievement of itself. This accomplished, it will produce what it will produce, it will bear the fruit of its nature. Not the fruit, however, but the flower is the culmination and climax, the degree to be striven for," because it is the flower which not only contains the seeds of the next harvest, but the essence, the vitality and the potential for meaningful, developing existence. "Not the work I shall produce, but the real Me I shall achieve, that is the consideration; of the complete Me will come the complete fruit of me ... The final aim is the flower," the "maximum of being." 6

While materialism, for most people, was not considered a problem in Edwardian England, perhaps the most consequential crisis (and so far as Lawrence was concerned, these two were related), involved the changing relations between men and women, changes arising out of the work, and the attention paid that work, by Freud, Havelock Ellis, even Edward Carpenter, and as a consequence of the trade union and suffragette movements. (The significance of the latter is that although they were occasionally harmonious, as when they joined to protest general working conditions, for the most part the men, as did their non-union counterparts, felt threatened by the militancy of the decidedly unconventional female activists.) These changes, essentially constituting a social revolution, affected, as they were often affected
by or arose out of dissatisfaction with, legal, political and economic issues such as divorce, marriage laws, ownership of goods and property, parliamentary representation, the birth rate and conditions of employment. Lawrence, as a result, becomes perhaps the most important, socially and artistically, of the Edwardian and Georgian writers, for many of the central issues in his novels (at least to *Women in Love*) are the same as those in contemporary society, in that they all derive from this single phenomenon: the conflict and the attempt at harmony, even the improvement of relationships between the sexes.

A potential problem in reading Lawrence, however, or at least in fully appreciating him, and another reason for bringing to mind these socio-historical issues, is that often what his characters oppose, or achieve, arises out of what is only an implied social environment. When Ursula in *The Rainbow*, for example, dismisses her father's objections, and in doing so rejects social and family expectations and tradition in order to obtain employment in the "man's world," we must understand that historically, particularly in a provincial city, she could not easily have done so. Although she would have had as precedents the efforts of an increasing number of pioneering women to assist her, still she would have been forced to endure the objections of others and of the community as a whole. She also would have earned less than men, a situation held by some to be right and by others, especially male teachers, even to be just.
for she, as a single woman with few expenses, still would have fared better than they, who had wives and children to support, and rent to pay. In a similar vein, when Gudrun travels to Europe with Gerald, unmarried and sexually active, or when it becomes known that Paul is sexually involved with Clara, a married woman and one perhaps even benefiting from recently developed, and reasonably efficient contraceptive devices (which either Gudrun does not use or which are only reasonably efficient, for in the epilogue to *Women in Love* we learn that she was pregnant with Gerald's son by the end of the novel), they too would have been strenuously and often openly criticized.

These are specific details, admittedly, but unless they are placed in context, they may be overlooked, and that in turn can tend to make more abstract than necessary the often concrete if abstruse endeavors and real feelings of these characters. The same can be said of Lawrence's efforts generally. What he was creating were characters critical of a society which seemed, in light of his own desire for immediate change, reluctant to admit that Victoria was dead, the Boer War ended, a new age dawning. These characters become pioneers in striving for changes which may seem inevitable, or perhaps impossible, yet which will never be achieved without considerable effort and extensive reflection and discussion. And to Lawrence what created this need for change was a pervasive feeling of alienation: from self,
from others, from society. The solution, therefore, the effective change, would be to improve relations with others and hopefully to assimilate more satisfactorily, more meaningfully, into society. To do that, however, entailed two further areas of change. Within society values must be converted from materialist to humanist—the machine must no longer reign as god—and within the individual intellectual, rationalist concerns, which are equated with materialism, must be suppressed so as to give at least equal weight to sexual, intuitive sensibility, which is equated with feeling and especially with love, those characteristics necessary to achieve better relations. All of this was meant to provide a means of escape from alienation—from the loneliness, the meaninglessness, the stasis of contemporary industrial experience—and in doing so would not only lead to progress but to the freedom and independence of the individual, man or woman, necessary to prevent the race from eventually either annihilating itself or reducing itself to impotency.

For Lawrence, what aggravated this concern was his impression that in the first years of the twentieth century, the dawning of a new, more enlightened age (so he hoped), things had changed little. Tensions still exited between the sexes, as between the rich and the poor, employers and employees; marriage and divorce laws and unequal pay for equal work continued to maintain a pervasive and humiliating double standard; and perhaps most importantly the hypocrisy, the ignorance, particularly of men towards women, the lack
of sympathy and understanding, the repression of sexual
desire, anxiety, frustration—Freud was clearly describing
the results of this—were detrimental to the healthy
development of men, women, and society. Underlying most
social problems, then, the fundamental issue in the end was
a problem of values. An age purported to be of modern
science, the Edwardian was also an age clinging to and
defined by obsolete Victorian morals. What Lawrence became
a part of, an innovator in, was in fact the establishment of
a new "religion," a Weltanschauung, as we see with Ursula in
The Rainbow, radically revised so as to be compatible with
developments in the material world, the "weekday world"
which had "triumphed over the Sunday world. The Sunday
world," Ursula realizes, is no longer real, "or at least,
not actual. And one lived by action ... so there was a
necessity to choose one's action and one's deeds. One was
responsible," not to God, or tradition, but "to the world
for what one did. Nay, one was more than responsible to the
world. One was responsible to oneself" (R, 284). Self-
responsibility: that was the new religion, Lawrence's
religion. And it was a religion, in that this bid for
autonomy was a humanistic alternative not only to conven-
tional religion and its alliance with the power structure,
but to the prevailing industrial capitalist idea of
individualism.

It was meant to be self-responsibility, not in the
pursuit of more efficient means of production, in the way
Gerald Crich might be described as being self-responsible,
but of culture: a quest for a flexible, organic interaction
between the individual and the collective which would be
beneficial to both. As Lawrence was to write in Apocalypse,
which is in many respects a reevaluation of the concepts and
issues he had discussed prior to and during WW I: "What we
want is to destroy our false, inorganic connections,
especially those related to money, and re-establish the
living organic connections, with the cosmos, the sun and
earth, with mankind and nation and family ... the magnifi­
cent here and now of life in the flesh is ours, and ours
alone, and ours only for a time. We ought to dance with
rapture that we should be alive and in the flesh, and part
of the living, incarnate cosmos." What Lawrence's
characters, the characters I shall discuss, try to do, in
spite of at times oppressive, disheartening obstacles, and
they do not always succeed, is to dance with rapture the
celebration of life in the flesh, and reestablish those
living, organic connections.

In an effort to reify such ideals, Lawrence proposed
alternatives to contemporary values, contemporary ways of
living, to marriage, for example: that "old way of love"
which, as Birkin describes it, is "a life lived together, in
the horrible privacy of domestic and connubial satisfac­
tion," whole communities "of mistrustful couples insulated
in private houses or private rooms, always in couples ... a kaleidoscope of couples, disjoined, separatist, meaningless entities of married couples" (WL, 223). It was not that Lawrence was opposed to marriage itself, but, as Britons, especially women, were discovering (and we will perceive this being realized by Clara and the early Brangwen women, and then Lydia, Anna, Ursula and Gudrun), in the new suburbs, the expanding towns and cities, as the world changed around them, the old way of love, the old marriages, the old, domestic life was a kind of death, just as, for the men and the new women workers, a life of meaningless labour in the service of dehumanizing machines, of a new technology that demanded more efficiency and less craftsmanship, was also a kind of death. Wages, procreation and motherhood could no longer form the basis of meaningful life, and in fact men and women must be liberated from those, to Lawrence, corrupt values and habits if they were to escape the prison of industrialism. Through Ursula, at the end of The Rainbow, he expresses this conviction: "She knew that the sordid people who crept hard-scaled and separate on the face of the world’s corruption were living still, that the rainbow was arched in their blood and would quiver to life in their spirit, that they would cast off their horny covering of disintegration, that new, clean, naked bodies would issue to a new germination, to a new growth, rising to the light, and the wind and the clean rain of heaven. She saw in the rainbow the earth’s new architecture, the old,
brittle corruption of houses and factories swept away, the world built up in a living fabric of Truth, fitting to the over-arching heaven" (WL, 495-96).

The basis of this new Truth, the rainbow, which he describes in a poem of that name as having "one foot in the lap of a woman / and one in the loins of a man," is sexual vitality. What Lawrence was suggesting, an astounding and for some a shocking proposal, is that sexuality is a healthy, normal human characteristic which must be developed in proportion to intellectual and spiritual growth if an individual is to achieve a meaningful and liberated existence, and that women experience and must satiate a sexual desire equal to that of men. What he also advocated, at times quite explicitly, as when Ursula rejects tradition and conventional religion, was a repudiation of the entrenched belief that contemporary, civilized humanity is the product of the past and that radical change is not liberation but degeneration. In that sense his sexual ideology was in fact socio-political, for any ideology which is viewed as threatening to undermine existing morals and conventions is deemed subversive. Specifically, Lawrence's proposals were in conflict with established religion and the institution of marriage. Together they had thus far provided economic and political stability through passivity and an expanding population; a stability which, to a nation feeling increasingly insular and threatened by both European and colonial forces,
was at least as important as the production of material goods. That *The Rainbow*, for example, would create the furor it did is not surprising.

The reaction is largely due to misinterpretation, however, for what Lawrence clearly if implicitly establishes is that modern, liberated women or men will not be anarchists, revolutionists nor necessarily even atheists. They certainly will not desire the end of family life, or the abolition of marriage or morals. On the contrary, such individuals would be socially engaged as well as self-responsible, capable of assisting in a more humanistic development of society, concerned with reestablishing marriage, religion and work as relevant, valuable institutions, wanting to reinstate the vital interplay between man and woman, the individual and society. They would only wish to abolish class structure, male domination, with its attendant aggression, violence and militarism, and finally, those tenets of laissez-faire capitalism (especially materialism), science and intellectualism held to be social ideals. For Lawrence, Eugene Goodheart has observed, "society is not a system of obligations, a necessary social contract into which one enters unwillingly; it is the fulfilment of the human impulse toward community with others." This "appeal to spontaneity to decide the issues of life," Goodheart continues, is the only recourse Lawrence has "to overcome the dualisms of life and culture, the self and the world. He is deaf to the claims of the world and culture,
because to grant them a hearing is to tolerate the dualism. Every impulse ... is devoted to restoring culture to life, the world to the self." 

In other words, when Lawrence discusses social assimilation, it is meant to be achieved in his terms, individual terms, with the obligations and the responsibility always directed primarily, even exclusively, to the self. When that is perceived as impossible, the alternatives are exile or the development of proposals to change society, to re-instate in a contemporary way those values and morals which he sees historically as having once defined culture nondualistically by responding or being responses to the needs and goals of individuals, singly and as a collective. It is when the collective takes precedence, when institutions and laws begin favouring the majority, and then the ruling minority at the expense of the individual, that the dualism originates. Moreover, in a dualistic society, as Lawrence observed in the novels of Thomas Hardy, the individual is often forced to decide between himself and the community, for the two no longer have common goals. And to decide in favour of community, which has also become an abstraction and as such no longer part of the natural world, is to forsake self, as we will see most graphically in the crisis which Gerald Crich experiences. Having established himself as a logical, rational, efficient man of indomitable will, he eventually realizes that beneath that social identity
there is nothing: a void that is at once alien and terrifying. He has, in service of industrial, mechanized society, become self-alienated, a foreigner in his own mind. The opposite of this is Rupert Birkin who, in trying to retain and develop a humanistic sense of self, must become socially alienated because social and self-identity tend to be incompatible, and because the morality he holds to be most valuable, most meaningful, he believes can only be found in the natural world. Thus Birkin, convinced that he can best achieve freedom and happiness only in exile, at first from industrial society and then from England altogether, becomes a foreigner in his own land.

These men and, in one way or another, the characters who precede them, are neither satisfied nor successful in their efforts to rid themselves of dissatisfaction. Siegmund and Helena escape to what is almost literally a fairytale land, an illusionary paradise that cannot be sustained. Paul Morel must sever relations with the women he loves before he can with any confidence stride towards the city: the man's world. Ursula and Gudrun desperately, and with varied success, strive to reconcile self-fulfillment and social commitment. And in spite of the most concentrated efforts of these characters it is evident, by the end of Women in Love, that they cannot succeed alone or in isolated relationships. As a result, Lawrence changes his focus in the novels which follow, concentrating on different issues. If individuals cannot assimilate and still retain
their integrity, their uniqueness, and if exile becomes an attempt to escape the inescapable, then obviously society must change. Of all the reasons for this shift of focus, the war itself was most responsible, because to Lawrence it suddenly and overwhelmingly intensified the sources of alienation he previously had been noting. During that war, Frieda wrote, "something changed in Lawrence for ever." In Kangaroo, the twelfth chapter of which, "The Nightmare," is probably the most explicit of his autobiographical endeavors, Lawrence is more specific. The transformation, he wrote there, began in 1915, the year "the old world ended," the year "practically every man lost his head, and lost his own centrality, his own manly isolation in his own integrity" (236), the year he "lost his meaning" and England, having died, "lost its meaning for him" (286), the year "he discovered the great secret: to stand alone as his own judge of himself, absolutely" (278).

To stand alone, however, was not to triumph. "The War," Lawrence wrote to Lady Cynthia Asquith (31 January, 1915), had finished him; "it was the spear through the side of all sorrows and hopes ... since then [the declaration of war] ... things have not existed for me. I have spoken to no one ... I have touched no one, I have seen no one. All the while, I swear, my soul lay in the tomb--not dead, but with the flat stone over it, a corpse become corpse dead. And nobody existed, because I did not exist myself. Yet I
was not dead--only passed over--trespasse." And yet he continued in his attempt to remain optimistic; he would "rise again ... We shall all rise again," he prophesied in the same letter. It was at this time that he was beginning his plans for a utopian collective which he called Rananim, a community, he wrote Lady Ottoline Morrell (1 February, 1915), "based not on poverty, but on riches, not on humility, but on pride, not on sacrifice but on complete fulfillment in the flesh of all strong desire, not on forfeiture but upon inheritance, not on heaven but on earth ... We will be aristocrats, and as wise as the serpents in dealing with the mob. For the mob shall not crush us or starve us nor cry us to death. We will deal cunningly with the mob, the greedy soul, we will gradually bring it to subjection."

Although in a subsequent letter to Lady Ottoline, one month later, he added that to "live, we must all unite, and bring all the knowledge into a coherent whole ... joining together ... the multifarious parts," knitting "all Words together into the smelting pot ... whereby a great people shall come into being, a free race as well as a race of free individuals," that optimism and that idealism continued to be affected by darker feelings, by a cynicism and despair that would eventually lead to the autocraticism of his new democracy. Not only were his ideals impractical--derived from a pot pourri of contradictory revolutionary sources such that they made Bertrand Russell wince--and the scope undecided--at one time Rananim was to be situated on a small
Pacific island, then in Florida or New Mexico, then England itself—but it seemed gradually to become clear that the issues were more complex, more pervasive, more fundamental than even his idealism could accommodate. "The world of men is dreaming," he wrote to Lady Ottoline (14 May, 1915). It has "gone mad in its sleep, and a snake is strangling it, but it can't wake up ... I cannot bear it much longer, to let the madness get stronger and stronger possession. Soon in England we shall go fully mad, with hate. I too hate the Germans so much, I could kill every one of them. Why should they goad us to this frenzy of hatred, why should we be tortured to bloody madness, when we are only grieved in our souls, and heavy. They will drive our heaviness and our grief away in a fury of rage. And we don't want to be worked up into this fury, this destructive madness of rage. Yet we must, we are goaded on and on. I am mad with rage myself. I would like to kill a million Germans--two million."

To Bertrand Russell, in the previous month (15 March), he had been just as deeply despondent. He was "struggling in the dark," he wrote, "--very deep in the dark--and cut off from everybody and everything. Sometimes I seem to stumble into the light, for a day, or even two days--then I plunge again, god knows where and into what utter darkness of chaos. I don't mind very much. But sometimes I am afraid of the terrible things that are real, in the darkness, and of the entire unreality of the things I see. It
becomes like madness at last, to know one is all the time walking in a pale assembly of an unreal world—this house, this furniture, the sky and the earth—whilst oneself is all the while a piece of darkness pulsating in shocks, and the shocks and the darkness are real. The whole universe of darkness and dark passions—the subterranean universe—not inferno, because that is 'after'—the subterranean black universe of all things which have not yet had being—has conquered me now, and I can't escape. So I think with fear of having to talk to anybody, because I don't talk."

Part of his feeling was derived from the inexorable belief that he was in some profound, complex way different from other people. The solution, during the war, was a shift from the individuality of his "Study of Thomas Hardy" to an attempt through vision to unite all estranged individuals. "Let the world be perfect as a vision," he told Margaret Radford. "Loneliness is part of temporality and partiality," while the vision of absoluteness "avails against all loneliness ... the eternal world is the perfect world" because it stands apart from "power in the mortal world," particularly "personal power." Observing the chaos, the lack of spirit, the effects of a continued war on social morale, the indecisiveness of government, the inability of most people to perceive the fundamental differences between this war and all those which had preceded it, Lawrence soon forgot Rananim. In two letters to Russell
(14, 16 July, 1915), he in fact repudiated even the vision of the previous month. The "extant" democracy, he assured the philosopher, "is our enemy. This existing phase is now in its collapse ... The idea of giving power to the hands of the working class"—to the masses, in other words, thus minimizing "personal power"—"is wrong. The working class must elect the immediate government, of his work, of his district," but not "the ultimate government of the nation," which must instead constitute an "aristocracy of people who have wisdom [one is reminded of the socio-political philosophy in Benjamin Disraeli’s *Sybil*] and there must be a Ruler: a Kaiser: no Presidents and democracies ... the idea is, that every man shall vote according to his understanding and that the highest understanding must dictate for the lower understandings ... the whole must culminate in an absolute *Dictator*, and an equivalent *Dictatrix*. There must be none of your bourgeois presidents of Republics."

At the same time as he was writing of social reconstruction, Lawrence described to Lady Cynthia Asquith (2 August, 1915) another, preferable world, not unlike that which Birkin desires (WL, 65, 120-21), a world of "no people, no people at all, no houses, no buildings, only a hay stack on the edge of a shingle, and an old black mill. For the rest, the flat unfinished world running with foam and noise and silvery light, and a few gulls swinging like a half-born thought. It is a great thing to realize that the
original world is still there—perfectly clean and pure ... It is this mass of unclean world that we have super-imposed on the clean world that we cannot bear ... One feels a sort of madness come over one, as if the whole world had become hell. But it is only super-imposed: it is only a temporary disease. It can be cleaned away." Although Lawrence subsequently had considerable difficulty formulating a satisfactory and acceptable method of eradicating the disease of industrialism, he continued, in an increasingly fragmented world, to believe in humanity's potential. It was just that—a concern for humanity—which caused him to concentrate on social reform in the first place, for he seems to have intuitively understood that while it is the individual and not society who attains freedom, some form of collective, whether a commune, a colony, a republic or a nation, is required to protect that freedom. And more than that, a collective with a specific set of values and the means of maintaining those values in a non-arbitrary way: a constitution, as it were, or, as he explained in the "Prologue to *Women in Love,*" a "great social, religious, philosophic idea towards which mankind, like an organism seeking its final form," must develop, for if there "be no great philosophical idea," there could only be a "corresponding process of decay and decomposition from some old, fulfilled, obsolete idea," a process, Birkin is convinced (WL, 286), leading ultimately to the annihilation of the race.

The issues, then, which characterized the novels
written after the war are already evident in *Women in Love*. It becomes clear, for example, by the end of this novel, that individual self-realization must be derived from the interaction of self with society, so that future development can be dependent upon awareness both psychological and social. It will also become a process of gaining insight into present circumstances developed from an understanding of the past: of origins, and desire or aspiration the result of experience, communication and the perception of limitations. Personal evolution, in other words, involves a multifaceted dialectic—intellectual and sexual, self and society, past and present—and when that dialectic is disturbed, when, in Lawrence’s words, "the human being becomes too much divided between his subjective and objective consciousness ... too much aware of objective reality, and of his own isolation in the face of a universe of objective reality, the core of his identity splits, his nucleus collapses, his innocence or naiveté perishes, and he becomes only a subjective-objective reality, a divided thing hinged together but not strictly individual."¹³

The same of course can be said of too much subjective reality. Without a sense of history, the present becomes a reactionary repetition of the past, and as such degenerative. The individual, unaware of being isolated, without a future, certainly without realistic direction or plausible goals, lives a meandering, illusionary existence approaching
stasis. We will see something of this with Ursula and Birkin, and with Ursula alone in *The Rainbow*: by rejecting the past, they deny themselves a future, or at least the future they envision, just as by refuting humanity they deny themselves development of identity, and even of purpose. And yet, as both Ursula and Birkin conclude, contemporary society is a "nullity," and individual life within it meaningless.

It is not surprising, therefore, that they and their author tend to stand alone, dismissing the whole of humanity as being too unmotivated ever to accept the responsibility of regeneration. As the war continued, Lawrence's optimism, even his energy and ambition, seemed, if only temporarily, to have dissipated, and this alone changed the whole character of his art. Typically, however, Lawrence did not give up, and more significantly, what emerges as a result of his own wish for personal happiness is a program meant to benefit all of mankind. The effects are twofold, and in many ways antithetical. While responding to social problems in his later novels, rather than to the needs of isolated individuals, he attempts to resolve those problems by proposing solutions meant to be more realistic, more successful than exile, and yet in doing so he shifts in his writing from novels of character to novels of ideas. The characters, as a result, come to represent attitudes, even commonly held attitudes—the commonality of despair, for example—and as such become symbols of an age, the novels
themselves utopian discourses rather than portrayals of individual struggle against oppression.

For this reason the novels Lawrence wrote after *Women in Love* will not concern me in the pages following, although I have referred to them and to the war because, like *Women in Love* itself, they were affected by that war, and by the circumstances which preceded and in many respects led irrevocably to it. What I will discuss are the earlier and I think Lawrence’s finest, most complex novels, works which depict the plight, the suffering, the alienation of individuals in an oppressive society. To me, there is a correlation between that oppressiveness and the failure of the characters, particularly the women, to achieve the equality, the freedom and the love they so adamantly desire.

What I see in these early novels is very similar to what Lawrence observed in Thomas Hardy: the tragedy or dilemma of contemporary experience which, he concluded, is "nothing more metaphysical than the division of a man against himself in such a way: first, that he is a member of the community, and must, upon his honour, in no way move to disintegrate the community, either in its moral or its practical form; second, that the convention of the community is a prison to his natural, individual desire, a desire that compels him, whether he feels justified or not, to break the bounds of the community, lands him outside the pale, there to stand alone, and say: 'I was right, my desire was real

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and inevitable; if I was to be myself I must fulfil it, convention or no convention,' or else, there to stand alone, doubting, and saying: 'Was I right, was I wrong? If I was wrong, oh let me die!'--in which case he courts death."14

In different ways, perhaps, some more metaphorical than others, all the characters, from Siegmund and Paul Morel to Ursula, Gudrun, Gerald and Birkin, experience essentially the same dilemma, and significantly, all realize at some point that they are courting death. In their determination to succeed on their terms or not succeed at all, death becomes a real possibility, a risk to be taken, and yet such is their state of alienation that the risk becomes minimized by desperation.

The difference between the earlier and later novels, and the source of power and insight in the former, is this: while the post-war works consider alternatives to decay, and attempt to refine that philosophic idea which must govern and direct us to a better life, in the novels I will consider, from *The Trespasser* to *Women in Love*, the characters, with the partial exception of Birkin, rarely enjoy the luxury of idle contemplation. More like Tom Brangwen, as the floodwaters sweep him off his feet, they grasp at ideas, people, and work in an effort to avoid what seems sometimes literally to be the swirling, suffocating maelstrom of contemporary experience within an oppressive industrial society directly responsible for the alienation they suffer. And yet they cannot avoid the maelstrom; caught in it, they soon
begin to change in terms of the ways in which they now respond to that society, and to other individuals. Even more consequentially, they begin to perceive themselves differently as well.

Oppression, in other words, affects both the communal and the personal components of identity and because of this alienation can be seen as a twofold phenomenon, involving what I define as social estrangement and self-alienation. The first I would describe as the feeling of being either a dehumanized victim or a foreigner within one's own milieu, even among one's peers, a feeling often exacerbated by the conflict between a desire to reject and the pressure to conform to moral convention and economic necessity. The second, self-alienation, is the sense of being personally or psychologically estranged, of feeling, as Gerald Crich does when he looks in the mirror after realizing that as a colliery manager he has become superfluous, that what one sees is not one's true self, or at least not the self hitherto perceived and defined as one's own.

Such traumatic self-realization is often compounded by the fact that individuals, no longer experiencing a sense of belonging (and the relationship between self-worth and security, as Lawrence implies in that section of his Hardy essay I last quoted, is a crucial one), and estranged from each other, in turn feel divided within themselves, in that their initial efforts to overcome social estrangement tend
to intensify self-alienation. This is because in the confrontation with a society that is inherently intellectual and materialistic they often are forced to repress both sexual and spiritual expressions of identity. Typically, therefore, the characters, convinced at times that they have regressed, must first contend with the problem of resolving this inner conflict before they can even hope to extricate themselves from social oppression and be better prepared to experience satisfactory relationships. In that they do succeed to some extent, what they achieve, based on the notion that the individual, each individual, must improve before society can develop in a humanistic way, dramatically emphasizes an integral and important proposition in Lawrence's first novels. Besides graphically and sympathetically depicting the nature and effects of contemporary alienation, he offers, if not solutions, at least hope for the future: hope in terms of a society, a community in which people, not machines, relationships, not economics might one day provide the basis of a fundamentally secure and meaningful life.

Having to choose, in the interest of coherence and clarity, only some of Lawrence's novels, I have chosen those which to me best represent this inherent potential of human nature, no matter how impoverished or downtrodden, to somehow flourish, to survive intolerable conditions and what could be but is not accepted as an irrevocable fate. In reflecting such hope, these works also seem to adhere most
successfully to Lawrence's own definition of what constitutes a worthwhile novel, for they are concerned, not with didactic absolutes, but with the individual, ongoing, and "passionate struggle into conscious being."\(^{15}\)

III

This choice of novels also relates to my reasons for deriving a definition of alienation directly from them rather than, say, from the works of Freud or Marx. It became clear to me in considering this project that to do otherwise was to risk overlaying the concrete dramatization of life in a specified "mechanical" industrial society with theory which could tend to disarm, or cover up the imaginative quality of Lawrence's writing. It is not that I am averse to theory; indeed, if not a member of (for mine is more an historical approach to literature than a concern with the history itself), I do sympathize with the Marxist school of literary criticism particularly, to borrow from Terry Eagleton, in its analysis of literature "in terms of the historical conditions which produce it" so as to reveal "the struggles of men and women to free themselves from certain forms of exploitation and oppression."\(^{16}\) My point, however, is that Lawrence's own strength as a writer presenting this kind of experience is not in interpreting alienation, or even indicating socio-psychological implications, so much as in simply describing such estrangement
within a definite socio-historical and socio-sexual context, and reflecting in his works a consciousness which is implicitly contradictory to that of the time and place in which he lived. The lives of his characters, therefore, are microcosms of the larger world, representational, perhaps, but neither intended to be nor even capable of being reduced to theoretical abstraction, stereotype and generalization. The characters themselves possess the spirit of human nature and human potential, in other words (as I have implied), but at the same time they remain unique, even eccentric in their adherence to personal vision as the means of reifying this potential.

What is decidedly representational, on the other hand, is the alienation itself, as it exists in these early works of Lawrence. That is to say, alienation is a pervasive socio-psychological phenomenon resulting from the fragmentary nature of contemporary industrial experience and therefore a concept not limited to Lawrence's novels, although certainly they offer a critical appraisal of the issues involved. What follows, then—an interpretation specifically of his early fiction—will keep in mind the larger social milieu of the early twentieth century within which Lawrence wrote. That is why I have earlier pointed out this socio-historical context, because while his characters themselves are unique to literature, speaking and thinking and feeling in profoundly if subtly new ways, that language and those people are at the same time familiar, for they repres-
sent a common, even universal, and in some respects unchanging and unchanged social experience.

As Lawrence himself said, describing Paul Morel's dilemma to Edward Garnett: "Now tell me if I haven't worked out my theme, like life, but always my theme ... It is a great tragedy ... It's the tragedy of thousands of young men in England."\(^{17}\) And it is a tragedy, unfortunately, with too little hope of resolution. As many social critics now argue, this is because the source of such estrangement, in the words of one such analyst, Deric Regin, is to be found in the "curious discrepancy between the incertitude of the contemporary outlook and the possession of our newly-won liberties, a situation ... which one could call ... a dialectical crisis, whereby two historical forces mutually negate and sustain each other. The one is of a liberating energy, the other of a destructive authority."\(^{18}\) The individual perception of this leads to the "'Self-consciousness' ... transferring itself ... to the 'actual world' and then turning back into itself. By entering thus into the world of objects, the Self objectivates itself, that is, alienates itself from the spirit. This relationship between the subject and the object, sustained by the principle of negation and suspension,"\(^{19}\) is further complicated by the polarization of individuation and collectivism. Consequently, contemporary society itself has evolved as a dialectic, because "the constitution of human
(or at least Western) identity, the control of nature and the domination of man by man have ... interacted as the inseparable moments of one long fatal syndrome": the simultaneous and polarized relations between "society and individual, man and nature, ego and id, male and female, concepts and their objects."  

It can be argued, however, that this evolution need not continue, that the probability of dialectic experience of this sort can be reduced or at least opposed by the idea that potentially a person living within any kind of community is simultaneously a social or intellectual being, a physical or sexual being, and an individual who represents a synthesis of social and personal experience: a cultural being. Culture, therefore--a term I will use to capture, in summary, the essence of a variety of similar words Lawrence used throughout his life in discussing this subject--is, or should be, that which recognizes and encourages this synthesis in terms of significance of experience and respect for the value of individual life. Each person within this ideal culture is a separate entity and a member of a collective or community; each person is therefore responsible for individual development--the reconciliation of sexual/intellectual conflicts, for example--and social development, or "progress" (that is: improvement, which is one way of defining culture). In both kinds of experience individuals must either move towards the resolution of those contradictions which confront them in their everyday experience or
remain in a kind of stasis, on the brink of degeneration.

Culture, in other words, is that abstract "something" which promotes unity and the totality of experience or, as Lawrence once wrote, "a wholeness of humanity ... Man must act in concert with man, creatively and happily ... man must also act separately and distinctly, apart from every other man, single and self-responsible, and proud with unquenchable pride, moving for himself ... These two movements are opposite, yet they do not negate each other. We have understanding. And if we understand, then we balance perfectly between the two motions, we are single ... individuals, we are a great, concordant humanity ..."21 Anything which advocates imbalance, fragmentation or disunity, anything which does not allow "the contradictions of growth through the various phases of the life cycles" to be "socially recognized, ritually expressed and dialectically resolved"22 is not culture (although it does appear to be). In fact it is the opposite: a degenerative process of the kind that Birkin describes in Women in Love, a process involving "the single impulse for knowledge in one sort, mindless progressive knowledge through the senses, knowledge arrested and ending in the senses, mystic knowledge in disintegration and dissolution, knowledge such as the beetles have, which live purely within the world of corruption and dissolution." It is a process during which we "fall from the connexion with life and hope, we lapse from pure integral being, from
creation and liberty, and we fall into the long, long
African process of purely sensual understanding," or the
intellectual, industrial equivalent, the attempt to "fulfil
a mystery of ice-destructive knowledge, snow-abstract
annihilation," the "process of frost-knowledge" such as
Gerald is engaged in (WL, 285-87).

Lawrence's characters, most of whom possess to some
degree a sensibility similar to that expressed by Birkin, do
not, therefore, attempt to discover and develop a sense of
self derived from the social environment in which they find
themselves (those, like Gerald, who do so are inevitably
doomed to failure), but in direct (conscious) or even uncon­
scious opposition to the superficial, the life-denying, the
corrupt and victimizing repressiveness of contemporary
society. That opposition, however, constitutes a dialectic
which, as Regin has observed, contains the potential for a
variety of possible consequences, including escape, polar­
ization, stasis, even, as Birkin is aware, degeneration.
And when individuals do succeed, to whatever extent, in
accomplishing individual development and fulfillment, such
progress, often contradicting existing moral codes, can lead
to an increased isolation. Ironically, therefore, the
struggle to liberate oneself from social or even personal
(self) alienation can result in a corresponding intensifica­
tion of another sort of alienation. The best one can hope
for, then, is that in the end the balance of movement is
weighed on the side of personal fulfillment, which is what I
believe Lawrence sometimes means when he refers to the "flux" of life: that tidal, swirling chaos from which, with a sense of vision and direction, one might conceivably expect to escape. My point is that the escape is neither inevitable, simple nor sudden but, as I mentioned earlier, an ongoing struggle literally to find and then hopefully to extricate oneself from oppression through opposition and ideally, through a concomitant awareness of the need for social reformation in conjunction with personal development.

Given such a complex, multi-faceted subject, and a desire (as he explains in his essay, "The Novel") to establish the organic relatedness of all those facets, it is not surprising that interpreting Lawrence involves, as well as the usual frustrations and challenge of literary criticism, the problem of associating with the works of an artist often characterized by the inability to perceive exactly what he was writing in relation to what he intended to write. Within any given work, therefore, and certainly throughout his efforts generally, Lawrence is ambiguous, contradictory and often abstruse while at the same time, according to his letters and essays on literature, at times apparently self-assured. (A good example of this is his long letter to Edward Garnett, 19 November, 1912--in which he describes his intentions and what he sees as the theme of Sons and Lovers--in relation to the novel itself: a comparison I discuss at length in the chapter devoted to this work.)
What any novelist writes must be to a considerable extent unconscious—the very length alone of such fiction prohibits the kind of detailed planning that, say, a poet can indulge in—and the unconsciousness as a source, often providing much of the imaginativeness and the very vision of the work, in turn can overwhelm and supplant the original intentions. Certainly in Lawrence I see evidence of this; indeed, when combined with those complexities of his own life which often account for such contradictions, the man who emerges tends to be as enigmatic as the characters and themes within his novels.

He was a man, for example, who possessed puritan middle class, even aristocratic prejudices and yet whose loyalty was clearly to the struggling working and lower middle classes. Consequently and, (as I will shortly endeavor to explain) without any apparent discomfort, he could create sympathetic protagonists who were of the lower classes, even though at the same time his letters and essays often contained vitriolic diatribes against the masses, the mob, the uncritical, apathetic horde whose only salvation, if such existed, lay in their rejection of contemporary leaders and later, their acceptance of others distinguished by a visionary acumen they lacked. He proposed reactionary social solutions, particularly in his post-war essays, but in his fiction he is a radical, opposed to organized militancy but staunchly on the side of the downtrodden nevertheless. And unlike Disraeli, for example, Lawrence neither trivialized
nor sentimentalized these people, for he believed in them. They were of his own background, and while he might criticize them he also never ridiculed them as he did those of the ruling class (which is interesting, given his prejudices and his predilections in social acquaintances) or of the bourgeois artistic elite. Even his ideas for social reformation, as problematic as they sometimes are, stemmed from a recurring awareness of the need to change rather than escape society and, as he described them in his Hardy essay, of the consequences an attempted escape would produce. And yet he could also propose the idea of Rananim (the erroneousness of which I will discuss in my final chapter) and articulate through Birkin the advantages of such a utopia: a place where he and a few others could reestablish the ancient Greco-Hebraic ideal of man in touch with the universe.

It is here that I begin to criticize what I see as a problematic social ideology, particularly, in terms of my work at hand, that part of it which will become apparent in *Women in Love*. Specifically my disagreement with Lawrence begins when he moves beyond insightful observation of alienation, and of the incredible difficulties one must suffer in order to improve experience, to the impossible dream of believing that one can even extricate oneself completely, by divorcing oneself from society. (And I am not alone in my disagreement; modern sociological theory also recognizes and is partly based upon the existence of these inextricable
ties, social and psychological as well as economic, between individual and society). On the other hand, Lawrence’s ideas for developing personal awareness I believe to be valid, and of particular value when the insight intended to be gleaned from them extends to the development of improved relationships and by implication a better social experience. They are also ideas effectively communicated in that the insight is presented controversially rather than didactically: presented, that is, as being open to criticism, including charges of contradiction, ambivalence and ulterior motives (as, most memorably, Birkin’s ideas are, although hardly more so than those of Paul Morel, Tom, Anna and Ursula Brangwen).

Again, this may not always be conscious or intentional, in terms of specific examples, but undeniably so generally, for almost from the outset as a novelist Lawrence expressed the desire to proceed beyond glibness, superficiality and didacticism. He simply could not write novels as predetermined tracts supporting contemporary morality; they are instead characterized always by discontinuity (narrative replaced by cinematic scenes), ambiguity, contradiction, absence of closed endings, layers of often conflicting meaning and possibility. At times, in fact, the alienation he presents, derived from personal experience and being, extends artistically through the characters from him to us, the readers, who can experience a similar sense of confusion. This is achieved by an often disconcerting refutation
of conventional storytelling and, as I have mentioned, by those layers of theme, inner contradiction and ambiguity which make straightforward interpretation impossible and, as a perusal of Lawrencean scholarship reveals, which have led inevitably to criticism of a selective kind (criticism, for example, concerned only with the Oedipal, the symbolism of imagery, love). While this is true of work on any major author, it is perhaps most true of Lawrence, which is why I have been suggesting issues beyond the perimeters to my own work: the socio-historical context, the psychological implications of alienation and the autobiographical as a means of accounting for a complex, sometimes contradictory ideology.

In light of the personal character of his writing, and especially of its contradictory nature, it is necessary in order more fully to appreciate these factors to keep in mind as we read and study Lawrence not only the socio-historical context but the man whose personal vision informed the artist. By this I do not mean an attempt should be made to ascertain and enumerate the details of Lawrence's physical and intellectual life, including his travel experiences and his attitudes towards the people he met and liked or disliked. What I do mean is that the particular characters Lawrence created in some ways reflect what the author himself was experiencing or had experienced in Eastwood, as the son of a miner and his beleaguered lower middle class wife, as an often sickly and ostracized boy; in Nottingham and
Croydon, contending with the same problems and frustrations of college and teaching and relationships we see Ursula experiencing in The Rainbow. For Lawrence these were exacerbated by an illness that forced him into writing as a full time career, a career immediately beset by both the tribulations he suffered and the insight he gleaned from combining autobiography with imagination in The Trespasser. And finally we must recall England, and especially Cornwall and London during WW I, where he was harassed by the military authorities, often bedridden by an intensifying tuberculosis, as his relationship with Frieda deteriorated and despair, bordering at times on madness, began to affect his work.

By the time of Women in Love, therefore, we see as a result of these experiences a work radically transformed from what had been intended in 1914 as a sequel to The Rainbow. By 1916 it had become a new novel, with a new style of writing and new themes: a novel about the effects of a world war, and more importantly, of personal anxiety upon individuals. In this respect, and we need only read Paul Delany’s study of Lawrence during the war to realize this, Women in Love, which reflects both the psychological and the social components of a specific urban industrial experience, is informed by autobiography, especially in terms of inception. And Women in Love is not unique. All of Lawrence’s novels are derived from personal experience, although they do change, of course, becoming significantly
different and more complex as they are developed, for they are derived as well from Lawrence's own confusion, his own not inconsiderable alienation, his own conflicts: his desire to be loved and respected, for example, while simultaneously, for a variety of interrelated reasons, despising the very people and social institutions from which he would command that love and respect. Central to this ambiguity and enigma lies an ailment Lawrence himself rarely referred to, and then in a decidedly abstruse way, and yet one which not only affected but actually formed his personality and structured his art. The ailment was tuberculosis, the pervasive and debilitating effects of which I do not have the space to discuss here, but about which I have written elsewhere.24

One result of this illness, despair, confusion, alienation, and consequently the difficulty in experiencing satisfactory personal and social relationships is, for me as a reader and for Lawrence as an artist, the discovery of new techniques for revealing greater meaning, a deeper significance in art as the means of providing more profound insight into experience, new methods of relating fiction to experience, his as well as ours. It is not a matter of solutions, however, at least not in his early novels, because what may serve as solutions tend to be the tentative means of more clearly recognizing and perhaps contending with the problems. That is why the conclusions to these works are so
open, so inconclusive, leaving, as they do, unanswered questions and doubt. From doubt comes dissatisfaction, the desire to overcome that dissatisfaction, knowledge. For Lawrence, each "answer" becomes a question, each "solution" contains yet another problem in personal (sexual, psychological, spiritual) and social terms.

The most fundamental of these problems was the difficulty with relationships, arising in his own life from a lack of physical well-being. Always there remained the problem of desired autonomy versus the necessity of dependence, of contemplated sexual fulfillment versus the reality of increasing incapacity (the result of tuberculosis). Theoretically, in his essays, he sometimes did solve these problems, or at least articulated the means of possible solution, but when he applied such ideology to his novels, in which he always, if at times unconsciously, granted his characters the freedom to resist didactic authority, they could not conform (and indeed, would have been lesser characters had they done so). As Ursula and Birkin discover in their attempts to reify his idea of freedom in love, it is impossible to retain complete independence and still be part of a relationship. A compromise must be reached, on both sides, and yet while that might seem commonsensical and fairly straightforward, at the same time it often contradicts the ideology, so that besides the internal dualism and polarization (sexual/spiritual, male/female, individual/societal conflicts within the novel) a greater, external
dialectic exists, between theory and experience, idealism and plausibility.

The significance of all this for me (and here I come to a description of my methodology) is that Lawrence’s life as it is reflected in his novels, combined with astute observation of lives around him and of society generally, reveal with occasional transgressions an awareness of contemporary industrial experience as being so complex, its various facets so intertwined, that no clearly defined way out of such a maze could possibly exist. True, many of his characters do become more self-aware, developing to a degree as a result, and in achieving this they do overcome alienation to a certain extent as well. But such progress tends to be sporadic, alternating between what I would call stages and plateaus. Through insight the characters move upwards a short distance, as it were, resolving their alienation somewhat as they do so, and then they exist for a while in a kind of stasis as they discover new obstacles and contemplate ways of surmounting them. (Paul, for example, often reaches such a state when he discovers that overcoming his own alienation or that existing between, say, himself and Miriam or Clara, in turn complicates an already estranged relationship with his mother.) What this means is that the overall experience of these characters, much more than the immediate experience, tends to illustrate or underline Lawrence’s observation of alienation as an intrinsic quality
of existence in contemporary society.

Such an appreciation of Lawrence has affected the way I discuss him; this will probably be most apparent in my tendency to quote from widely separated passages and specific events, for in terms of alienation I often see those events and the characters' responses to them as statements or evidence of this larger and only slowly changing state of being. (For a more detailed explanation, using specific examples, I would refer the reader to Chapter 3, note 2, rather than continuing here in abstract terms.) It is not that I wish to be prescriptive or reductive, but simply that for my purposes and given my thesis, a particular scene can also be appreciated as part of an unfolding philosophical position: Lawrence's Weltanschauung, if you will. As a result, after looking at a scene and then continuing to subsequent ones, I will sometimes return to the original because in light of what I have later discovered I will see it in a new way: as having acquired, perhaps, a second level of meaning or now illuminating a character's ulterior motives or as evidence of ambiguity or uncertainty. Thus, while at times I may seem to be wandering about, ignoring chronology, in fact I have what I think are justifiable reasons and a definite purpose. I do not ignore chronology but rather, tend to see a given moment as more than immediate: as having a past and a future as well.

In terms of the way I see these narratives unfolding, then, time itself is in a sense replaced by the characters'
ongoing struggle which exists, not in a vacuum, but as it is said God exists, everywhere and unaffected by time. And in that the struggle is to overcome alienation, it could be said that for Lawrence such experience derives from human nature itself and is only incidentally related to specific social experience. In a letter to Eunice Tietjens (21 July, 1917) he admitted to exactly such a conviction, writing that "the truth of evolution is not true. There is no evolving, only unfolding. The lily is in the bit of dust which is its beginning, lily and nothing but lily: and the lily in blossom is a ne plus ultra: there is no evolving beyond. This is the greatest truth ... the real truth. Man was man in eternity, has been man since the beginnings of time, and is man in the resultant eternity, no evolution, only unfolding of what is man." What we are, therefore, and the way we relate to and treat other individuals is not so historically unique as it might sometimes appear to be, because consciousness itself is for Lawrence a state of awareness rather than an activity in which meaning is sought from personal experience (which is why the immediate experience in these novels does not concern me so much as the characters' state of being). To give an example: Paul Morel may feel himself a prisoner of industrialism, and as such his alienation is unique in some respects to the industrial social environment in which he lives, but if he were of a pre-industrial age, he might well see himself as a prisoner,
say, of agriculture with most of the same feelings of estrangement and despair.

This does not contradict my reasons for establishing a socio-historical context in the first pages of this introduction, for there is sufficient evidence of a specific industrial oppressiveness to warrant it, but that context only exacerbates and characterizes in lesser ways what I see in Lawrence as this universal state of alienation (which he also observed, for example, in less industrialized nations such as Italy and Mexico). Nor am I contradicting an earlier description of Lawrence as optimistic: he is optimistic, but not so much in terms of individual goals and expectations as of humanity as a whole, a humanity which must reestablish its ties with nature, with its instincts, with the very cosmos. As such, what Lawrence envisions as a means of release from the old ties, the old ways of living and relating to others, and of realizing this perception of one's place in the universe is also not concerned primarily with the individual but with all individuals, nor with specific steps to fulfillment, but with progress itself as a kind of imperceptible drift, like the movement of glaciers or continents.

In my use of the primary texts, then, and in the way I interpret Lawrence, I admit to a methodology different from that of most critics who, given their theses, quite correctly and more studiously than I do, respect the context of passages they quote and discuss. I, on the other hand,
would agree with John Henry Raleigh, who believes that for Lawrence "the exploration of the minutiae of consciousness was finally, magnificent a subject though it might be, a cul-de-sac." Sometimes I also tend to ignore the minutiae, and in doing so I realize that mine as a consequence is also an interpretation that has often been unable to use or even refer to the work of specifically Lawrencean scholars. I do not dismiss them, however; to the contrary, I would reiterate my belief that in contending with an artist like Lawrence, a man of such various and complex writing, many interpretations are possible and can coexist, even when they do not agree with each other. Indeed, I could not have seen Lawrence in quite the way I do without having read most of my considerable and learned predecessors; to them I acknowledge my indebtedness.
2: Clothed in Fancy: The Trespasser

She clothed everything in fancy ... That was her favourite form of thinking. The value of all things was in the fancy they evoked.

D.H. Lawrence, The Trespasser

He thought imaginatively, and his imagination destroyed him.

D.H. Lawrence, The Trespasser

Because of a single, although undeniably consequential act within it, The Trespasser is both intriguing and a unique novel in the Lawrencian oeuvre. That act is Siegmund's suicide. While other of Lawrence's characters die—Gertrude Morel and Gerald Crich come immediately to mind—they are not protagonists, as Siegmund is, and their demise produces effects in addition to those usually associated with death, and particularly with suicide. 1 Although depression, despair and hopelessness certainly exist in Sons and Lovers and Women in Love as direct responses to the deaths being discussed, the more affective feelings evoked and felt specifically by the protagonists, while ambiguously presented, perhaps, for they are neither isolated nor necessarily clearly perceived by the often still confused characters, tend to approach optimism, determination, even idealistic fervour. In other words, death becomes a kind of
catalyst in these later works, shocking the persons involved into a realization of their own strength, their own potential, and following from that insight, the possibility of extricating themselves from the alienation which has previously informed their sense, or lack, of identity, their relationships, their socio-psychological experience generally. That is not true of Siegmund MacNair, of course, but neither is it true of Helena Verden, who adroitly and pragmatically replaces romantic reinterpretation of a living Siegmund with an equally fanciful recreation of spirit from memory, while Beatrice, not dissimilarly, achieves a life-long fantasy as the tragic madonna surrounded, at a distance, by sympathetic or at least intrigued gentlemen boarders.

An explanation of these distinguishing characteristics in *The Trespasser* cannot, I contend, be derived from the argument that the idea for this novel was not its author’s, for the story of Helen Corke’s five day vacation with Macartney clearly embodied a theme which Lawrence felt that he could develop successfully, and personally— that is, in a uniquely "Lawrencean" style which, incidentally, was to inform his writing thereafter—in that it provided him with a structure and more importantly, with a method of characterization both artistic, imaginative, and closely aligned to his own burgeoning philosophy and to his own way of perceiving himself and others. It was a method, therefore,
which enabled him to make use of a wealth of personal, socio-psychological experience and insight, thereby permitting him to develop his art far beyond the Edwardian superficiality which largely characterizes *The White Peacock*, and yet which he and his artistic peers—Woolf, Joyce, Ford, Conrad, Forster—so vehemently disliked in the works of their predecessors and other, less ambitious contemporaries: Bennett, Galsworthy, Powys, Wells. So while it is true that the characters and events in *The Trespasser* are not derived exclusively from Lawrence's experience, the preoccupations of those characters, as well as their ambiguous ambitions and confused sense of identity, their anxiety, alienation and despair, do parallel his, in a way that must have seemed both coincidental and yet evocative to the young writer in terms of the direction he could, and would, take in this and in subsequent novels. *The Trespasser*, therefore, can be seen as an experiment in artistry; in that it succeeded Lawrence had only to apply the resulting insight into methodology to his own experience in order to proceed from the derivative early works—the short stories and the first novel—to the complexity and uniqueness of his later fictional creations.

As with *Sons and Lovers*,² the manuscript of *The Trespasser* was extensively revised and improved, in this case with the assistance of two very capable editors—Ford Madox Hueffer and Edward Garnett—and, again as with the third novel, it was altered as the result of both this

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editorial advice and Lawrence's own refinement of intent, structure and characterization. The first draft, sent to Hueffer in August, 1910, was returned, with comments, "this morning," Lawrence informed Louie Burrows (9 September); it was, the editor wrote, a "rotten work of genius," only "one fourth of which" was acceptable. Although Heinemann, who had published The White Peacock, subsequently, and grudgingly, agreed to accept The Trespasser, probably due more to the first novel's success than to any perceivable and sustained quality in the work at hand, Lawrence withdrew the manuscript, possibly because of a long additional letter from Hueffer, the thrust of which was that a hasty second novel, published to take advantage of the first one's encouraging public response, would "damage" any young author's reputation.

On 4 December, 1911, Lawrence again posted the manuscript, this time to Garnett. In the interim he had thoroughly revised the work, in part to remedy what Hueffer had described as an overall immaturity and moralism reminiscent of "a schoolboy larking among placket-holes [openings in the upper parts of dresses or blouses to facilitate dressing], dialoguing with a Wesleyan minister who has been converted to Ibsen." The revisions also, however, reflected changes in Lawrence himself, for by 1911 he had experienced a series of rather traumatic events, the effects of which were to be observed, understandably, in an altered...
temperament, one now characterized more by cynicism and
despair than by the previous naïveté and youthful exuber-
ance. His mother had died; he was recovering from
bronchitis complicated by the onslaught of activated, or
possibly reactivated, tuberculosis; and most of his affairs
with women had ended, or were about to end: the long rela-
tionship with Jessie Chambers; his engagement to Louie
Burrows; even his relationship with Helen Corke, the most
significant in terms of The Trespasser, was about to
terminate, largely the result of her repeated resistance to
his sexual overtures. These experiences are perceptibly
reflected in the revised manuscript, none more so, perhaps,
than the latter, of which Elizabeth Mansfield has written:
"It is clear from Lawrence’s letters that he ... came to
think of Helen Corke as one of the ‘Dreaming Women’ whose
passion exhausts itself at the mouth," a feeling similarly
expressed in a poem written during that time—"Repulsed"—
which ends, in the version originally published in Love
Poems (1913):
How we hate each other tonight, you and I,
As the world of activity hates the dream that goes on high,
As a man hates the dreaming woman he loves, but who will not
reply.
Clearly, Helena Verden is that kind of woman too: a romantic
idealist who "clothed everything in fancy" (T, 43), and for
whom "love" invoked, not physical passion, but "the yearning
and pathos of Christianity" (55).
Lawrence's characterization of Siegmund is similarly derived in part from personal experience, for his model, Herbert Macartney, was a man who also had loved Helen Corke, and had been, in sexual terms, repulsed. In her accounts of that time, Corke described "the continual struggle with the 'beast'" in Macartney; what she had desired with both him and Lawrence was a "spiritual relationship when they wanted a physical one." However, in spite of these similarities, much of the despair and frustration which Siegmund experiences during his affair with Helena, hardly capable of being communicated so explicitly in Corke's description of the real events, and especially, of the real man, in fact closely resembles what Lawrence himself was enduring, concomitant with a more general sense of self-alienation, and neurosis, at the time of revising *The Trespasser*. In other words, the similarities are hardly fortuitous; it is Lawrence who provides the impetus for Siegmund, and in doing so not only dramatizes Helen Corke's poignant vacation on the Isle of Wight, but records his own sexual experiences, including the ecstasy of consummation, the angst of perceived failure and most importantly, particularly in Chapter 13—the dialogue with Hampson—the idealism which was to be developed in "Study of Thomas Hardy" as a theoretical solution to religious doubts, sexual inadequacy, and his social experiences, which include insight into isolation, mechanization and victimization: the effects of industrial
urbanism. "For the first time," writes Alistair Niven, "Lawrence uses the word 'mechanical' with insistence. Siegmund is a victim of the city and of the suburban responsibilities forced upon the city-dweller."^6

This counters both the argument that it is Sons and Lovers which marks the end of Lawrence's derivativeness, and the antithetical contention held, amongst others, by Emile Delavenay, that it is The White Peacock which "shows the writer's first timid attempts to introduce himself into his work, as he begins to formulate his problems and trace back to their deep-seated origins the difficulties of his adjustment to life."^7 To virtually the same degree that I would concur with Delavenay, were he discussing The Trespasser, I disagree with his statement as it stands, for I find very little evidence in The White Peacock to support it. Certainly the work reflects Lawrence's experience generally, but even so it still remains, as Delavenay describes the earlier short stories, "an attempt at objectivity, an exercise on historical and local data"^8 in which the author himself does not exist, for he is the traditional dispassionate, omniscient observer. If there is anything Lawrencean in the first novel, it is the idealization which permeates the work, most noticeably in the elevated social positions of the families involved and, with one exception, Cyril's father, Frank Beardsall, in the blissful, pastoral harmony within and between those families, an idealization stemming from the young Lawrence's belief that novels by
definition were middle-class (thus the Saxtons and Beardsalls are intended to approximate gentlemen farmers, the new bourgeois version of the landed gentry). It was not until he realized that Siegmund’s story could also be successful that Lawrence became aware of the quantity of material available from the ranks of the working class, material which included his own experience.

The exception to idealized pastoralism which I mentioned earlier, and which threads its way through *The Trespasser* to *Sons and Lovers*—specifically to Walter Morel—is the idea of the father as isolated and alienated stranger, even in the midst of his own family: a man who is driven to extreme measures by the criticism and hatred of a wife and children whom he loves, or once loved, and yet by whom he is perceived as an outcast and an intruder in a life which, for them, improves in his absence. Beardsall, in the first novel, dies a neglected and impoverished man within walking distance of the family who abandoned him; Siegmund hangs himself in his own bedroom after an evening spent with a family for whom he was virtually invisible; and after Paul matures, his father essentially disappears from the novel until Gertrude dies, at which time he is at least partially, although briefly, recognized and accepted. This movement to Walter Morel, which I discuss in detail in the following chapter, is significant because it becomes clear, in retrospect, that Siegmund is also treated sympathetically, and
even Beardsall is granted a certain sentimental appeal as
his end approaches. The significance extends, therefore, to
the realization that Lawrence, very early in his career, was
arriving at an understanding of both the universality of
alienation and the relationships he could forge between his
own experience (with his father, for example) and that of
his characters. In turn, he could artistically objectify
those feelings, which he knew firsthand, and thus about
which he could most successfully write without being senti­
mental (as Dostoevsky and Dickens had been) or superficial
(as were the Edwardians).

The point I am making is that The Trespasser, as tran­
sitional novel, is a preface to Lawrence’s subsequent works,
in that it either embodies the genesis of theories developed
more fully in later works, both fictional and non-fictional
(Hampson’s apprehension concerning women, for example, and
the "Study of Thomas Hardy", a relationship I discuss later
in this chapter), or it indicates the erroneousness of
certain convictions, certain theories which, although they
adequately inform theme and characterization in this novel,
cannot have a future, and indeed may be construed as psycho­
logically counter-productive in terms of Lawrence’s own
highly personal relationship to his characters. Whereas
starting with Sons and Lovers he is concerned with self­
insight as the means of solving problems of alienation and
neurosis, in The Trespasser he documents the destruction of
a relationship and of a character who fails completely to
escape or resolve those dilemmas.

In his own life the potential for development, even in a highly theoretical form, came to be seen as a necessary, survivalist alternative to a state of alienation which, without such idealism, could only worsen; that same optimism characterizes his later works, partly, I contend, as the direct result of its absence in *The Trespasser*, for without it they too could conceivably, and in some, quite plausibly, have ended "tragically," as, in his opinion, did Hardy's, a tendency he specifically denounced in his study of that author. Paul Morel, for example, had Lawrence not begun to develop these theories of self-improvement based on strength of will and reconciliation of internal conflict, could well have committed suicide; the point, however, is that he very explicitly did not.

The theme, then, in *The Trespasser*, is similar to those of subsequent works, but is developed differently, even antithetically, concluding with the suggestion that the solution to alienation is unity through passion (that is, exclusively through what Lawrence later calls "Will-to-Inertia"), even though the reification of that implies the denial of intellect, of spirituality, and therefore of self. Clearly, as Paul Morel discovers (is made to discover) in terms of repressed sexuality, and as we discover of Siegmund, denial, particularly self-denial, is no solution. Another similarity between Siegmund and Paul, in terms of
dilemma although not in terms of "solution," involves the choices which both must make at certain points in their lives. For Paul, those choices, insightfully determined, allow him to free himself from a maddening stasis, and even to achieve a kind of synthesis in terms of sexuality and intellect. For MacNair, all perceivable alternatives seem equally futile, and ultimately self-destructive, whether he continues to live or not.

II

When we are first introduced to Siegmund, he is a man convinced that his only means of escaping a mechanical, dehumanizing world is to live a passionate, almost idyllic life with Helena, a life which, even if it cannot continue, might from its very intensity provide him the clarity necessary to objectively consider a second alternative. But before he is able to articulate the various reasons why even this first alternative cannot succeed, he is being devastated by his own response concerning the likely effects on them of his abandonment of family, particularly of his daughters. He cannot leave them; he "was bound by an agreement which there was no discrediting to provide for them. Very well, he must provide for them. And then what? Humiliation at home, Helena forsaken, musical comedy night after night. That was insufferable—impossible! Like a man tangled up in a rope, he was not strong enough to free himself. He could not break with Helena and return to a
degrading life at home; he could not leave his children and go to Helena" (185).

Siegmund's dilemma, in that he loves his children (and even harbours, beneath an overwhelming guilt, a vestige of love, or at least of respect for Beatrice), is that to leave them, even for a few days—although the guilt has to do more with abandoning them and their mother for another woman than with the time involved—is to cause them undue and added suffering. Yet to continue to suppress his own identity, his own spirit and his own sexuality so as to continue mechanically to support his family is to endure an intense agony of his own, a sense of self-alienation grown intolerable. He must escape, even if only for a few days. However, once on the Isle of Wight, with Helena, particularly as the end of the sojourn approaches, Siegmund is confronted with a second dilemma, involving the dependency of Beatrice, as he perceives it, and of Helena who, for all of her fancifulness and apparent self-possession, does need him, albeit in her projected guise of idealized spiritual lover. At this point for Siegmund, already living another existence, under another name (or names: he is in fact Bertram MacNair, and Helena at times also calls him Domine⁹), the Isle of Wight is an escape from responsibility, a fantasy world or Zauberland, as Helena calls it, which exists in a social vacuum (similar to the Alps in Women in Love). Even though he has fled London in an attempt to escape alienation, he
knows that the duration is finite, that he must inevitably return, that when he does so the alienation will be worse; in fact it will specifically have worsened because of the attempted escape.

At the moment these two dilemmas converge, and the effects of flight are realized, Siegmund’s decision to commit suicide is assured; even subconsciously made. He cannot return to the hell of family life, mechanical, joyless teaching or playing, and poverty, nor can he endure seeing his family suffer the helplessness and ignominy of a father and husband who is neither there, at home, nor departed, but existing as a vague, shadowy spectre. He cannot remain on the island; that is as impractical as the fleeting possibility of emigration to America. He cannot live with Helena, for he realizes, by the end, that she is not in love with him, but with a romanticized, Wagnerian fantasy inhabiting his (rejected) body, and yet to leave her is equally painful, for he loves her and he realizes that life with her embodied the last opportunity for a bearable existence. The second alternative, then, clearly, undeniably the solution, is suicide.

Helena is in a way similarly alienated. Although she needs Siegmund as fuel for her romantic fire, there is something in her dependency that is real. At the same time, however, she knows that she cannot have him, although she only vaguely realizes that his rejection of her is largely the result of her idealization of him, a factor which far
outweighs her intolerance of his sexual passion in creating the rift that eventually develops between them. But that is only part of Helena's dilemma, which extends beyond Siegmund. She has always, for example, had to choose a life of disapproving parents, "vulgar circumstances," intolerable strangers or one fancifully self-created, and her "history" of decisions has until now reflected, although not without difficulties, a certain pattern: "it consisted of petty discords in contemptible surroundings, then of her dreams and fancies, finally--Siegmund" (98). But Siegmund, while initially, in the form of an idealized Eros, a more substantial manifestation of that "real life" which had previously always "'seemed just outside--brownies running and fairies peeping--just beyond the common, ugly place where I am'" (98), is eventually perceived as an aging, indifferent man whose inner turmoil, reflected in his bloodshot eyes, replaces her feelings of spiritual ecstasy with terror. When that happens, her current Zauberland is at an end, leaving her once again alone and helpless in a world as capable of destroying her as Siegmund.

The difference between these two now becomes apparent, in that for Helena the solution is different. Although she is convinced that she "'won't live a day'" (177) after Siegmund, should he die, she not only continues to live, but to adapt to her new circumstances, fancifully creating an illusionary world, this time aided by the physical proximity
and protection of Cecil Byrne, with whom she attempts to relate only platonically while experiencing the passion of a Siegmund who in memory (that is, in spirit) is at least as close to her, for now, as he ever was. Given her penchant for the immediate, and Byrne's presence, Helena's greatest dilemma may be just beginning as the novel ends.

Helena, therefore, is alienated specifically in terms of the fear of being overwhelmed by circumstances, by a social environment, by an individual—Siegmund, for example, or Cecil—all of which threaten her at best tenuous sense of identity. Although Siegmund's initial perception, and appreciation, derives from the belief that "Helena was something like the sea, self-sufficient and careless of the rest" (43), she is in fact not a strong, self-reliant woman, and uses fantasy as a veil with which to soften reality and obscure feelings of estrangement. She is most fearful of physical passion and desire, or anything approximating those emotions; thus, ironically, she too draws an analogy, although an antithetical one, between her lover and the sea which, "as it flung over her filled her with the same uncontrollable terror as did Siegmund when he sometimes grew silent and strange in a tide of passion" (114). Siegmund wants sexual love, but receives either a spiritual substitute, for Helena "belonged to that class of 'dreaming woman' with whom passion exhausts itself at the mouth" (30), or a complete rejection of his sexual advances; Helena, on the other hand, desiring her "dream of Siegmund" which "was more
to her than Siegmund himself" (30), a dream embodying all the "yearning and pathos of Christianity" (55), is con-
fronted by either a passionate "animal" or a man who conversely rejects her for her asexual and cold aloofness.

In other words, each experiences in the other a dual figure: the extended or potential embodiment of their dreams
and desires, and the actual figure whom neither understands. Those discrepancies form the basis of a lack of understanding and communication between the two which is fundamentally responsible not only for the ambivalence, the anxiety, the despair from which they both suffer, but more importantly, for the increase in self-alienation which so acutely defines their characters and informs their decisions as the novel progresses. In the light of this, one could say, and indeed it has been said,¹⁰ that Helena is an instrument of Siegmund's fate, but no more, although perhaps more dramatically, than he is of hers.

Critics tend to the opinion that Helena is not a "nice" person--some go so far as to call her a witch, reminiscent of Winifred Varley in "The Witch à la Mode"--and that it is she who is directly, even solely responsible for the failure of her relationship with Siegmund, and for his suicide. It is not that simple. While Helena certainly has faults, many of which even Siegmund is able to recognize, and while she does frustrate him, especially sexually, he too is frustrating, frustrated, enigmatic. The real problem is, for both,
an inability or unwillingness to communicate. Both are alienated; both are fearful that confessing to that alienation, to those fears, to those feelings of existential loneliness, might alter the relationship; as a result, it is their very reticence which causes them slowly to drift apart, into their respective private worlds: for Helena, the world of romantic idealism; for Siegmund, the inverse, a Dantean prison from which he peers, as through a window, into the mechanized and alien "real" world.

The novel is filled with words like withdraw, isolation, alone, despair, loneliness, foreign, hell, death: words that reveal an intense and conscious sense of self-alienation which in itself, as Lawrence was later to write, creates an identity crisis. "The reason is obvious. The moment any individual creature becomes aware of its own individual isolation, it becomes instantly aware of that which is outside itself, and forms its limitation. That is, the psyche splits in two, into subjective and objective reality. The moment this happens, the primal integral \( I \), which is for the most part a living continuum of all the rest of living things, collapses, and we get the \( I \) which is staring out of the window at the reality which is not itself... Paradoxical as it may sound, the individual is only truly himself when he is unconscious of his own individuality, when he is unaware of his own isolation, when he is not split into subjective and objective, when there is no me or you, no me or it in his consciousness, but the me and you,
the me and it is a living continuum, as if all were connected by a living membrane.\footnote{2}{In other words, Lawrence believed that to lose sense of one's individuality—one's uniqueness, the subjective consciousness—or of one's relationship to all others—one's link with humanity and nature, the objective consciousness—was potentially fatal, for it meant essentially ending 'all responsibility of keeping up one's own bright nuclear cell alive in the tissue of the universe.'\footnote{3}{That, it seems to me, more comprehensively and appropriately describes the basis of Siegmund's despair and the reasons for his eventual suicide than does the comparatively glib interpretation of Helena as femme fatale.}} Lawrence's Helena is a survivor and as such, although she clings tenuously to life, a definite precursor of those strong, defiant characters, particularly women, who will follow. What is more interesting is that at the outset she also attempts to assist Siegmund, and to a degree succeeds. It is she, for example, who convinces him to vacation with her; it is she who plans their daily itinerary, while he, resigned in his belief that he "belonged to his destination" (134), is content to be "led" by Fate, only to discover, briefly but intensely, the existence of an alternative to his mechanical life which, he concedes until the falseness of hope is revealed, is as Helena said it would be. "'Fairy-tales are true, after all'" (39), he says on the first morning of their vacation. The difference is that
Siegmund's fairy-tale is derived from actuality—from the beauty of the sun-bathed seascape, the invigorating breeze, the proximity of a myriad artifacts and organisms which link him to a natural environment so different from that of London as to understandably be perceived as exotic if not unworldly.

Helena, on the other hand, finds or creates fairylands wherever she resides, and therefore has suggested the Isle of Wight more for its remoteness from London, and Beatrice, than from any inherent preternaturalism. And that is where the misunderstanding originates, in the contradictory expectations and interpretations of the notion of an island vacation. Having been encouraged by what he would describe as Helena's sensuality, her receptiveness to him, and her unconventionality, which would assumedly extend to sexual matters, Siegmund expects what Helena does not intend naturally to give. When she kisses him, or puts her arm around his neck, as she often does, it is from either a feeling of insecurity or a desire to relate more closely, but platonically, to exchange "the long supreme kiss, in which man and woman have one being. Two-in-one, the only Hermaphrodite," and then to draw away, her desire "accomplished" with a kiss (30). For Siegmund, that same act is intoxicating; she holds "his head to her bosom, pressing it close, with her hand among his hair" (24) and he, "burning and surging with desire" (35), is uplifted momentarily and then, to his mind, abruptly rejected.
For all her sensuousness, Helena is not a passionate woman because passion is a part of physical love, of a concrete reality which she constantly attempts to escape from or at least to forget. Like Miriam Leivers or Sue Brideshead, therefore, she perceives sexuality as a sacrifice through which, by granting Siegmund a part of what he so desperately desires, she can in turn achieve the gratification she seeks from him, and to a greater degree than if she did not submit to his passion. Even then, sexuality is for her transcendent, at least conceptually, in that she attempts to experience it ethereally, as if her desire could completely alienate her physically. With two exceptions, therefore, both devastating for her, she permits Siegmund no more than kisses. The fear of his overwhelming, potentially subjugating sexuality is one reason for that reticence; a second has to do with the effects of lesser forms of physical contact, in themselves eminently satisfying: in fact almost more than she can, or wishes to endure. When Siegmund kisses her, for example, "his lips filled her with a hot flush like wine, a sweet, flaming flush of her whole body, most exquisite, as if she were nothing but a soft rosy flame of fire against him for a moment or two. That, she decided, was supreme, transcendental" (71).

It is through limited physical contact, then, that Helena hopes to achieve spiritual ecstasy, and yet she cannot succeed because of a basic deficiency: her tendency
to ignore or fancifully recreate her environment. She cannot accept people, or even care for them: "they were vulgar, ugly, and stupid, as a rule" (43); she accepts nature to no greater extent, at least not on its own terms. What characterizes her relations with both is her habit of seeing "just as she pleased, without any of humanity’s previous vision for spectacles. So she hardly knew any flower’s name, nor perceived of any of the relationships, nor cared a jot about an adaptation or modification ... The pink convolvuli were fairy horns or telephones from the day fairies to the night fairies. The rippling sunlight on the sea was the Rhine maidens spreading their bright hair to the sun. That was her favourite form of thinking. The value of all things was in the fancy they evoked" (43). Unable to commune with man or nature, then, Helena may, in her naiveté, be very capable of survival, but no more, for without communion there can be no transcendence, and especially no spiritual transcendence, because she reduces even God, as she does nature, Siegmund, and life generally, to her own terms in order to minimize the fear of the unknown. A "great God thudding out waves of life" (47) must be transformed, just as the once-fearful ocean has become "the curling splash of retreat of the little sleepy waves" (48).

That Helena prefers a world of self-created fantasy and romantic idealism, however, is neither so benign nor so deleterious as it might seem, depending upon the reader’s predilection. Alistair Niven, who like so many critics
views Helena pessimistically, gives considerable weight to the undeniably graphic and yet equally ambiguous statement that because of this tendency, although physically she "shrank from anything extreme ... psychically she was an extremist, and a dangerous one" (44). In expressing that characteristic, writes Niven, "Lawrence invokes Helena’s rarity of imagination but makes it clear that a soul such as hers turns its back on the creative side of life [the "living continuum," which includes Siegmund as both man striving to be imaginative, and artist] by substituting its own mock creativity. The end-product of this process would be someone like Hermione in Women in Love, who wants to mould her man into an imagined shape rather than to accept the real personality he presents." And yet it is clear that in The Trespasser Helena lacks the ulterior motives of Hermione, just as Siegmund cannot offer the theories of reconciliation Birkin advocates. While in the later work Hermione serves almost as a test of Birkin’s convictions, in The Trespasser Helena, while she may be a "dangerous extremist," is so almost by accident: that is, she has herself become the victim of self-alienation and as such remains, I think, sympathetic. In spite of the consequences of her denial of reality, and particularly of people, she is almost exclusively concerned with her own well-being and thus unknowingly affects others: a woman perhaps more similar in the end, therefore, to Tess than to Sue Brideshead, and certainly
very dissimilar to Hermione.

Given this insight, we must carefully reassess Helena’s ambitions. In terms of relationships, for example, she is similar to Miriam Leivers: Helena "wanted to sacrifice to him [Siegmund], make herself a burning alter to him, and she wanted to possess him" (T, 56); Miriam "would obey him [Paul Morel] in his trifling commands. But once he was obeyed, then she had him in her power, she knew, to lead him where she would" (SL, 364). Niven describes this as "tyranny," and in doing so apparently fails to realize that for both women there is only one perceived alternative to the historical victimization of women by men, and that is mastery. It is from neither a tyrannical nor a whimsical desire, therefore, that Miriam "fiercely wished she were a man" because men "'have everything,'" nor is it ambiguous of her to "at the same time" hate men (SL, 192). It is a matter of survival, and of self-respect, to desire either the attainment of some kind of equality or, realizing that such a goal is likely never to be reached within contemporary society, the converse of existing social reality: feminine supremacy. We may assume that these alternatives would all seem to involve fantasy and would therefore be life-denying, but as these women perceive them, they are just the opposite: the means of replacing reality with something else so as to avoid, or convince themselves they are avoiding, the ignominy of surrendering to that reality. In these terms it is perhaps ironical that in The Trespasser Helena’s ambition initially
appears similar, and yet in the end is hopelessly anti-
thetical to Siegmund’s, for while she would replace reality
with fantasy, he, in an effort to escape social respon-
sibility and personal angst, would join with Helena on the
island fairyland and transcend reality. Neither is willing
to accept what Lawrence would later insist upon as the only
means of survival: the acceptance and assimilation of the
conflicts of socio-psychological experience, and the recog-
nition of the necessity for individual "separateness" as
ways of achieving the conviction of personal significance in
a world which would seem to embody the notion of individual
worthlessness and insignificance.

Helena, then, is not so self-possessed as Siegmund
imagines, for she is dependent upon him as a source of
fanciful inspiration and following from that, of strength,
even while attempting to achieve or sustain her autonomy.
It is with this ambivalence that she acquiesces to
Siegmund’s desires, and it is not surprising, therefore,
that she is afterwards not only "full of strange sensations,
of involuntary recoil from shock" (36), but also fearful of
what she has passively assisted in creating: an altered
Siegmund whose very peacefulness may be threatening. Al-
though previously he had been "burning, volcanic, as if he
would destroy her," and now he is "like the sea, blue and
hazy in the morning," she understands that a placid surface
does not necessarily imply equally calm depths. In fact,
beneath Siegmund's apparently tranquil exterior, she discov­ers, lies a heart whose throb "seemed to go through the whole island and the whole afternoon ... so deep, unheard, with its great expulsions of life ... It frightened her ... she knew not this Siegmund. It was so different from the half-shut eyes with black lashes, and the winsome, shapely nose ... She listened for Siegmund's soul, but his heart overbeat all other sound, thudding powerfully" (47-48) like waves during a storm which in turn "thud ... like a great heart beating under the breast. There was something brutal about it that she could not bear. She had no weapon against brute force," whether that force be from the sea or from Siegmund, who in his passionate moments is "not her Siegmund. She hated the brute in him" (51).

To heighten her apprehension, Helena feels that she is implicated. When she observes Siegmund outwardly calm after the storm, as it were, she realizes that she "had given him this new soft beauty. She was the earth in which his strange flowers grew. But she herself wondered at the flowers produced of her. He was so strange to her, so different from herself. What next would he ask of her, what new blossom would she rear in him then. He seemed to grow and flower involuntarily. She merely helped to produce him" (36). To a woman whose strength is her self-possession and her dreams, the disturbing reality of Siegmund's sexual passion is a threat to her very identity. She fears that she is little more than a catalyst, for his happiness is to
be derived more from a harmony with his environment, of which she will be a mere part, than from herself. And if that is so, it undermines her own dream of possessing Siegmund, of having him as the knight in her romantic fantasy. When he talks about no longer being an outcast because "from now ... the darkness is a sort of mother, and the moon a sister, and the stars children, and sometimes the sea is a brother ... she did not know what he meant ... 'And I, Siegmund?' she said softly," looking "up at him piteously ... 'The key of the castle,' he said" (37).

Helena's love, like Miriam's, is spiritual: that is to say, mystical in a conventionally Christian way; Siegmund's embodies a vision of transcendence in terms of a physical, intuitive relationship with the environment and the elements which associates Christ as a man with personal tragedy and the failure of human beings to respond to such passion. "'Thirty years of earnest love; three years' life like a passionate ecstasy--and it was finished,'" he reflects as the two of them ponder a carved figure of Christ on the cross in the graveyard of a Catholic chapel. "'He was very great and very wonderful. I am very insignificant, and shall go out ignobly. But we are the same; love, the brief ecstasy, and the end. But mine is one rose, and His all the white beauty in the world.'

"Siegmund felt his heart very heavy, sad, and at fault, in presence of the Christ. Yet he derived comfort from the knowledge that life was treating him in the same manner as
it had treated the Master, though his compared small and despicable with the Christ-tragedy" (79).

Helena, on the other hand, viewing the same carved figure of Christ on the cross, is overwhelmed by romanticism; her heart swells "with emotion. All the yearning and pathos of Christianity filled her again" (55), and in this mood she "felt a rare tenderness" for Siegmund. "It was unusual for her to be so humble-minded, but this evening she felt she must minister to him, and be submissive," and although her "pride battled with her new subjugation to Siegmund," she "loved him, was jealous of every particle of him that evaded her. She wanted to sacrifice to him, make herself a burning altar to him, and wanted to possess him ... That night [for the second time] she met his passion with love. It was not his passion she wanted, exactly. But she desired that he should want her madly, and that he should have all—everything. It was a wonderful night to him. It restored in him the full 'will to live'. But she felt it destroyed her. Her soul seemed blasted" (55-56).

Again for Helena, reality and fantasy clash. What had begun as her version of the Eucharist, during which she would piously consume the flesh and the blood of Siegmund's passion, turns out quite differently, for unlike the Christian sacrament, Siegmund is inescapably substantial.

After their second consummation, Siegmund feels, or hopes, that he is on the threshold of achieving a transcen-
dence of worldly responsibility. Helena has, to his sen­sibility, participated more passionately, and the following morning he is "as full of life" as the ocean; a "pioneer ... like Adam when he opened the first eyes in the world" (57, 60). At the same time, however, he is beginning intuitively to realize that Helena's moments of contentment do not correspond to his, although he never comes to realize why that is so. "She had a peculiar, childish wistfulness at times, and with this an intangible aloofness that pierced his heart. There was a remoteness about her, an estrange­ment between her and all natural daily things, as if she were of an unknown race that never can tell its own story ... Siegmund suddenly realized that he knew nothing of her life, her real inner life. She was a book written in characters unintelligible to him and to everybody" (131-32). Nor can he ever know Helena, for she "clothed everything in fancy" (43), including herself, and himself. For that reason they can also never have a satisfactory, or even a lengthy relationship, because it is not to Helena a rela­tionship with him, but with an idealized lover. To Siegmund, that is interpreted as devastating rejection, "the spear in the side of his tortured self-respect" (121). Helena's cruelty is not intentional, however; it is simply a matter of her fantasy not corresponding to his needs, just as his fantasy does not relate to hers.

This fundamental lack of understanding and of communi­cation intensifies as the days pass. Alienated from each
other, each incapable of expressing his or her particular illusions of love, each not understanding, and therefore misinterpreting the other's desires, their dialogue increasingly comes to be characterized by vagueness, doubt and perceived indifference. Helena often "did not take his meaning, but left him alone with his sense of tragedy ... she was blind to him" (24), while Siegmund, when Helena is upset, "held her closely, tenderly, not knowing what it was all about, but happy and unafraid ... He did not understand" (25, 70). And when he even approaches an articulation of that tragedy Helena, without "troubling to understand--she was inclined to think it verbiage ... made a small sound of assent" (66). Similarly, when she says: "'I saw the sun through the cliffs, and the sea, and you' ... He did not understand ... 'I saw the sunshine in you,' repeated Helena quietly ... He laughed again, not understanding, but feeling she meant love" (60). He "had a peculiar, enigmatic look in his eyes, between suffering and mocking and love. He was quite intractable; he would not soften to her, but remained there aloof" (33), while he in turn feels that "Helena had rejected him" (122).

As this process develops, each feels increasingly depressed, lonely and troubled: feelings, moreover, which are aggravated by what is interpreted as contentment and indifference to this anguish by the other. "'I was dreaming of huge ice-crystals,'" Siegmund informs Helena at one
point, having awakened from an "evanescent sleep interspersed with suffering" (96), and she "smiled at him. He seemed unconscious of fate, happy and strong ... Helena felt the chagrin of one whose wretchedness must go unperceived ... She saw him lying in a royal ease, his eyes naive as a boy's ... she felt very lonely. Being listless with sun-weariness, and heavy with a sense of impending fate, she felt a great yearning for his sympathy ... Instead of receiving this, she had to play to his buoyant happiness .. knowing he did not understand" (93). Ironically, he might well have understood, had she cared to broach the subject, for he, too, is overwhelmed by the immediacy of a fate which, for her, hovers just above "with wide wings ... Fate, ashen grey and black, like a carrion crow, had her in its shadow. Yet, Siegmund took no notice. He did not understand ... 'If,' thought she, 'the whole clock of the world could stand still now, and leave us thus, me with the lift and fall of the strong body of Siegmund in my arms ...' But the clock ticked on in the heat" (99, 125). Siegmund is no less affected by Helena's continual rejection of his passion; it "was very disagreeable ... the sense of humiliation ... which had fixed itself, bled him secretly, like a wound. This haemorrhage of self-esteem tortured him to the end" (121), and yet like Helena he is determined not to articulate this despair. Helena "'does not understand,' said Siegmund to himself. 'And whatever I do I must not tell her. I should have thought she would understand.' ...
there mingled with his other feelings resentment against her. Almost he hated her" (129), and himself, and life generally. "'If only,' prayed Siegmund, 'death would wipe the sweat from me, and it were dark ...' But the waves softly marked the minutes ..." (125).

Helena is somewhat of an abstraction to Siegmund, as he is to her: something neither of them fully realizes until events have become irreversible. She is, as she has suspected, a means of momentary escape; when she is near, Siegmund loses "the ache, the yearning towards something, which he always felt otherwise. She seemed to connect him with the beauty of things, as if she were the nerve through which he received intelligence of the sun, and wind, and sea, and of the moon and the darkness" (44). But these moments pass, and when they do Siegmund's mood changes abruptly. For Helena, these changes are confusing although, like him, she rarely asks for an explanation, choosing instead to suffer a mixture of "dread and excitement," having "no idea what Siegmund was thinking." At any moment, he might have "changed again ... his mood ... different, incomprehensible to her," and as "she wondered where was the Siegmund of ten minutes ago," her heart would surge "with yearning, to sink with a dismay. This Siegmund was so incomprehensible" (71).

By the eve of the vacation this dread of indifference has become fear of rejection, and impending loneliness.
Then Helena, as the two lie on the beach, Siegmund sleeping in apparent tranquility, "turned from her book in a confusion of thought ... Her mind traced again the tumultuous, obscure struggling of the two [their attempts to enter Eden, her Zauberland] ... and she felt sorrowful." Tomorrow "'there shall be no more sea ... no more anything,' she thought dazedly ... It seemed to her as if all the lightness of her fancy and her hope were being burned away ... She tried to imagine herself resuming the old activities, the old manner of living. 'It was impossible,' she said" (92). Following this insight she listens to Siegmund, equally perturbed by what the future will involve, tell her how his love for Beatrice dissipated, and she realizes that love, too, which she had previously "chose[n] to consider as single and wonderful a thing ... as birth, or adolescence, or death, was temporary, and formed only an episode. It was her hour of disillusion," of "horror," of feeling that life and hope had become "ash in her mouth. She shuddered with discord. Despair grated between her teeth. This dreariness was worse than any her dreary, lonely life had known. She felt she could bear it no longer" (98-99).

At this point Helena is beginning to understand herself. Although she will subsequently drift again into fantasy, for self-insight perhaps creates additional reasons to resist change (that is: to avoid confrontation), in the midst of disillusion and despair she realizes that she has always clothed her life in "dreams and fancies" (98), but
now that Siegmund, suffering the dissolution of his own short-lived dreams, no longer responds within or to her own fantasy, it was "her turn to suffer the sickening detachment which comes after moments of intense living ... Was that really Siegmund, that stooping, thick-shouldered, indifferent man? Was that the Siegmund, who had seemed to radiate joy into his surroundings ... whose face was a panorama of passing God? She looked at him again. His radiance was gone, his aura had ceased. She saw him a stooping man, past the buoyancy of youth, walking and whistling rather stupidly—in short, something of the 'clothed animal on end,' like the rest of man.

"She suffered an agony of disillusion. Was this the real Siegmund, and her own only a projection of her soul? ... Was he the real clay, and that other, her beloved, only the breathing of her soul upon this. There was an awful blank before her," a blank which persists even when Siegmund turns to offer comfort. "What was all this? This was not comfort or love? He was not understanding or helping, only chaining her, hurting. She did not want his brute embrace—she was most utterly alone, gripped so in his arms ... The secret thud, thud of his heart, the very self of that animal in him she feared and hated, repulsed her. She struggled to escape" (99-100).

While her fantasy had remained more or less intact, Helena was able to endure Siegmund's physical passion, in
part by reinterpreting it, reforming it into a representa-
tion of forthcoming spiritual ecstasy. Now, the veil of
fantasy rent, she cannot endure what is essentially the same
kind of love Siegmund has always offered. In order to
survive and to continue to repel the vulgarity of the world,
Helena must create a new fantasy, which she does, and ironi-
cally, although it does not provide the blissfulness of the
old, but rather the melancholy of a kind of martyrdom, it
does continue to embrace the perfect Siegmund. After his
death he remains, to her, as alive as before, but in memory
exclusively and resolutely spiritual, an embodiment of "one
of her symbols, the death of which the sagas talk—something
grand, and sweeping, and dark" (45).

With this particular "saga," however, Lawrence graphi-
cally compares Helena's world with the real one. Siegmund,
hanging from a door hook by a portmanteau strap bedded in
his neck, his face swollen and discoloured (192), is no
symbol, and yet Helena, at first unaware of the event,
although clearly apprehensive, nevertheless insists that it
is "'impossible anything should have happened to him—I
should have known. I should have known the moment his
spirit left his body; he would have come to me'" (196). And
although she is soon confronted with the indisputable facts,
they do not effectively register. One year later,
Siegmund's violin reposing in an arm-chair beside her own,
as if her next lesson was soon to begin, Helena is recalling
the anniversay not of his death, but of a significant
Thursday when the two of them strolled through a particular larch-wood grove. And, reminiscent of an earlier time and an earlier moment of insight, her new companion, Cecil Byrne, realizes that "'I might as well not exist, for all she is aware of me'" (213).

This would offer evidence that Helena is not accepting Cecil Byrne, in a conventional way, at any rate, but rather, is using a fantasized version of him as the physical embodiment within which, or perhaps more appropriately, above which hovers the still living spirit of Siegmund. Helena will cling to the memory of her former lover because for all of her "self-possession" and her dislike of people, she needs someone, even within fantasy, to give strength to that self-possession. Therefore, after having earlier repelled Siegmund's sexual passion and then realizing that she may have permanently alienated him, or at least her romanticized version of him, she "experienced the dread of losing him" permanently, not in terms of estrangement but because his indifference "was insufferable to her pride" (104). In other words, Helena survives and succeeds in relation to the strength of her own self-image, which although alienated is not, as is Siegmund's, perceived as such by her. She is willing, therefore, to undermine any real sense of self she may have in order to sustain that romanticization from which her self-possession is derived. She chastizes herself at one point, for example, for having "given way to her revul-
sion a little space before. Why had she not smothered it and pretended? Why had she, a woman, betrayed herself so flagrantly?" (104).

She decides to attempt a reconciliation, and yet will not succeed this time any more than during previous attempts, for the love she gives Siegmund is a "Madonna love," the love which attempts through self-denying physical sacrifice to possess his spirit, to cool his passion until "he was a child to her Madonna" (104). Even Siegmund knows that Helena will not alter. "'You will always be you,'" he tells her (106), even if it means losing him. The only way their relationship could continue is if he were to change—equally unlikely, for he is no longer willing to continue being "pushed this way and that, like a fool" (106)—because Helena will always fantasize. "For her the world was still a great wonder-box which hid innumerable sweet toys for surprises in all its crevices" (113); that is the only way of surviving the potential threat of nature, which, when it manages to penetrate her fancy, "filled her with the same uncontrollable terror as did Siegmund when he sometimes grew silent and strange in a tide of passion" (114).

It is safer, as well, to view the harsh summer sun as a throng of "light-fairies," the terrifying Atlantic as a blaze of white fire overhung by "the blue sky in a glory, like the blue smoke of the fire of God ... in His white incandescence, His fire settling on her like the Holy Spirit" and Siegmund as "'Eros walking by the sea'" (114-
15), for otherwise Helena's world is a lonely, alienating place, a world which, like Siegmund in his passionate moments, threatens to overwhelm her, to place in jeopardy her tenuous sense of identity. She is, as Siegmund eventually recognizes, almost completely alienated from the real world, and yet, paradoxically, and in Siegmund's terms, ironically, she is able to survive, and will survive his death because she is estranged and thus detached from the world around her. "There was a remoteness about her, an estrangement between her and all natural daily things, as if she were of an unknown race that never can tell its story. This feeling always moved Siegmund's pity to its deepest, leaving him poignantly helpless. This same foreignness, revealed in other ways, sometimes made him hate her. It was as if she would sacrifice him rather than renounce her foreign birth. There was something in her he could never understand ... But what would become of her ... She could not escape thus with him from this house of strangers which she called 'life.' She had to go on alone, like a foreigner who cannot learn the strange language.

"'What will she do?' Siegmund asked himself, 'when her loneliness comes upon her like a horror, and she has no one to go to. She will come to the memory of me for a while, and that will take her over till her strength is established. But what then?' ... He could not conceive. Yet she would not die, of that he was certain" (131-32).
The characterization, then, of Helena within *The Trespasser* involves a continuation, although not a "continuum" of life. She lives, in that she survives and continues to function daily, but she is not alive in the breathless, naive way she was, say, when they first arrived on the island. Byrne notes, uneasily, how "mechanically" she plays, for example, the music coming "lifeless" from her bow, her body swaying as if it were "the white stroke of a metronome" (6), her whole demeanor one of resignation, weariness, apathy (7). She ignores Louisa, her long friendship with that woman coming to an end, and Byrne, who tries to revive her, insisting that she is alive, and has "'got to live'" (9). "'You are not dead,'" he tells her. "'Even if you want to be, you're not ... You are not dead with Siegmund,' he persisted, 'so you can't say you live with him. You may live with his memory. But Siegmund is dead, and his memory is not he--himself ... he is Siegmund Dead! And you do not know him, because you are alive, like me, so Siegmund Dead is a stranger to you'" (10). Byrne is mistaken, for Helena is entrenched even more firmly beneath her fanciful veil, spiritually absent from this world, her body and soul ironically as mechanized and alienated as were Siegmund's during the later years of his life. And yet Helena has succeeded to a degree, in that she has withstood similar if not as overwhelming circumstances as those which push Siegmund downwards to his eventual and inevitable end.
Parallel to Helena’s otherworldliness, Siegmund, too, is from the outset only physically present in the environment at hand, "a man in abstraction ... in a kind of trance, his consciousness suspended" (13), even as he anticipates his vacation with Helena. This is the result of having for years "suppressed his soul, in a kind of mechanical despair doing his duty and enduring the rest ... Now he was going to break free altogether, to have at least a few days purely for his own joy. This, to a man of integrity, meant a breaking of bonds, a severing of blood-ties, a sort of new birth" (13). But for a "man of integrity" this anticipated severance of ties with the past leads, as I earlier mentioned, and as Siegmund himself will soon realize, not to freedom or rebirth but to an increase in the very alienation from which he would escape, and ultimately to a conflict which cannot be resolved. Furthermore, the expectations which he is internalizing are as romantic, as much in the nature of a fairytale, as those which Helena possesses.

Even as he walks to the train he is allowing himself to be deceived. The city sheds its grisly industrial aura, the polluted river, now a "soft grey, shaking golden sequins among the folds of its shadows, fell open like a garment before him, to reveal the white moonglitter brilliant as living flesh ... in a kind of trance ... he lifted his face to the moon. It seemed to help him; in its brilliance amid the blonde heavens it seemed to transcend fretfulness. It
would front the waves with silver as they slid to the shore, and Helena, looking along the coast, waiting, would lift her hands with sudden joy. He laughed, and the moon hurried laughing alongside, through the black masses of the trees" to his room, where "he thought the whiteness was Helena. He held his breath and stiffened, then breathed again. 'Tomorrow,' he thought, as he laid his violin-case across the arms of a wicker chair. But he had a physical feeling of the presence of Helena: in his shoulders he seemed to be aware of her" (13-14).

Abruptly, however, this buoyant and romantic mood changes, in part because he knows, although at times he does his utmost to repress the fact, that the vacation will change nothing. "It would be the same, while ever Beatrice was Beatrice and Siegmund her husband. He ate his bread and cheese mechanically, wondering why he was miserable ... half wishing he had not promised Helena, half wishing he had no tomorrow." Even the "strong feeling of affection" he has for his daughters is "battling with something else ... he hated his children for being so dear to him. Either he himself must go under, and drag on an existence he hated, or they must suffer ... As he turned, he saw himself like a ghost cross the mirror" (15-16). Although he is not conscious of this, in some respects Siegmund's suicide is inevitable at this point, for he almost literally does not exist, neither to his wife and children, for whom he is a stranger, nor to Helena, whose strength is "in her self-
possession, in her love of beautiful things and of dreams" (16). He is already dead: dead to himself—he is repeatedly described as being mechanical, tired, overwhelmed with fatigue, "overcome with weariness" (15)—and dead with respect to Helena, whose love is not even life-giving, for it is a love defined by "an inconsistent virtue, cruel and ugly" (18).

When he leaves London, Siegmund forces himself to eradicate (actually he only represses) this morbidity, to retain only the "gay world of romance," a world without time. "How could it be Sunday!" he exclaims with a rather facile-sounding but for him sincere exuberance. "It was no time; it was Romance, going back to Tristan" (20). Ironically, and as evidence of this sincerity—otherwise it is not likely he would so soon lose his familiarity with Wagner's Tristan und Isolde—Sieg mund's allusion to Tristan is fraught with foreshadowing, for the opera, a tragedy involving two lovers (one of whom is married) who die at the end, "is pervaded with longing, at first sexual: this is transformed into a longing for death as a release from the limitations of life."15 But Siegmund continues intensely to veil the world in fantasy. As he approaches the Isle of Wight, he "watched the bluish bulk of the island. Like the beautiful women in the myths, his love hid in its blue haze. It seemed impossible. Behind him, the white wake trailed myriads of daisies ... Beneath him the clear green water
swung and puckered as if it were laughing. In front, Sieglinde’s island drew near and nearer, creeping towards him, bringing him Helena” (21). The fantasy is complete: Siegmund and Sieglinde, self-deceiving figures neither responsibly of this world, nor of mythos, involved in a love affair destined to end in sorrow and death, an affair from the beginning informed only by a romantic passion which can never be sustained for long. Even as the ferry docks, Siegmund feels empty, sitting “in a chilly stupor,” his heart “thudding heavily with excitement, surprising him, for his brain felt dead” (22).

Siegmund’s temperament throughout the novel is characterized by such abrupt fluctuations, from alienation and torment to the most buoyant happiness, shifts which he comes to explain as reactions to Helena’s changing perception of him. Helena, however, does not change, nor basically does their relationship, except in a responsive way, following from Siegmund’s own despair or idealistic optimism, his own alienation and lack of self-awareness which lead to alternations between an inflated view of self and position in the world, and a morose, pathetic condemnation of self. Lacking an adequate sense of identity, and certainly any sense of self-worth, he can never be certain whether he must change, or escape—that is, transcend the social environment through synthesis with nature—or whether it is the fault of others that he feels rejected. It is this ambivalence which affects Helena so traumatically, and therefore mediates
their relationship. When, for example, at the height of his passion, Helena rejects his kisses, he is devastated. She "ought to be rejoiced at me," he says in a bewildered tone, "but she is not; she rejects me as if I were a baboon under my clothing ... He felt as if his breast were scalded. It was a physical pain to him" (33, 41).

The reason for this immediate and apparently solipsistic reaction is that, just as she later suspects, Helena is for Siegmund a catalyst, desperately intended as the means of uplifting him psychologically to a point where he feels capable of union, and then transcendence with nature. It is nature, far more than Helena, with which he seeks a relationship; communion with nature, therefore, more than consummation which will provide the means of attempting to escape an essentially urban self, and the responsibilities, again defined in terms of the city, of self, of social life, of reality. This is both similar to Helena's fantasy, in that he is attempting imaginatively to recreate experience and self, and different because whereas she attempts to reduce nature to fit her fancy, he attempts to negate himself so as to join with and conform to nature. The former, it seems to me, is essentially survival-oriented, even pragmatical; the latter self-treacherous; Helena's perspective, which Siegmund does not understand, but assumes to be love for him (60), self-affirming; while his, until it is too late, self-denying.
For Helena, therefore, love is personal even if, in order to affect her, it must be abstract and conform to her fantasy, which can change but is always possessive, while for Siegmund love is highly impersonal, whether in terms of reception (in which case Helena, for example, may be perceived personally, but her revitalizing love is not) or, more enjoyable for him, in terms of extending outwards to reach and unite with the breadth of nature. Although Siegmund perceives nature as fancifully as does Helena--it is forever responsive: laughing, greeting him warmly, embracing him, extending its love to him--the difference is that whereas she prefers to observe the natural environment "without touching things" (64), he constantly responds physically, touching, embracing, giving of himself, so that eventually he reminds Helena of Francis Thompson: a "pale shadow of a person" (61). His love is not self-oriented because it emanates from a man so alienated as to be incapable of any emotions responsive specifically to others, and because love given to so impersonal a force as nature must by definition itself be impersonal as well.

Sieg mund, who at times seems so able to almost willingly ignore his own life, and others--Beatrice, his children, Helena--is in contrast mesmerized by the power of life in nature, even after he realizes that it is also the power of death, in that it is "life which has no sympathy with the individual, no cognizance of him" (64). That is a threat which Helena, who carries the world within her, minimizes by
reshaping nature according to her requirements, and to the
situation at hand, whereas Siegmund either attempts to re-
shape himself to meet the demands of the external world, or
blames that world for the predicament in which he finds
himself. Just as he became a subservient automaton in
London, for years suppressing his soul, "doing his duty and
enduring the rest" (13), so too does he rather apathetically
become a victim on the Isle of Wight, this time of what he
observes as the inevitability of his fate. In that he
defines fate as naturalistic, he succumbs in turn to nature,
which he loves, even after that relationship becomes
potentially fatal, for in his desperation he seeks tran-
scendence of the physical through nature, of which consumma-
tion with Helena is one viable, and at the same time
impersonal means.

When those attempts fail, and Siegmund comes to require
a degree of passion and energy which even Helena cannot
provide, she becomes more than "his little Helena": a
"woman, tall and pale, drooping with the struggle of her
compassion ... stable, immortal, not a fragile human being,
but a personification of the great motherhood of women"
(74). She becomes "Hawwa" (the Arabic and Hebraic word
meaning "to breathe" or "to give life"), an Eve to his
reborn Adam (60). But even that grasping for mythos cannot
succeed, for as Siegmund is beginning to realize, or at
least at this point, to intuit, as much as he may fancifully
reinterpret Helena, nature, even himself, the illusion is difficult to sustain. As Helena observes (71), he is becoming moody, because the despair evoked by the awareness of what awaits him back in London cannot be dispelled, or even repressed, and in fact intrudes with increasing repetition and intensity upon his fanciful exuberance, alienating him, as it does so, from Helena, from nature, once immediate and vital, now falling "back into shadowed vagueness" (75), even from his own body. "He felt detached from the earth, from all the near, concrete, beloved things: as if these had melted away from him, and left him, sick and unsupported, somewhere alone on the edge of an enormous space. He wanted to lie down ... to relieve himself of the sickening effort of supporting and controlling his body. If he could lie down ... perfectly still he need not struggle to animate the cumbersome matter of his body, and then he would not feel thus sick and outside himself" (75).

Thus begins a significant development in the already proliferating estrangement between Helena and Siegmund. While originally she rejected his sexual passion, and he in turn repelled her for rejecting him, now he is slowly losing sense of what it was he came to the island to find. As well, with the "hill-side and the gorse" (75), Helena—his Sieglinde—also begins to recede, as his despair intensifies, to be replaced by an awareness of the real Helena Verden, a woman about whom he knows very little, and a woman whose passion, even if it were to come sexual, cannot uplift
him. Therein lies the significance of this change, which parallels a similar change in Helena’s romantic perception of Siegmund. As the clothing of fancy falls from both of them, both begin to realize that what they felt they could receive from the other is no longer possible in the light of this alteration of perceived identity. Thus Helena does not cause Siegmund’s despair and eventual suicide, any more than she desires actual mastery over him. She is not the castrating woman, the witch, the overwhelming mother-figure, the cruel man-eater critics have described her as being. Most of what she is to Siegmund in the beginning has been the result of his own imagination; what she really is, and this Siegmund will never understand fully, is an alienated woman for whom picturesque and harmless fantasy replaces the harshness of life and of potentially troubling self-awareness.

Just as she is a catalyst in Siegmund’s attempt to unite passionately with the natural world, she is a catalyst in the downward swing of his feelings, but she is not intentionally involved, and she is not involved to the degree that indifferent nature itself is, largely because she is not indifferent. She may love an idealized, romanticized version of Siegmund, but that love is nevertheless extended in the direction of the real figure. Given that, she is in fact not even as involved as Beatrice, whose frustration with her alienated and indifferent husband turns, under-
standably, to rejection, and who, therefore, if for no other reason that the length of time she has been a part of Siegmund, and the fact of their offspring, hovers constantly in his subconscious, even when the artificially overlayed drapery of escapism is most tenable. As that drapery wears thin the fact and the memory of Beatrice resurfaces in his consciousness and in his discussions with Helena, creating yet another facet of their estrangement.

Siegmund is at first unaware of the reasons for his despair, his self-alienated anxiety manifesting itself only as a physical sensation, an undefinable, internal anguish, initially the "insupportable feeling of sickness, as a man feels who is being brought from under an anaesthetic" (75), increasing from that English sense of anguish to "l'agonie": mortal agony (literally, "the pangs of death"). It is the result, he tells himself, of excess passion, of "happiness concentrated one drop too keen, so that what should have been vivid wine was like a pure poison scathing him ... 'I suppose,' he said to himself ... 'I suppose living too intensely kills you, more or less'" (77). But of course it is not passion that is responsible, but the rent in the unsustainable veil of fantasy, through which intrudes the relentless and impersonal awareness of reality.

By understanding the effects, if not the sources of his alienation, however, Siegmund allows us to understand that his eventual decision to commit suicide is neither romantic, particularly self-indulgent, nor cruel. It will be a care-
fully conceived decision based on what he defines as the inescapable; such is the extent of his alienation that he simply cannot envision an alternative. With a body already so weak that at times he can barely summon the energy to stand, and a psyche similarly reeling under the onslaught of what will be, in the light of this island fairyland (which cannot be sustained, so is no longer an alternative), a life comparatively even more grotesque than it seemed previously, he will bow to a fate that made his life with Beatrice what it has become and that introduced him to Helena. Now, he is convinced, having experienced a brief but glorious respite, life is to end. It will be a relief and an act of faith, of submitting to the inevitable, for Siegmund, who equates their sojourn with "some state beyond ordinary experience—some place in romance, perhaps, or among the hills where Brunhild lay sleeping in her large bright halo of fire" (78), is familiar with Wagner’s Ring of the Nibelung; he understands, therefore, that Brunhild is able to save Sieglinde’s life, but not that of her lover.

Fate, however, is not of course inevitable, or not wholly so; it is to a certain extent of one’s conscious or unconscious choosing. Siegmund’s fate, therefore, perceived as inevitable, originates with the mistaken decision to attempt to forsake his life for the fantasy world which Helena inhabits but which is for him as alien as his real world. While he might have resolved matters in London,
resolution or progress, or change of any kind, has no place in Helena’s reactionary cosmos, and the extent to which Siegmund nevertheless aspires to that idyllic place is the extent to which, not Helena, but fantasy is instrumental in his downfall; the "trespass," therefore, which he commits is the sin of abnegating responsibility, of believing in utopia, but in a way that is not always self-expressive, and therefore is in some respects antithetical to Helena’s. The differences are most apparent in the face of failure: Helena’s romanticism is positive—her primary concern being survival and a sense of self which almost instinctively causes her to flee "as soon from warmth as from cold," to shrink from "anything extreme" (44)—and when the fantasy dissipates, for whatever reason, her reaction is also positive, in that she can create a new fairyland. Not that she is not affected by failure, for she is, but it is an emotion equally as romanticized as that which defines her in a more tranquil state. Even death is to her a symbol, something abstract, "something grand, and sweeping" (45). Like certain poets of the past, for whom death was an experience which moved them to produce some of their greatest works, Helena is moved in a constructive way. There is something of the future in her creations.

"'Carpe diem,'" on the other hand, summarizes Siegmund’s view of life. Seize today, that he may have the strength to face the possibility of hell, and when Helena asks "'Why hell, Siegmund?'" his reply is both pessimistic
and self-piteous: "'I suppose it is the postero [tomorrow]. In everything else I am a failure'" (70). His idealism, in other words, whether in the face of despair or ecstasy, is even more extreme and, one could add, more dangerous than Helena's. In the swimming scene, for example, following and in contrast to his first consummation with Helena, during which there was "a good deal of sorrow in his joy" (35), he experiences a self-satisfaction and a unity with nature that is for the moment untroubled. Even though he is a poor swimmer, he is neither fearful of the tide nor troubled by the previous night's less than fulfilling experience, but eager. "He ran laughing over the sand to the sea ... Laughing, he went under the clear green water." It was "splendid to play, even at middle age, and the sea is a fine partner" (40). And later, glancing at "his whole handsome maturity, the firm plating of his breasts, the full thighs, creatures proud in themselves ... 'I am at my best, at my strongest,' he said proudly to himself" (41). But the sea is not the fine partner he imagines it to be. The choppy waves, so harmless in his fancy, push him against a sharp rock which gashes his thigh, producing a "long raw scratch" (41) which, relatively insignificant in itself, perhaps, is indicative of a change taking place: of a pleasurable relationship with nature and a delight in himself now marred by an anti-thetical and irreconcilable pessimism derived from a realization of his inadequacies and his inability to ever
satisfy his dreams.

Siegmund's second movement, as it were (ironically, Helena urges him at one point to "'write a symphony of this--of us'" (61), but he is already reliving Wagner's Die Walkure), begins again optimistically, again following consummation. "'You,'" he tells Helena, "'seem to have knit all things in a piece for me. Things are not separate; they are all in a symphony. They go moving on and on. You are the motive in everything'" (69). He feels that his situation is improving, that what had previously occurred between him and Helena, between him and nature, was a false beginning, that their second consummation, an overwhelming success in his eyes--he does not perceive Helena's feelings--was for him a rebirth. As he swims again, the following morning, he engages in the rites of baptism; "he soused himself, and shook his head in the water, and washed and splashed and rubbed himself with his hands assiduously. He must feel perfectly clean and free--fresh, as if he had washed away all the years of soilure in this morning's sea and sun and sand. It was the purification. Siegmund became again a happy priest of the sun. He felt as if all the dirt of misery were soaked out of him, as he might soak clean a soiled garment in the sea, and bleach it white on the sunny shore. So white and sweet and tissue-clean he felt--full of lightness and grace ... 'like Adam when he opened the first eyes in the world'" (59-60).

Siegmund also feels united once more with nature, in
spite of "the deep weight of cold his hand encountered as he burrowed under the surface" of the "smooth, warm" sand, which he compares to Helena. Beneath that surface he finds the "cold mystery of the deep sand also thrilling. He pushed in his hands again and deeper, enjoying the almost hurt of the dark, heavy coldness" (58), ignoring the foreboding potential of an indifferent and therefore threatening nature, for he is "as full of life" as the ocean. He swims venturesomely, recklessly, feeling that "he had more wilful life than the sea, so he mastered it laughingly with his arms, feeling a delight in his triumph over the waves," and later "swelling with glad pride at having conquered" them (57). This kind of romantic illusion is perhaps understandable at a time when he sees his relationship with Helena finally succeeding, but it continues even after their passion has become a "passion of fear" (108) and he stands alone, searching for the faith to end life cleanly and courageously (103).

Even then, the sea is "blue with a panier of diamonds; the sky ... full with a misty tenderness of love" which he interprets as "the affection that existed between him and everything" (110). Even then, the wave-worn stones are as smooth as Helena's cheeks, the soft wind "shy as a girl ... caressing him ... 'Helena is right,' he said to himself as he swam, scarcely swimming, but moving upon the bosom of the tide; 'she is right, it is all enchanted. I have got into
her magic at last’" (111). To end this fantasy, the sea
must reveal again its potential, its lack of benignity, its
reality. As Siegmund feels himself being "carried along in
an invisible chariot, beneath the jewel-stained walls,"
suddenly the "tide swerved, threw him as he swam against the
inward-curving white rock; his elbow met the rock, and he
was sick with pain. He held his breath, trying to get back
the joy and magic. He could not believe that the lovely,
smooth side of the rock, fair as his own side with its
ripple of muscles, could have hurt him thus ... 'No,' said
he pitifully to himself, 'it is impossible it should have
hurt me. I suppose I was careless.'"

He finally admits, however, as he views what are osten-
sibly the same elements--"the azure sky and the sea ...
holding a bright conversation one with another ... the
boulders and pebbles of the sea-shore" playing together--
that "'they take no notice of me; they do not care a jot or
a tittle for me. I am a fool to think myself one with
them'" he finally admits. "'It was an illusion ... They
will all go on the same; they will be just as gay. Even
Helena, after a while, will laugh and take interest in
others. What do I matter?'" (112-13). For Siegmund this is
the final disillusionment. Rejected by Helena, by Beatrice
and his children, rejecting family, responsibility, work,
now rejected by nature, he "at last gave in ... Quite
stunned, with a death taking place in his soul, he lay still
... His consciousness was dark ... 'My fate is finally
wrought out,' he thought to himself. 'Even damnation may be finally imagined for me tonight. I have come so far. Now I must get clarity and courage to follow out the theme. I don't want to botch and bungle even damnation.'

"But he needed to know what was right, what was the proper sequence of his acts. Staring at the darkness, he seemed to feel his course, though he could not see it. He bowed in obedience. The stars seemed to sing softly in token of submission" (101, 103). Although the novel is but half complete, Siegmund's suicide is inevitable. He has accepted his fate, and now requires only the courage and the opportunity to relieve himself of an alienated consciousness he has neither strength nor reason to continue enduring. Just as Helena realizes that even if the island vacation were to be extended, the affair is at an end--this after the morose, alienated, "real" Siegmund, temperamental, indifferent, pessimistic about his relations with Beatrice and by implication, with herself, can no longer be concealed beneath the aura of a romanticized surrogate--so too does Siegmund dismiss any dreams of a union with nature, or even of a sustained relationship with Helena, a stranger about whom he "realized that he knew nothing ... She was a book written in characters unintelligible to him and to everybody" (132), unable to be known any more than she can ever know the "strangers ... I seem to make ... of all the people I meet" (118). Thus does Siegmund inform Beatrice of his
impending return; thus does he remark, as he signs the telegraph: "'There goes my warrant'" (128). The decision is made, and having been made, he "was out of it. Already he felt detached from life. He belonged to his destination" (134). All that remains is for him to assure himself that his decision is right, and from that self-assuredness summon the faith and the courage to commit his final act.

That conviction is eventually obtained from an analysis of the alternatives, contained within "the body of life" which for him means Beatrice, his children, Helena, music: all unbearable. Family life would mean a mechanical enactment of feigned responsibility, which "was a cynicism. He would have to leave Helena, which he could not do" (185), even though he knows he cannot stay with her, for now that her illusions concerning him have ended, she would "'only come to me ... out of pity,'" and then "'I should have nothing but mortification'" (140). Nor can he continue with the opera; that "was absurd. In fact it all was absurd and impossible. Very well, then, that being so, what remained possible? Why, to depart. 'If thine hand offend thee, cut it off.' He could cut himself off from life. It was plain and straightforward ... All the time he could feel his brain working ceaselessly, like a machine running with unslackening rapidity ... whilst his body ... was a separate thing, a terrible, heavy, hot thing over which he had slight control" (183, 185).

In other words, Siegmund would live if he could find a
viable alternative. Instead, all he can understand is that to continue would be insufferable. As he reflects, he now seems aware of the extent of his alienation, from himself as well as from the external world, which "was unreal, like a show, like a peeping show" (185), an absurdist drama in which he has been given no part, in which he has no place. His mind, coldly, mechanically reviewing the "facts," no longer recognizes the body, that previously passionate source of energy, ambition, even identity, except as a kind of offensive and no longer useful adjunct to rational thought, "a limb out of joint from the body of life ... a disjointed finger, swollen and discoloured, racked with pains" (185). But of course Siegmund's reasoning can hardly be described as rational; it would be more accurate to define his decision to commit suicide as the alternative to madness, and his attempts to free himself from the last clinging remnants of ambivalence as the repetitive, mesmeric chant of a man being consumed by a kind of schizophrenia. He cannot sanely make a decision, for the double bind in which he is entrapped—Beatrice and family or Helena, life or death—allows no choice without horrible consequences. It is a matter, therefore, of taking the path of least consequence, a decision, although made convincing by that mechanical mind, originally formulated by the sickened body which had experienced a "physical sensation of defeat, a kind of knot in his breast which neither reason, nor dialec-
tics, nor circumstance ... could untie" (122).

Once made, the decision is repeated endlessly, his thoughts circling at times "like oxen over a threshing floor, treading out the grain" (141); at other times pounding monotonously like "the rhythm of the train," or a mechanical version of "the well-known movement from the Valkyrie Ride, his whole self beating to the rhythm" (143). He likens himself to a pebble on the beach, or to an insignificant bee in a swarming hive, not from self-pity so much as from the desire to nullify an already repressed, self-alienated identity. "He seemed to be shrinking inwards" (151); and again he "lay shrinking within himself" (156), withdrawing into himself "like a sick dog" (169), for if he can eradicate self, if he can eliminate "desire--that is death to begin with" (161), the actual suicide becomes a detached act which he can, and in fact does perform "methodically and exactly ... as if he were the servant of some stern will" (188). In a mechanical world, a world whose "streets were like polished gun-metal," a world inhabited by modern technological beings--clockwork hansom, lofty, luminous, almost ethereal cars and purring, scampering taxis, suave, deprecating clocks, and whirring motor-buses, their hearts beating perceptibly as they charge scornfully past clumsy foot traffic (147-48)--Siegmund has become an inefficient and therefore obsolete mechanism, "not worth," says his daughter, "the flicking of your little finger" (152). He no longer even feels self-responsible, but rather
that he is being manipulated by an implacable universe which "swings on uninterrupted by cries of anguish or of hate," a universe piloted by a pitiless God who gives and takes life, makes experience tolerable or intolerable, with "unfaltering sternness" (187).

In these terms suicide is not the contemplation of a weak or self-piteous man, but of a man for whom there are no alternatives and for whom the continuation of life, therefore, would be an act characterized by weakness and self-pity. Despair, then, and pity are to be observed as very different feelings. Despair is what life holds for Siegmund, but that is not pity; in fact the last moments of his existence are characterized by strength and faith: strength in his decision and in his ability to follow that decision--the strength of conviction--and faith in the "unfaltering sternness of life. There was no futile hesitation between doom and pity. Therefore he could submit and have faith ... Siegmund thanked God that life was pitiless, strong enough to take his treasures out of his hands, and to thrust him out of the room; otherwise, how could he go with any faith to death" (187). Ironically, he has the strength and the faith to die, and no reason to live; such are the consequences of self-alienation, lack of identity, and the dehumanization so much a part of modern social experience.
The one segment—the single chapter, actually—which I have so far omitted in my discussion of The Trespasser is that in which Siegmund meets and converses with Hampson. I have done so because Chapter 13 is artificial, glib and undramatic, and the conversation, at least on Hampson's side, didactic. Nor am I convinced that Siegmund's meeting with Hampson has persuaded him to change his mind about the way he feels about Helena, or women generally, or about his life and the direction it must inevitably take. The novel, it seems to me, would progress virtually unaltered were Hampson never to have been created. However, what this chapter, as polemic, does signify, at least by comparison (as does Siegmund's suicide, for example), is the nature of the philosophy, and specifically, the sexual ideology, which Lawrence was then formulating and the form, therefore, future novels would take.

It was presumably Edward Garnett, for it was he to whom Lawrence subsequently responded, who first criticized Hampson in a note written on the unrevised manuscript: "Something is wanted to carry off this passage with the Stranger, i.e.,--you must intersect his talk with little realistic touches to make him very actual. He must not spring quite out of the blue & disappear into it again. He's too much a deus ex machina, for your purpose. Make him seem to talk more ordinary & natural & slip in the pregnant things at moments." After revising the manuscript,
Lawrence, who had attempted to follow this advice, was still dissatisfied with the chapter. "I hope the thing is knitted firm," he wrote Garnett, 21 January, 1912. "I hate those pieces where the stitch is slack and loose. The 'Stranger' piece is probably still too literary--I don't feel at all satisfied," Why, then, would Lawrence insist upon retaining a character so artificially introduced? What was Hampson's intended purpose, so important as to be defended in spite of the artistic problems this character created? Was it to divorce the author from a character--Siegmund--whose failure was an embarrassment and yet whom Lawrence was obliged to present as such because he had committed himself to dramatizing the actual story of Macartney's suicide? If that was the case, and I believe it was, then Hampson can be seen as the voice of the author, announcing a philosophy of reconciliation by which an individual in different circumstances—an individual of Lawrence's own creation, for example—could extricate himself from the despair of self-loathing and the humiliation of weakness, for that kind of inadequacy, Lawrence was later and optimistically to suggest, is mostly a state of mind.

According to Helen Corke, Hampson was indeed intended to articulate Lawrence's view; it was, she wrote, "DHL's way of indicating his own place in the story. He brought it [the chapter] to me when first written and asked if I had any objection to its inclusion--I had not." 17 On the other
hand, as Lawrence explained to Garnett in the letter cited above, including "oneself, one's naked self," something he had never previously attempted, was in itself reason for uneasiness. "I give myself away so much," he added, "and write what is my most palpitant, sensitive self, that I loathe the book, because it will betray me to a parcel of fools." Although this apprehension extended to the novel as a whole, coming as it does immediately after his stated dissatisfaction with Chapter 13, it clearly refers most explicitly to Hampson.

Siegmund reacts to this enigmatic character with understandable ambivalence, for Hampson is mesmerizing in his "perturbing intimacy" (81), able to discuss MacNair's circumstances and feelings with disconcerting accuracy and yet offering, as a kind of solution, advice which cannot or will not be followed and a theory of relationships which Siegmund finds arbitrary and subsequently ignores. And yet Siegmund is affected by Hampson's apocalyptic rhetoric; he listens, for example, "with a strong fear and a fascination opposing each other in his heart" (83) as the stranger discusses the process by which death "'creeps through the blue envelope of the day, and through our white tissue,'" a process which "'we can't stop ... once we've begun to leak'" (82), for it originates as a basic relinquishment of life. Although Siegmund, who interprets these statements personally, as he is meant to, denies that he is tired of this "House of Life," a direct contradiction to the despair which has been

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mounting within him in the previous chapters, he does admit that on the following day he is to be "'turned out of this "blue room'" (83). Encouraged by this confession, Hampson continues, with almost Mephistophelean zeal, to "explain" Siegmund to himself, again recalling Siegmund's own self-analysis but now articulated in a definite "Lawrencean" vocabulary. With people like yourself, and me, Hampson says, if you have "'acquired a liking for intensity in life, you can't do without it. I mean vivid soul experience. It takes the place, with us, of the old adventure, and physical excitement ... A craving for intense life is nearly as deadly as any other craving. You become a concentré; you feed your normal flame with oxygen, and it devours your tissue. The soulful ladies of romance are always semi-transparent'" (83).

Love, Hampson implies, must be reciprocal so that this flame will not be self-devouring and, lacking what he calls a stimulant, eventually be extinguished. That stimulant, furthermore, must be a physical, sensual as well as spiritual woman, so that instead of only spiritual love, which is often never actualized, or physical satisfaction, the "vivid soul experience"—communion or transcendence, as Lawrence also describes it—can be achieved. The problem, of course, is to find a compatible woman in order for the apparent disparity between intellect and instinct, or spirit and flesh, to be reconciled.
"The best sort of women," Hampson explains, "the most interesting— are the worst for us ... By instinct they aim at suppressing the gross and animal in us. Then they are supersensitive—refined a bit beyond humanity. We, who are as little gross as need be, become their instruments. Life is grounded in them, like electricity in the earth; and we take from them their unrealized life, turn it into light or warmth or power for them. The ordinary woman is, alone, a great potential force, an accumulator, if you like, charged from the force of life. In us her force becomes evident." But that force, in most women, is spiritual, and because the relationship just described is not reciprocal, nor balanced in the sense of being also sexual, a woman, while herself fulfilled, "destroys us. These deep, interesting women don’t want us; they want the flowers of the spirit they can gather of us. We, as natural men, are more or less degrading to them and to their love of us; therefore they destroy the natural man is us—that is, us altogether' .... he stopped. The bitter despair in his voice was the voice of a heavy feeling of which Siegmund had been vaguely aware for some weeks. Siegmund felt a sense of doom" (84-5). While it is too late for Siegmund, and the preceding passage illuminates the reasons why this is so, Lawrence as Hampson is suggesting alternatives which we will see dramatized in the following novel (a first draft of which he had completed—he sent it to Jessie Chambers, 20 October, 1911—
before he began revising *The Trespasser* on 3 January, 1912). In this respect Hampson prefigures Paul Morel's comparative freedom of choice in expressing the frustration of a man who has not been able to experience the kind of sexual fulfillment or communion he has sought, a desire further exasperated by being for the most part unconscious except in terms of nature. Siegmund does realize, however, that spiritual or intellectual fervour, such as he has known musically, is no longer enough. Indeed, as Hampson implies, having expended his spiritual vitality in music, for its own sake and as a kind of surrogate passion, and now with Helena in much the same way, he could not continue to exist as a musician even if he wanted to.

Hampson believes that the problem has to do with women, but more to the point Siegmund's failure, with Beatrice and Helena, has involved the abnegation of self-responsibility and the inability to understand the necessity of equating sexual with spiritual development, so that internal tranquility or harmony becomes possible, and following that, the likelihood of harmonious relations, both personal and social. With Helena, and possibly Beatrice too, personal frustration has been intensified by a lack of understanding, and therefore of communication. Without those there has been no possibility of reconciliation or harmony because neither individual has been able to express the nature of his or her desire. Instead they have remained isolated,
estranged from each other, until finally that awareness of separation is all that concerns them.

At this point the relationship between alienation and fancy becomes evident. With Siegmund, in his desire for communion with nature, but more obviously with Helena, fancy replaces frustrated desire and obscures the reasons why fulfillment might not have been forthcoming. And for Helena fancy also replaces self-contemplation, thus ensuring in some respects the continuation of alienation, hers and Siegmund’s. Even when, for one moment in the novel, she does experience self-doubt, what ensues becomes yet another example of retreat to fancy. That moment, which I discussed earlier but one worth recalling, occurs when Helena first becomes aware of the true state of their relationship, and of its inevitable end. Left, after Siegmund retreats to his own tortured rumination, "to suffer the sickening detachment which comes after moments of intense living" (99), that detachment allows her a glimmer of insight into her own use of fancy. Siegmund is not there to uplift her; Siegmund, the man walking before her, is therefore not the figure of her dreams she has previously created (30), the man who always radiates "joy into his surroundings, the Siegmund whose coming had always changed the whole weather of her soul ... Was this," she then asks herself, "the real Siegmund, and her own only a projection of her soul?" (100).

Whatever the answer might be, Helena is not capable of discovering, for she cannot withstand self-insight, cannot
bear to suffer the pangs of anxiety, doubt and dissatisfaction that will accompany such an experience. She begins to sob uncontrollably, and calls to Siegmund, then rejects him, and in doing so misses perhaps the most important opportunity of their affair, for he, kneeling before her, pleads: "Tell me what it is. At least tell me, Helena; tell me what it is" (101). Ignoring him, she cries until she "had sobbed and struggled the life animation back into herself" (101). By then she has restored her illusions; even Siegmund knows that, were he willing, she "would have drawn him back to her, and on her woman's breast have hidden him from Fate, and saved him from searching the unknown" (103): that is, from facing the reality of his own alienation. But Helena herself is part of that unknown, and by refusing to confront her own problems and to discuss them with him, she partly determines Siegmund's fate as well, for she leaves him no choice but to return home alone.

In this respect, The Trespasser is a tragedy, in the way that Lawrence defines the novels of Thomas Hardy as tragedies. I refer to the sense of fate which both Helena and Siegmund believe in, and accept. Although reacting differently--Siegmund succumbs to what he sees as the irrevocability of impending doom while Helena obscures its possible consequences with fancy so that, for example, the fated ending of their relationship she fears at one time (99) does not occur--the point is that the two characters
are personally negligent in a way that is directly related to their pessimism. Whether he recognized this in his own novel or not, in criticizing the tragedy he sees pervading Hardy's novels, Lawrence is clearly noticing human traits and elements of fiction to be avoided, to be corrected, to be suppressed or developed in his own writing. If, like Alistair Niven, we see in *The Trespasser* "the same sense of the crushing vastness of the universe, the same pathetic insignificance of human existence" as can be found in a Hardy novel, that is the last time, Mary Freeman has observed, such fatalism will appear. Having "followed his transcendental mood to its conclusion in death," Lawrence would not again "forsake either the joyful for the tragic or the concrete for the illusory. While he still didn’t know quite the form it would take, he did know that his solution must make life in its small details explicable and satisfying, and carry into the everyday the splendor, but not the tragedy, of the extraordinary."¹⁹

Comparing the decisions Paul makes, especially near the end of the novel, with those of Siegmund, we can see that this is true at least of *Sons and Lovers*. By the time of writing his third work, Lawrence definitely had changed, personally and artistically. It is my belief, however, and for this reason I describe *The Trespasser* as a transitional novel, that some of those changes were in part the result specifically of having written this work, for Lawrence clearly had recognized that the feelings of estrangement and
ambivalence existing within Helena and Siegmund were exacerbated by their failure to satisfactorily make contact with each other and with the urban environment they inhabit. And as if to emphasize the possible alternatives to the inevitable frustration and failure resulting from such alienation, in his own life, after the dissatisfaction of teaching and a number of affairs with other women, Lawrence was to experience a sense of exhilaration, of beginning at last to live, after he left Davidson Road School, and particularly after he met Frieda Weekley. The consequences, James Boulton has suggested, affected both his life and his work, for concurrent with a "discovery of selfhood, emotional security and satisfaction through his passionate commitment to Frieda was a striking development in his maturity and self-confidence and therefore in his creative achievement."\(^20\)

The two, personal experience and artistry, are closely related. If Lawrence and Siegmund had experienced the tragedy of realizing a personal dilemma without knowing how to solve it, now he, like Paul, would stride forward with confidence, aware of the extent to which relationships are vital to individual development, and knowing when relationships become obstacles to that development. Just as Sons and Lovers would have form, while The Trespasser, Lawrence explained to Frederick Atkinson, 11 February, 1911, consisted only of "gorgeous tableaux-vivants which have not any connection one with the other," so too would Paul Morel have
purpose and determination and a reason to live which somehow had eluded Siegmund.

Lawrence himself felt that he had matured artistically in other ways as well. While he admitted to Atkinson, 24 June, 1910, that *The Trespasser* was "horribly poetic," and that "I shall never do anything decent till I can grow up and cut my beastly long curls of poetry," *Sons and Lovers*, he reported to Sydney Pawling later that year (18 October), "will be a novel—not a florid prose poem, or a decorated idyll running to seed in realism; but a restrained, somewhat impersonal novel." Even when he was revising *The Trespasser*, he could exclaim to Edward Garnett, 3 January, 1912, that it was "heaps, heaps better. There was room for improvement, by Jove!—I was so young—almost pathetically young—two years ago." Although admitting to Garnett sixteen days later a lingering dissatisfaction with the work, he felt that it was not "retrograde from the *White Peacock*." Similarly, he told Arthur McLeod, 17 September, 1912, *Sons and Lovers* would be "better than the *White Peacock* or *The Trespasser*." As a consequence of creative and personal maturation, his third novel would certainly be artistically better, as would at least its immediate successors, *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*.

Of even greater significance to me, these novels would also be thematically and philosophically more complex, most discernibly in their provision of alternatives to the unnecessary tragedy of Siegmund and Helena. In them Lawrence
would insist upon the reconciliation of logic and intuition, the spirit and the flesh, within the individual and between individuals who, with insight and confidence, might then successfully challenge dehumanization and repression of identity from within the community rather than being either passive or outcast. Thus will Paul Morel walk "towards the faintly humming, glowing town, quickly" (SL, 511); thus will Ursula Brangwen see "in the rainbow the earth’s new architecture, the old, brittle corruption of houses and factories swept away, the world built up in a living fabric of Truth, fitting to the over-arching heaven" (R, 495); thus, later, will Gudrun and perhaps Ursula recognize the futility of attempted escape, and return from the ice and the sterility and the deathliness of the Alps to urban society for, as Gudrun realizes, "a new world is a development from this world, and ... to isolate oneself with one other person isn’t to find a new world at all, but only to secure oneself in one’s illusions" (WL, 492). Idealistic, perhaps, and incapable of achievement, but the attempt, for Lawrence as well as for his characters, was surely preferable to the fate which befell Herbert Macartney and Siegmund MacNair.
3: The Drift Towards Life: Sons and Lovers

But always, we are divided within ourselves.

D.H. Lawrence, "Study of Thomas Hardy"

This love so full

Of hate has hurt us so ...

D.H. Lawrence, "Winter Dawn"

Villa Igea, Villa di Gargnano,
(Brescia) Lago di Garda,
Italy.

19 November, 1912.

To Edward Garnett.

Dear Garnett,—

Your letter has just come. I hasten to tell you I sent the MS. of the Paul Morel novel to Duckworth, registered, yesterday. And I want to defend it, quick. I wrote it again, pruning it and shaping it and filling it in. I tell you it has got form—form: haven't I made it patiently, out of sweat as well as blood. It follows this idea: a woman of character and refinement goes into the lower class, and has no satisfaction in her own life. She has had a passion for her husband, so the children are born of passion, and have heaps of vitality. But as her sons grow up she selects them as lovers—first the eldest, then the second. These sons are urged into life by their reciprocal love of their
mother—urged on and on. But when they come to manhood, they can’t love, because their mother is the strongest power in their lives, and holds them.—It’s rather like Goethe and his mother and Frau von Stein and Christiana—. As soon as the young men come into contact with women, there’s a split. William gives his sex to a fribble, and his mother holds his soul. But the split kills him, because he doesn’t know where he is. The next son gets a woman who fights for his soul—fights his mother. The son loves the mother—all the sons hate and are jealous of the father. The battle goes on between the mother and the girl, with the son as object. The mother gradually proves stronger, because of the tie of blood. The son decides to leave his soul in his mother’s hands, and, like his elder brother, go for passion. He gets passion. Then the split begins to tell again. But, almost unconsciously, the mother realizes what is the matter, and begins to die. The son casts off his mistress, attends to his mother dying. He is left in the end naked of everything, with the drift towards death.

"It is a great tragedy, and I tell you I have written a great book. It’s the tragedy of thousands of young men in England—it may even be Bunny’s tragedy. I think it was Ruskin’s, and men like him.—Now tell me if I haven’t worked out my theme, like life, but always my theme. Read my novel—It’s a great novel. If you can’t see the development—which is slow like growth—I can ...

D.H. Lawrence.
It is clear, from reading Lawrence's summary of *Sons and Lovers*, that the alienation which permeates the novel was intended from the outset. And in that the material in this letter constitutes an outline as well—a sketch probably originating as a broad statement of intent and theme and now preserved as summary—the amplification of the original concept is also notable, particularly insofar as it intensifies Paul's role in this web of estrangement, and to some degree subjugates William's parallel dilemma, while shifting the emphasis in relationships from passion to a kind of impotency or frustrated passion. The more significant questions we must ask of the letter, and of the novel itself, however, are not ones involving concept or change of concept so much as conclusion. Does Paul "drift towards death"? Or does he find life beyond his mother? And if the latter, is this discovery plausible?

These questions can be answered most decisively, I think, if we agree to an interpretive position derived from the novel rather than from the furious rhetoric of theories based upon the Oedipal or the autobiographical which this work has traditionally inspired; a position which unites these polarized views of the novel; a position which assumes the following to be true: that *Sons and Lovers* is both autobiographical, in part, and psychological, in that it is an insightful analysis of relationships and the dependency of individual development upon social experience; that the
author, whose vision informs the creative work, is different from the man whose conscious and unconscious experiences provide the novel its genesis; and that inherent in this work, as a novel of experience, is the "development—which is slow like growth—" of Paul Morel, from alienation to awareness, of self, of others, and of his place as an adult within society.

These are the issues in *Sons and Lovers*, all of which derive from the need to understand the experience of relationships as being fundamental to both self and social awareness. The key is relationships; it is this notion which causes Paul to remain with his mother for so long, in spite of her tyranny, in spite of his slowly awakening consciousness, in spite of the ambiguous nature of their association. He remains because Mrs. Morel can more readily help him achieve maturation, and in doing so resolve the "split" between sexuality and spirituality, masculinity and femininity, which alienates him and makes his experiences seem at times artificial and insincere. This process of maturation is for Paul a conscious and determined effort, an attempt to give meaning to the mechanical or artificial; it is also a process in part socially mediated, especially in terms of the limitations placed upon the love between a mother and a son. It becomes a conscious process almost as soon as Paul discovers about himself that which is different from his mother and the other beings in his world, and therefore unique, but the consciousness is constantly being
retarded, frustrated in its aims, by Mrs. Morel’s often ambivalent expectations, and by Miriam’s and Clara’s nearsighted but nevertheless sometimes attractive desires.

This is the story, then, and the substance of Sons and Lovers. Although other characters are more significant than may at first be apparent, it is mainly the story of Paul Morel, progressing from alienation to at least a partial resolution of such feelings through maturation and self-awareness. It is a process also involving a series of stages and plateaus, in that just as there are times when Paul discovers something about himself and develops, there are times when he is stymied in his attempts to resolve external tension, as when he tries to sever relations with Miriam and then with Clara. These are not temporally-fixed plateaus, of course; they are as much an integral part of Paul’s slowly increasing awareness as they are decisions to be made. The point is that Paul’s development, a move towards synthesis, is fraught with obstacles such that success is not necessarily inevitable.

That these obstacles are difficult to overcome is indicative, I think, of Paul’s nagging confusion concerning what an individual must accomplish to become a mature and integrated member of society. He questions whether he wants to be a professional artist, for example, even as he works his way up the Jordan company ladder, conforming to his mother’s plans for him to "climb into the middle class"
(314), while at the same time informing several people of his desire to go abroad, leaving chaos and confusion behind. The demarcation between fantasy (unachievable goals) and reality is not always clear to Paul, for it is at times obscured by his relationship with his mother. He will never seriously consider going abroad until after she dies, and in the meantime he will paint and work only to please her, for it is she who possesses the materialistic goals and the social ambition.

Accepting Mrs. Morel's standards and her desires almost without question, Paul unwittingly conspires in the creation of the double bind which becomes his personal dilemma. He cannot mature without severing some part of the link with his mother, nor can he intensify the relationship, for there is only the sexual which can be intensified. Yet he resists separation; even as a man of twenty-three he still acknowledges her as "the strongest tie in his life ... nobody else mattered" (272-73), and when he feels that she is "slipping away from him ... he wanted to get hold of her, to fasten her, almost to chain her" (294). He clings like a desperate child, blindly, emotionally, denying his adulthood yet realizing that he is denying a vital part of his identity. The frustration wells: "Again his heart was crushed in a hot grip. He wanted to cry, he wanted to smash things in a fury ... his eyes furious ... mad with his impotence" (295-96).
Paul's dilemma actually begins even before his birth, with Mrs. Morel's frustrated and incomplete adolescence, her sense of dependency upon men whom she hates, and her unfulfilled womanhood. She has always felt estranged; she hated her father for their poverty and his harsh treatment of her mother; she lost what she feels was her only chance for happiness when her affair with John Fields ended abruptly; and nine months after her marriage to Walter Morel that relationship has also ended: "Now she ceased to fret for his love: he was an outsider to her" (25). Suffering the effects of this personal and social estrangement, she becomes embittered and cynical but retains her passion and her vitality. All of this she will bequeath to Paul. When she is several months pregnant with her third child, Morel locks her out of the house. As she stands beneath the moon "high and magnificent in the August night," she is "seared with passion," her soul inflamed. "She walked down the garden path, trembling in every limb, while the child boiled within her. For a while she could not control her consciousness; mechanically she went over the last scene, then over it again, certain phrases, certain moments coming each time like a brand red-hot down on her soul; and each time she enacted again the past hour, each time the brand came down at the same points, till the mark was burnt in, and the pain burnt out, and at last she came to herself" (34). Mrs. Morel, it is clear, is as capable of anger, and of the same
intensity, as her husband, and being as conscious as she is
of the unborn child, she can almost imagine her passion and
determination being passed through the placenta to the
impressionable fetus. Certainly after Paul is born, in a
moment of insight during which "she had the peace and
strength to see herself" (50), Mrs. Morel wonders if this
could happen, and she is not so sure it is a positive thing.
Knowing that while she requires this kind of strength to
battle her husband, if she can shield her children, they
need not succumb to such unsophisticated behaviour. "And at
that moment she felt, in some far inner place of her soul,
that she and her husband were guilty.

"The baby was looking up at her. It had blue eyes like
her own, but its look was heavy, steady, as if it had real-
ized something that had stunned some point of its soul ...
Its deep blue eyes, always looking up at her unblinking,
seemed to draw her innermost thoughts out of her. She no
longer loved her husband; she had not wanted this child to
come, and there it lay in her arms and pulled at her heart.
She felt as if the navel string that had connected its frail
little body with hers had not been broken. A wave of hot
love went over her to the infant. She held it close to her
face and breast. With all her force, with all her soul she
would make up to it for having brought it into the world
unloved. She would love it all the more now it was here;
carry it in her love. Its clear, knowing eyes gave her pain
and fear. Did it know all about her? When it lay under her heart, had it been listening then? Was there a reproach in the look? She felt the marrow melt in her bones, with fear and pain" (50-51). Her guilt, and the fact that he was "rather a delicate boy, subject to bronchitis .. whereas the others were all quite strong" (84), become additional reasons for Mrs. Morel's special attentiveness towards Paul and the genesis of his own alienation.

Almost from the beginning, when the honeymoon ends, as it were, Gertrude Morel has felt herself a foreigner in the neighbourhood. "A rather small woman, of delicate mould but resolute bearing, she shrank a little from ... contact with the Bottoms women" (9), who were, in turn, "rather foreign to her" (19). She dislikes the social life and traditions of Bestwood--the crowds, the dancing and drinking, the markets, even the annual fair--and is mostly alone as a result, "but she was used to it" (12), or so she tries to convince herself. At home, the poverty and drudgery of domesticity provides no alternative to the unfamiliar outside world. Even her children, who will later offer support and vitality, are as youngsters further sources of despair and hardship. Annie whines underfoot (9), William at age seven is already "half-shouting" with "indignation" (9) and reproach when she resists his attempts at autonomy, and she feels "wretched with the coming child ... She did not want it ... The world seemed a dreary place, where nothing else would happen to her .. nothing but this dreary endurance ..
she was sick of it, the struggle with poverty and ugliness and meanness ... looking ahead, the prospect of her life made her feel as if she were buried alive" (12). Finally, she disapproves of her husband's pleasures and what she sees as his deception: when he has the smell of alcohol on his breath, for example, he is "drunk," as if there were no degree of inebriation. Since the discovery of his original falsehoods concerning the houses he implied that he owned, the unpaid furniture, the nonexistent bank account--the efforts of a miner to impress a "lady"--she can never trust him.

This animosity derives largely from the fact that Gertrude Coppard and Walter Morel had little in common except romantic attraction to each other when they met: she was "that thing of mystery and fascination, a lady" (17); he was a miner who "risked his life daily, and with gaiety" (19), a noble man whose "sensuous flame of life, that flowed off his flesh like the flame from a candle, not baffled and gripped into incandescence by thought and spirit as her life was, seemed to her something wonderful, beyond her" (18). And then she learns of the deception, and more importantly, of the true nature of her husband, and "her proud, honourable soul ... crystallized out hard as rock" (22); she "felt lonely with him now ... miles away from her own people ... and his presence only made it more intense" (13). In a matter almost of moments, the romanticism on her side is
crushed.

For Morel, too, however, the marriage does not proceed well. His wife remains to him a foreign woman; he heeds her attempts, for example, at introducing intellectualism into their conversation, "but without understanding" (20) and soon becomes restless, eventually turning from both his teetotalism and the estrangement of the home in favour of the camaraderie and intimacy of the public house. He is a social person whose very identity is reinforced by the carefree attitude, the understanding and respect which he finds among his peers, while she is "proud ... and rather bitter," a person who "preferred theology in reading" (18) and in conversation liked "most of all ... an argument on religion or philosophy or politics with some educated man" (17). "She was a puritan, like her father, high-minded, and ... stern" (18).

They might conceivably have agreed upon a solution to their marital strife, choosing to lead separate social lives according to their interests, were it not for Mrs. Morel's puritanical high-mindedness and her husband's obstinacy. When she turns in her affections from Morel to William, who was born "just when her own bitterness of disillusion was hardest to bear," the father, becoming jealous, begins "knowingly or unknowingly, grossly to offend her where he would not have done" (23-24), while she, in response, ridicules him even more intensely for his unsophisticated manner, his dialect, and his drinking. "She fought to make
him undertake his own responsibilities, to make him fulfil his obligations" (23), judging him by standards foreign to his experience. She "strove to make him moral, religious. She tried to force him to face things. He could not endure it," nor could he defend himself articulately; "it drove him out of his mind" (23). And so a cycle of alienation is described. Her scathing satire infuriates him; his temper and increased drinking infuriates her; the rage escalates on both sides. When Morel crops William's hair, because to a miner long curls on a boy imply wanting "'ter make a wench on 'im,'" her response indicates the extent of her estrangement. "'I could kill you, I could!'" she shouts, choking "with rage, her fists uplifted," and he, the burly, "bullying" husband, was frightened, "bending his head to shield his eyes from hers" (24). "Morel was subdued. He crept about wretchedly, and his meals were a misery that day. She spoke to him civilly, and never alluded to what he had done. But he felt something final had happened" (25), which, for Mrs. Morel, is true. From now on, although she will continue to torture him, he is "an outsider to her. This made life much more bearable" (25).

At this point Lawrence is clearly sympathetic towards Morel, and critical of his wife, who "could not be content with the little he might be; she would have him the much that he ought to be. So, in seeking to make him nobler than he could be, she destroyed him. She injured and hurt and
scarred herself, but she lost none of her worth. She also had the children" (25-26). The destruction is a slow process, however, and the marriage, for some considerable time, has its more pleasant moments. When Mrs. Morel is relaxed, not chastising her husband, and he is allowed his good humour, she is both cheered and pacified. When he whistles, for example—hymns, mostly, which in themselves contribute to her mood—as he tinkers about the house in the early morning, it "always gave her a sense of warmth and peace to hear him thus ... happy in his man's fashion" (28). What she recognizes, when she is not sacrificing her husband to her own alienation, is that Morel, while he may be short-tempered and often inebriated, is not without generosity, repentance and love for his wife. When William is born, he was good to her, "good as gold" (23), and he feels wretched when he discovers to his surprise that his cropping of William's hair has incensed her. When he locks her out of the house in a fit of temper, he later feels "abashed and ashamed" (38), his sympathy for her difficulties in the last days of pregnancy "quickened by penitence" (38). And even though he regains some of his "old bullying indifference," we wonder from whom that description is derived: Lawrence or Mrs. Morel. Certainly it is not Morel himself who expresses such feelings; he is in fact in the early stages of changing into the pitiful, humble, prematurely aged man he will be by the end of the novel. Even before Paul is born, "there was a slight shrinking, a diminishing in his assurance. Physi-
cally even, he shrank, and his fine full presence waned ... so that, as he sank from his erect, assertive bearing, his physique seemed to contract along with his pride and moral strength" (38).

For all of his attempts to express, in his own reticent way, his love for them, this disintegration is ironically expedited by his own children. Although part of their disfavour comes from their mother, who cannot, nor wishes to, disguise her feelings towards her husband, another significant reason is that to the children Mr. Morel is an outsider, a stranger. In other words, they are alienated from him, and he from them, by the fact of his absence, and of his mannerisms and behaviour which, to children who have been instilled with the bourgeois values of their mother, are as foreign and as distasteful as they are to Mrs. Morel. The children do not hate their father, therefore, so much as they ignore him, resenting his intrusion into their relatively quiet homelife. Although fairly implausible, if it had been Mrs. Morel who worked, and Walter who tended the children, one could imagine them accepting and admiring his inherent joviality, his carefree, easy manner to an even greater extent than they do now, and perceiving their mother as the stranger. The difference, I think, and this has more to do with Mrs. Morel's character than the faults of her husband, would be that the children's feelings towards their mother, in this theoretical reversal of roles, would be more
sympathetic than they are now towards their father. He is a stranger, but he has perceivable good qualities, which Mrs. Morel does much to dismiss.

The two adults elicit the worst of behaviour in each other, neither of them attempting to understand the other, neither of them inclined to explain his or her own feelings. A case in point: on the evening that Morel throws a drawer which strikes his wife on the forehead, he arrives too drunk, tired and hungry to perceive or inquire about her fatigue, while she characteristically intensifies his moodiness with her haughty aloofness, criticism and open hatred of his drunkenness. He then throws the drawer instinctively, after it hits his shin, not intending to strike her, and yet when he rushes to assist her, she rejects him. Sickened with "feebleness and hopelessness of spirit" (54), by her resistance and his own mortification, he suffers "like a skulking dog ... his inner consciousness inflicting on him the punishment which ate into his spirit like rust, and which he could only alleviate by drinking" (55). Although Mrs. Morel offers to the children a fabricated explanation of her wound, it is not convincing; they, as a result, feel certain that their father has beaten Mrs. Morel, and by not telling them the truth she supports that conviction. She also awaits an apology from Morel, knowing, however, that the reticent, proud and sensitive miner finds that impossible to give; and so the misery felt by everyone is allowed to continue. Mrs. Morel feigns indifference, the children
"breathed the air that was poisoned, and ... felt weary" (56), and Morel, "his winching sensitiveness having hardened again," becomes self-indulgent, no longer caring "about his alienation" (56).

Morel is alienated from his wife and children, and at work, where his altercations with the pit boss have resulted in his being given poorer and poorer coal seams to mine. His only solace is the alcohol and companionship of the public house. Mrs. Morel, alienated from her husband, and from her bourgeois, intellectual background, feels that her life has been reduced to endless, continuous housework and child-caring, and an ignominious dependency upon a man she detests. Her only solace is the occasional visit by the minister, and the proof through verbal abuse of her superiority over her husband. Both live lives made wearisome by fatigue, poverty and the hopelessness of a certain future without improvement, unless the hostility of alienation should change to resigned indifference. As the children mature, however, Mrs. Morel finds new life, support and challenge. To have them on her side in the marital battle, and to imbue them with her values, will be further evidence of her superiority, and a source of psychological support that will endow her once again with a sense of self-worth. As this begins to happen, Morel's defeat becomes inevitable.

Mrs. Morel's strongest ally, although she does not immediately recognize this, is Paul, for he, delicate and
sensitive, cannot abide his father's rough ways, just as Morel cannot accept his second son's "unmanly" penchant for habitual crying and fits of depression. Before Paul, however, Mrs. Morel turns her attention to the intellectually capable William. With him she is proud and ambitious. He will not work in the mines (another blow to Morel), but in business. By the age of sixteen he is adept at shorthand and book-keeping, working in an office and teaching at night school. William, however, has even higher ambitions than his mother, an independence that disconcerts her, and a penchant for bourgeois social life--dancing and playing billiards with the sons of doctors and bank managers--that horrifies the puritanical woman. William becomes worldly in a way that even his father never knew. Then the greatest of Mrs. Morel's fears is realized: he begins dating young women, and seeking even greater autonomy. He moves to Nottingham, then London.

Having turned from her husband to her eldest son, Mrs. Morel cannot hold him. Having perceived him as an ally, she discovers as well that her son's dislike of his father is derived from a distaste for dependence of any kind. When he is old enough, and taller than Morel, he wants to fight him, physically, but with little more aggression than that with which he resists his mother's desire to cling to him. He is too independent and, ironically, too much like his father. Also, her feelings are different at this point; she is looking for a surrogate parent and husband more than a
lover. William was to succeed where Mrs. Morel's bankrupt grandfather, her poverty-stricken father and now Walter had failed. He was to provide the income which the three men before him had been too inept to provide; he was to help her raise the children. But in that respect he too is a failure, for the little he makes is spent on Lily.

With Morel dismissed and William a disappointment, it is not surprising that Mrs. Morel gives all her attention and love to the son for whom she already feels something special. And unlike her previous experiences, this time the object of her attention responds openly and wholeheartedly, vying for affection. Paul, more sensitive and imaginative, and more devious than his older brother, hates Morel for different reasons: for his bullying, his temper, his loudness, and perhaps too, for his weakness. Certainly Paul hates weakness, in himself, in other people, even in inanimate objects. He burns Annie's doll, for example, "because he had broken it" (76); that is, because with almost no effort he had been capable of breaking it. Similarly, it must seem to him that Morel is as easily broken, as easily defeated by his sharp-tongued wife, by his physically incapacitating, futureless, hopeless life. The drinking and the violent, noisy temper would then be seen as signs of weakness to Paul, who is too young to understand and appreciate the nature and complexity of his father's inescapable alienation. In the same way that he "rejoiced in silence
... and wicked satisfaction" (75-76) at the destruction by fire of Missis Arabella, he rejoices in the possibility of his father's destruction. When William challenges Morel, Paul "watched his father. Another word, and the men would have begun to fight. Paul hoped they would ... [He] hated his father. As a boy he had a fervent private religion ... 'Lord let my father die,' he prayed very often. 'Let him ... be killed at pit,' he prayed when, after tea, the father did not come home from work" (77, 79).

The hatred at this point is not derived from an excessive love for his mother; in fact, like William, Paul, who "almost hated his mother for suffering"—for being weak, therefore, like his father—chastises her: "'What do you bother yourself for?'" he asks her (80), not realizing that until she has someone else to depend upon as "breadwinner," she must suffer. Nor is this hatred continual; when Morel feels content, attending to some domestic chore, singing while he works, Paul is with his siblings as they "watched with joy," sometimes uniting "with him in the work" (82), and appreciating his praise when the task is complete.

It is Paul's delicacy, then, and his dependency upon Mrs. Morel when he is ill, that is as much responsible for her protectiveness and the development of their relationship as the son's dislike of Morel, which in itself is derived more from misunderstanding than abhorrence. When Paul is ill, for example, "the father ... always very gentle if anyone were ill ... would come into the sickroom. But he
disturbed the atmosphere for the boy." Morel "felt his son did not want him" (86), and he is right, of course, for somehow his son cannot understand the nature of his father's tenderness. Compared to Mrs. Morel, he is inarticulate, ill at ease, and seems insensitive, even indifferent. For all his sensitivity, Paul simply misinterprets Morel's feelings, and in fact, Morel himself. He cannot appreciate the reasons for the man's behaviour, so, like his mother, assumes the worst. To Paul, Morel is rough and uneducated and not subtle enough to appreciate his son's temperament, while Mrs. Morel, on the other hand, does understand something of his "ridiculous hypersensitiveness," and protects him from the "common" or uncultured outside world which Morel represents, a world incapable, in their eyes, of appreciating the aesthetics of everyday life. Paul may like Morel for his love of music, wildlife, and his manual dexterity, but those traits are negated by his inability to go beyond, to understand painting and poetry, lace and fine china. That negation is graphically clear when Paul informs his father of William's death: "Morel walked on a few strides, then leaned up against a truck side, his hand over his eyes ... Paul stood looking round, waiting ...[He] saw everything, except his father leaning against the truck as if he were tired" (171).

While William, then, soon becomes an exotic stranger to the Morel family and Arthur, who flies "into rages over
nothing," hates school and seems "unbearably raw and irritable ... quick, careless, impulsive ... a good deal like his father" (142). Paul, almost by osmosis, becomes in everything but his health a "shadow" of his mother. Walter, as he ages, falls "into slow ruin," getting "mean and rather despicable" (142). His only means of establishing himself in the household is to irritate the family, taking "a kind of satisfaction in disgusting them, and driving them nearly mad ... just to assert his independence" (143). It is a losing battle, however, for it now extends to his wife's allies: the children who increasingly despise their father as they absorb their mother's notion of sophistication and her own negation of her husband. Mrs. Morel, on the other hand, prospers mentally as her third child increasingly appreciates and depends upon her. To capitalize on that support, security and hope, she indulges Paul, while at the same time making sure that he, and her other children, feel that same way about their father as she does.

When Morel is hospitalized, the family, and especially his wife, enters a new phase. Paul announces "'I'm the man in the house now'" (88), a position Mrs. Morel and her other children accept gratefully, as they perceive "how perfectly peaceful the home could be" (88) without the father. This is more than adolescent role-playing on Paul's part, however. The son loves "to sleep with his mother," a sleep which is "most perfect" because it is "shared with a beloved" (87), and wants to take care of her. Sometimes, as
he watches her unobserved, "her blue eyes so young, so quick and warm, made his heart contract with love. When she was quiet, so, she looked brave and rich with life, but as if she had been done out of her rights. It hurt the boy keenly, this feeling about her that she had never had her life's fulfilment: and his own incapability to make up to her hurt him with a sense of impotence, yet made him patiently dogged inside" (85). "His ambition, as far as this world's gear went, was 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" (113). This resolution, made at fourteen, is more than the romantic goal of an adolescent, although it is that also. Ten years later, Paul tells his mother that "'I shall never meet the right woman while you live'" (427), and a few days later, when Clara asks him what he would like to do with his life, he replies, "'Go somewhere in a pretty house near London with my mother'" (429).

For Mrs. Morel the affair is as intense. She accepts flowers from Paul as a woman "accepting a love-token" (88); sometimes he "roused her, making her sleeping soul lift up its head a moment, surprised" (94); and when they are together alone one day, she was "gay, like a sweetheart" (116), while he "was sensible all the time of having her opposite him. Suddenly their eyes met, and she smiled to
him—a rare, intimate smile, beautiful with brightness and love" (117). She tries at first to give Paul only love, keeping her anxiety from him, but he becomes more than a son and a lover. Soon she is relying upon him as a responsible partner, a husband-figure, "and he took it in as best he could, by sharing her trouble to lighten it. And in the end she shared almost everything with him without knowing" (111). "When she fretted he understood, and could have no peace. His soul seemed always attentive to her" (75). In spite of what he becomes, particularly in terms of his relationship with Miriam, we are not surprised that at this point "he seemed old for his years," and that "as he grew older he became stronger" (75).

The mother and son engage in acts of domestic conviviality during which Paul proudly bakes the bread for the family, Mrs. Morel shares with him the delights of her market purchases, or they knit together by the fire. "Everything he did was for her. She waited for him coming home in the evening, and then she unburdened herself of all she had pondered, or of all that had occurred to her during the day. He sat and listened with his earnestness. The two shared lives" (144). When Paul contracts pneumonia, after William's death, the two become even more inextricably united. For Mrs. Morel, duty and loyalty are now perfectly clear: she would nurture "the living, not the dead," and we understand that to mean her one living relationship. Morel, and with him any kind of marital or social responsibility,
no longer exists even nominally, while Paul, for neither the first nor the last time, literally depends upon her for life. "'I s'll die, mother!'" he cries in his delirium, but "she lifted him up, crying in a small voice: 'Oh, my son--my son!' That brought him to. He realized her. His whole will rose up and arrested him." Lying in bed with her, "he put his head on her breast, and took ease of her for love ... The two knitted together in perfect harmony. Mrs. Morel's life now rooted itself" solely in her son. "'For some things,' said an aunt, 'it was a good thing Paul was ill that Christmas. I believe it saved his mother'" (175-76).

When Paul begins his relationship with Miriam, his life becomes almost unbearably complicated, because of his attachment to his mother, and because Miriam too is "her mother’s daughter." She has had mysticism instilled in her in the same way Paul has been conditioned by sensuality. While Mrs. Morel sleeps with him and fondles him, Mrs. Leivers teaches her daughter the love of Christ, with the same passion. As a result, Miriam is a sexually frustrated romantic and mystic, living in a fantasy world of Walter Scott heroines "being loved by men with helmets or with plumes in their caps," while she "was something of a princess turned into a swine-girl in her own imagination," sustained by the "one great figure" of Christ and God "which she loved tremulously and passionately" (177).
Like Mrs. Morel, on the other hand, Miriam considers herself middle-class, sophisticated, learned and devout; "she went to church reverently, with bowed head, and quivered in anguish from the vulgarity of the other choir girls, and from the common-sounding voice of the curate; she fought with her brothers, whom she considered brutal louts; and she held not her father in too high esteem because he did not carry any mystical ideals cherished in his heart" (178). Also like Mrs. Morel, Miriam wants love to be secure, and that is best attained if her lover is in some way her inferior, and therefore dependent upon her. For this reason, she feels she could be attracted to Paul, because she "would be stronger than he ... If she could be mistress of him in his weakness, take care of him, if he could depend on her, as it were, have him in her arms, how she could love him!" (178). Her role as "mistress" would be part muse, part ministering angel, part martyr for whom Paul, her intellectual equal, would provide culture, enjoyment, challenge, shared ambition, and no physical threat.

For Miriam, then, as for Paul, the sexuality of adolescence is repressed, and a kind of surrogate love allowed to surface in its place. Miriam substitutes metaphysics and maternalism, although at times her sexuality is revealed, as when she fondles flowers, and stifles her younger brother with embraces. She rationalizes her love for Paul by assuring herself that he needs caring for, because she cannot admit her sexuality. She also wants to master him, for
reasons similar to those which cause her to desire the rights and independence of manhood. In other words, the relationship, on both sides, is confused by a search for identity which denies any kind of reciprocality. The two lovers are literally looking for a partner who does not exist in the other person, whom they then try to mold into the idealized visions they seek. Paul can find women with whom he can relate intellectually or sexually, but yearns for a woman who encompasses both. Miriam, on the other hand, seems torn between the desire for ethereal sex—the desire to have the profound enjoyment of sex, but without the crudity of intimate touch, the bestiality of actual physical intercourse—and sensuous spirituality—the desire to be titillated by ethereality in a way that is sensuous, even physical, rather than philosophical and abstract. For her, sexuality is seen only in terms of the sacrificial role of woman in society; that is, as duty rather than fulfillment of personal desire. What she thinks she desires in her relations with Paul is "a communion together ... something holy" (197).

Paul is more confused and alienated by this ambiguity of expectations than Miriam. He cannot love her because he cannot identify the nature of their love, and thus cannot know her except as a potential sexual object. His identity crisis, as a result, is intensified, as is his repression of sexuality. Ironically, this clouds his perception of Miriam
at a time when she is beginning to become conscious of her own sexuality. At one point, when she is crushing her brother, "almost as if she were in a trance, and swaying also as if she were swooned in an ecstasy of love ... her intensity, which would leave no emotion on a normal plane, irritated the youth [Paul] into a frenzy. And this fearful, naked contact of her on small occasions shocked him. He was used to his mother's reserve. On such occasions he was thankful in his heart and soul that he had his mother, so sane and wholesome" (190).

We see why Paul will always love his mother more. She is "logical"; that is, her passion is already perceived as containing the intellectual component that constitutes a synthesis of the physical and the mental, which he will seek more intensely and consciously as he matures. Because Miriam does not understand, nor have the ability to control her own unrequited passion, it becomes for Paul a force which he fears, a force which he knows has the potential to completely overwhelm his own burgeoning identity. This is not synthesis; it is two warring components--the metaphysical and the sexual--both of which are too repressed ever to meld. Paul begins to hate Miriam, in that he hates what he cannot understand, yet he is drawn to her, ambivalently detached by her abstractions and repressed sexuality yet attracted by her intense eroticism, a manifestation of her slowly awakening sexual consciousness. Miriam, meanwhile, intensifies that ambivalence by attempting to stifle
her sexuality. "Full of twisted feeling, she was afraid she did want him. She stood self-convicted. Then came an agony of new shame. She shrank within herself in a coil of torture. Did she want Paul Morel, and did he know she wanted him? What a subtle infamy upon her! She felt as if her whole soul coiled into knots of shame" at the realization that "there was a serpent in her Eden" (212).

Miriam is almost as determined as Paul, therefore, to keep their relationship abstract, and he of course agrees. As a result they both attempt to stifle what they increasingly cannot deny, what was becoming, we are told, "all thought and weary struggle into consciousness" (213). At times, in fact, Paul is the stronger in denying their feelings; caught between his mother's reserved, mature sensuality and Miriam's ill-concealed lust, he is the most confused, and thus the one with most to gain by continued repression. "Sometimes, as they were walking together, she slipped her arm timidly into his. But he always resented it, and she knew it. It caused a violent conflict in him. With Miriam he was always on a high plane of abstraction, when his natural fire of love was transmitted into the fine stream of thought. She would have it so ... And in this passion for understanding her soul lay close to his; she had him all to herself. But he must be made abstract first.

"Then, if she put her arm in his, it caused him almost torture. His consciousness seemed to split. The place
where she was touching him ran hot with friction. He was one internecine battle, and he became cruel to her because of it" (214). In other words, Miriam at times infuriates Paul by wanting and at the same time denying sexuality, and yet he in turn, becoming conscious of this as a factor in his own partially realized dilemma, is just as cruel and insensitive at times, mostly because he feels that he is being victimized by her. Although he does not yet understand how, and certainly not why, he can neither confront Miriam nor, because of his ungratified but increasingly powerful desire, can he leave her. This leads to the ambivalence which follows.

In the captivating scene near the end of Chapter VII, "Lad-and-Girl Love," during which the sudden appearance of the full moon shocks Paul into a relaxation of his self-control, Miriam becomes for the first time "half aware of his passion," in spite of the fact that she still attempts to translate these feelings into "some religious state in him" (220). At this point Paul, too, although "he did not know he wanted to crush her onto his breast to ease the pain there" (221), is beginning to realize the exact nature of his desire. "The fact that he might want her as a man wants a woman had in him been suppressed into a shame" (221) clearly indicates this awareness, for otherwise the fact could not be suppressed. Certainly he is conscious of wanting to kiss her, and yet he cannot. "He did not know himself what was the matter" (220), but the reasons, it is
suggested, are that he "was afraid of her," and that her "purity" stands between them, preventing "even their first love-kiss. It was as if she could scarcely stand the shock of physical love, even a passionate kiss, and then he was too shrinking and sensitive to give it" (221).

As a result of this frustration, Paul "hated her, for she seemed in some way to make him despise himself," and, too, "because, somehow, she spoilt his ease and naturalness. And he writhed himself with a feeling of humiliation" (221). It is significant that to dispel this humiliation and gloom, Paul "loved to think of his mother," who also notices Paul's discomfort. The two of them share, in other words, a common frustration, in that it is derived from attitudes towards the same woman. Mrs. Morel also blames Miriam, although for different reasons, one of which is jealousy. Having earlier convinced herself that Paul is being "drawn away by this girl" who, she believes, "'is one of those who will want to suck a man's soul out till he had none of his own left'" (199), now, as she observes Paul's increasing despair, "Mrs. Morel hated her for making her son like this. She watched Paul growing irritable, priggish, and melancholic. For this she put the blame on Miriam" (221).

Shortly after the scene beneath the full moon Paul finally does confront Miriam with his frustration, but this time it is he who is comparatively more repressed and ignorant. In attempting to realize what the problem has
been, he has not taken into account Miriam’s descent from the abstract. "I’m so damned spiritual with you always!" he says, and she replies, rather suggestively, I think: "Then why don’t you be otherwise?" But he ignores her words, denying, therefore, what she is suggesting, and says again: "You make me so spiritual ... And I don’t want to be spiritual." This time Miriam’s response is even more suggestive. "She took her finger from her mouth with a little pop, and looked up at him almost challenging. But still her soul was naked in her great dark eyes, and there was the same yearning appeal upon her. If he could have kissed her in abstract purity he would have done so. But he could not kiss her thus--and she seemed to leave no other way." He fails to realize, in other words, that "she yearned to him" (232) in a way that is becoming more obviously sexual. He still thinks she is rejecting him physically--"You don’t want to love," he tells her, "your eternal and abnormal craving is to be loved. You aren’t positive, you’re negative. You absorb, absorb, as if you must fill yourself up with love, because you’ve got a shortage somewhere" (268)--but perhaps as well as fear of absorption, that is a fear of his disapproving mother standing over him, or between him and Miriam. At any rate, "he was mad to comfort her and kiss her. But then he dared not--or could not" (233).²

The affair becomes more confused. The two cannot relate physically, because they do not fully understand themselves nor each other except on an intellectual plane.
"She loved him absorbedly. She wanted to run her hands down his sides. She always wanted to embrace him," but only "so long as he did not want her." This angers and bewilders Paul. "She did not seem to realize him in all this," he speculates. "He might have been an object. She never realized the male he was" (233). He also does not realize the female she is; it will take Clara to point that out to him. Neither of them—although it is Paul now more than Miriam—is able to define his or her own desires clearly: Miriam, because she resolutely strives also to maintain her abstractions; and Paul, because he cannot choose between her and his mother. "Why," he cries in anguish, "was he torn so, almost bewildered, and unable to move? Why did his mother sit at home and suffer? He knew she suffered badly. But why should she? And why did he hate Miriam, and feel so cruel towards her, at the thought of his mother? If Miriam caused his mother suffering, then he hated her—and he easily hated her. Why did she make him feel as if he were uncertain of himself, insecure, an indefinite thing, as if he had not sufficient sheathing to prevent the night and the space breaking into him? How he hated her! And then, what a rush of tenderness and humility" (238).

This confusion and insecurity associated with Paul’s feelings for Miriam are derived from his uncertainty as to what she wants from him, and he from her, and from a lack of understanding and communication between the two, but at
least as consequential, it is also a problem of divided loyalty. Paul wants Mrs. Morel to bless their relationship so as to simplify any decision he might arrive at with the younger woman. Instead, when he asks his mother why she does not like Miriam, she replies "'I've tried and tried, but I can't--I can't!' And he felt hopeless and dreary between the two" (238). And when he turns from the ambiguity of his affair with Miriam to what has been in his youth a straightforward and secure life with a woman he knows and with whom he has experienced a reciprocal sympathy and understanding, now even that is indefinite, complicated, clouded by frustration and despair on both sides. Not knowing exactly what he wants for himself, or with these women, he turns alternately to each of them for clarity, but neither of them really knows what he wants either, only something of what they want, and what they feel would be best for him, and for their respective relationships with him. Paul then has to guess, especially with Miriam, and yet his guesswork, too, is coloured by ambivalence. "She seemed to want him, and he resisted. He resisted all the time. He wanted now to give her passion and tenderness, and he could not. He felt that she wanted the soul out of his body, and not him. All his strength and energy she drew into herself through some channel which united them" (239).

As that conviction develops, Paul eventually decides that he cannot marry Miriam, even though in some respects it might be his duty. But in the passage following we begin to
see other reasons for this reluctance, related again to his feelings for Mrs. Morel, and to the fact that there is a point beyond which he feels himself incapable of proceeding in his desire to give Miriam "passion and tenderness."

What, he asks, "was his reluctance? He told himself it was only a sort of overstrong virginity in her and him which neither could break through. He might have married her; but his circumstances at home made it difficult, and, moreover, he did not want to marry her. Marriage was for life" (339-40), and even though earlier he has been critical of Miriam for not wanting "to meet him, so that there were two of them, man and woman together" (239), now, he feels, "because they had become close companions, he and she, he did not see that it should inevitably follow they should be man and wife. He did not feel that he wanted marriage with Miriam. He wished he did. He would have given his head to have felt a joyous desire to marry her and have her. Then why couldn't he bring it off? There was some obstacle; and what was the obstacle? It lay in the physical bondage. He shrank from the physical contact. But why? ... Why, when she put her arm in his, timidly, as they walked did he feel he would burst forth in brutality and recoil? He owed himself to her; he wanted to belong to her. Perhaps the recoil and the shrinking from her was love in its first fierce modesty. He had no aversion for her. No, it was the opposite; it was a strong desire battling with a still
stronger shyness and virginity. It seemed as if virginity was a positive force, which fought and won in both of them" (340).

It is not necessarily, however, a force in both of them; in a previous conversation when Paul, tired of talking, complains: "'If only you could want me, and not want what I can reel off for you!'" (239), Miriam responds "bitterly--'I! Why, when would you let me take you?''' (240). Nor would virginity alone, or even a sense of morality which might prevent premarital sexuality (his only alternative, since he is rejecting marriage), appear to be the problem, because Paul has also mentioned physical bondage, as if fearing a loss of autonomy should he consummate his affair with Miriam. If that is the case he would wish to avoid physical contact as being a prelude to what could also be perceived, by a man whose sense of self is becoming closely related to independence, as a threat to his identity. Already we have seen Paul feeling, in Miriam's presence, "insecure, an indefinite thing," and while at that time he feared the possibility of her taking his soul, in sexual terms, although he does not admit it, he may fear as well the likelihood of losing a sense of separateness necessary for the retention of physical autonomy. He is reluctant to commit himself, then, until he can be sure of Miriam, particularly in terms of her motives for wanting marriage, and until Mrs. Morel becomes more amenable. Lack-
decisions which might lead to failure, and especially here, for a failed marriage and an alienated mother would be intolerable, he will not consider matrimony while doubt remains. If, he assures himself, he and Miriam "could get things right, they would marry; but he would not marry unless he could feel strong in the joy of it--never. He could not have faced his mother" (340).

Paul describes his reluctance as modesty as well as sensitivity towards Miriam and in this he looks for assurance to what he sees amongst his peers as a similar attitude towards women. "A good many of the nicest men he knew were like himself, bound in by their own virginity, which they could not break out of. They were so sensitive to their women that they would go without them for ever rather than do them a hurt, an injustice. Being the sons of mothers whose husbands had blundered rather brutally through their feminine sanctities, they were themselves too diffident and shy. They could easier deny themselves than incur any reproach from a woman; for a woman was like their mother, and they were full of a sense of their mother. They preferred themselves to suffer the misery of celibacy, rather than risk the other person" (341). Whether Paul has actually witnessed or discussed this tendency in other men is not important. Being the son of his own mother, having observed how her husband often treats her, he will himself also suffer celibacy rather than risk ending his and
Miriam's virgin states brutally. As in his relations with Mrs. Morel, he is both sensitive towards Miriam and fearful of disaffection from her. They are close companions and that friendship is at this point one of Paul's most valued possessions. Even if hesuspects at times that Miriam also wants to consummate their affair, ambivalence regarding sexual intercourse makes the risk too great.

III

The preceding is only one in a series of similar acts of rationalization or justification, all of which contain a certain poignancy, for they are the valiant attempts by a confused, despairing young man to understand himself, and especially to reconsider his own desires in relation to those of Miriam. In some respects these acts do achieve the development of self-awareness and certainly they are at times also acts of self-deprecation. Earlier, for example, Paul tries to convince himself that Miriam's spiritual love is what he too should be concentrating on, and that in desiring sexuality he is not spiritual enough and therefore not suitable for her. Miriam's love, he believes, "was too good for him, and he was inadequate. His own love was at fault, not hers" (255). And later, his decision to end their relationship is partly the result of still feeling spiritually inadequate, on the one hand, and too diffident to do anything about his sexual desire on the other. Consequently, he tells Miriam, "We agreed on friendship ...
How often have we agreed on friendship! And yet—it neither stops there, nor gets anywhere else ... I can only give friendship—it's all I'm capable of—it's a flaw in my make-up. The thing overbalances to one side—I hate a toppling balance. Let us have done" (271). This sense of being unbalanced in love will continue to haunt him with Clara, although conversely so because he will be frustrated by a lack of intellectual or spiritual communication. Nevertheless, he will experience a similar feeling of being the one at fault, of having, he confesses to his mother, ""wronged my women ... You know, mother. I think there must be something the matter with me, that I can't love. When she's there, as a rule, I do love her. Sometimes, when I see her just as the woman, I love her, mother; but then, when she talks and criticizes, I often don't listen to her"" (426).

At other times, however, Paul is inclined to blame the woman, shifting suddenly and unexpectedly from sympathy to mockery. Watching her "crouching, sipping the flowers with fervid kisses," he has earlier accused Miriam of being too possessive in her love. ""Why must you always be fondling things!"" he asks her. ""Can you never like things without clutching them as if you wanted to pull the heart out of them? Why don't you have a bit more restraint, or reserve, or something"" (267-68). Shortly after that she is the opposite. "'You are a nun,'" he writes to her. "'In all our relations no body enters. I do not talk to you through
the senses—rather through the spirit. That is why we cannot love in the common sense ... If people marry, they must live together as affectionate human beings, who may be commonplace with each other without feeling awkward—not as two souls'" (307-08).

These two accusations are derived from the single fear, often expressed by both Paul and Mrs. Morel, that Miriam wants to "absorb" him, "to draw him out and absorb him till there is nothing left of him, even for himself" (237). Miriam, however, at times believes just the opposite: "She did not at the bottom believe she ever would have him," because she "did not believe in herself ... doubted whether she could ever be what he would demand of her. Certainly she never saw herself living happily through a lifetime with him. She saw tragedy, sorrow, and sacrifice ahead" (265). And yet she remains optimistic, willing to endure the pain and sacrifice, and in that hope lies the embodiment of Paul's fear. Miriam is as insecure as he and his mother, and from that anxiety she grasps, desperately, for the only man she knows. When he announces an end to their relationship, she counters with the assurance that it will be temporary. "He belonged to her. His soul wanted her," and, she suspects, he is only leaving because "somebody had been influencing him. She felt upon the him the hardness, the foreignness of another influence" (272). When that influence weakens, therefore, and she is convinced it will: "He would come back. She held the keys to his soul" (273).
Their first separation is indeed temporary. In spite of anxiety, confusion, and a lack of understanding on both their parts, Paul can no longer repress sexual desire, a desire intensified by, to him, the sensual, physically exciting Clara Dawes. It is in fact she who advises him to return to Miriam, and to resolve those problems which have prevented the development of what even she believes to be, from its length alone, a worthwhile relationship. In seven years "'you haven't found out the very first thing about her,'" Clara informs Paul, without knowing in detail the history of their time together, but with correct insight as to what Miriam now wants. She "'doesn't want any of your soul communion. That's your own imagination. She wants you'" (339). Dissatisfied and frustrated with Clara, who still remains too aloof, Paul returns to Miriam, although reluctantly, for he is not sure, or cannot admit, why he does so. Only Mrs. Morel realizes that he goes because "he was suffering for want of a woman," and for that reason distrusts both his motives and those of Miriam in accepting him again. "She could not forgive him. Miriam killed the joy and warmth in him. He had been such a jolly lad, and full of the warmest affection; now he grew colder, more and more irritable and gloomy ... She recognized, however, the uselessness of any further interference. He went to Willey Farm as a man now, not as a youth ... If he had made up his mind, nothing on earth would alter him. She began to give
up at last; she had finished. She was in the way" (342).

Miriam, on the other hand, in spite of her own desire in contrast to Paul's, has not given up. She would let him "have her, if he insisted ... she would submit, religiously, to the sacrifice," only because there was "something divine in it" (347). It will be "a sacrifice in which she felt something of a horror" (350), however, because of the possibility that what she offers will not be enough, and that he "would be disappointed, he would find no satisfaction, and then he would go away. Yet he was so insistent; and over this, which did not seem so all-important to her, was their love to break down. After all, he was only like other men, seeking his satisfaction" (347).

In perceiving this desire for herself as impersonal, Miriam sees evidence of increased alienation. Just as Mrs. Morel feels "a coldness" between her and Paul, and a lack of communication, as if she had been discarded (342), to Miriam also, he "seemed to be almost unaware of her as a person: she was only to him then a woman. She was afraid ... This thick-voiced, oblivious man was a stranger to her" (349-50). Their suspicions are not wrong; as Paul returns to Miriam he feels overwhelmed by a sense of fatigue and indifference, "as if nothing mattered, as if his living were smeared away into the beyond, near and quite lovable ... To him now, life seemed a shadow, day a white shadow; night, and death, and stillness, and inaction, this seemed like being. To be alive, to be urgent and insistent--that was not-to-be. The
highest of all was to melt out into the darkness and sway there, identified with the great Being" (350). What he wants, he explains to Miriam, is to "'be rid of our individuality, which is our will, which is our effort—to live effortless, a kind of conscious sleep—that is very beautiful, I think; that is our after-life—our immortality ... and very beautiful to have'" (351).

It is not surprising, then, that their subsequent consummation only emphasizes the rift between them. "'It would come all right if we were married'" (354), Miriam says, but neither of them believes that. And for Paul the act is completely unsatisfactory, little more than a kind of masturbation, followed by "the sense of failure and death." It increases his alienation—"he wished he were sexless or dead"—but it is also a significant step forward from adolescence to maturity. He knows himself more fully; "he was a youth no longer. But why had he the dull pain in his soul? Why did the thought of death, the after-life, seem so sweet and consoling?" (354). The reason is not that he is suicidal but, I would suggest, that the same sense of increased self-confidence with which he has related to Clara, and which allows him to approach Miriam in a sexual way, has also resulted in a concentration upon the physical at the expense of spiritual or intellectual concerns.

He now relates to both Clara and Miriam only sexually, and with the younger woman even that is a failure. He had
once "loved her utterly. But it never came again. The sense of failure grew stronger. At first it was only a sadness. Then he began to feel he could not go on. He wanted to run, to go abroad, anything. Gradually he ceased to ask her to have him. Instead of drawing them together, it put them apart. And then he realized, consciously, that it was no good. It was useless trying: it would never be a success between them" (356). In realizing this, he also knows that their previous friendship can no longer continue either, or at least not to the extent they once knew. Frustated, tired and alone, Paul understandably wishes to escape.

At the same time, however, he is beginning to realize from previous experience that escape from conflict, responsibility or despair is more often a backwards step, if a more secure, sheltered one, in that it is an act of self-denial. That this might be the case is suggested as early as the first time Paul leaves Miriam, just after he has told her that he could only give friendship because of a flaw in his make-up, and that he cannot love her physically "any more than I can fly up like a skylark" (272). In a sense absolving himself of responsibility for both himself and Miriam in doing so, he returns home. "He had come back to his mother. Hers," he believes at that moment, "was the strongest tie in his life. When he thought round, Miriam shrank away. There was a vague, unreal feel about her. And nobody else mattered. There was one place in the world that
stood solid and did not melt into unreality: the place where his mother was. Everybody else could grow shadowy, almost non-existent to him, but she could not. It was as if the pivot and pole of his life, from which he could not escape, was his mother" (272-73).

It does not take Paul, or even his mother, very long, however, to realize that leaving Miriam does not solve, and in some ways exacerbates, his problems. Whatever Mrs. Morel provided him during his youth—sympathy, security, understanding—she still continues to provide, but in spite of that what Paul now requires is more complex, and as a result she satisfies him less and less. Although he has returned to her, "and in his soul was a feeling of the satisfaction of self-sacrifice because he was faithful to her," and although "she loved him first," and "he loved her first ... it was not enough. His new young life, so strong and imperious, was urged towards something else," something his mother cannot offer. "It made him mad with restlessness. She saw this, and wished bitterly that Miriam had been a woman who could take this new life of his, and leave her the roots. He fought against his mother almost as he fought against Miriam" (273). Finally, Paul also realizes he must look elsewhere in this ongoing and desperate search for self-awareness, resolution of conflict and satiation of desire. He turns again from his mother, this time to Clara, to seek a sexuality encumbered by neither social morals nor
romantic philosophy. It is a move Miriam has foreseen, which is perhaps why she introduces him to Clara, for she has perceived the symptoms, if not the problem itself, more clearly than he, and hopes that she can use this knowledge for her own gain. "She believed that there were in him desires for higher things, and desires for lower, and that the desire for the higher would conquer" (280). She does not know that it is synthesis which he seeks: a union of higher and lower.

Clara Dawes, like all the major figures in Paul’s story, is also ambivalent about her own desires, her own character, and as such, alienated from what she really wants and who she really is. "She had scornful eyes," for example, which masks her repressed sexuality, and a "full mouth, with a slightly lifted upper lip that did not know whether it was raised in scorn of all men or out of eagerness to be kissed, but which believed the former. She carried her head back, as if she had drawn away in contempt, perhaps from men also" (228). For Paul, this "'grudge against men' ... was probably one of his own reasons for liking Mrs. Dawes, but this did not occur to him" (231). In other words, while Paul may not be able to articulate the reasons, Clara is a challenge, particularly, it is clear, in a sexual way. Whereas it is Lawrence, and not Paul, who describes Miriam as "full-breasted and luxuriously formed," her face "still like a soft mask, unchangeable" (265), the first aspects of Clara which Paul notices are her "mouth--
made for passion—and the very set-back of her throat" (231), her passionate lips, "the nape of her white neck, and the fine hair lifted from it" (281), and the exciting manner in which "her breasts swelled inside her blouse, and ... her shoulder curved handsomely under the thin muslim at the top of her arm" (282).

Although their first meetings are characterized by an aloofness on her side and a self-conscious flippancy on his, that changes when he observes that "the upward lifting of her face was misery and not scorn" (287). This is not to suggest that Paul wishes to protect Clara as Miriam once wanted to nurse him; in fact, at this time the virile young man, no longer physically adolescent, is attracted to Clara as much from her contrast to the other women in his life as from her beauty, sensuousness and intriguing personality. Miriam, whose own beauty he seems not to perceive, is to him only an intellectual, spiritual woman, Mrs. Morel is aging, while Clara is young and physically attractive. Paul reacts accordingly, in a way that Miriam has never seen before. When he is with the older woman, he acts worldly, self-assured, cavorting in a manner which makes Clara forget her own misery in spite of herself. They begin a relationship from common frustration and based on mutual attraction and the potential for reciprocal satisfaction of their desire. Miriam, interestingly, sees in this quest for "superficial" satiation the possibility of Paul becoming "unfaithful to
himself, unfaithful to the real, deep Paul Morel. There was a danger of his becoming frivolous, of his running after his satisfactions like any Arthur, or like his father. It made Miriam bitter to think that he should throw away his soul for this flippant traffic of triviality with Clara" (306).

There are problems, however. Clara is independent and a Suffragette, the complete antithesis to Miriam, therefore, whose insecurity, in spite of her desperate and overwhelming tendency to cling and her desire to have Paul dependent upon her, made her in some way attractive, in that her own dependency bolstered Paul’s ill-defined ego. Clara, on the other hand, is often scornful and more than that, a mystery in her aloofness and cynicism. This both infuriates and excites Paul; it challenges him for the first time to respond in a mature way, forcing him to cast aside his characteristic petulance and temperamentality. As well, Clara, an older, married woman, is experienced in the worldly, especially sexual, affairs in which Paul is so self-consciously naive. He may not know it yet, but the excitement Paul feels from Clara’s mysterious "history" is the excitement of a student in the presence of an enigmatic teacher, while Clara, in turn, is attracted to Paul by his energetic if immature physical presence, "his quick, unexpected movements," for example, which remind her of a "young animal" (325). For Paul, as well, the attraction to Clara is primarily, even exclusively, physical. Although she is reasonably well-educated, conversation is for Morel
only a means, in their initial meetings, of keeping her by his side. "He talked to her ... with some of the old fervour with which he had talked to Miriam, but he cared less about the talk; he did not bother about his conclusions" (334).

This is not because he is no longer interested in intellectual matters; rather, it is because he is obsessed with Clara sexually, awed by the parts of her body: "her beautiful naked arm," her throat, her breasts, "the curve of her limbs" under her dress. "His whole life seemed suspended" when she is close to him. "He was Clara's white heavy arms, her throat, her moving bosom. That seemed to be himself ... he was identified with that ... There was no himself" (403-04), nor even Clara, but a depersonalized sexual object: "something he loved and almost worshipped, there in the dark" (429). Even after they consummate their relationship, he feels, as he did with Miriam, that the "experience had been impersonal ... it was not she who could keep his soul steady. He had wanted her to be something she could not be" (431), and when he realizes that, suddenly her physical proximity becomes irritating. Why, he asks her, "'do you always want to be kissing and embracing for? ... Surely there's a time for everything'" (432). This reminds us of a similar complaint he once made to Miriam, and of the fact that the only woman whose caresses have remained bearable is his mother. With Clara, then, he not only denies
himself a relationship beyond sexuality, but he ensures that even a limited affair will be shortlived. By the time she commits herself, albeit with reservations (431), to loving him, he is already becoming indifferent to her, at times to the extent that the very fact of "her existence was of no matter to him" (427). And yet Paul assures himself that he needs Clara "passionately," just as she suspects he needs Miriam (intellectually), although neither is the right woman. "'And I shall never meet the right woman,'" he tells his mother, "'while you live'" (427).

Mrs. Morel does not accept Paul's statement, however, any more than Paul would, were he not so desperate, for it is evident that the satisfaction derived from all existing relationships is in reality rapidly waning. Love, Paul, says, "'should give a sense of freedom, not of prison'" (438), but with all three women, as with his position at Jordan's, indeed with his very life in Bestwood and Nottingham, he feels imprisoned. He hates his work, he hates the women he loves, "perhaps," like Baxter Dawes, "because he really disapproved of himself" (229). He is, however, more sexually self-assured through knowledge and experience, and thus no longer at a disadvantage with Clara. As their relationship develops, in fact, Paul becomes the aggressive one, the ambivalent Clara reticently following, restraining herself in spite of his attractiveness to her. She is in part suspicious of his reasons for severing his relationship with Miriam, and, possibly, unsure as well of a
man who, for all his own faith in his new-found maturity, is perceptibly adolescent still.

It would seem, from her queries (374-75), that Clara is also apprehensive about what could be construed as a certain fickleness and irresponsibility on his part, and fearful, too, that he wants her in the same superficial way he wanted Miriam, as a sexual object which he turns from when he is no longer satisfied. Although this kind of reasoning does not take into account all the factors involved, it is sound insofar as it proceeds, for Paul does desperately want to gain sexual experience and self-knowledge sufficient to balance his previously developed intellectual, artistic self. (He may not consciously be seeking this, but nevertheless it is the direction in which he is heading, and a balance is what he eventually achieves.) In that respect he is fickle, and Mrs. Morel is correct in her suspicion that he will tire of Clara (401), for when he attains that harmony within himself, it is likely that he will then want, as Lawrence suggests is desirable in "Study of Thomas Hardy," a woman similarly in harmony with herself.

As it turns out, Clara's fears do materialize. Their relationship is soon characterized by the same mechanical detachment as that of Paul's previous affair, with Miriam, this time, however, with added complications for, as we have observed, Miriam as well as his mother hover between the two lovers. This detachment, which will force a synthesis in
the end—Miriam as non-physical and Clara as sexual entities rejected as disparate parts in favour of the intellectual/sexual mother whom he then must also reject—is not surprising. Even before consummating his affairs with the two of them, "sex had become so complicated in him that he would have denied that he ever could want Clara or Miriam or any woman whom he knew. Sex desire was a sort of detached thing, that did not belong to a woman. He loved Miriam with his soul. He grew warm at the thought of Clara, he battled with her, he knew the curves of her breasts and shoulders as if they had been moulded inside him; and yet he did not positively desire her" (337). The dilemma is now graphically clear, for him as for us. Clara is a physical object, Miriam an abstract concept, and Paul cannot relate to either. One solution is to give himself completely to a woman, body and soul, and the only woman to whom he can currently relate in this way is his mother.

It is true that Mrs. Morel does not provide the intellectual stimulus that Miriam does, but she has been a mentor for him in the past: a source of knowledge and inspiration to whom he will remain grateful. As well, it is sexuality with which Paul is presently more concerned, or at least, in the attempt to blend the two divergent streams in his life he is more secure about his mental capabilities than his physical ones. It does not matter that Mrs. Morel is a less acute sounding board for his philosophising than Miriam, just as it does not concern him that his mother cannot be an
alternative to Clara. He is desperate at this point in his search for the resolution of a dilemma which threatens his very existence. Every time he would appear to be achieving manhood, it slips away, and he is left standing alone, as confused and frightened as when he was a boy, feeling as if his mother "were slipping away from him," and that "he wanted to get hold of her, to fasten her, almost to chain her" (294). The desperation comes from the fact of her aging, and from the realization, therefore, that he is moving from the familiar, fraught as it is with problems, to the unknown.

The implications are frightening. When he studies his mother’s face, he sees "crow’s-feet near her eyes, her eyelids steady, sinking a little, her mouth always closed with disillusion ... as if she knew fate at last. He beat against it with all the strength of his soul" (294), for he knows that the future is unknown, and therefore dangerous, because it is a future without this woman. "Why can’t a man have a young mother?" he asks, rather petulantly, but with a deep psychological despair. "What are you old for?" he said, mad with his impotence. "Why can’t you come with me to places?" (296). In his refusal to accept his mother’s aging, he sounds fourteen, the age Miriam at one point accuses him of appearing to be, and in some respects he is that age. By the time of Mrs. Morel’s final illness, in fact, both of them will be teenagers as well as adults,
fighting a last battle against mortality, a generation gap and the cruel irony that delivered him from this woman's womb, and not another's.

As often as Paul clings to and needs his mother, he also understands why he must sever his ties with her forever. "There was," he realizes, "a good deal of his life of which necessarily he could not speak to his mother. He had a life apart from her--his sexual life. The rest she still kept. But he felt he had to conceal something from her, and it irked him. There was a certain silence between them, and he felt he had, in that silence, to defend himself against her; he felt condemned by her. Then sometimes he hated her, and pulled at her bondage. His life wanted to free itself of her. It was like a circle where life turned back on itself, and got no farther. She bore him, loved him, kept him, and his love turned back into her, so that he could not be free to go forward with his own life, really love another woman" (419-20).

Minus the subjectivity of adolescent frustration, and romantic philosophizing, this moment of insight remains one of the highlights of Paul's life in the novel. He realizes so many things: his mother's bondage, which is so similar to Miriam's; the sexuality inherent in the relationship with Mrs. Morel which prevents him from loving even Clara, or any other woman whom he might one day meet; and more importantly, he realizes clearly, for the first time, what he must do in order to resolve his predicament. The freedom to go
forward with his own life, to continue developing intellectually and sexually, to become more self-aware and confident so as to mold his own being into a strong and independent force and achieve a satisfactory union with one woman: these cannot come from an alliance with Mrs. Morel, any more than from Miriam or Clara. He will try one last time, the son striving to keep the mother alive, but even so, he knows intuitively that she is no longer the woman for him.

A significant change occurs in the novel at this point: Paul becomes Morel. When he is in the bar, in his first altercation with Baxter Dawes—his first fight as a man, with a man—he is already being addressed quite often as Mr. Morel, and then, in the dispute at Jordan's in which Dawes is fired, we are told that "Morel was leaning against the counter" (424). And in the fight near Daybrook Station as well as in subsequent scenes involving Dawes, he is referred to as both Morel and Paul. This brings to our attention another—perhaps the most important—factor in Paul's relationship with Clara. He is forced to relate to her, and more intensely to her husband, as a man. Adolescence would destroy him. It is Morel, then, who fights Dawes, with a ferocity that Paul never had: "He felt his whole body unsheath itself like a claw ... He was a pure instinct, without reason or feeling. His body, hard and wonderful in itself, cleaved against the struggling body of the other man; not a muscle in him relaxed. He was quite unconscious,
only his body had taken upon itself to kill this other man" (444-45).

This instinct, different from the mechanical estrangement he brings to Clara, is something new and bewildering for Paul. He loses to Dawes when he stops to ponder his unknown and novel potential: the ability to be strong and unified, body and mind. It is the very union that he and Clara have just discussed; it is what he has sought without knowing if he was capable of achieving it, even in love. She has asked him if, in spite of the fact that their affair was only sexual, the "sex part" was nevertheless worth something. "But how can you separate it?" he said. 'It's the culmination of everything'" (441). As he battles Dawes, he is achieving that culmination within himself.

He loses his concentration, however, in part from a false sense of endurance, for his body is in fact still the frail structure it has always been. After being furiously beaten by the irate husband, he falls rather dramatically from manhood, and crawls home to his mother. It is a disappointing setback for any who would applaud his determined efforts to resist the temptation to continue in bondage with her. However, like so many of Paul's setbacks, the fall also becomes a means of clarifying his position and his new ambition. By dwelling on what he increasingly knows to be the wrong action, he intensifies his dissatisfaction and that feeling intuitively minimizes doubt regarding the correctness of the alternative he is in the process of con-
sidering, in that it will be at least preferable to the present situation. This explains why he returns to Miriam again and again, after he is confident that he cannot marry her, nor even continue to relate to her. It is also the reason he makes love to Clara after their affair is almost unbearably mechanical. And now, becoming more certain but not yet completely convinced that he must sever relations with his mother, he returns to her.

Of course, in one way I am being simplistic in saying this; the circumstances—Paul’s pain, the pain of his mother’s impending death, that part of his filial dependency which is still unconscious—complicate his decision. At this point, in fact, it is not even a decision so much as an instinctive move, but nevertheless it will eventually hasten the final steps of his entry into manhood. Initially, however, the return is in some respects a retreat to childhood. Tired, with a dislocated shoulder and then bronchitis, he feels "dazed and helpless, like a child" (450), his life "unbalanced, as if it were going to smash into pieces" (448). It is a return to that time when he first had bronchitis, and slept with his mother, consort ing so intimately with her in his convalescence that William and Morel were jealous, or to that other moment of illness and passion when Mrs. Morel, suffering from what she supposes is her heart (258), but what is also jealousy of Miriam, "threw her arms" around Paul’s neck, and "cried in a whimpering
"I can't bear it. I could let another woman--but not her [Miriam]. She'd leave me no room, not a bit of room--'

"And immediately he hated Miriam bitterly.

"And I've 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.

"And she exults so in taking you from me--she's not like ordinary girls."

"Well, I don't love her, Mother,' he murmured, bowing his head and hiding his eyes on her shoulder in misery. His mother kissed him a long, fervent kiss.

"My boy!' she said in a voice trembling with passionate love.

"Without knowing, he gently stroked her face" (261-62).

Near the end of the novel their intimacy is once again intensified by illness, as it has been previously, but this time Paul's bronchial attack is followed almost immediately by the decline of Mrs. Morel from cancer, and in their closeness now--unknown to this degree before--they enter a strange period of transition. Paul drifts forward again from childhood to adolescence while Mrs. Morel regresses, and as they join in an almost surrealistic, even mildly insane reverie, so "unreal, he could not understand it" (468), they combine their strength in battle: Paul against mortality and fate; his mother against a lost adolescence, a
feeling of worthlessness, and perhaps the knowledge of the insidious part she has played in weakening her son's chances for survival, and the desire, then, if that is true, to give him the strength and the will to continue living. During these moments of reconciliation, he calls her "Pigeon," and kisses her when he returns home. Her eyes, to him no longer lined with wrinkles, are clear blue and smile "straight into his, like a girl's--warm, laughing with tender love. It made him pant with terror, agony and love" (468).

They are both in fact "afraid of the veils that were ripping between them" (468): veils within which are contained not only individual vitality but the essence of their relationship. As they tear, therefore, Paul begins to react "almost as if he were agreeing to die also" (477), and to offset this "they had both come to the condition when they had to make much of the trifles, lest they should give in to the big thing [death], and their human independence would go smash. They were afraid, so they made light of things and were gay" (468-69). Their pretense, however, cannot be so impenetrable as to exclude death, and as a result, particularly for Paul--Mrs. Morel is already far more pragmatic--the flaw in the dream which he tries to but cannot deny eventually becomes the incentive which forces him once more beyond the idealism of youth, to a pragmatism and a determination even greater than that which supported him in his fight with Dawes. He will end his mother's life out of
compassion; he will murder his mother as an act of survival.

In other words, killing her out of love and mercy, for she is suffering, will simultaneously resolve the ambiva-

cence and hatred inherent in his feelings for her. Having overcome one part of his dilemma by ending the affairs with Miriam and Clara, which could not succeed because of his mother, he now overcomes another part of that dilemma. Her illness is fortuitous, true, but it is not the fact of her inevitable death which is crucial, but the act of attempting to sever his relationship with her, an act during which Paul as boy moves unequivocally to manhood, no longer as restrained by a mother who has clung to him, and he to her, in a way that has repressed his sexuality and thus retarded his development as a whole being. The fact of Mrs. Morel's death ends the physical association; however, the memory of that relationship, and the psychological dependency remain.

Afterwards, Paul is devastated to the extent that he feels dead inside, but that is only a feeling and not an inclination to suicide. In fact he dismisses other concerns--work, friends, his painting--in order to focus his limited strength against death, for he knows that in the past he has fallen severely ill physically in times of emotional or psychological stress, after William dies, for example, or when he is beaten by Dawes, and while previously his mother brought him back to life, now he is alone. "He wanted someone of their own free initiative to help him," but even Clara "could not stand for him to hold on to"
She knows she need not, however, for Paul Morel is a survivor, a man who "would never own to being beaten" (494). Paul echoes this thought as he draws himself together, making himself smaller and tighter, like the pugilist he was when he fought Dawes. His mother "was gone, and forever behind him was the gap in life, the tear in the veil, through which his life seemed to drift slowly, as if he were drawn towards death ... He did not want to die; he would not give in. But he was not afraid of death. If nobody would help, he would go on alone" (495). These thoughts soon become a conscious, maturely stated desire to survive, a plan for the future. He will not let his life seep through the veil, in spite of the proximity of death. He knows he must proceed, and he will; even the self-pity of the past will soon be discarded.

This determination is not enacted at once, for that, from such a weakened man, would be implausible. He lapses, alone and alienated in an unidentifiable and indifferent world, feeling that his future can have no meaning. But still "he would not admit that he wanted to die, to have done. He would not own that life had beaten him, or that death had beaten him" (501). This is not surprising, given Paul’s growth and determination throughout the novel. He has been, from earliest childhood, a survivor, and now he has more than ever for which to live: his independence. He did not lose his mother, we recall, he and Annie release her
from suffering, and in the final chapter, "Derelict" (from the Latin "derelict-us, pa. pple. of derelinguere to forsake wholly, abandon" OED), he is also not abandoned, but aband­
oning, relinquishing the constrictions of childhood, such as dependency and the consideration of his mother’s feelings and expectations sometimes at the expense of his own. Look­ing back, we can see that this last move to autonomy and manhood is much more complicated than it seems, for Paul’s experience thus far has entailed not only parental rejection, but more importantly, although less consciously, it has entailed paternal as well as maternal sympathy.

IV

After he has become a man of some sexual and worldly experience, Paul recognizes that his father is not the monster that his mother made him out to be, and that his parents’ relationship was more satisfying, more sustaining for Mrs. Morel than she might have admitted. With "'my father, at first, I’m sure she had the real thing. She knows; she has been there’" (386), he tells Miriam before his mother dies, and in saying that he expresses his belief that their sexual relations were profound enough to have benefited them both. "'You can feel it about her, and about him,’" Paul explains, "'my mother, I believe, got real joy and satisfaction out of my father at first. I believe she had a passion for him; that’s why she stayed with him ... That’s what one must have, I think,’ he continued—'the
real, real flame of feeling through another person ... the something big and intense that changes you when you really come together with somebody else. It almost seems to fertilize your soul and make it that you can go on and mature" (386-87). This does explain the surprisingly tender and amicable moments shared by the Morels even after Mrs. Morel claims that her only feeling for her husband is hatred, moments when her criticism of him is gentle and jocular, and he responds with characteristic brusqueness, but in the same spirit. An example of this continued affection occurs in Chapter VIII, "Strife in Love," long after the two have apparently lost all love for each other. Morel is washing in front of the fire, complaining that he must do so because, being so underweight, he feels the cold more than most. "'I'm nowt b't a skinned rabbit,'" he explains. "'My bones fair juts out on me.'

"'I should like to know where,' retorted his wife. "'Iv'ry-wheer! I'm nobbit a sack o' faggots.'

"Mrs. Morel laughed. He had still a wonderfully young body, muscular, without any fat. His skin was smooth and clear. It might have been the body of a man of twenty-eight ...

"'You should have seen him as a young man,' she cried suddenly to Paul, drawing herself up to imitate her husband's once handsome bearing.

"Morel watched her shyly. He saw again the passion she
had had for him. It blazed upon her for a moment. He was shy, rather scared, and humble. Yet again he felt his old glow" (242-43).

In some respects all of the Morel children, including Paul, have benefited from their father’s "glow"—his own passion—and have inherited from him a restless spirit and an obstinacy which, combined with their mother’s "high-mindedness," have made them incapable of becoming exactly what either parent would have wished. They are independent— they have become so in a bid to escape the repressiveness of homelife—and it is this which makes at least the three sons at times impetuous, immature, and alienated from both home and society. They may emulate social ambitiousness, but only superficially and idealistically. They are this way, perhaps, because of their ambivalent feelings towards both parents, and because neither parent has provided the teaching by example, or the emotional stability which would have been necessary for the children to comply with each parent’s expectations concerning them.

Certainly it has been most clear to Mrs. Morel that her children have not met her expectations: William is "vain" (115), foolhardy and a spendthrift; Paul ridiculously hypersensitive (94), immature, even stupid at times (314); Arthur a "fool" (223), lacking common sense. Only Annie seems to escape her mother’s criticism, but then Mrs. Morel never seems to have had ambitions for her daughter. Having expressed the realization at one time, like Miriam, that as a
woman she will not be granted the opportunities and advantages of men, nor even the recognition of intellectual equality (16-17), she offers, in her silence, little hope that her daughter will become anything more than a wife and a mother. Her only wish for Annie would seem to be that expressed to William after she "loses" him: that she might escape the mess and the hopeless failures of Mrs. Morel's own marriage. As it turns out, Annie becomes a teacher, although it has never been mentioned that she was even so inclined, and certainly she seems to have accomplished this without the ambition and the pride associated with Mrs. Morel's feelings towards her sons.

Although Annie, William and Arthur most obviously reflect something of their father's character, particularly in their implicit rejection of their mother—Annie by tending to ignore her, William in his lifestyle and engagement to Lily, Arthur by enlisting in the army—they are not the only ones. Even as an adolescent, Paul too is frustrated by Mrs. Morel almost as often as he is alienated from his father, and for rather explicit reasons. Cynical, puritanical and possessive, especially of Paul, she is unwilling to admit to this son's increasing maturity, nor to his right to have relationships with young women. It is "'disgusting,'" she says at one point, "'bits of lads and girls courting.'" Paul is nineteen, and yet still she does not "'hold with children keeping company, and never did,'" although she does
not mind "Annie going out with Jim Unger," because her daughter is not "one of the deep sort" (200).

This lack of understanding and sympathy often causes Paul to reject or dismiss his mother’s objections, and in doing so he becomes less tolerant and less inclined to question her motives, whereas towards his father he feels more sympathetic, especially after Mrs. Morel dies, in spite of a previous and lengthy estrangement. It is as if, having assisted in the defeat of Morel so as to win the exclusive affection of his mother, and then having increasingly rejected and then lost her, he is able to identify with Mr. Morel and his world more completely, in the same way as he has vacillated in his relations with Clara and Baxter Dawes. Even before his mother’s death brings him closer to his father he has said that "I don’t want to belong to the well-to-do middle class. I like my common people best. I belong to the common people" (313).

Paul’s fluctuating rejection and acceptance of certain attributes of both parents is most acute in terms of his desire to be an artist. This ambition alienates him from his father, of course, who has always hoped that his sons would become miners, but also to a degree from his mother, in spite of a bourgeois background which should make her more sympathetic towards that ambition. Both parents may be proud of their son’s artistic success, but in both it is an ambiguous pride. Morel is simultaneously jealous and astounded, because he cannot understand art as a vocation,
when, for example, Paul wins "‘twenty guineas for a bit of a 
paintin’ as he knocked off in an hour or two!’" (311); his 
wife, although bursting with pride, is more concerned that 
her son do well at Jordan’s, and on social occasions wear 
the appropriate clothing so that, while he does not yet 
"look particularly a gentleman" (312), he is at least able 
to dress like one. "She frankly wanted him to climb into 
the middle class, a thing not very difficult, she knew. And 
she wanted him in the end to marry a lady" (314).

At the end of the novel, when he turns from his 
mother’s to the "man’s world," as Ursula will call it, and 
throughout, especially as an artist, Paul is often critical 
of what his mother represents. He feels, for example, as 
the previous reference to the common people suggests, a 
defined if romantic attachment to the working class: that 
is, to his father’s world, a world whose vitality, from the 
young artist’s point of view, is reflected in the pit, 
heaped "‘together, like something alive almost,’" and in the 
trucks "‘standing waiting, like a string of beasts to be 
fed’” (154). Although he is reluctant to go so far as to 
socialize with his "father’s pals" (313), that reticence is 
derived from generation differences, in the same way that he 
becomes less able to converse with his mother (261), and 
not, as Mrs. Morel maintains, from a snobbishness about 
class. That is her prejudice, not his. Towards the end of 
the novel, in fact, he commonly frequents working class
pubs, including those where violence is not unknown and a "chucker-out" (418) forms part of the regular staff. And even before he becomes better acquainted with Dawes, and discovers that this man is more than the unsavoury character he once thought him to be, Paul sees the wisdom in discovering people as individuals rather than as preconceptualized and therefore, it is possible, as erroneously perceived or generalized figures. This is why, he has earlier tried to explain to his mother, he is interested in the common people, because "the difference between people isn't in their class, but in themselves. Only from the middle classes one gets ideas, and from the common people--life itself, warmth. You feel their hates and loves'" (313).

Although at this point such a statement is perhaps only conjectural, those words will soon be applicable, from experience, to Dawes and to a greater extent than before to Mr. Morel himself, who certainly makes his "hates" and, more subtly but almost as clearly, his "loves" felt. Just as Paul eventually knows Baxter and especially his feelings concerning Clara sufficiently that there is soon established "a sort of friendship between the two men, who were all the while deadly rivals" (467), so too, partly as a result of his increasing sensitivity towards people, including those of which his mother has not necessarily approved, is he able to understand and sympathize with his father after Mrs. Morel dies, and to appreciate the extent to which Morel has loved and depended upon her. Arriving home late one night,
for example, Paul finds his father waiting for him. He "looked so forlorn. Morel had been [or had appeared to be] a man without fear--simply nothing frightened him. Paul realized with a start that he had been afraid to go to bed, alone in the house with the dead. He was sorry" (486).

This is not to suggest that Paul’s attitude towards his father has suddenly changed, only that he has rarely, perhaps never, unequivocally hated him. While there is "scarcely any bond between father and son," there is at least sufficient attachment "that each felt he must not let the other go in any actual want" (497). On the other hand, they will not remain together; as "they could neither of them bear the emptiness of the house, Paul took lodgings in Nottingham, and Morel went to live with a friendly family in Bestwood" (498). That, however, emphasizes the point I have been making in the preceding discussion of Morel and the working class. In adding to his experience of the world beyond what he has previously known, Paul would seem to have been preparing himself, although he has not always been aware of this, to leave home even before Mrs. Morel died.

In his youth, Paul’s "ambition, as far as this world’s gear went, was 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 happily ever after" (113), and even at the age of twenty-two he still assures his mother
that his goal is to "'have a pretty house, you and me, and a servant, and it'll be just all right'" (301). Particularly in terms of the second passage, Paul has other reasons for expressing such an ambition: his confused relationship with Miriam, for example. And yet when it becomes clear to him that it is his mother and not his father who will die first, although he is certainly upset, and occasionally unwilling to accept the fact, at the same time he admits to Dawes, even before she is dead, that afterwards "'I s'll go abroad,'" because while "'I don't care what I do ... I s'll have to begin a new start of some sort'" (473). Such a statement, I would suggest, could only come after preparing himself for the inevitability of eventually losing his mother or even of deciding to leave home before then. The process of becoming acquainted with a wider variety of people than those with whom Mrs. Morel has associated herself, therefore, and of gaining experience and drawing conclusions independent of and sometimes contrary to her prejudices, convictions and expectations, has constituted at least part of that preparation. Perhaps the first intimation of this, although at the time he strenuously resists the idea, occurs when Paul realizes his mother is aging (294-96).

Paul is able to leave home, and that would suggest that he is also capable of severing his emotional attachment with home, with the memory of his mother, and with the past. To do so, however, he must consider the future in terms of
replacing that past. In light of this, Paul's dilemma near
the end of the novel—that part of his alienation yet to be
confronted—lies not in his inclination towards death, as I
mentioned earlier, but in his feelings of loneliness and in
the realization that while he exists and can continue to
survive alone in Nottingham, he is without purpose, and as a
result he lacks a sense of belonging, of being an integral
part of the city in the way he could be if he was living
rather than merely functioning. He cannot envision his own
future, and at the same time everything related to the past
"seemed to have gone smash for the young man. He could not
paint. The picture he finished on the day of his mother's
death—one that satisfied him—was the last thing he did.
At work there was no Clara. When he came home he could not
take up the brushes again. There was nothing left.

"So he was always in the town at one place or another,
drinking, knocking about with the men he knew. It really
wearied him. He talked to barmaids, to almost any woman,
but there was that dark, strained look in his eyes, as if he
were hunting something" (498). And yet he does not know
what he is hunting, and more disconcerting, the "real agony
was that he had nowhere to go, nothing to do, nothing to
say, and was nothing himself" (501). Having moved from home
because it is no longer a part of him, so too does he feel
that although he lodges in Nottingham, "he was not of it or
in it. Something separated him. Everything went on there
below those lamps, shut away from him. He could not get at
them. He felt he couldn’t touch the lamp-posts, not if he
reached. Where could he go? There was nowhere to go,
neither back ... or forward anywhere. He felt stifled.
There was nowhere for him" (501).

Such feelings are not expressions of self-pity, how­
ever. In spite of a certain hopelessness, Paul resolutely
considers alternatives to his present situation, for he does
not intend to become a victim of his own alienation. He
could continue, for example, "working hard and mechanically
at the factory," for during those hours he experiences "pure
forgetfulness, when he lapsed from consciousness. But it
had to come to an end" (498). As he explains to Miriam: "'I
suppose work can be nearly everything to a man ... though it
isn’t to me'" (505). He could also marry Miriam but again,
although she asks him and then he asks her, "'I’m not
sure,’" he says, "'that marriage would be much good ... you
love me so much, you want to put me in your pocket. And I
should die there smothered’" (506). Miriam would marry him
if he wanted to, and feels that she might conceivably force
the issue, given his vulnerable state, but she will not
allow the decision to be hers alone. "He wanted something
else" (507), and whatever that something is, he must first
rouse himself from the somnambulist state he is now in. To
continue doing nothing, he has earlier realized, would be
eventually to destroy himself and that, he knows intuitive­
ly, would be wrong. When he asks himself: "'Why wrong?’ ...
there was no answer, but a hot stroke of strong stubbornness inside his chest resisted his own annihilation" (500).

To paraphrase an earlier quotation, resisting annihilation means finding somewhere to go, something to do, something to say, becoming something himself, and to do that he must become emotionally, just as he has become physically, independent of his mother. He must resist stasis, move beyond the past to the future, make a complete transition from home to the city, and continue to develop, whatever the obstacles. In the last pages of the novel, which I consider necessary to quote at length, Paul makes a decision that will increase the likelihood of his achieving this kind of autonomy. It is not an easy decision. Leaving Miriam, "he felt the last hold for him had gone. The town, as he sat upon the car, stretched away over the bay of railway, a level fume of lights. Beyond the town the country, little smouldering spots for more towns—the sea—the night—on and on! And he had no place in it! Whatever spot he stood in, there he stood alone. From his breast, from his mouth, sprang the endless space, and it was there behind him, everywhere" (509-10). This anxiety continues until he begins to realize that, as insignificant and empty as he feels, "yet there was his body, his chest, that leaned against the stile, his hands on the wooden bar. They seemed something. Where was he?—one tiny upright speck of flesh, less than an ear of wheat lost in the field. He could not
bear it. On every side the immense dark silence seemed pressing him, so tiny a spark, into extinction, and yet, almost nothing, he could not be extinct ... So much, and himself, infinitesimal, at the core a nothingness, and yet not nothing.

"'Mother!' he whispered--'mother!'

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

"But no, he would not give in. Turning sharply, he walked towards the city's gold phosphorescence. His fists were shut, his mouth set fast. He would not take that direction, to the darkness, to follow her. He walked towards the faintly humming, glowing town, quickly" (510-11).

Shortly after Mrs. Morel dies, "Paul felt crumpled and lonely. His mother had really supported his life. He had loved her; they two had, in fact, faced the world together" (495). Now, perhaps, he will be able to support himself, emotionally and psychologically as well as financially, and within the city be a part of the world rather than, from the security of home, facing it as an outsider. In his youth, Paul had resisted seeking employment, not wanting to become involved in affairs beyond his current environment. "Already," he had then felt, even as he searched the newspapers for positions, "he was a prisoner of industrialism ... Already his heart went down. He was being taken into bondage. His freedom in the beloved home valley was going now"
Striding towards the city, however, he appears to have realized that freedom and bondage are not necessarily to be associated with the memory of home and the reality of Nottingham, and that in fact the reverse might also be true. Had he given in to the desire to remain excessively attached to his mother, continuing to believe that she was his only support, then he would have been a prisoner or victim of his own emotions. In assertively choosing the city instead, Paul is not unlike Ursula in *The Rainbow*, who at one point will also be convinced that autonomy is to be attained in the "man's world," and in doing so will see family and tradition as being to her the more probable sources of bondage.

Paul has attempted to resolve a problem which has tormented his parents, a problem derived from the fact that, Mr. Morel being "purely sensuous" (23), and his wife "very intellectual" (17), "he was too different from her" (23) or conversely, "she was too much his opposite" (25). In trying to avoid such extremes by deciding that he could not be compatible with Miriam, who is to him overly intellectual and spiritual, nor Clara, with whom he finds intellectual discussion difficult, Paul is now more fully aware, of himself as an intellectual and sexual individual, and of what he might be capable as a man and as an integral part of society. Whereas once he had established as his goals a life with Mrs. Morel and possible success as a painter,
perhaps now he can still realize that second goal alone. And as a man, his relationship with his mother can no longer be seen as an obstacle to other relationships or an excuse for not committing himself to a woman and to marriage. Having rejected the idea of suicide, not that he ever seriously contemplated such action, and having at last the maturity to overcome or at least to confront more resolutely and decisively the estrangement that has plagued him thus far in life, Paul accepts in its place what he has previously associated and hoped to share with the common people: life itself.

This conclusion contradicts those of other critics, particularly Mark Schorer. In his essay "Technique as Discovery," he writes that "Paul rejects his desire for extinction and turns towards 'the faintly humming, glowing town,' to life—as nothing in his previous history persuades that he could unfalteringly do." What also bothers Schorer is the "discrepancy" between the two themes in the novel: the "crippling effect of a mother's love on the emotional development of her son," and the "'split' between kinds of love, physical and spiritual, which the son develops." To him, this unforeseen ending "suggests that the book may reveal certain confusions between intention and performance." Furthermore, Schorer is perturbed that Lawrence portrays his characters, especially Paul, ambiguously; he "(and Morel) loves his mother, but he also hates her ... and he hates his father ... but he also loves him
... This is a psychological tension which disrupts the form of the novel and obscures its meaning, because neither the contradiction in style nor the confusion in point of view is made to right itself."

What Schorer cannot accept is that a novel such as this may contain some unresolved contradictions, be ambiguous at times, and the resultant tension, which may be disruptive, nevertheless is the mediator of the novel, providing both power and cohesion. It is true that Lawrence does not perceive the whole of *Sons and Lovers* clearly, even consciously—his letter to Edward Garnett, although written after the novel's completion, is simplistic and even tangential in its description of theme, form, and characterization—but it is not necessary for Lawrence to see, and thus resolve, things completely; that he presents the whole of the complex situation is enough. Because his genius, in fact, lies in his ability to present that wholeness, including the contradictions, the morality inherent in the resolution of contradictions which Schorer looks for as a mediating agent simply does not exist. That Schorer does not understand this is only unfortunate; what is more disconcerting is that he seems to have missed the entire movement of the novel, which is largely Paul's development or maturation to a point of self-realization that not only does not ignore his previous history, but which is derived from a series of very significant steps, the last of which is the
move to the city. If there is anything unforeseen in the novel, it is a consequence of what, in the end, will always be the spontaneous character of human behaviour, an attribute which should be accepted as exciting and valuable, and not at all fortuitous.

Even amongst those who counter the Schorer position, and see Paul's movement at the end as positive and plausible, some still criticize it as a sudden, or nonintegral, act of enlightenment, and as a weak ending, partly because it does not conform to the prescriptive statement of theme and intent which Lawrence outlined in his letter. A case in point is that of Julian Moynahan. Because "there is not the slightest indication that escape from disintegration will be easy or assured," he writes, this "movement towards the city's 'gold phosphorescence' does not contradict, as some critics have thought, the drift towards death of which Lawrence's thematic summary speaks. A physical body is set in motion toward the 'humming, glowing town,' but it is clear also from Paul's envisionment of stars and sun as 'a few bright grains ... spinning round for terror,' that the tiny glow of the town lights up no safe harbour."

It is true that what follows will not be easy, that a new beginning does not imply success the second time round. Paul may conceivably fail in his attempt to live within and contribute to society, and become alienated again, but he has at this point, as a result of having become more self-aware and mature, at least partially resolved previous
dilemmas, so that at the end his is not a drift towards death, but a determined, conscious passage to adulthood and life. In other words, to counter Moynahan, it is not just Paul's "physical body" which is "set in motion," but his entire consciousness, and given that we have closely followed the evolution of that consciousness, it is quite probable, certainly more so than before, that he will succeed at whatever he next chooses. To my mind, there is in his decision not to give in, and in the determination with which he chooses the city instead, that degree of optimism.

This does contradict Lawrence's thematic summary--the move is not towards death; Paul does not leave his soul to his mother and go for passion; he does the opposite in both cases--but one must understand that statements of authorial intent are not sacrosanct. They must be seen instead as organic, perpetually developing, and at best, even after the work is complete, as little more than observations, or "'pollyanalytics' ... deduced from the novels and poems, not the reverse. The novels and poems," Lawrence insisted, "come unwatched out of one's pen. And then the absolute need which one has for some sort of satisfactory mental attitude towards oneself and things in general makes one try to abstract some general conclusions from one's experiences as a writer and a man. The novels and poems are pure passionate experience. These 'pollyanalytics' are inferences
made afterwards, from experience." This is not always the
case with Lawrence—often the novels provided him with the
opportunity for applying theories worked out beforehand—but
the passage just cited can nevertheless be perceived as
prefatory to a theory of the novel established some years
later, the main point of which was that a work of fiction
must contain "no didactic absolute," so that it can remain
"honourable" to its characters, who must be true to them­
selves—just as the novelist himself must honour the flame
which lies behind the characters, rather than his own
didactic purpose. 9

In other words, those ideas brought to the novel may
provide it its genesis, may inform it, but must not control
it. In saying this, Lawrence is indicating his understand­
ing of the need to recognize and accept the unconsciousness
of artistry, which must inform artistic works, especially
novels, because the conscious, objective artist cannot con­
trol, nor even adequately describe afterwards, such a mass
of words and concepts and interrelated development of
characters. For Lawrence, the novel was the "highest devel­
opment of [this] subtle interrelatedness that man has dis­
covered. Everything is true in its own time, place, circum­
stance, and untrue outside of its own place, time, circum­
stance. If you try to nail anything down, in the novel,
either it kills the novel, or the novel gets up and walks
away with the nail. 10

What is true of a novel when the work is incomplete,
therefore, and what the novelist may say about that work, cannot be completely objective, any more than it can hope to describe the breadth of the man's unconsciousness, or his future development. To hold Lawrence to his "polly-analytics," and certainly to insist that his position regarding form and theme is final in any way is absurd. Contrary to Schorer, I am insisting that a person can integrate illumination of experience and an understanding of the human psyche, producing a work that transcends the artist's technical ability or even his consciousness. To assume otherwise is to limit a genius to the bounds of his physical capabilities; it is to deny the painter his realm beyond oils or the sculptor a vision that extends further than marble and chisel.

While the artist certainly must express the man adequately in order that the work achieve a significance able to be interpreted (that is, some form and articulation are required), the experience of the man can, in turn, raise artistic capability to a level previously unknown. The man—that is, the individual who is also an artist—can write better than the artist as technician, for the man has a vision that the artist may be incapable of articulating, except through the art as it exists, and then in a way both subjective and yet faithful more to technique and the limitations of technique than to the vision. And while the man may also be unable to explain how the work is inspired, the
vision remains true. "I tell you I've written a great book," Lawrence wrote to Garnett. "It's a great tragedy ... a great novel. If you can't see the development—which is slow like growth—I can."
She was struggling between two worlds, her own world of young summer and flowers, and this other world of work.

D.H. Lawrence, *The Rainbow*

And so, she assumes the responsibility and sets off towards her goal. She can see it there, at the foot of the rainbow. Or she can see it a little way beyond. In the blue distance. Not far, not far.

But the end of the rainbow is a bottomless gulf down which you can fall forever without arriving, and the blue distance is a void pit which can swallow you and all your efforts into its emptiness, and still be no emptier.

D.H. Lawrence, *The Fox*

*The Rainbow*, a chronicle of three generations of Brangwens, records the development of their alienation, their estrangement from the land which once defined them, their confused desires and ambitions, their ambivalence towards each other—husband and wife, parent and child, lover and fiancé—within a definite socio-historical context such that Ursula’s life is far more complicated, her alternatives less defined, her desires less able to be articulated, then Will and Anna’s, as theirs are in relation to the anxieties which torment Tom Brangwen and his wife,
Lydia. Ursula lives not just in a more advanced society but in a society that has endured the complex and pervasive effects of industrialism, suffered the rise of science and the related questioning of religious faith, and experienced a devastating Boer War, the announcement, as it were, of the impending end of British imperialism. Thus for the modern reader it is perhaps Ursula who provides the greatest insight, for it is Ursula who most comprehensively experiences this world and to whom its values are communicated in what, to her, at times appears to be a decidedly foreign language. In turn, The Rainbow, as a work which so competently dramatizes this woman's traumatic life, is generally the most socially and psychologically perceptive of all Lawrence's novels: a veritable history of modern alienation such as was only briefly if as competently described in The Trespasser, and portrayed socially as little more than a backdrop in Sons and Lovers.

This history of alienation is not just a description of contemporary urban experience, however; it also depicts the breakdown of the traditional family unit, the social and religious values which once defined the family, and the consequently increased alienation of individuals, particularly women, seeking alternatives to the tyranny of male domination within the family and within society while at the same time searching for a progressive relationship and a place in that society so as to make manifest a potentially cohesive sense of identity. This quest, in The Rainbow, is
most extensive, and successful, for Ursula; it is as well central to the novel itself, the theme of which, Lawrence informed Edward Garnett (22 April, 1914), is "woman becoming individual, self-responsible, taking her own initiative." Clearly, that woman is Ursula, but what is not evident from the simplicity of the theme, as stated, is the myriad complications to which an individual is susceptible in undertaking such an endeavor. From the outset, for example, merely by leaving her family and rejecting that tradition in order to emigrate, as it were, to a fundamentally alien environment, Ursula severs all ties with the past, and in doing so alienates herself from her own sense of identity, without having the time or opportunity to replace that lost self-awareness. In a world of such rapid and extensive growth that by the turn of the century authors were finding it difficult to portray or even grasp a sense of the unified, complete individual—indeed such persons might then have become extinct—it is not surprising that as a character Ursula is so often self-contradictory, appearing at times actually to internalize characteristics she elsewhere abhors in others. As she experiments with various aspects of identity—passion and power, individualism and the dependency of relationships, logic and intuition—in an effort to achieve her ideal, she also acquires a certain aggressiveness so as to avoid the gravest danger in an industrial world: helplessness. Again, it is an aggressive—
ness criticized, and then deemed necessary.

These contradictions, the ambiguity of Ursula's character generally, reveal the multiplicity and confusion of the modern individual, the contemporary society, rather than, as Stephen Miko argues, authorial "uncertainty of direction and purpose."¹ Miko adds that although "we need not charge Lawrence with a major loss of direction," his "characteristically forceful prose" does falter during the presentation of Ursula's development, particularly in Chapters 12 and 13. He then presents an implied contradiction to that observation when he admits that "Ursula, representing a new generation and moving with the usual Brangwen force and sensitivity on her own quest, would look in precisely those places which her parents and grandparents did not explore," and that we "have in fact come to the place in Lawrence's career where he ... is beginning to make definite statements about those negative aspects of the outer world against which he was to fight the rest of his life."² If Lawrence falters, in other words, if Ursula is at times ambivalent, it is because this is not the restricted provincial world in which Paul Morel enacts his crisis of identity, but the world at large, a complex and often insidious socio-political landscape complete with modern bureaucratic processes of conformity, bourgeois versions of Darwinism, and a mechanized, conveyor-belt system of propagandistic education.

Understanding the context, then, we understand as well
that Ursula is Lawrence's first character to be of his own generation and moreover that, like Women in Love, the latter part of The Rainbow "took its final shape in the midst" of social unrest and confusion. Although it "does not concern the war itself," the novel, written just before and at the outset of WW I and taking place during the Boer War, is concerned, as is its successor, with the alienation inherent in contemporary experience as it affects the "profoundest experiences in the self," and with man's struggle "to know and to understand what is happening" in himself and in terms of his place within this repressive, ambiguous world. "We are now," Lawrence adds, "in a period of crisis," and if critics find fault with the uncertainty of direction, with the "continual, slightly modified repetition" in style and in character depiction and development, his "only answer is that it is natural to the author: and that every natural crisis in emotion or passion or understanding comes from this pulsing, frictional to-and-fro," this "struggle into conscious being." It should not surprise nor unduly concern us, therefore, as it does Miko, that Lawrence feels "a need to recapitulate the thematic concerns of the book by a ... series of parallels between Ursula and the previous generations," and that he "does seem to be feeling his way more than usual." What we must realize is that even to attempt so comprehensive an artistic dramatization of contemporary experience, of individual consciousness, of the
necessity for the individual to completely reassess the meaning of self-identity in such a social context, was to attempt something comparatively unique in fiction at that time. It is therefore understandable that Lawrence, who was himself involved in a similar struggle for self-awareness and independence, should portray Ursula so tentatively and with such equivocacy.

As to the parallelism, it is true that Ursula resembles her forebears in many ways. She succumbs to fantasy, creating an escapist, irresponsible Zauberland as did Anna, she tends to seek solitude in a way which recalls her father, she initially idolizes Skrebensky, a trait that characterizes several other Brangwens, she colours ambition with an optimism that is at times more romantic than determined or practical. In short, she repeats many of her ancestors' mistakes, at times appearing to be in danger of actually reliving their burdened, often unsuccessful lives. There are, however, authorial reasons for this. In some respects, as I will later discuss, Ursula is committing these errors of judgment for the first time because she, of all the Brangwens, is the only one to refute the mythology of tradition and rural life, the only one to be objective, comparatively so at least, in her assessment of what has always appeared to be the new alternative, the exotic urban society, that "far-off world of cities and governments and the magic scope of man, the magic land ... where secrets were made known and desires fulfilled" (9). Ursula has a
vision, as her ancestors have had for generations; the difference is that she is prepared to forfeit predictability, both social and psychological, in favour of the certainty, as she sees it, of her own ideals. Why it should be Ursula who emerges, rather suddenly, from a lineage characterized by insularity has to do, as I have suggested, with the specific time, not of her life within the novel, but of her creation. Paul and Siegmund may be contemporary figures, but Ursula moves beyond that essentially Victorian mentality, with a strength of conviction hopefully able to withstand an environment which previous characters have only superficially known.

Although Ursula may be confident that her ideals are attainable, what she seeks, at times blindly and unsuccessfully, are the means of reifying those ideals in a reconciliatory way, the result of which will be an appreciation and assimilation of all facets of self. To achieve this goal, to become "individual, self-responsible," Ursula must initially confront the traditions and values of both religion and family, and must eventually reject both. Taking "her own initiative" means inevitably rejecting the stability and security, such as it is, of family and entering "the man's world," because that is where further experience and knowledge through education are to be obtained. In doing so Ursula, responding to certain intellectual needs, sacrificing others, is doing what Paul Morel
is about to do at the end of *Sons and Lovers*, what Lawrence was beginning to realize entailed both necessity and uncertainty. It was necessary, he had written, in criticizing Hardy's characters, for example, to reconcile the conflicting demands of the individual and of society, for the only alternative seemed to be the anguish of loneliness which Tess, Jude, even Siegmund MacNair were incapable of enduring. However, the benefits of assimilation, of relating to what was essentially perceived as an insane social matrix, were not clear to Lawrence; that ambivalence and the lack of a sense of resolution which affected his own conviction are perhaps nowhere so graphically presented as in Ursula's stormy endeavors to balance personal ideals with moral convention and social responsibility.

To complicate matters, by moving beyond the rural Brangwen consciousness to embrace the modern world, Ursula does gain some insight into the "unknown," in itself a valuable asset in the attempt to more completely control her destiny and fulfill her potential, but in doing so she is forced occasionally to repress her instincts and emotions. Thus while someone like Tom suffers an ambivalent fear of and desire for further knowledge, Ursula finds herself experiencing a comparatively more destructive internal conflict, between instinct and intellect, self and society, an alienation that is exacerbated by those people with whom she wishes to relate, and to whom at one time or another she is attracted, especially Winifred Unger and Anton Skrebensky:
individuals notable for their attempts to repress significant and vital parts of themselves in order to achieve virtually the same goal as Ursula’s. The problem Ursula then faces is that by rejecting those persons to whom she once turned for insight and assistance, she is in danger of defining freedom internally, thereby divorcing herself from the community and actually becoming more isolated, more alienated than before, and more pathologically inclined to embrace a bourgeois concept of individuality in direct contrast to her own definition of self and independence. Certainly she cannot turn to the city itself as a source of knowledge when individuals prove unsatisfactory, for it is no longer the "faintly humming, glowing town" (SL, 511) towards which Paul Morel strides, but "an ashen-dry, cold world of rigidity, dead walls and mechanical traffic, and creeping, spectre-like people" (R, 457).

Ursula’s quest originates as an inheritance from her forebears: a significantly female desire for a broader "form of life," one which could extend beyond the narrow "blood-intimacy" relationship the men have had with nature. For generations the Brangwen woman has "faced outwards ... towards the activity of man in the world at large, whilst her husband looked out to the back at sky and harvest and beast and land." Listening to those "who spoke the other, magic language, and had the other, finer bearing, both of which she could perceive, but could never attain to," she never-
theless "strained her eyes to see what man had done in fighting outwards to knowledge ... strained to hear how he uttered himself in ... the battle that she heard, far off, being waged on the edge of the unknown ... She craved to achieve this higher being, if not in herself, then in her children ... She decided it was a question of knowledge ... education and experience" (9-10). The war Ursula eventually wagers is exactly this ancient female Brangwen conflict between "blood-intimacy" and "this higher being," between inner consciousness and external knowledge. Like her grandfather, she becomes involved from a fear that what she has known so far in her life, in itself traumatically unsatisfying, may in fact be all there is to know. With no plan, no idea as to what further "knowledge, education and experience" may offer in the way of personal fulfillment, she nevertheless has few qualms. Her progress, often erratic, is sustained by desperation and, in spite of failure, by the encouragement of some insight gained each step of the way, even when that insight only involves what she eventually rejects: the love of Christ, the dehumanization of teaching, the mechanical preconceptualization of college learning, the potentially repressive physical love of both Skrebensky and Winifred.

One of the keys, then, to development in a materialist world is articulation, and in this respect Ursula is the first to succeed, at least partially, in the attempt to acquire that of which her female ancestors had once only
dreamed. Although Tom is the pioneer in this process of modernization, his failure to proceed beyond curiosity is primarily the result of dismissing as unattainable the ability to reason perceptively and articulately. So, too, does Anna reject logic in favour of the pre-articulate rhythms of sensuality, and even Will's eventual stasis is the outcome of having "failed to become really articulate, failed to find real expression" (206). While Tom, perhaps, can find meaning in an inarticulate relationship with nature, Anna and Will's failure is in the end self-denying and consequently far more devastating. In a world whose god is the word, we are who we say we are. Expression is also necessary in repudiating what we do not want to become, and being able to articulate the reasons for that, as well as in communicating to others, because relationships are crucial in a society where isolation tends to be endemic. While lack of communication most affects Will and Anna, then, even Tom, with inadequate qualifications and no expertise, fails to satiate his curiosity concerning the unknown, while at the same time severing most connections with the land and the past. Almost from the outset, therefore, he is alienated, displaced, estranged even from Lydia, who "touches" him, but whose foreignness, the quality which initially attracts him, is ultimately a barrier to fulfillment.
When Tom first meets Lydia he is satisfied that she represents the unknown and that by marrying her he can return to nature, his instinctiveness and curiosity reconciled in a life at the Marsh with her by his side. Now, he feels, "was the unreality established at last ... A swift change had taken place on the earth for him, as if a new creation were fulfilled, in which he had real existence. Things all had been stark, unreal, barren, mere nullities before. Now they were actualities that he could handle" (32). If previously he had been nothing, "with her he would be real ... There was an inner reality, a logic of the soul, which connected her with him ... he would marry her and she would be his life" (40-41). Tom will never experience the unknown but as represented by Lydia that unachievable knowledge will be close to him, and he will relate to it with the reverence with which his forefathers related to the soil. What in fact happens, of course, is that Tom is not able so easily to reconcile the conflicts within himself or between him and his wife, for even to "know" her sexually he should know her intellectually, and yet he "knew her so little. They were so foreign to each other, they were such strangers" that all he can do is worship her, "holding her aloof from his physical desire, self-thwarting" (57). Even when they come "together in an elemental embrace beyond their superficial foreignness ... in the morning he was uneasy again. She was still foreign and unknown to him ...
When he approached her, he came to such a terrible painful unknown. How could he embrace it and fathom it? How could he close his arms around all this darkness and hold it to his breast and give himself to it? ... What was it then that she was, to which he must also deliver himself up, and which at the same time he must embrace, contain?" (58-59).

By perceiving Lydia as a representation of the unknown, as the "embodiment of all his inarticulate, powerful religious impulses" (20), and thus shirking the responsibility of firsthand experience, Tom is continuing in the Brangwen tradition of deferring to the woman "on all points of morality and behaviour. The woman was the symbol for that further life which comprised religion and love and morality. The men placed in her hands their own conscience ... They depended on her for their stability. Without her, they would have felt like straws in the wind, to be blown hither and thither at random" (19). The man, in doing this, can only define himself in sexual terms; to fail sexually will mean being devastated by anxiety, a sense of worthlessness and self-alienation, while even success does not necessarily mitigate these feelings, for sexuality tends to be divorced from consciousness. Attempts, therefore, to overcome repression, to move from alienation to self-awareness, must be frustrated because consummation is isolated from the rest of experience and from the potential for development. Initially, that is Tom's experience with Lydia; "he let
himself go from past and future, was reduced to the moment with her. In which he took her and was with her and there was nothing beyond" their relationship.

Even when Tom begins to become intellectually aware of Lydia, realizing that she might also be alienated, frustrated in her unsuccessful pursuit of self-fulfillment, he still cannot develop that awareness in intellectual terms. The best that can be accomplished is a consummation during which he no longer "did not exist to her nor she to him" (21), but instead, becomes sensitive to what she desires in order to achieve an orgasm, so that simultaneously they can experience "the transfiguration, the glorification" that moves Tom to such ecstasy. In itself that undeniably improves their relationship. Although such perspicacity is not sustained, in the interim Tom can be justifiably proud of having had the insight to respond to Lydia’s accusation that "'You only leave me alone or take me like your cattle, quickly, to forget me again ... You come to me as if it was for nothing, as if I was nothing there. When Paul came to me, I was something to him--a woman, I was. To you I am nothing--it is like cattle--or nothing’" (94). Her sexual (body) language is no longer a foreign language, perhaps, but still he "did not know her any better, any more precisely, now ... He did not understand her foreign nature, half German, half Polish, nor her foreign speech. But he knew her ... when she touched him, he knew her instantly, that she was with him, near him, that she was the gateway and the
way out" (96). But the way out of what? and to where? Tom
neither knows nor cares, and in that this is the result of a
lifelong ineptitude and consequent indifference to intel-
lectual matters, it is also the reason he in fact never
proceeds through that gateway.

Defined only sexually, then, Tom has reached the apogee
of his struggle for identity, achieving satisfaction through
sexuality as he once did through alcohol: "by obliterating
his own individuality" (28), by excluding, that is, all
other possible means of self-melioration. Where once he had
hoped that although alone he "was nothing," with Lydia "he
would be real" (41), in later life, estranged from her and
rejected by Anna, he must ask himself: "What was missing in
his life, that, in his ravening soul, he was not satisfied
... Was his life nothing? Had he nothing to show, no work?
He did not count his work," which itself no longer identi-
fies him, as it did his ancestors; "anybody could have done
it. What had he known, but the long, marital embrace with
his wife? Curious, that this was what his life amounted to!
At any rate, it was something, it was eternal ... But the
bitterness, underneath" persists; "there still remained an
unsatisfied Tom Brangwen ... What weariness! There was no
peace, however old one grew!. One was never right, never
decent, never master of oneself" (129).

If Tom rejects his ideals, fails therefore to achieve
any reconciliation of instinct and intellect, and is more or
less satisfied with the former, his immediate descendants, for all their apparently greater awareness of society and social aggrandizement, are hardly more successful. And yet their failure, or at least Anna's, is hardly the result of insufficient desire or ambition. From childhood she has been fiercely independent, forced to self-sufficiency from her own perception of herself as an outsider, a stepdaughter whose own mother rejects her and the memory of her biological father in favour of a foreigner, and yet beyond the Marsh herself very obviously an immigrant whose differences do not pass unnoticed by the provincial townspeople for whom even her name is something of an oddity. She responds with contempt: "Few people," she decides early in life, "were significant to her. They seemed part of a herd, undistinguished. She did not take people very seriously" (98). That contempt, however, is partly a facade; she is an independent individual who values her freedom and autonomy, but she is also insecure, avoiding other people from fear and mistrust, the consequence of having lived in the comparative isolation and security of the Marsh. Her earliest dilemma, therefore, involves the aspiration to experience the outer world and seek knowledge countered by her own fear of failure.

Anna nevertheless persists, because of a romantic recollection of her most memorable childhood experience: a visit to Baron Skrebensky, who for her represented the "real" world, the materialist world, and therefore comes to
reject her mother's devout Catholicism and Tom's lack of sophistication, as well as spiritual and rural life generally. To her Tom and Lydia are slaves to their respective faith and class background, both dependent in a reactionary way upon traditions which Anna dismisses largely because they cannot be satisfactorily rationalized. Knowledge is a matter of verbal communication, of questions which the school authorities are not about to answer, no more than is her mother, whose current experience comprises "strange, profound ecstasies and incommunicable satisfactions" (104), nor Tom, who becomes uneasy when she wants "to have things dragged into consciousness" (105). This frustrating search for answers, and rejection of those who will not or cannot respond, courageous as it might appear, is still mediated by insecurity.

Like Helena Verden, if not so intensely, what Anna really aspires to during adolescence is a state of romance, magic, mythos, an escape from intolerable strangers and vulgar circumstances. When Will arrives, in his "town clothes," slender and with soft white hands in contrast to the muscular, calloused farmers she has previously known, he seems to embody the culture and the romance of her fantasies. "Something strange had entered into her world, something entirely strange and unlike what she knew. She was curiously elated. She sat in a glowing world of unreality, very delightful ... She was aware of a strange in-

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fluence entering into her ... a dark enrichening influence she had not known before" (110). Such is the extent of her enthrallment that she even becomes interested in church architecture. "She was carried away. And the land seemed to be covered with a vast, mystic church, reserved in gloom, thrilled with an unknown Presence ... He talked of Gothic and Renaissance and Perpendicular, and Early English and Norman. The words thrilled her ... In him she had escaped. In him the bounds of her experience were transgressed: he was the hole in the wall, beyond which the sunshine blazed on an outside world" (113-14).

At first, neither of them is conscious of the other in sexual terms, Will's passion for things and self being similar to Anna's. When they do discover their sexuality, it is, in each, manifested in ways which will characterize their life together. Anna, like Tom, equates consummation with the natural world—she is aroused, for example, beneath the moon as he used to be in the fields—but unlike Brangwen, Anna has the ability and the compulsion to know Will, and not just intuitively, to attempt to understand the nature of his ambition, and his goals, to respond sexually in a way that strives to synthesize mental and physical consciousness. But that will never occur because just as Tom was incapable of articulating his sexual relations with Lydia, or of knowing her intellectually, so too does Will not understand who Anna is nor what she desires. To him she is a generalized abstraction, "the essence of life. She
existed as much when he was at his carving [of the Creation of Eve] in his lodging in Ilkeston, as when she sat looking at him in the Marsh kitchen. In himself he knew her. But his outward faculties seemed suspended. He did not see her with his eyes, nor hear her with his voice" (130).

To Anna this is a "negative insentitiveness to her that she could not bear, something clayey and ugly. His intelligence was self-absorbed. How unnatural it was to sit with a self-absorbed creature, like something negative ensconced opposite one. Nothing could touch him—he could only absorb things into his own self" (154). Again, it is a matter of understanding. Anna is at this point in her life an unconventional woman, striving to establish her own uniqueness and assert that individuality in physical and mental terms. Will, on the other hand, is bound to tradition and convention, a man for whom, from the outset, courtship and marriage have disrupted his orderly life, leaving him in the midst of a confusing array of "strange feelings, and passions and yearnings and aspirations" (150) which are only exacerbated by Anna's attempts to make him more intellectually aware, more critical of the fact that in worshipping abstractions and "caring nothing for humanity" (159), he is suppressing something of himself, both psychologically and physically. Thus he is insecure, dependent, and yet at times sexually aggressive, for he defines marital relationships only in terms of submission or domination. He can
neither comprehend his wife's unsatisfied sexual proclivity
nor think of uniting with her, for it is the Church that
receives his inarticulate passion. When Anna succeeds in
dampening that ardour, through ridicule, cynicism, denuncia-
tion, even his passion becomes frustrated. Thus while he
may be "glad to forfeit from his soul all symbols, to have
her making love to him ... he did not make love to her ...
He came to her fierce and hard, like a hawk striking and
taking her ... She wanted his eyes to come to hers, to know
her. And they would not. They remained intent, and far ...
and inhuman ... without tenderness ... like flames of anger
they flared at her and recognized her as the enemy" (162-
63).

Anna's reaction to this is to withdraw. Realizing
after months of conflict that the "final release" she has
desired with her husband is not possible because Will "could
not be liberated from himself" (182), she becomes determined
to achieve autonomy through motherhood. It is in fact her
pregnancy which allows her to subdue Will's penchant to
sexually dominate, for during that period she can, with good
reason, deny him a place in her bed. That devastates Will,
for as much as he would have Anna subservient, he depends
upon her "utterly," out of a terror, similar to hers, of the
external world, a world of "naked, lurking savages," a
"ponderous, massive, ugly superstructure" (193) within
which, were he separated from Anna, he feels he would be
"clinging like a madman to the edge of reality, and slipping
surely, surely into the flood of unreality that would drown him." Merely the thought of it "drove him mad, his soul screamed with fear and agony" (187).

Eventually the two compromise: if he does not try to dominate her, they can sleep together. What that means, of course, is that they will each provide the other security, and no more. Will retreats from the physical world back to his church, attempting to satisfy sexual desire by abstract consummation with her. When that fails, he is further reduced to the role of chapel caretaker and mechanized draftsman capable, even in his half-hearted endeavor to reassert himself artistically, of no more than comtemporar-ily irrelevant imitations of obsolete religious symbols. Anna similarly relinquishes hope for fulfillment--her quest for further knowledge--in favour of the security and physical satisfaction of motherhood. In the end, possessing neither the determination nor the objectivity to free herself from a repressive relationship, she rejects the conformist authoritarianism of education, the abstract symbolism of religion, yet never criticizes the conventions and traditional social expectations of matrimony and especially of maternalism. In fact, marriage is for her a form of insularity, the means of protecting herself from a world which terrifies her, a "vast, alien world which was not herself ... was always the unknown, always the unknown, and she clung fiercely to her known self" (166-67). It is not
surprising, therefore, that Anna eventually associates herself exclusively with motherhood. As with Tom, Lydia and Will, that singularity of self-awareness also eventually isolates her and turns her into a reactionary who refuses to accept "the existence at all of anything but the immediate, physical, common things" (353).

By the time of Ursula's birth, then, Anna has reached a willingness "to postpone all adventure into unknown realities. She had the child, her palpable and immediate future was the child. If her soul had found no utterance, her womb had" (206). Will is in virtually the same frame of mind. Reduced to inertia and the routine of meaningless work, his whole life "shifting its centre, becoming more superficial," he has, like Tom, "failed to become really articulate, failed to find real expression. He had to continue in the old form. But in spirit he was uncreated" (206). Both of them have regressed to the level of traditional parental functions; both have renounced the outer, modern world. In the end it is this renunciation, this privatization of religion in Will, this ahistorical and immaturesly personal sense of femininity in Anna, which condemns them both to an alienated stasis, a complacent oblivion to self and society which horrifies Ursula.

Her parents' complacency, their withdrawal, their passivity also provide the impetus for Ursula's own ensuing quest for independence, not so much as an act of rebellion but because with Anna's attention almost constantly being
given to one or another of the eight infants who follow, and Will’s pathological solitude, she feels at an early age that she has no one "in the world but her own self," and that in fact the rest of the world, by ignoring her, constitutes an "outward malevolence that was against her ... And very early she learned to harden her soul in resistance and denial of all that was outside her, harden herself upon her own being" (224). That experience, at the age of four, marks the genesis of Ursula’s self-assertiveness, in physical and intellectual terms, for although her relationship with her parents is physical, her awareness of rejection is conscious, as is her perception of Will’s subsiding but at one time prevalent desire to dominate. This insight may not be plausible in a child so young, but for Lawrence’s intentions it does provide both form and motive in the subsequent development of his protagonist.

As Ursula matures, she becomes aware of "realities," of the world beyond the Marsh as a source of edification much greater in scope and relevance, so far as she is concerned, than that obtainable within the cloistered Brangwen family. She also learns, however, of the suppression of individuality that world fosters, and yet she is able to retain her compassion rather than becoming cynical, especially with those persons, her sisters for example, in whom she perceives a comparable sensitivity. As the eldest child, she learns responsibility from the need to protect her younger
siblings while becoming aware, as she does so, of a desire for greater autonomy. And finally, she develops the basis of her ideal identity, a goal towards which she will progress steadfastly in the following years, a process which will begin with the satiation of a "passionate craving to escape from the belittling circumstances of life, the little jealousies, the little differences, the little meannesses ... She wanted to be with her equals, but not by diminishing herself ... So even as a girl of twelve she was glad to burst the narrow boundary of Cossethay, where only limited people lived. Outside, was all vastness, and a throng of real, proud people whom she would love" (263-64).

We realize, of course, that this is still an imagined world which Ursula desires, a world "measured by the standard of her own people: her father and mother, her grandmother, her uncles. Her beloved father, so utterly simple in his demeanour, yet with his strong, dark soul fixed like a root in unexpressed depths that fascinated and terrified her: her mother, so strangely free of all money and convention and fear, entirely indifferent to the world, standing by herself, without connexion: her grandmother, who had come from so far and was centred in so wide an horizon: people must come up to these standards before they could be Ursula's people" (264). This mythology, for it is that, largely the result of Ursula's interpretation of events related to her by others, and of the idealized perceptions of those individuals, does provide a certain bulwark between
her and the impending unknown, the need for which allows her temporarily to reconcile idealism with verity. In actual fact all three of the forebears just mentioned represent values and unfulfilled, repressed lives completely antithetical to herself, and yet the Brangwen history, much of which has been related from a point of view approximating, or potentially that of Ursula, is a source of security and hope in a society which is already forcing her to withdraw, to make herself appear "less than she was, for fear that her undiscovered self should be seen, pounced upon, attacked by brutish resentment of the commonplace, the average Self" (271).

It is characteristic of Ursula to persist, however, and as she does so, she realizes that the danger of repression, of conformity, and the figures of authority who disseminate those menacing principles of conduct are increasingly not to be avoided, certainly not by retreating to fiction. She must "move out of the intricately woven illusion of life: the illusion of a father whose life was an Odyssey in an outer world; the illusion of her grandmother, of realities so shadowy and far-off that they became as mystic symbols:—peasant girls with wreaths of blue flowers in their hair, the sledges and depth of winter; the dark-bearded young grandfather, marriage and war and death; then the multitude of illusions concerning herself, how she was truly a princess of Poland, how in England she was under a spell, she
was not really this Ursula Brangwen; then the mirage of her reading: out of the multicoloured illusion of this her life, she must move on" (268) if she is to become a fulfilled individual. Self, she understands, or perhaps at this age intuits, is a matter of acquiring experience in the "real" world, and the strength of conviction derived from objectivity and goals much more concrete and plausible than those which inform her before she leaves Cossethay to conquer that world. Illusion, a mythologized past, the enchanted world of romantic love stories do not provide security, only the means of avoiding the inevitable. She must adjust, while preserving the sanctity of self, and if security is not to be a part of the future, or even appears to be an obstacle to independence, she will forsake security. That, perhaps more than any other characteristic, is what radically differentiates Ursula from her forebears and from most of her peers.

Mythology, however, is not merely a contrivance of Ursula's in this novel; it functions, from an authorial perspective, on a larger scale, for more significant reasons than to point out her temporary fear of the unknown. If we look back, recalling the past as Ursula does, we discover mythology, certainly, but not used to project an idyllic pastoral alternative to the insidiousness of contemporary society, nor to resolve the contradictions of history. Rather, the mythology—that is, the idealization of rural and isolated, provincially urban society—serves through
contrast to dramatize the end of pre-industrialism, illuminating not content but discontent and the ways in which that discontent informs Ursula and affects her future. Historically, in *The Rainbow*, it is this discontent leading to the desire to discover an idealized "city of knowledge" which first motivates the characters to strive for urbanity, disassociating themselves, as they do, from the natural environment, and the past. In other words, reading backwards we can see that Ursula's predecessors move to industrialized society at the same time as it intrudes upon them, idealizing that unknown modern world and then discovering that it is not what they had envisioned. From Ursula's point of view, neither is the rural, which may in its simplicity and apparent harmony seem to be preferable, but which in fact, beneath the mythos, encompasses the history of a family disintegrating in the face of an industrialization with which they cannot contend, as much or even more from their own tendency to fancifulness in isolation (rather than confrontation) as from the actual effects of the socio-economic development itself.

Such ambivalence has characterized Tom, Lydia to a degree, certainly Will and Anna, and as we read the history of the latter it becomes obvious that their frustration, anxiety, incapability in many respects recall the earlier generation, often in similar phrases. At the end of his life "there still remained an unsatisfied Tom Brangwen"
(129); in middle age Will "in spirit" remains "uncreated" (206). To Anna, Will is initially a mysterious stranger; to Tom of course Lydia is a foreigner, but not only because she is literally an immigrant. Lydia accuses Tom of treating her brutally, making love to her in the way that cattle copulate; Anna similarly analogizes, using hawk as a metaphor. The similarities continue, extending well beyond coincidence to include, in fact, much of Ursula's adolescence. However, it is also possible to interpret these characters, their lives, their relations, more optimistically: to suggest that they have progressively succeeded in overcoming alienation, Will and Anna more than Lydia and Tom, and now Ursula more than her parents. From such sensibility the novel itself becomes a chronicle of achieved transcendence, as Leavis suggests when he writes that in The Rainbow we "watch the struggle towards self-responsibility in the individual—self-responsibility and a wider scope, things which entail a freer play of intelligence and a direct part in the intellectual culture and finer civilization of the age, the finer contemporary human consciousness ... the impulse to this development, as well as the vigour for it, comes from the life that is to be transcended."

That struggle, Leavis argues, begins with Tom, who in the "'depths of his stillness' ... contains, and lives, a resolution of the whole being."⁵

I agree that there is throughout the novel a continuous suggestion of fulfillment, of success, but it is difficult
for that optimism to be reconciled with what is clearly an antithetical and equally pervasive despair which cannot be ignored. If Tom achieves self-responsibility, why then does he die "unsatisfied"? And how can Leavis suggest, after citing Tom's resigned acceptance of the fact that the little he had achieved "was something, it was eternal," that the "recognition of success is there in the word 'eternal', as an examination of its use in The Rainbow will show." I contend that words such as "eternal" suggest immutability rather than ethereality, that what Tom wishes is no more than to be remembered, a common human aspiration. And indeed, he is not forgotten; he is recalled, in fact, through embellished nostalgia as if he had attained something greater than the agony of failure which he endures in middle age. The embellishment is part of the mythology; to ignore either is to establish Anna, Will and Ursula within a "living tradition" or continuation of Tom's nominal success, and to minimize, therefore, the angst, the alienation, the insecurity which characterizes these three individuals to an even greater degree than it does Tom. However, if we accept the optimism and the despair, we then understand that it is the successive alternation of mythos and reality which explains both the contradictions and the repetition. Succeeding generations bring with them into maturation little of value from the past, for the mythos is misleading and the actual, mostly reactionary consciousness progressively
irrelevant. Ursula must reject both in order to escape the cyclical nature of previous and her own early experience.

In the beginning is the mythos of the unchanging past: "it was enough for the men, that the earth heaved and opened its furrows to them, that the wind blew to dry the wet wheat, and set the young ears of corn wheeling freshly round about; it was enough that they helped the cow in labour, or ferreted the rats from under the barn, or broke the back of a rabbit with a sharp knock of the hand. So much warmth and generating and pain and death did they know in their blood, earth and sky and beast and green plants, so much exchange and interchange they had with these, that they lived full and surcharged, their senses full fed, their faces always turned to the heat of the blood, staring into the sun, dazed with looking towards the source of generation [the past], unable to turn around" (8-9). As industrialism approaches, but before it is an actuality, it too is idealized. The Brangwens, turning at last, gaze now beyond Ilkeston "as if they were expecting something unknown, about which they were eager," waiting with "an air of readiness for what would come to them, a kind of surety, an expectancy, the look of an inheritor" who need not be fearful because "heaven and earth was teeming ... and how should this cease?" (7).

That fearless optimism soon changes, however, for when industrialism does arrive, they are not inheritors; they are in fact initially astonished and disconcerted to find themselves "strangers in their own place" (12), but gradually
the commotion, "startling at first," becomes "a narcotic to the brain" (13). Thus, after the canal is completed, and then "a short time afterwards, a colliery was sunk on the other side of the canal, and in a while the Midland Railway came down the valley at the foot of Ilkeston hill, and the invasion was complete ... Still the Marsh remained remote and original, on the old quiet side of the canal embankment" (12).

That is not a realistic description. Far from being quiet, the Marsh in fact reverberates with the "shrill whistle of the trains ... the sharp clink-clink-clink-clink-clink-clink of empty trucks shunting on the line ... the rhythmic run of the winding engines ... a colliery spinning away in the near distance ...[all] announcing the far-off come near and imminent' (12-13). The Brangwens effectively suppress those sounds, as they do the "faint, sulphurous smell of pit-refuse burning ... the dim smoking hill of the town," the slag-polluted water, all of which are close enough that the machinery "vibrated in their hearts" (13; the canal in fact traverses their property). For them, the Marsh remains "in the sunny valley where slow water wound along in company of stiff alders, and the road went under ash-trees past the Brangwen's garden gate" (12). Trapped between mythos and the reality of a rapidly changing environment they are, like the colliers who are displacing them (495), in the process of repressing the adverse effects of industrialism, clinging
to the fiction of rural idyllicism (a fable they will relate to their grandchildren, thus perpetuating the myth) in an effort to survive. Yet even as they do so, their alienation intensifies, for what they are repressing are not so much external phenomena as their own responses to those phenomena, to the natural environment, to themselves.

This, we are told, is exactly what occurs in the generation following the arrival of the colliery: the generation of Alfred Brangwen’s offspring. The eldest runs away to sea and is never heard from again; Alfred Jr. ends up in a lace factory, working "stubbornly, with anguish" in an un challeng ing occupation, "crushing the bowels within him, adher ing to his chosen lot whatever it should cost" (14); Frank becomes a butcher, and soon after "he had taken over the butchery business, already a growing callousness to it, and a sort of contempt made him neglectful of it. He drank" (15), as will his younger brother, Tom, after he too loses that vital communion with the soil and is unable to replace it. There is in all of them a void, an estrangement now from both the past and the future, values and tradition. Tom, for example, while he clearly would have been inclined to other pursuits, is sent to school where he is "an unwilling failure from the first ... But he [like Alfred] took the infliction as inevitable, as if he were guilty of his own nature, as if his being were wrong, and his mother’s conception right. If he could have been what he liked, he would have been ... clever, and capable of becoming a gentleman"
That, too, is only illusion; in later life, although his two sons, in his eyes at least, become gentlemen (Tom Jr. because he lives in London, although he attains only "a sort of post" as assistant to an engineer; Fred because he reads Ruskin), Tom merely "seemed to mature into a gentleman-farmer" (242). In fact he is neither gentleman nor farmer, but caught between the two, in a mythic place only partly of his own creation.

Marvin Mudrick agrees that the Marsh is mythic; he does not use that term, but he does point out that what Lawrence describes certainly is not derived from history, nor was it intended as such. To the contrary, The Rainbow records "with a prophetic awareness of consequences, the social revolution whereby Western man lost his sense of community"; to interpret otherwise is to imagine "a unanimity of social feeling that never was and a potency of personal feeling that never could be, [except] under idyllic and perpetually recurring circumstances in the rural districts of the English Midlands up to, say, the turn of our century. But Lawrence presents no idylls. The community of The Rainbow ... is an abstraction from its individuals, who are ... just that, different and distinct from one another except when a strength of sympathy draws them together for moments out of the reciprocal alienations of individuality." 7 We should read the novel, then, "not as a record of historical process, with Wiggiston as the culmination of a real history of
social decline, but as mythology, where the 'history' is
deduced from the present and cast backwards into the past,"
with Marsh Farm mythically created "to fill that blank space
in the centre of Wiggiston, that human absence at the heart
of the modern community."  

Lawrence presents no idylls; The Rainbow is a mythology
rather than a history: both statements are true. Certainly
Lawrence, as omniscient narrator, does not present idylls;
from the description of the canal constructed in 1840 to the
final pages of the novel he is consciously and in consider­
able detail charting the process of community replaced by
industrial, decentralized urbanism, farmers and artisans by
"brittle" miners and factory workers. And yet, Tom and
Lydia are able to retreat from the contextual present to an
isolated communion with the natural world uninterrupted by
an expanding industry which we know exists, for Lawrence has
described its "invasion" of the Marsh. As their withdrawal
proceeds, in fact, they become "a law unto themselves,
separate from the world, isolated, a small republic set in
invisible bounds" (103). Lydia in particular is able to
remain "quite indifferent to Ilkeston and Cossethay, to any
claims made on her from the outside ... mistress of a little
native land that lacked nothing" (103), while Tom does
journey occasionally to the town, but a town only described
during his visits in terms of the traditional market-place,
the pub, a few acquaintances, a routine unchanging and
apparently inviolable.

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When Will enters this isolate domain, he is a foreigner, an apprentice in a lace factory, a member of the Nottingham branch of the family, itself as remote as Lydia's Polish relatives. When Anna becomes part of Will's world, eventually even she, once Tom's closest and most sympathetic ally, sees her father as a "man put apart with those whose life has [sic] no more developments" (128). However, particularly after Ursula is born, and in contrast to Anna and Will, living their stormy relationship, Tom is not described as an unhappy, isolated man, but rather, a wise and content individual, "blue-eyed and warm" (177). It is Will who now confronts the unknown, who now suffers the anxiety of isolation and ill-defined, perhaps unachievable potential, while Tom, "as he grew older ... remained fresh and his blue eyes ... full of light," in spite of his repressed yet extant fear of the unknown. "Things had puzzled him very much, so he had taken the line of easy, good-humoured acceptance. He was not responsible for the frame of things ... He became indolent, he developed a luxuriant ease" (242).

Ironically, progress finally intrudes even upon the sequestered Tom Brangwen, for it is a "great, raw gap in the canal embankment" (249) from which pours the raging flood waters that drown him. But even that--the literal description--is only presented later, in passing; the events leading to his death are described in a kind of romanticized Victorian language--one recalls, for example, the deaths of
Maggie and Tom in *The Mill on the Floss*, or even more appropriately, Quilp's unsuccessful wrestling match with the Thames near the end of *The Old Curiosity Shop*—during which it seems as if the forces of prehistorical nature have gathered to claim him. Tom is struck by "something in the water" with which he "wrestled and fought" (246) as if it were alive. Something else strikes his head, and he is vanquished. Even Lydia is perplexed when she sees the water—"Where did it come from? She did not understand" (247)—although it has been my experience that persons who reside near flowing water, particularly in regions characterized by heavy rainfall, are constantly aware of potential flooding, no matter how shallow or narrow the causeway, how fortified its embankments.

Tom, then, is caught as inextricably between the past and the present, the natural and the industrial, as are Anna and Will. He has attempted to retreat to the past because the present—the unknown—is too complex and incomprehensible, and yet he cannot achieve "intercourse between heaven and earth," that life held "between the grip of their knees" (8) his forebears knew, partly because the present is inescapable—he remains, long after he appears to have become complacent, still "afraid of the unknown in life" (242)—and partly because he allows himself certain modern luxuries, bourgeois luxuries which alter and eventually preclude intimacy with the land. He does not feel, as his ancestors did, the "pulse and body of the soil" clinging to
his feet "with a weight that pulled like desire" (8); he is a "gentleman-farmer ... Fred did most of the farm work ... He drove a good mare ... He drank in the hotels and the inns with better-class farmers and proprietors" (242) and usually he overimbibes. His only successful retreat, in fact, is to the "darkness of his own intoxication" (245), a state which, because it exacerbates his insensitivity to the natural environment, is as responsible for his demise as is the modern world whose canal waters drown him.

Alienated from himself, and from nature, he suffers the effects of another, a social estrangement as well: alienation from his sons, whom he admires but cannot understand, and more importantly, from Anna and Lydia, who describe him after death as having been "inaccessible ... inviolable, unapproachable ... beyond change or knowledge ... 'I shared life with you, I belong in my own way to eternity,' said Lydia Brangwen, her heart cold, knowing her own singleness. 'I did not know you in life. You are beyond me, supreme now in death,' said Anna Brangwen, awe-stricken, almost glad" (250-51). In death Tom is "a majestic Abstraction," the essence of mythos, a figure already being given attributes he never possessed and yet which will transform him into a kind of patriarch without whom the Brangwen clan feel they would by now have floundered, engulfed by the eroding forces of change.
III

We begin to perceive who is responsible for this mythos and why Lawrence, constantly undermining its intrinsic sentimentality and repression of truth, nevertheless permits it. Within the world of the novel knowledge, dramatized knowledge, mythology, family history would of course be narrated orally, from generation to generation, which is exactly how Ursula, too young to have been more than casually acquainted with him, comes to know her grandfather: from Lydia, and possibly from her mother. We are not told that Anna actually discusses Tom with her daughter, but we are aware of the tone with which such a tale would be imbued, for when she receives the news of her stepfather's death, she almost immediately forgets the degeneration of their relationship. She is swept back to a "girl of eighteen again, loving her father," and although she attempts to resist such nostalgia, she cannot help viewing Tom as one who embodied "the majesty of the inaccessible male" (250). Lydia, who had once withdrawn so completely from her husband that he had turned to Anna for companionship, recalls after his death that he had "made himself immortal in his knowledge with her," and she in turn had loved him "out of fulfillment, because he was good and had given her being, because he had served her honourably, and become her man, one with her" (258). Ursula, Lydia's "chief friend at this period" (254), sits for hours listening to her grandmother's tales of the past, filled with a "deep,
joyous thrill... Till her grandmother’s sayings and stories, told in the complete hush of the Marsh bedroom, accumulated with mystic significance, and became a sort of Bible to the child” (260).

This is how mythos is developed within the novel: through oral communication of events, details of which are often expurgated or embellished by the nostalgic quality of memory. It is my contention, therefore, following from this, and from other evidence previously discussed, that the entire novel is narrated as if from Ursula’s point of view, and that the events prior to her own life are not meant to be read as historical and chronological, but recalled, as Lydia recalls them for her granddaughter. The first half of the novel, then, is the accumulated family history as related to Ursula, although presented as apparently occurring while we read for the purpose of dramatic immediacy. Although I am arguing this to be true in the figurative sense only, it does correspond to the theme and the narrative direction of the novel: the development of a woman, of her sense of identity, to the point where she can possibly survive the devastating repressiveness of urban industrialism; the development, therefore, of an intellect and a sexuality graphically antithetical to her estranged, isolated, only partially fulfilled forebears.

While Tom, for example, from one point of view seems to have successfully withdrawn from that which he could not
develop within himself, and yet that which historically should have destroyed or at least crippled him—the "unknown" in reality encroaching with insidious and inescapable certainty upon his idyllic pastoral retreat—Ursula is depicted in terms as plausible and pragmatic as the characteristically idealistic Lawrence could provide. Her development is as well, therefore, in contrast to mythos, just as it is in contrast to "the old stable ego of character." She is "a new human phenomenon," a woman characterized by being rather than feeling, a woman who is unique and sympathetic and contemporary because of "what she is as a phenomenon ... instead of what she feels according to the human conception," for it is conception which is partly responsible for myth: the conception of how individuals should be, of the morals and values by which they should abide, and most importantly, of individualism itself: life in an intellectual and sexual vacuum. Here Lawrence makes his most significant point, for in presenting Tom's isolation and that of the colliers at the end of the novel, he is clearly suggesting that while the present is intolerable, in many respects the past was no different, for isolation and the resulting repression of identity or potential are in the end not social, but psychological. They are mediated, undeniably, by social environment, but they are states of mind, of self-perception, of "feeling," and the solution, therefore, must involve new states of mind, a new, contemporary ideology.
In other words, we are not meant to read the first half of *The Rainbow* as either history or mythology, but as both. In that way, through comparison, Lawrence contends non-didactically with the romanticism of mythos, the consequences of withdrawal (atavism, reactionism), and the contradictions of history: industrialism as beneficial to humankind versus industrialism as cruelly repressive; the sanctity of the individual versus patriotism, conformism, the necessity of bureaucratization; the sanctity of family versus the tendency and the necessity of industrialized workers to define themselves in terms of workplace or position, and so on. What remains, for us and eventually for Ursula, after absorbing and repudiating this mytho-history, are not values to be rejected, but the lessons of social history, of society revealed: hypocritical, senselessly traditional, contradictory, and of the individuals who have striven in vain and sometimes in madness to assimilate rather than confront these contradictions.

There is in French the term *dépaysement*: literally "uncountrying," leaving behind all that is familiar and all, therefore, that defines security. For individuals whose sense of self derives from place and tradition (historical continuity at any cost), *dépaysement* is a negative notion, for it implies a sense of alienating disorientation. To someone like Ursula, however, for whom tradition, (isolated) place, even security are cloistral, incarcerating terms,
dépaysement implies liberation, agreeable challenge and change. This particularly applies to Ursula when she realizes how little she has in common with the previous Brangwen generations except that initially tantalizing desire to escape, to withdraw into fantasy, a desire she must confront and eventually expunge as she does a similar attraction to Christian mythology. Lydia’s isolation, Anna and Will’s reactionism, even Tom’s ability temporarily to achieve a kind of instinctive intimacy with nature are not steps forward, nor achievements upon which Ursula can build her own life, for in her world there is no natural environment and there can be no avoidance of confrontation. The two worlds, then, between which she struggles are her ideals and contemporary urban reality, not the rural past and the urban present. Mythos, therefore, must be rejected if she is to escape the stasis and degeneration her parents have suffered, the direct result of having through ignorance and a desire for isolated individuality been trapped within the latter dilemma: the past-present, rural-urban dichotomy.

A final distinction between Ursula and her parents is that she comes to realize that the modern, man’s world is a business and professional world which has subsumed both art and religion in its own economic interests. No longer is the Church an autonomous institution, forsaking or participating in politics as it chooses; it is under the direct control of the State, and as such is either propagandistically used or made irrelevant. The "old duality of life,
wherein there had been a week-day world of people and trains and duties and reports, and besides that a Sunday world of absolute truth and living mystery ... this old, unquestioned duality suddenly was found to be broken apart. The weekday world had triumphed over the Sunday world. The Sunday world was not real, or at least, not actual. And one lived by action. Only the weekday world mattered" (283-84). It is interesting that Ursula, who pragmatically rejects the old religion, never considers artistry as a profession, for it too has been undermined by the weekday world, reduced to bestsellers, family portraits, light comedy and verse. Even Will, after twenty years as a draughtsman, can no longer dabble in aesthetics. He can merely reproduce, as his work has taught him, and then the only work which seems palatable is that which approximates the modern: that is, the commercially viable (355-56).

In the modern context, then, as Will intuits, the old world, the world of religion and aesthetics, is dead. After demythologizing the Brangwen past, therefore, it is logical that Ursula must question the relevance of Christianity, particularly as a guardian and communicant, like the educational system, of societal mores, and its attraction as an abstract, mystical phenomenon, akin to romantic fantasy. As a sanctuary from the weekday world, religion does provide security in the form of a respite from the pressures and anxieties of that world, but again, is it at the expense of
personal freedom and desire? Can Christianity be applied, as it never has been by the Brangwens, to the everyday world, or is it, in its mysticism, its prognosis of salvation after death (abstract immortality), merely another way of avoiding or, more abhorrently, passively accepting the present? Is a Christian, in other words, also caught between two worlds, unable to be assertive in either? And how is Christianity to be reconciled with the mythologies of other cultures, other knowledge generally (mathematics, science, history), all of which Ursula considers undeniable in the expedition of her proposed personality?

It is not a simple task, Ursula discovers, to refute or even criticize such a complex body of doctrine, particularly because in attempting to demythologize and therefore contemporize religion, she is also striving to pierce the mystique of the Brangwen family itself. Both are isolated concepts from which she is able to learn little that can be directly applied to her own life. "To her, Jesus was beautifully remote, shining in the distance, like a white moon at sunset" (275); her ancestors are similarly "extraordinary, out of the ordinary," abstract figures who "wanted the sense of the eternal and the immortal" and therefore "shrank from applying their religion to their own immediate actions" (274). But while the contradictions, fears, repressiveness of at least her immediate forebears are fairly obvious, religion often cannot even be interpreted literally, and when it is, that translation is unacceptable in that it
specifically prohibits the materialism, the sense of pride, the will Ursula feels are fundamental to her proposed development. It denies the flesh in favour of a ritualized celebration of the spirit, thus denying individuals the hope of becoming "perfect in body and spirit, whole and glad in the flesh, living in the flesh, loving in the flesh, begetting children in the flesh, arrived at last to wholeness..." (281). Because Ursula defines knowledge of the unknown as experience of the physical, material world, it is in its denial of this that religion comes to be finally rejected. Although anxious and insecure about the future, as she becomes aware of herself as a "separate entity in the midst of an unseparated obscurity," she is convinced that "she must go somewhere, she must become something" (283) in order to avoid both the conformism and the stasis which, amongst other institutions, religion seems to advocate. "Only the weekday world mattered. She herself, Ursula Brangwen, must know how to take the weekday life. Her body must be a weekday body, held in the world's estimate. Her soul must have a weekday value, known according to the world's knowledge" (284).

There remains, however, "some puzzling, tormenting residue of the Sunday world within her" (284), which is not traditional Christianity, but her own interpretation of Christ developed to meet, in her adolescence, the one form of desire which the weekday world has yet to satisfy: her
evolving sexuality. Rejecting Christ as resurrected spirit, she "craved for the breast of the Son of Man, to lie there." Knowing that it "was a betrayal, a transference of meaning, from the vision world, to the matter-of-fact world ... ashamed of her religious ecstasy" (286), she cannot help succumbing to the bliss of that ecstasy. "Jesus—the vision world—the everyday world—all mixed inextricably in a confusion of pain and bliss. It was almost agony, the confusion, the inextricability. Jesus, the vision, speaking to her, who was non-visionary! And she would take his words of the spirit and make them pander to her own carnality ....All the time she walked in a confused heat of religious yearning. She wanted Jesus to love her deliciously, to take her sensuous offering, to give her sensuous response" (287).

Confused, bitter, knowing that such mysticism can only impede self-development, she nevertheless cannot deny her sexual desire, and only turns from Christ as lover when she is introduced to a more concrete, immediate, but for a time no less idealized successor: Anton Skrebensky. Her final rejection of religion, in fact, occurs when the two of them make love in a church (303-4).

The idealization of Skrebensky is derived from intense sexual desire, obscuring from the outset what is nevertheless obvious to Ursula, that he "seemed simply acquiescent ... even fatally established ... in the fact of his own being, as if he were beyond any change or question" (291). Because she wants to interpret this aloofness as evidence of
self-awareness and security, and a welcome change, therefore, from the obsequiousness which characterizes most people she has previously met, "Ursula thought him wonderful, he was so finely constituted, and so distinct, self-contained, self-supporting ... She laid hold of him at once for her dreams" (292). He appears also, as Lydia was to Tom, and Will to Anna, a somewhat exotic member of cosmopolitan society, and a projection, therefore, of her ideals, in that he gives form to her previously abstract sense of future and confused conceptualization of self-potential.

"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" (293). In this respect Ursula seeks the unknown in another person, as have Tom and Anna. However, while Tom withdraws after having failed, through fear and lack of intellectual experience, to know the unknown, and Anna, incapable of understanding Will's spiritual world, partly because she destroys his relationship to it, similarly retreats to motherhood, Ursula will reject Skrebensky in favour of acquiring firsthand experience of that material world she initially thinks her idealized lover represents.

Such an act will not be without complications, however. To free herself of Skrebensky, Ursula must also counter her own sexual yearning, and her naiveté, with all the strength of intellectual awareness she possesses, for this man is
worldly, sexually proficient, and in his complacency threatens to suppress her sense of self as he has suppressed his own. He represents security, and yet at the same time depersonalized power of the kind that intimidates Ursula at school. On the one hand, therefore, she waits for his kiss "like the Sleeping Beauty in the story" (299), but when it arrives she is aware of Skrebensky "asserting his will over her, and she kissed him back, asserting her deliberate enjoyment of him ... each playing with fire, not with love" (302). Even though desire at times overwhelms objectivity, it is in fact her idealism which rescues her, for even in sexual terms she knows what she wants, what she feels is possible, and can therefore criticize Skrebensky for not rising to that potential.

Her determination, then, is derived from a recognition, but not an acceptance, of the way things are. She is still a romantic schoolgirl able to perceive magic in the natural world and feeling at times that "if only she and Skrebensky could get out, dismount into this enchanted land ... Then they would be enchanted people, they would put off the dull, customary self" (305). Given her own self-respect, however, it can be assumed, I think, that what she really means is for Skrebensky to "put off" his "dull, customary self," to replace the vacuity of self-complacency, repression and passivity with something more vital, something to which she could respond sexually and intellectually in a more satisfying way. But he will remain what he is, defined by his
position or role as a member of an abstraction called nationhood, willing to die for that concept. "I belong to the nation and must do my duty by the nation," he tells her, and if the nation were to no longer require his services, he would "do what everybody else does ... Nothing" (311).

What is of particular significance for Ursula is that Skrebensky is incapable of appreciating her "body and soul together, the man's body and soul wistful and worshipping the body and spirit of the girl, with a desire that knew the inaccessibility of its object, but was only glad to know that the perfect thing existed, glad to have had a moment of communion" (316). Lawrence presents that ideal from Skrebensky's point of view, but it is his own, and Ursula's, for Skrebensky does not even realize that the object of his sexual covetousness is in fact inaccessible; that is: ultimately a unique individual with whom he may commune, but whom he cannot possess (oppress) in a materialistic way. Their relationship, then, becomes "a magnificent self-assertion on the part of both of them," and while Ursula appreciates that there is nothing to be gained "from such a passion but a sense of his own maximum self, in contradiction to all the rest of life ....Nevertheless, it was begun now, this passion, and must go on, the passion of Ursula to know her own maximum self" (303).

Again we see how Ursula differs significantly from Anna
and Tom. For them, it was the intellectual (spiritual) partner who came from the outside to the Marsh, bringing, they assumed, the knowledge necessary to complement their sexuality and satiate their curiosity. Ursula, on the other hand, is primarily motivated not by sexuality, as were Anna and Tom, or by religion or family tradition, but by intellectual curiosity and a quest for enlightenment such that she must forsake all forms of security, even marriage. "She wanted to let go. She wanted to reach and be amongst the flashing stars, she wanted to race with her feet and be beyond the confines of this earth ... leap from the known to the unknown" (317-18), and she wants to venture forward "body and soul together" (316). To achieve that she must escape the inertia of her relationship with Anton, of "his will and her will locked in a trance of motion, two wills locked in one motion, yet never fusing, never yielding to one another" (318). However, to know herself—that is, to test her potential—and to free herself of Anton's aggressive insecurity, which she does beneath the moon at her uncle's wedding, Ursula is forced to resist his cold, impersonal power with a similar kind of ruthlessness, the force of which terrifies her. "Had she been mad," she asks herself afterwards; "what horrible thing had possessed her? She was filled with overpowering fear of herself, overpowering desire that it should not be, that other burning, corrosive self. She was seized with a frenzied desire that what had been should never be remembered, never be thought
of, never be for one moment allowed possible" (322).

Ursula's distaste is commendable, but she has had no choice, just as she will have no alternative as a school-teacher but to again become ruthless, realizing, the second time, what the novel itself makes very clear throughout: for an individual in a peremptory culture to resist the tendency to conformity, depersonalization and tedious work is difficult; for a woman avoidance of this is even more complex, for it means confrontation on two fronts: the masculine, intellectual and the feminine, sexual. To defeat Skrebensky, for he is both sexually powerful and cunning in the rational, worldly ways he has learned, Ursula must "limit and define herself against him, the male," becoming "cold and hard and compact," and yet she must not lose sight of her "maximum self, female," for that is what she is, and for what she is fighting: a self "in supreme contradistinction to the male" (303, 320). She must discover the masculine, rational world, and conquer it as opposed to being conquered by it, while remaining a woman. The alternatives are impersonal cerebral indomitability, such as defines Winifred Unger, or the sexual complacency of someone like Anna.

Ursula suffers, in other words, and will continue to suffer a uniquely female dilemma. To preserve and develop her femininity in a truly independent manner, she must resist male domination, and yet because resistance is a
matter of combating a masculine will with a corresponding aggressiveness, as she does with Skrebensky, the very act of resistance threatens her femininity from within. On the other hand, not resisting his oppressive compulsion to subjugate would have meant suffering defeat both intellectual and sexual. To triumph cognitively, then, is to at least preserve half an identity, as Ursula is beginning to understand. Confused, self- alienated, at times unsure of her latent capability, at others fearful of that same potency, she is for a while traumatized by the awareness that she has forsaken the traditional female role, becoming in some respects what she will later criticize in Winifred Unger, and in men. It is not in Ursula’s nature, however, to be subservient. Having responded to Skrebensky from sexual compulsion and a sense of insecurity, an even stronger self-respect assumes authority: a sense of self which must prevail if life is to transcend subservience or conflict. More than that, Ursula understands that as a docile servant of an abstract and repressive social order Skrebensky represents an impersonal force, a nullity potentially more devastating than his overbearing sexuality. While instinctively capable of confronting the latter, against this more momentous threat Ursula feels "an agony of helplessness. She could do nothing. Vaguely she knew the huge power of the world rolling and crashing together, darkly, clumsily, stupidly, yet colossal, so that one was brushed along almost as dust. Helpless, helpless, swirling like dust! Yet she wanted so
hard to rebel, to rage, to fight. But with what?" (327).

Ursula decides the answer is knowledge, and experience, the first of which, concomitant with an "all-containing will in her for complete independence, complete social independ­ence, complete independence from any personal authority, kept her dullishly at her studies" (334). As to the second, even though she still naively believes, wants to believe at this point, that her femininity is her strength, "and what she could not get because she was a human being, fellow to the rest of mankind, she would get because she was a female ... she was sufficiently reserved about this last resource. The other things should be tried first. There was the mysterious man's world to be adventured upon, the world of daily work and duty, and existence as a working member of the community. Against this she had a subtle grudge. She wanted to make her conquest also of this man's world. So she ground away at her work, never giving it up" (334).

Here we have further evidence of Ursula's confusion, as well as of goals idealistically held yet pragmatically sought, of real circumstances accurately perceived yet coloured by romance and pride. On the one hand, she "knew that soon she would want to become a self-responsible person and her dread was that she would be prevented" (334); that against the forces which would prevent her, she is relative­ly insignificant. On the other hand, however, she views the weekday world fancifully, a world still unknown and as such
one within which the individual is, in her mind, socially responsible, able to contribute to the improvement of mankind, and a world, while recognized as the enemy, reduced in that capacity to individuals rather than the monumental, abstract force it is. In that capacity, she feels it can be vanquished as she has vanquished Skrebensky. In other words, Ursula’s recognition of the necessity of education and encounter is accurate, and evidence of an astute and discriminating mind, but acumen alone, just as feminine pride or determination alone, is not sufficient. Lacking social experience, she cannot know exactly of what she herself is capable within society. Her demand for autonomy, therefore, while a stubbornly-held goal, is also at this point idealistic (as we observe when she initially enters the schoolroom as a teacher), and her apprehension of the probability for success thus ranges from inevitable to hopelessly impossible.

From observing her parents, the local congregation, her teachers and classmates, herself and Anton, and later, Winifred Unger, herself and her colleagues as teachers, Ursula is becoming aware of what she does not want to be, personally and socially. While this variety of insight eventually contributes to a realistic rather than romantic self-insight, before that occurs Ursula's dilemma is ironically complicated, her alienation intensified. The irony is graphically made evident when she initially rejects Skrebensky for having no identity except as a passive
instrument of his country. "'It seems to me,'" she informs him, "'as if you weren't anybody--as if there weren't anybody there, where you are. Are you anybody, really? You seem like nothing to me'" (311). But Ursula, too, has no identity, except in relation to the past, to nature (the Marsh), to family and religion, all of which she has rejected. Standing between those sources of identity and cosmopolitan society, in which accomplishment is the prerequisite to a new individuality, she has only her ideals and a determination sufficient to counter traditional social expectations in pursuit of those ideals. She can describe in theory what she wants to be--an autonomous synthesis of intellect and femininity--but until she attempts to reify that abstract self-conceptualization she does not even comprehend what autonomy means.

When she conquers Skrebensky, for example, she discovers that her triumph is her independence, but that without a concomitant sensitivity to others, that freedom is a brutal phenomenon, just as strength of will in the form of domination is not the type of strength she desires. But again, this insight defines what Ursula does not want to become. She will not achieve a positive personality until she has taught school; in the interim she continues to idealize others, as she originally did Skrebensky, seeing, hoping to perceive in them a reflection of her future self. It is for these reasons she so eagerly responds to Winifred
Unger, and in turn so quickly rejects her.

Ursula is attracted to Winifred at a time when, as I have suggested, "inflamed in soul," she was "suffering all the anguish of youth's reaching for some unknown ideal, that it can't grasp, can't even distinguish or conceive. Mad-dened, she was fighting all the darkness she was up against" (353), when out of that darkness appears an apparently mature, experienced, independent and yet feminine woman who, Ursula learns, has rejected religion and the inherent, self-serving, depersonalizing tendencies of men for reasons similar to her own and even more articulate. In Ursula's eyes, Winifred is as "proud and free as a man, yet exquisite as a woman" (337): the manifestation of her own ideal.

Separated from the schoolmistress, however, Ursula is able to balance sexual and adolescent idolization with critical objectivity, realizing that the older woman has no life of her own, but is a compilation of eclectic, secondhand rhetoric, abstractly intellectual, devoid of any real feeling or vitality. Like the men she herself criticizes, Winifred unwittingly makes "everything fit into an old, inert idea" (343), reducing life to a short list of desires either attained by early adulthood or dismissed (repressed) as unattainable.

For Ursula, at an impressionable age and yet, when first impressions prove incapable of scrutiny, easily disillusioned, it is this cynicism of Winifred's, her inertness, her lack of ideals and therefore of self-challenge and
progress which disappoint. Like Tom Brangwen Jr., Winifred has "come to a stability of nullification" (344), living each moment "like a separate little island, isolated from time" (345), and ultimately, from humanity, seeing others, in a selfish, self-gratifying way, as reflections of herself. Certainly she does not live for humanity; again like Tom, she "worshipped the impure abstraction, the mechanisms of matter. There, there, in the machine, in service of the machine, was she free from the clog and degradation of human feeling. There, in the monstrous mechanism that held all matter, living or dead, in its service, did she achieve her consummation and her perfect unison, her immortality" (350).

It would not be an exaggeration at this point to suggest that much of what Ursula is rejecting in Winifred she is rejecting in herself as well. The significant difference between the two, or between Ursula and others she has idolized--her parents, Anton, and later, Maggie Schofield--is that in not feeling secure enough to absorb contradictions nor entrenched (apathetic) enough to ignore them, Ursula is constantly overwhelmed by others and then almost immediately fearful of the potential danger of being overwhelmed. It is both the restlessness of her struggle for autonomy, then, and the tenuousness of adolescent self-comprehension which in the end are responsible for her skepticism. The objectivity derives from her determination to achieve her ideals and from her perception of herself,
and others, in terms of the future: of development, knowledge, accomplishment, and most importantly, of social identity, for that is all she feels she can at this moment attain. Having resisted Skrebensky's lust in essentially intellectual (masculine) terms, having admired and then rejected Winifred in a similar manner, she feels she has effectively nullified her own femininity, and that "to remember what she had been then [as a younger woman] ... was remembering a dead self ....The vividest little flame of [sexual] desire was extinct ....The tiny, vivid germ that contained her real self" (357)—that is, her feminine self—lost forever.

In a sense that is both true and not true, perceptive, therefore, and self-pitying. On the one hand she feels, as seventeen year old adolescents are apt to, that failed relationships reflect some sort of intrinsic deficiency, some kind of cynical perversity which, while it is a possibility, is not at this point one of her characteristics. To the contrary, the evidence suggests that she has not even lost the passion and sensitive if romantic vitality which informed her as a girl; in fact, "the young loving self she mourned for" (357) is not a sexual or humanistic personality now deceased, but that romantic self which is the source of her idealism, a self which, on the eve of imminent and complete severance from family and childhood, about to pursue her future in a foreign culture, she fears she has lost, and in fact almost does lose.
IV

Having disassociated herself from the past because of a need to establish an identity that is unique and more contemporarily relevant, Ursula soon recognizes, once she begins teaching, that idealism alone is deceptively fragile, providing no protection from the painfully concrete, dehumanizing school environment. She must acquire a shield to protect her inner self, "her own world of young summer and flowers" (408) and the only shield available is the indomitability of will which characterizes her colleagues and the educational system generally. Although she vows that she will not submit to that kind of tyranny, by the time she resigns, she "carried away from the school a pride she could never lose. She had her place as comrade and sharer in the work of the school ... she was one of all workers, she had put in her tiny brick to the fabric man was building, she had qualified herself as co-builder" (425). These terms—pride, place, comrade and sharer, one of all workers, co-builder—describe an identity, a sense of belonging in a relevant way, of being a part of society, even of a progressive society. The school may be oppressive and dehumanizing, a prison, but it is also "hard, stark reality ... which she had never known" (373) before, a "prison where her wild, chaotic soul became hard and independent," and her "real, individual self drew together and became more coherent" (407).

Clearly, Ursula has attained a sense of self, of
reference to society, even of camaraderie not by changing the educational system, but by acquiescing to its demands. Is that a contradiction? Is Ursula, for all her optimism, her idealism, becoming, like Skrebensky, a petty subjugator who within a larger context is powerless, apathetic, a "hard and independent" rationalist like Winifred Unger? Probably, in that by striving so desperately for a singularity of character, she has over-identified, extended her intellect too far at the expense of passion and sensuality. She must, therefore, and indeed does, in order to return to her envisioned self, experience a further educative process in which she once again severs connections, finding that path between idealism and idolization, optimism and despair which she is determined to follow. In the interim a significant question arises: is this exaggerated will, this acquiescence to "impure abstraction" preferable to no will at all? and the answer is probably a qualified affirmative, for with no will an individual is at the mercy of tyrants, whereas Ursula, by knowing them, "would serve them that she might destroy them" (406). She of course will not destroy them, but she is aware, I think, of what she is doing. Belonging, even in such an institution, is preferable to not belonging, as The Trespasser so graphically reveals; power, even the power of tyrants, is better than being powerless; real identity, even the acquired social identity of school teacher, is of more value than abstract idealism. And it is
clear that whether or not Ursula can redirect or reformulate that power, she is still more of an emotional, spiritual human being than, say, Winifred Unger. That is why Ursula leaves the school; she has not worshipped at the altar of the machine but used that machine as a means of self-education, just as she will attempt, less successfully, to use college.

Awareness and critical objectivity, then, are not lacking in Ursula; what might be deficient is her ability to use in a humanistic, self-assertive and yet still assimilative manner these newly acquired skills and this burgeoning independence and self-insight. Her goal remains, and as Miko points out, "the fact that she is gaining victories over herself implies that she might achieve it." Thus she is not, as he contradictorily suggests, merely "learning to be tough in order to function in a brutalized world"; she is attempting to become an individual within a society which in order to progress economically tends to subjugate personality in favour of the more efficient process of mass production. Even Lawrence is undecided as to how in reality Ursula's goal can be attained, but what he is certain about at this point is that the alternative--isolation--is worse than the effects of assimilation. So long as one does not succumb to apathy, so long as one retains one's ideals, change can occur, but only from within society.

Even though Ursula does not destroy the man's world, she does survive it, with her ideals more or less intact if
at times repressed. It is not easy. "Always the shining doorway ahead; and then, upon approach, always the shining doorway was a gate into another ugly yard, dirty and active and dead. Always the crest of the hill gleaming ahead under heaven: and then, from the top of the hill only another sordid valley full of amorphous, squalid activity ... Yet she was always Ursula Brangwen. But what did it mean, Ursula Brangwen? She did not know what she was." She only knows what she wants to achieve: "not limited mechanical energy, nor mere purpose of self-preservation and self-assertion," but "consummation, a being infinite. Self was a oneness with the infinite. To be oneself was a supreme, gleaming triumph of infinity" (436-37, 441), which thus far she has been incapable of achieving for neither the man's world nor, in her relation with Skrebensky, her woman's world have been satisfactorily liberating experiences. She "had made a strong, cruel move towards freeing herself. But having more freedom she only became more profoundly aware ... that somewhere, in something she was not free. And she wanted to be" (406).

Before becoming a teacher, Ursula has known a definite loss of innocence, and a move from fantasy, but not a loss of idealism or even of an imaginative romanticism of that perceived potential. Nor will she until after the teaching experience which, while it is an alienating encounter with an imperious culture, allows her to separate realistic
ideals from romantic ones, and in doing so allows her to progress from "a wavering, undefined sensibility only, without form or being" (335) to a "real individual self" which "drew together and became more coherent during these two years of teaching" (407). However, the alienation and the actualization of ideals both derive from this venture, and the former, always threatening to overwhelm the possibility of the latter, makes this the most crucial period of Ursula’s life.

The decision to apply for a teaching position isolates Ursula and disorients her, making her feel like "a foreigner in a new life, of work and mechanical consideration" (406). Although her goal remains fixed, her immediate actions seem directionless, the quantity and quality of freedom achieved so far, while of some importance, appears comparatively small and, ironically, seems to have been gained at the expense of real choice, as she realizes that freedom in an industrial society is in the end only the liberty to select from a finite number of more or less equally oppressive alternatives within restrictive boundaries. Because outside those boundaries is the debilitating exile of her parents, Ursula will continue to persist. "She was in revolt. For once she was [completely] free she could get somewhere. Ah, the wonderful, real somewhere that was beyond her, the somewhere that she felt deep, deep inside her" (406).

There is a dilemma here, however. If freedom lies, not backwards, nor outwards, beyond the contemporary, in the
isolated Marsh of the past, but forward, embracing accomplishment and cognizance, Ursula must continue to gain social experience. She must be loyal to herself, relentless in pursuit of her future, and yet for the current venture to be meaningful she must during that experience be socially responsible as well. On the one hand she is determined never to submit to the shackles of work: "Why should she give her allegiance to this world, and let it so dominate her, that her own world of warm sun and growing, sap-filled life was turned into nothing? She was not going to do it. She was not going to be prisoner in the dry, tyrannical man-world" (410). But that sun-lit world still retains something of the romantic dreams of adolescence, and, as she soon discovers, it lacks the substance necessary to contend with this world. The more she recalls of her childhood, the less capable she is in the present, and yet the more she refutes the imaginative element of aspiration, the more susceptible she becomes to the tenets and methods of authoritarianism. When she beats the student William, for example, it is with an intensity which shocks the very headmaster who advised her to forsake ideals for pragmatic discipline in the first place. While not nearly so affected by her extremism as she was when she thwarted Skrebensky, Ursula again rationalizes her actions as being necessary to her own freedom, and her survival. "The children had forced her to the beatings," she attempts to convince herself.
"She had come to them full of kindness and love, and they would have torn her to pieces ... she was not going to be made nought, no, neither by them, nor by Mr. Harby, nor by all the system around her. She was not going to be put down, prevented from standing free" (405-06).

Having decided that she cannot "escape from this world of system and work, out into her fields where she was happy" (410), she defines her role within the system as both a responsible one, in psychological and political terms, and a subversive one. Her existence is to be defined by her position "as a working member of the community" (334), a "recognized member with full rights there" (410), and yet in accepting her place in society, she would be "only the more its enemy" (410), for she wants "to make her conquest also of this man's world" (334). One questions the nature of that subversion, however, and exactly what she is in danger of subverting. While admitting to the tedium of teaching, she at times "enjoyed getting into the swing of work of a morning, putting forth all her strength, making the thing go" (407). But what kind of strength, what sort of enjoyment, for earlier she had decided that her duty as a teacher is to "bring them all," her students, "into subjection. And this she was going to do. All else she would forsake," even if that means becoming "hard and impersonal, almost avengeful on herself as well as on them ....She would assert herself for mastery, be only teacher. She was set now. She was going to fight and subdue" (395-96), not the system, but
the students and, it would seem, her own ideals.

Ursula can convert to subversiveness, however, no more than she can be subservient, for the same temperament which prevents the latter is in its self-orientation too politically naive to allow her to pursue the former. It is this complex amalgam, then, of acumen and naivété, pragmatism and idealism which allows Ursula, almost fortuitously, to stumble and struggle through the course of her abbreviated teaching career. She acts, not subversively, to undermine the values of the educational system, but from self-interest, using whatever means are available to protect herself and preserve a vision of a self-conceived identity meant to contain both the insight of the present and the passion of the past. What she gains from the present is an appreciation of the consequences of industrialism, previously unknown or only suspected, which she will not attempt to alter, but only to avoid within herself: apathy, self-loathing, humiliation, dehumanization, insensitivity, cynicism, the desire to gain power through domination. The details of what is perhaps the most insightful, the most masterfully portrayed section of both The Rainbow and Women in Love reveal the complexity of this experience and the confusion which both Ursula and Lawrence suffer.

At the outset, in spite of previous, albeit limited edification, Ursula regards the teaching profession, and her projected aptitude within it, with a bias that is somewhat
fancifully optimistic. Unlike other teachers who "were always so hard and impersonal" (367)—perhaps for good reason; she too becomes "hard and impersonal, almost avengeful" (395)—she "would be personal ... She would make everything personal and vivid, she would give herself, she would give, give, give all her great stores of wealth to her children, she would make them so happy, and they would prefer her to any teacher on the face of the earth" (367).

In contrast to Winifred's abnegation of feeling Ursula believes that if she can be a passionate teacher she can escape the mechanized tedium of work and thereby, through increased self-fulfillment, achieve independence. Within minutes of actually entering it, however, the school is a prison, a "new world, a new life, with which she was threatened. But still excited, she climbed into her chair at her teacher's desk" (372). An hour of facing fifty children subdues that excitement; she feels instead as if "she could not breathe: she must suffocate, it was so inhuman. They were so many, that they were not ... individual children, they were a collective inhuman thing" (376-77). From little more than appearance, the cloistered feeling, the dark, dismal atmosphere, she understands that this, "which she had never known till to-day, and which now so filled her with dread and dislike ... this prison of a school was reality ... She winced, feeling that she had been a fool in her anticipations. She had brought her feelings and her generosity to where neither generosity nor emotion were wanted.
And already she felt rebuffed, troubled by the new atmosphere, out of place" and yet even more irrevocably removed from her past, her family, her childhood and adolescence, her origins, all of which now "seemed so far off, so lost to her" (373).

Because her as yet tenuous identity depends so much upon her goal, itself conceived during adolescence, Ursula nevertheless clings to the past, not romantically or nostalgically now, but more as a means of fixing herself to something concrete as she faces an unknown future. She does not wish to return to the past, only to remember from where she has originated, why she is here, where she is going. That sense of self is all she has; without it she "was nobody, there was no reality in herself, the reality was all outside of her, and she must apply herself to it" (373). However, circumstances, Ursula’s own perception, even her values begin to change. To survive intact, with direction and a sense of future maintained, she must recall the past, and yet to succeed in the interim she must also acquire the characteristics, the methodology of someone like Mr. Harby, identify with his callousness, suppress the idealistic Ursula Brangwen. Although in the end what prevents her from becoming like Harby is an indomitability of spirit which she resolutely harbours, from that same pride evolves a desire to be competent, for competency, she feels, is inextricably linked to identity and to independence within society. It
is also a matter of acquiring a certain supremacy over oppressive circumstances which would otherwise destroy her self-worth, and potential. In that respect, as with Skrebensky, the implications of power are of less importance than the alternative: being defeated in some significant way. This is made clear in her relations with Harby, a man capable of vanquishing her were she to remain "her own responsive, personal self" (328).

In other words Ursula is confronted once more with a dilemma. Being "in the ignominious position of an upper servant hated by the master above and the class beneath ... liable to attack from either side at any minute, or from both at once" (381), and yet hating the prospect of appeasing Harby by submitting to "the graceless task of compelling many children into one disciplined, mechanical set, reducing the whole set to an automatic state of obedience and attention, and then of commanding their acceptance of various pieces of knowledge" (382), she must acquiesce to a process of repression she has set, as a goal, to oppose, or suffer the ignominy of failure. "She could feel the ghastly necessity. She must become the same—put away the personal self, become an instrument, an abstraction ... she could not submit. Yet gradually she felt the invincible iron closing upon her" (383-84), partly because to resist submission means she is "incapable of fulfilling her task ... Her very life was at test ... For she could not escape. Neither could she succeed ... And yet, if she failed, she must in
some way go under. She must admit that the man's world was too strong for her, she could not take her place in it; she must go down before Mr. Harby. And all her life henceforth, she must go on, never having freed herself of the man's world, never having achieved the freedom of the great world of responsible work" (385, 390-91). To further complicate matters, Harby, disciplining Ursula's students for her, is excessive, as if part of the punishment was intended to be directed at her. Ironically, therefore, her students suffer more intensely because she does not discipline them, while becoming more unruly in their derision of her lack of authority, and thus being punished more often as well.

Peter Brookesmith has observed that Ursula is "a member of probably the first generation to see an opposition between individual and society"; she has, therefore, "to discover for herself her own resolution of what Erikson calls the psychosocial crisis of integrity vs despair—a crisis itself attendant only on a high level of individuation, as Bettelheim points out."\(^{13}\) Therein lies the source of Ursula's ambivalence, contradictory acts, periodic subjugation of her own ideals, for integrity, which presupposes the exuberance of initiative and the desire for autonomy, forces the individual to concentrate above all upon self in the pursuit of that autonomy, and to defend the projected goal against all physical, psychological, socio-economic threats. There are forces against which the individual
cannot defend herself, however, and there are times when she feels her goal is not attainable. There are as well, and this applies particularly to Ursula, moments when the individual realizes she has misrepresented the integrity of that goal by concentrating, for example, upon one facet of personality at the expense of another: economic freedom, say, with an attendant loss of sexual independence or appreciation. These are the causes of despair, and if the insight into causality is not the individual’s own, but that of an author, a critic, that despair is, in its subjectivity—its unconsciousness—overwhelming, and can even mediate against the original integrity.

Integrity itself originates as a modern phenomenon; in the industrialized society which has abolished rural or family tradition, "the old organic community," identity must first focus on self, and then on the individual’s relation to the new community. In those terms the initial goal involves by definition a solitary struggle. This "new-found necessity to come to one’s own terms with the world is signified by Ursula’s determination to leave home ... she also discovers that the only norms available to the individual are those one painfully learns and creates for oneself from experience: that is the price of individuality and freedom."14 It is one thing to retain and defend one’s identity, however, and quite another, as Ursula is aware after being dispossessed of an adolescent self and then seeking a replacement in the urban industrial environment,
to actually attain a sense of identity.

It is at this point that integrity and despair become co-existent facets of alienation, the first because the struggle for individuation is socially alienating, the second because the obstacles which make it a struggle involve contradictions (between individual and society, for example, or femininity and masculinity) which are self-alienating, and which always appear in the individual's consciousness as one alternative, the other, and in some respects easier temptation being the abnegation of ideals in favour of existing socio-economic roles. As early as her last year of school Ursula is experiencing both these feelings. "She knew that soon she would want to become a self-responsible person [integrity], and her dread was that she would be prevented [despair]. An all-containing will in her for complete independence, complete social independence, complete independence from any personal authority, kept her dullishly at her studies," and yet concomitant to this her life "at this time was unformed, palpitating, essentially shrinking from all touch. She gave something to other people, but she was never herself, since she had no self" (334-35).

Ursula's ambition and achievements are historically even more admirable; at the turn of the century she suffers not only parental but social and historical opposition in the form of a body of expectations regarding role and
character which may allow a woman to become a teacher but does not condone intelligence and self-determination. Female teachers were expected to be passive, efficient, preferably asexual, at worst "feminine." A crucial dilemma for us to remember, then, is that in attempting to develop her spiritual or intellectual and sexual consciousness, Ursula is concentrating, in Lawrencian terms, alternately on male and female facets of identity. Thus the danger of denying her own femininity (sexuality) increases when we consider that in becoming a teacher she is truly entering a man's world, for not only is it literally a socio-economic male environment, but it requires of its members a rationalistic, intellectual clarity that is exclusively masculine, and that involves, if we recall "Study of Thomas Hardy," refusal of sensation, service to some idea, self-subordination to that idea, abstraction, multiplicity and diversity, as opposed to the oneness Ursula desires. For a woman, then, the man's world is a schizoid place in that it demands adherence to masculine principles by both men and women. Entering this environment without an identity, Ursula incurs the possibility of irrevocably suppressing her femininity; she does in fact over-identify with the system but the very "will-to-motion" and sense of challenge and discovery which characterize that persona enhance her ability to sustain her ideals, retain her objectivity, and eventually procure the determination to escape.

That determination is kindled when, after so merci-
lessly beating William, Ursula recognizes the extent to which she has lost sight of her goal. The act does not, however, as Brookesmith argues,\(^\text{15}\) mark the end of idealism, any more than does the attempt to balance pragmatism and exaggerated optimism give that optimism "a purpose even though it dooms it as idealism."\(^\text{16}\) Purposefulness, extended to the future, related to the self-perception of latent capability, although repressed, survives and even experiences a resurgence after Ursula resigns as schoolteacher and enrols at the college. That change, combined with a move from Cossethay to Beldover, in fact recalls an earlier fancifulness as she "made dreams of the new place she would live in, where stately cultured people of high feeling would be friends with her, and she would live with the noble in the land, moving to a large freedom of feeling. She dreamed of a rich, proud, simple girl-friend, who had never known Mr. Harby and his like, nor ever had a note in her voice of bondaged contempt and fear, as Maggie had" (419-20).

Interestingly, Ursula avoids in another way becoming permanently like Winifred, Harby or Skrebensky because, particularly in hindsight, she romanticizes even the most traumatic events, and because she is so adept at rationalization. The latter explains Lawrence's repetitive use of the word "impersonal." Ursula does not enjoy what she is forced to become as schoolteacher--that is why she resigns--but she performs with a sense of some greater purpose which
allows her, albeit romantically, to divorce herself from her immediate surroundings. This becomes evident in a comparison of Ursula and Harby who, although "not a little, fussy man," in fact a man she "might have liked" in another capacity, "seemed to have some cruel, stubborn, evil spirit, he was imprisoned in a task too small and petty for him, which yet, in a servile acquiescence, he would fulfil, because he had to earn his living. He had no finer control over himself, only this blind, dogged, wholesale will. He would keep his job going, since he must. And his job was to make the children spell the word 'caution' correctly, and put a capital letter after a full stop. So at this he hammered with his suppressed hatred, always suppressing himself, till he was beside himself ....He could not be impersonal. He could not have a clear, pure purpose, he could only exercise his own brute will" (387-88).

What continues to distinguish Ursula is her purposefulness, in spite of the by now familiar and repetitive conflict between idealism and disillusionment which has characterized her relations with Skrebensky, Winifred, her colleagues and students, college, even religion and her parents. Always she is initially romantic, hopeful, reflective, from having conceived her ideals in such isolation, and then just as assuredly her unrealistic expectations are never met. Of this Ursula herself is aware, critical and to a degree not dissatisfied, for in "every phase she was so different. Yet she was always Ursula
Brangwen" (437), always developing, adapting to circum­
stances without, she hopes, undue compromise. And yet if
she has achieved a certain self-awareness as a result of
this--and compared to Harby, for example, I think she
definitely has--and a sense of independence the result of
having been exposed to a more cosmopolitan state, it is an
intellectual, masculine identity and a dubious independence:
on the one hand, freedom from the constrictions of tradi­
tion, on the other, the "freedom" of an individual forced to
conform to a mechanized world in order to survive in it.
While her "other self," her "positive self" continues "dark
and unrevealed ... like a seed buried in dry ash" (437) she
must remain debatably and only partially fulfilled.

Ursula analogizes her performance to date as having
taken place within a circle of light; that is, within the
sphere of science and industry, the dispassionate domain she
now knows (sufficiently, in fact, to be almost immediately
critical of the college as a "commercial shrine"). What
Ursula is attracted to now, and yet is simultaneously terri­
fied of, is the realm beyond the lighted area, for there,
she feels, is where she must venture to achieve complete
fulfillment. Furthermore, the means of lighting up that
darkness is Anton. "He held the keys of the sunshine.
Still he held them. He could open to her the gates of
succeeding freedom and delight. Nay, if he had remained
true to her, he would have been the doorway to her, into the
boundless sky of happiness and plunging, inexhaustible freedom which was the paradise of her soul. Ah, the great range he would have opened to her, the illimitable endless space for self-realization and delight for ever" (438-39). The darkness beyond consciousness, a world of wild beasts and lordly angels "not to be denied," the only place her soul, or intuitive self, acknowledges, is a submission to sensation which she associates with Skrebensky: clearly this is the state of as yet unfulfilled, even repressed sexuality, and until she does develop this part of herself, the known (man's) world will always be unfulfilling and eventually even rejected. It is for that reason that she responds when, again not so fortuitously (from Lawrence's point of view), Skrebensky returns. Ursula is desperate, eager and optimistic; Skrebensky is the man who once stirred her passion, who now reawakens those feelings, "the man with the wondrous lips that could send the kiss wavering to the very end of all space" (439). With him she will achieve physical gratification and self-perception, then a harmonious unification of sexual and intellectual being; this time the shining doorway will not, upon approach, become another gate into another sordid valley. But of course once more optimism is only a prelude to disillusionment.

Ursula has learned something in the materialist world, however, and that is how to survive, and more than that, how in fact to make use of threatening circumstances, to adapt to them in a way that actually increases her independence.
This time, therefore, although Skrebensky has not changed in the six years since she has seen him, she is now secure enough to satisfy his "animal desires" without trying to dominate him, and he, satisfied by her, also does not resort to domination. Able to become sexually gratified, Ursula feels that her dark, vital self is finally also developing. "She had never been more herself ...[more] perfectly sure of herself, perfectly strong, stronger than all the world ....This curious, separate strength, that existed in darkness and pride of night, never forsook her" (452). Released from the repressiveness and self-inflicted celibacy of teaching, having quickly become disappointed and then indifferent to college, Ursula is able to concentrate solely on the evolution and appreciation of this "consummate being." Vacationing with Anton, the two spend "three weeks together--in perfect success. All the time, they themselves were reality, all outside was tribute to them" (454).

Initially they are in some respects like children: naive, carefree, divorced from obligations. They live an adventure defined by leisure and sexual activity which for Ursula is a time of sensual education. Participating to an extent reminiscent of the focussed, although occasionally myopic, previous two years, she reacts as if this at last were her childhood dream of young summer and flowers come true. She responds, with rarefied sensuality, to Anton, to the environment, absorbing scents and sounds and tactile
impressions, breathing the air as if for the first time. And indeed, it can be said that Ursula is being born physically. "She became proud and erect, like a flower, putting itself forth in its proper strength," representing "all the grace and flower of humanity. She was no mere Ursula Brangwen. She was Woman, she was the whole of Woman in the human order" (444). Able to elicit a corresponding if comparatively reserved response from Skrebensky, she defines their relationship as "absolute and happy and calm. The fact of their own consummate being made everything else so entirely subordinate that they were free" (452). It is a freedom, however, mostly illusionary and destined to be short-lived, for while Ursula can evolve, Anton cannot and together, therefore, they are for several reasons severely limited in their ability to attain Ursula's expectations.

It is at this point that we become aware of a problem which, in spite of what he asserted in "Study of Thomas Hardy" and other essays, was to plague Lawrence personally and in his fiction for the remainder of his life. A social consciousness, and following from that, a social identity was a necessity, he had written, and yet the exact means of assimilation seems never to have become clear to him. Perhaps because personal identity and a relationship that could enhance self-awareness without the possibility of subjugation on either side were themselves at best tenuously held concepts, perhaps because while social integration as theory was commendable, in practise it meant contending with social
institutions and processes too reactionary to be realistically susceptible to change, too abhorrent to be experienced for long—whatever the reasons, Lawrence, Ursula and Birkin, Alvina Houghton, Aaron Sisson, Richard Somers, Kate Leslie, even Mellors attempt to seek solutions, both personal and social, in isolation within or exile from their homeland.

Ursula and Skrebensky are not exceptions; their relationship can apparently evolve only in isolation, for to "make public their connexion would be to put it in range with all the things which nullified" Skrebensky, and from which "he was for the moment entirely dissociated. If he married he would have to assume his social self. And the thought of assuming his social self made him at once diffident and abstract" (452-53). To fortify themselves against the possibility of Skrebensky's characteristic diffidence reinstating itself, they revoke "altogether the ordinary mortal world. Their confidence was like a possession upon them. They were possessed. Perfectly and supremely free they felt, proud beyond all question, and surpassing mortal conditions. They were perfect, therefore nothing else existed" (453).

It is not confidence, however, and certainly, especially for Ursula, not confidence in the relationship which moves them from society, but insecurity and even fear. She knows what Skrebensky is like: distant, inarticulate, alien,
"made up of a set of habitual actions and decisions. The
vulnerable, variable quick of the man was inaccessible. She
knew nothing of it," no more of him now than when she knew
him six years ago. "What did he want? His desires were so
underground. Why did he not admit himself? What did he
want? He wanted something that should be nameless. She
shrank in fear" (443), as she had with Winifred Unger, for
it is his repressed social consciousness which terrifies
her. Knowing, therefore, that their relationship can only
be sexual and yet perceiving the benefits to her of such a
liaison, Ursula encourages both isolation and fantasy, the
latter because she does not love Skrebensky but rather, sees
reflected in him her own assertiveness. During their first
consummation, for example, it is she who "had taken him,"
reduced him to "a dark, powerful vibration that encompassed
her," allowing her to transcend her "everyday self," to
travel alone "as on a dark wind, far, far away, into the
pristine darkness of paradise, into the original immortality
... It could not occur to her that anybody, not even the
young man of the world, Skrebensky, should have anything at
all to do with her permanent self" (451-52).

She does not love this man as he exists but rather, an
idealized version of him as the means of superlative sexual
gratification. Because she is inclined to be romantic,
Ursula, like Helena Verden, creates a fantasy which fulfills
previous dreams, granting her a more compatible lover and an
idyllic social milieu. Staying at an inexpensive hotel in
Piccadilly, they become, in her fairy tale, "titled people. He was an officer in the engineers. They were just married, going to India immediately. Thus a tissue of romance was round them. She believed she was a young wife of a titled gentleman on the eve of departure for India. This, the social fact, was a delicious make-belief" (454). Although not as entranced by her fiction as Helena, nor as imaginative, Ursula nevertheless is able to attain fulfillment, such as it is, only by holding Skrebensky separate from herself and from the society within which he is both intellectually passive and sexually aggressive and therefore both a threatening and a potentially disappointing mate.

There are circumstances which mitigate against extended isolation, however. Beyond the obvious social and economic necessity to return, there is in Anton the traditional expectation of marriage as validation of their relationship, an acquiescence to social mores Ursula does not immediately reject. Having manipulated the relationship, and Skrebensky, somewhat, oscillating between dissatisfaction with him and insecurity, she can sometimes rationalize marriage as a convenience and an end to what she fears might be a passion that is little more than promiscuity. After all, her mother is married; is it "not enough for her, as it had been enough for her mother? She would marry and love her husband and fill her place simply. That was the ideal. ....Her mother was simply and radically true. She had taken
the life that was given. She had not, in her arrogant conceit, insisted on creating life to fit herself" (485). This denial of earlier sentiments ensues from her suspected pregnancy, and even then is not altogether convincing. The ideal is love, which for Ursula is an impersonal, futureless phenomenon unless it be exchanged with that perfect man of "'strong understanding ... dignity, a directness, something unquestioned that there is in working men, and then a jolly, reckless passionateness that you see—a man who could really let go—'" (475). That man is not Skrebensky, marriage with whom will not entail love, for he is not an individual, she explains to Dorothy Russell, but a type, and why "'should I not go on, and love all the types I fancy, one after another, if love is an end in itself? There are plenty of men who aren't Anton, whom I could love—whom I would like to love'" (475).

In other words, Ursula only momentarily considers a permanent relationship with Anton, and then mostly from a fear that the only option is "entering the bondage of teaching once more" (474). Maturing sexually, and psychologically, she is no longer enamoured of the fantasy of their affair. In fact, more often "at the thought of marriage ... being Mrs. Skrebensky, even Baroness Skrebensky, wife of a lieutenant in the Royal Engineers ... living with Skrebensky amid the European population in India, her soul was locked and would not budge" (474). Nor does she require her romanticized, "surrogate" Skrebensky, a
man, she realizes after they separate, who could have "never become finally real. In the weeks of passionate ecstasy he had been with her in her desire, she had created him for the time being. But in the end he had failed and broken down" (494). Proceeding according to the Lawrencian theory of resolving self-alienation, the subsequent phase of which is the reconciliation of developed opposites, Ursula becomes eager to assess the extent and quality of her sexual autonomy in a social context, to combine with a known ability to endure intellectually, if with abnegated feeling, an awakened passion, a condition of feeling, of being rather than of knowledge.

In Rouen, where the architecture and exotic culture first inspire her to respond to this demand, she becomes more intensely aware of a sense of foreboding derived from the static, unchallenging, and therefore hopeless nature of her association with Skrebensky, while he feels the opposite: a feeling of horror at the prospect of re-entering a world in which the only way he knows how to survive is by repressing his passion, for if that happens, he understands that his attempts to assert his individuality and to justify himself to Ursula will fail and she, despising his reactionary conformism, will leave him. Skrebensky of course is correct. Recalling once more Lawrence's model for the development of self-awareness as it extends to relationships, it is obvious that Ursula can only be content and
successful with a man as committed as she is to achieving psychological as well as sexual cognizance, autonomy, and the sanctity of individuality. Without that form of reconciled dualism one partner must be subservient, and Ursula, for all of her pride and apparent narcissism, is no more inclined to dominate than she is to be dominated.

That their separation is inevitable becomes increasingly apparent as the romantic fiction of the relationship dissipates and Skrebensky’s complacency, psychological dependency and sexual aggression begin to threaten Ursula’s as yet still tenuous identity. She cannot accept without reservation the prospect of marriage, nor this social isolation, for both alternatives present obstacles to her embryonic autonomy. "Who," she asks herself, "was going to liberate her?" (466). The answer, clearly, is herself; certainly there is little question in her mind as to it being Skrebensky, whom she knows is capable of offering her "none of the dreadful wonder, none of the rich fear, the connexion with the unknown, or the reverence of love" (474) necessary for liberation. At this point, Ursula is approaching the most traumatic decision she has had to confront in her young life, a decision derived above all from her own sense of self, from what she wants, and feels capable of achieving, this time in the light of what she has already accomplished. Adhering to the same principles that allowed her to survive teaching, that caused her to reject Skrebensky six years previously, once again, desperately
defending those values, Ursula cannot accept a man "whom she knew, whom she was fond of, who was attractive, but whose soul could not contain her in its waves of strength, nor his breast compel her in burning, salty passion" (478).

The trauma is the consequence of experience. Where once Ursula rejected Skrebensky only from a sense of self-potential largely idealized, now although she knows something of her real capabilities she appreciates also what it is to be alone, and the nature and power of those forces capable of overwhelming the individual. Fear of marriage and Skrebensky as obstacles to individuation, therefore, arouse in her a compulsion to continue alone, which in turn is intermittently precluded by moments of devastating insecurity, during which she understandably questions her motives. Is she not being arrogant, selfish, unrealistic, she asks herself, in wanting "that fantastic freedom, that illusory, conceited fulfilment which she had imagined she could not have with Skrebensky. Who was she to be wanting some fantastic fulfilment in her life? Was it not enough" to desire a husband, children, a "place of shelter under the sun?" (484-85).

Ursula’s disillusionment with her ambition stems from the very optimism which fosters that determination. Like Paul Morel, she has had to develop and now must unite the disparate qualities of being in order to achieve a personality strong enough to escape the debilitating restraints and
neuroses of socio-psychological alienation, but she has also had to objectify her goal, to distinguish between the possible and the romantic. She only survived, and even matured, as a teacher, for example, by staunchly maintaining her quest for independence while at the same time rejecting her initial and idealistic plans to "be the gleaming sun of the school" beneath which "the children would blossom like little weeds, the teachers like tall, hard plants would burst into rare flower" (367). Similarly, in both phases of her interaction with Skrebensky, she has been confused by seeing in him a reflection of her own desires and then, because she has become attached to that idealized version of the man, unsure what part of him was less than ideal, what part was to be rejected, what part of her own desire was hopelessly impractical and thus also to be repudiated.

Maturation, in other words, complicated by illusion, exaggerated optimism, and then despair, has been accomplished with difficulty, but it has by the end of the novel been achieved, in three stages: her intellectual self at school, her sexual self with Skrebensky, and, in the scene with the horses, her ability to synthesize those attributes, overcoming fear, insecurity, self-consciousness, and becoming a woman determined and capable enough to objectively understand the threat imposed by the horses, and then intuitively, with indomitable will, act to protect herself from it.

Even before the encounter Ursula is being drawn to
nature, at once fearful and determined, as if convinced she must purge herself of that fear, that insecurity. She "hurried to the wood for shelter ... keeping an illusion that she was unnoticed," gliding "between the tree-trunks, afraid of them ....She felt like a bird that has flown in through the window of a hall where vast warriors sit at the board. Between the grave, booming ranks she was hastening, assuming she was unnoticed ....She must beat her way back through all this fluctuation, back to stability and security ... she moved swiftly along, watching her footing, going like a bird on the wind, with no thought, contained in motion. But her heart had a small, living seed of fear, as she went through the wash of hollow space.

"Suddenly she knew there was something else. Some horses were looming in the rain, not near yet. But they were going to be near. She continued her path, inevitably ....She pursued her way with bent head. She did not want to lift her face to them. She did not want to know they were there ... she would circumvent them. She would bear the weight steadily, and so escape. She would go straight on, and on, and be gone by" (487). If Ursula can pass her fancifully imbued hawthorn trees, her imagined warriors, she cannot so easily ignore real, milling, agitated animals, nor in some respects is she so compelled. Gripped by ambiguous feelings as if aware that what lies ahead is not external conflict but the finally inescapable confrontation with her
own insecurity, she continues forward, inadvertently onto the path of the stampeding horses. Now "her way was cut off. They were blocking her back. She knew they had gathered on a log bridge over the sedgy dike, a dark, heavy, powerfully heavy knot. Yet her feet went on and on. They would burst before her. They would burst before her. Her feet went on and on. And tense, and more tense became her nerves and her veins, they ran hot, they ran white hot, they must fuse and she must die ... She knew without looking that the horses were moving nearer. What were they? She felt the thud of their heavy hoofs," like heartbeats. "What was it that was drawing near her, what weight oppressing her heart? She did not know, she did not look" (488).

As she continues to question, to reflect, Ursula begins to understand something of these horses, a certain affinity. "She was aware of their breasts gripped, clenched narrow in a hold that never relaxed, she was aware of their red nostrils flaming with long endurance, and of their haunches, so rounded, so massive, pressing, pressing, pressing to burst the grip upon their breasts, pressing forever till they went mad, running against the walls of time, and never bursting free" (488). That is not some sort of symbolic, overbearing masculinity she faces, but a repression of unified being, of ultimate freedom which parallels her own, and informs her of impending crisis. To triumph is to resist hesitation, to discontinue speculation about the unknown, to vanquish both the intellectual and physical fearfulness.
which threaten to immobilize her, which is what she succeeds in doing. "Her way was clear. She lulled her heart. Yet her heart was couched with fear, couched with fear all along." Then her "heart was gone, she had no more heart ... Her heart was gone, her limbs were dissolved, she was dissolved like water ... in a flame of agony, she darted, seized the rugged knots of the oak-tree and began to climb. Her body was weak but her hands were as hard as steel. She knew she was strong ... Her will alone carried her, till, trembling, she climbed the fence under a leaning thorn-tree that overhung the grass by the high-road. The use went from her, she sat on the fence leaning back against the trunk of the thorn-tree, motionless" (489-90).

If those horses represent the unknown—specifically, that which she can potentially become, and yet concerning which she remains doubtful because of the possibility that such strength still will not suffice—they also represent distinct beings which for the first time Ursula is moved neither to dominate nor subjugate herself to. They are, for anyone who has observed horses milling in a storm, threatening, if only from their size and unpredictability, but the important insight Ursula gains is that they are impersonal; that is, their movement is not intentionally directed towards her, and in fact is not directed at all. They move from a fear and a frustration not dissimilar to her own, and when the incident has ended, they seem pathetic to her. Of
greater significance, however, is Ursula’s reaction. She
does not romanticize the horses, she does not grant them any
part of her own potential and in doing so divorce capability
from desire. She feels neither inferior nor superior to
them, only separate. That, she reflects later, is how she
must in the future relate to other people, particularly men.
"It was not for her to create ... a man according to her own
desire ... but to recognize a man created by God. The man
should come from the Infinite and she should hail him. She
was glad she could not create her man. She was glad that
this lay within the scope of that vaster power in which she
rested at last. The man would come out of Eternity to which
she herself belonged ... She was the naked, clear kernel
thrusting forth the clear, powerful shoot, and the world was
a bygone winter, discarded, her mother and father and Anton,
and college and all her friends, all cast off like a year
that has gone by, whilst the kernel was free and naked and
striving to take new root, to create a new knowledge of
Eternity in the flux of Time. And the kernel was the only
reality; the rest was cast off into oblivion" (493-94).

V

In perceiving herself at last to be a part of the
natural world, Ursula arrives at a realization of self
through actual experience, and therefore of real capability.
This derives largely from having achieved during her con-
flict with the horses what Paul Morel attains in his alter-
cation with Baxter Dawes: the potential to be strong and unified, body and mind, a synthesis which is not self-conscious and yet which is more than instinctive. It is a fusion of physical awareness and logic, a reconciliation, in other words, of the characteristics of Will-to-Inertia and Will-to-Motion. The result is an internal "Oneness" and a faith in self which together raise will to a level beyond doubt or insecurity (self-alienation) and thereby accomplishes the "aim of every living thing, creature, or being [which] is the full accomplishment of self." To paraphrase Lawrence elsewhere in "Study of Thomas Hardy," Ursula is now capable of achieving a further reconciliation involving knowledge of self and knowledge of that which is outside the self--of self, in other words, and society--and in doing so is potentially able to confront that dichotomy which Lawrence contends Hardy's characters are tragically incapable of confronting: first, that an individual "is a member of the community, and must, upon his honour, in no way move to disintegrate the community, either in its moral or its practical form; second, that the convention of the community is a prison to his natural, individual desire, a desire that compels him, whether he feels justified or not, to break the bounds of the community ... in which case he courts death." For Lawrence the cultural individual is he or she who can conceptualize development in terms of personal goals and
social values, then act to achieve those aims, which is precisely what Ursula has attempted throughout the novel, culminating in the episode with the horses, an episode of significance, I think, not just in terms of Ursula, but to Lawrence as well, because it dramatizes what has perhaps previously been, for him, overly conceptual. I have mentioned that in many instances, the novels provided Lawrence with the means of working out abstract ideology in more concrete terms: a proving ground, as it were, for his theories. Within this and other novels he places his characters in similar situations, whereby their own theories are tested. Ursula with the horses, Paul with Dawes, Gudrun with the Highland cattle, Ursula and Birkin in their marriage: all of these characters are confronted with the decision either to retreat from danger or confront that danger with the confidence of some kind of ideology upon which they inevitably must act to prove the worthiness of their conviction. It is always a physical test and in some cases instinctively performed, but it is as well always the physical manifestation of abstract conviction or belief or faith in self which has evolved from an intellectual working out of issues and desires.

In his writing thus far, Lawrence became aware of the phenomenon of socio-psychological alienation, and continued from there to develop a theory and in the novels reify that theory in terms of self-alienation, but he seems to have been incapable of resolving Hardy's dilemma: the double bind
of isolation or assimilation into a basically mad, anarchic society. Ursula, as an example, feeling within herself a "firmness of being, a sense of permanency" (491), is nevertheless still alienated from the community, neither an unquestioning part of it as Skrebensky and Winifred are, nor courageous enough to extricate herself completely from it, for to do that would mean being without that sense of place necessary to maintain a social and psychological identity. So to divorce herself from the repressive values of family, tradition, religion and industrial society is also to have "no father nor mother nor lover ... no allocated place in the world of things," while to remain in contact is to risk being "trammelled and entangled" (493) in a world whose oppressiveness threatens to impinge upon her sanity even before it conquers her will.

Ursula's final problem, then, has to do with belonging, with discovering a place in which she can continue to be independent, fulfilled, passionate. Her "solution" is imaginatively to create a futuristic, romantic world where that is possible: "some other land, some other world, where the old restraints had dissolved and vanished, where one moved freely, not afraid of one's fellow man, nor wary, nor on the defensive, but calm, indifferent, at one's ease" (472). That world becomes so intensely desired that by the end of the novel Ursula can almost literally see it as she desperately tries to suppress the fear that in spite of what
she has accomplished her sense of identity is tenuous and, particularly so long as she remains alone, still very vulnerable. How else but imaginatively can she survive for any length of time a pervasive, expanding culture that is by definition life-denying? So The Rainbow ends, with a woman capable of continued self-fulfillment, autonomy, social integration, but lacking the social acumen and the self-confidence to achieve these goals. Having progressed beyond self-alienation, she is still estranged from other individuals, and from society generally. In the sequel to this novel she will come to terms with the first, but although she will also be capable of a more realistic assessment of society, she will still, by the end of Women in Love, be struggling with the latter, still searching for the place Lawrence himself never discovered.

In terms of the rainbow vision itself, Lawrence has progressed from Sons and Lovers, in which Paul at the end is simply walking towards the city. Ursula has experienced that city, an industrial urbanism far more evolved than the gentle provincial environment of Jordan’s in Nottingham, far more immediate and pervasive than the collieries of Ilkeston. Yet the naiveté of the vision threatens to undermine the insight Ursula has gained from her experience. She knows herself, she understands the repressive nature of industrialism, she would have the workers acquire knowledge of their own sexual, physical being, as she has done, but she does not know the workers themselves, and in her ignor-
ance she romanticizes them and the means of improving their lives. They have, it is probably true, "stiffened bodies ... which seemed already enclosed in a coffin ... unchanging eyes, the eyes of those who are buried alive"; they live in "dark blotches of houses, slate roofed and amorphous," coal-blackened suburbs comprised of "raw new houses on the crest of the hill, the amorphous, brittle, hard edged new houses advancing from Beldover to meet the corrupt new houses from Lethley, the houses of Lethley advancing to mix with the houses of Hainor, a dry, brittle, terrible corruption spreading over the face of the land," inhabited by "sordid people who crept hard-scaled and separate on the face of the world's corruption," people imprisoned by circumstance, "all going mad" (495-96). What is unlikely, however, is that they show evidence of a "new generation," and that soon "the rainbow ... arched in their blood ... would quiver to life in their spirit, that they would cast off their horny covering of disintegration, that new, clean, naked bodies would issue to a new germination, to a new growth, rising to the light and the wind and the clean rain of heaven" (496).

Of course this is symbolic, but even as such it is woefully inadequate and disappointing, coming as it does at the end of a struggle to consciousness that is graphically, at times painfully realistic. It would seem that Ursula's knowledge is of an autonomous self, still isolated, and in fact re-enacting an earlier idealism, almost regressing from
an inability to transform a previous vision of self and society into a viable socio-psychological ideology which can be made manifest in the future. Left at the end of The Rainbow with a quasi-transcendent "solution," a new religion, abstract, idealized, divorced from the actual community, the present, and a sense of the likely future, Ursula will discover in Women in Love a second alternative: marriage of similarly unified, self-aware individuals as a simpler, more concrete means of reconciling those two worlds, self and society. Knowing Women in Love, we can therefore derive a second suggestion from the rainbow symbol, the desire for a harmonious relationship in the form of a microcosmic society—a society of two—but even that, as we shall see, becomes a struggle from alienation to awareness continuing as a movement not towards integration and synthesis, but towards isolation.
It was a sort of grief that this continent all beneath was so unreal, false, non-existent in its activity. Out of the silence one looked down on it, and it seemed to have lost all importance, all significance. It was so big, yet it had no significance. The kingdoms of the world had no significance: what could one do but wander about?

D.H. Lawrence, *Twilight in Italy*

"One must be free, above all, one must be free."

D.H. Lawrence, *Women in Love*

If *The Rainbow*, as I suggested in the previous chapter, is in an historical sense the most socially and psychologically perceptive of Lawrence's novels, *Women in Love* is his most complex and for the critic, as F.R. Leavis discovered thirty years ago, the most difficult to analyze fully enough to satisfy both writer and reader without appearing to belabour it. "From the moment the Brangwen ...[women] begin their conversation about marriage," Leavis wrote, "the dramatic poem unfolds—or builds up—with an astonishing fertility of life. This life, so much of which commands the imagination at the first encounter, is all significant life; not a scene, episode, image, or touch but forwards the development of the themes. To discuss this development..."
point by point as the dramatic action advances would take a volume. One can only hope to do some sufficiently representative illustrating that will convey the nature of the themes and the whole of the organization. To do that it is necessary, I think, to delineate themes, to consider the issues those themes attempt to address, and to contemplate the questions raised by the author in his efforts to contend with his subject, as well as those raised by the reader and critic in light of the extent to which Lawrence either fails in his efforts, or perhaps succumbs to didacticism and idealism in attempting to succeed.

For my purpose, the key issues in *Women in Love* are the nature and varieties of modern alienation—that is, alienation in a society in which the rapid development of technology resulting from the requirements of war has intensified the oppressiveness of industrialization—its effects upon a new generation of individuals, and their struggle to survive and even to improve the quality of life individually, and more importantly, together. The question of relationships, therefore, of convention and social acquiescence versus innovation, becomes a central issue, as does the failure of relationships, the result of a lack of communication, self-alienation, lack of trust, the inability to share common anxieties and fears, the problem of freedom, particularly as it is related to exile, and perhaps underlying all of these, Birkin's ideology. To describe *Women in Love*
as a novel of despair and failure is in light of these issues appropriate, all the more so given the organization to which Leavis also refers, for the novel begins and ends with two characters about whom I must necessarily write little, and yet who are in their lesser roles significant in illuminating the superficiality of an optimism which struggles so valiantly and yet so pathetically to blossom within this work. These two characters, Hermione and Loerke, act as mileposts, between which, for the duration of the narrative, the four main protagonists attempt to free themselves from societal restrictions and forge a new future. And yet they cannot in the end escape society, as represented by Hermione—a world of convention, power, class oppression—and the future they meet as a result is not theirs but the one Loerke has accepted: a future directed by those shadowy figures at Breadalby who can be ridiculed but never dismissed.

We begin to see why even Lawrence, in spite of having formulated Birkin's optimistic ideology, was himself apt to describe his fifth novel bleakly. "The book frightens me," he told Catherine Carswell (7 November, 1916): "it is so end-of-the-world. But it is, it must be, the beginning of a new world too." By the following year, however, that insistent optimism seems to have dissipated. Unlike The Rainbow, he wrote Waldo Frank on 27 July, Women in Love "actually does contain the results in one's soul of the war: it is purely destructive ... and terrifying, even to me who have
written it." Those letters were composed during World War I, as was the novel, and yet in his "Foreword" to *Women in Love* Lawrence wrote that although it was a work "which took its final shape in the midst of the period of war ... it does not concern the war itself. I should wish the time to remain unfixed, so that the bitterness of the war may be taken for granted in the characters." That statement is crucial, for two reasons. The first has to do with the fact that Lawrence, writing in Cornwall, as far from military activity as he could then be, was trying to escape the war, hoping fervently for it to end so that he could leave England altogether. Unable to do so, he has his characters leave, and the fact that they could travel through Europe to the Alps, that Ursula and Birkin could subsequently continue to Italy, and that Gudrun eventually moves to Dresden with Loerke, suggests that there is literally no war in progress within the temporal frame of this novel. Further evidence confirms this, and even indicates when *Women in Love* is meant to take place.

The most obvious clue is that the Federation lock-outs and ensuing riots which Gerald observes could not have happened before 1910, that being the first time in this century British soldiers were involved in a labour dispute. The implication, then, is that Gerald, who at the time of the riots is a "boy" too young even to be "allowed to go out of the lodge gates" (254), and who subsequently attends a
German university, "tries the war," travels rather extensively afterwards, and finally, reorganizes the Crich mines, is at least "thirty years old" (15) when we meet him. Even if he was a "boy" of fifteen or so during the labour dispute of 1910 (and Lawrence could have intended his version for a later date), he would still have reached the age suggested after the war had ended. I realize Lawrence was not known for being historically accurate or even dependent, but the events and circumstances described here, combined with a shift in subsequent novels from concern for individual liberation to social reform, idealism, even utopianism, suggests that Women in Love, as a transitional work—one in which these thematic changes are already evident—was intended to occur some time after 1918. In other words, insofar as it reveals, through its characters, that one method of escaping societal oppression might be exile, an avenue not possible during the war, it is a futuristic novel, for it is the attempt by Lawrence through fiction to turn a dream into a future reality. This becomes important in a later discussion of the implausible nature of Birkin's ideology and the fancifulness with which he and Ursula nevertheless endeavor to conform to its tenets.

The extent and even the nature of Gerald's experience during the time following university when he felt "he must try war" (249) is unknown to us, for besides apparently not existing in Women in Love, the war is not even discussed. However, as Lawrence implies in his "Foreword," the perva-
sive consequences of militarism during that time and even afterwards, particularly the intensification of industrialism, are evident: not only the aggression, frustration and helplessness of the characters, but the increase in economic production, efficiency and zeal asked for and then demanded by modern industrialists. Gerald’s reorganization of the mines, combined with the rejection of his father’s capitalist-Christian ethics, which reflects an actual historical development, is a good example of this. Inspired with "almost religious exaltation ... to turn upon the inanimate matter of the underground, and reduce it to his will" (256), Gerald soon creates "a new world, a new order, strict, terrible, inhuman, but satisfying in its very destructiveness. The men were satisfied to belong to the great and wonderful machine, even whilst it destroyed them. It was what they wanted. It was the highest that man had produced, the most wonderful and superhuman system which was beyond feeling or reason, something really godlike. Their hearts died within them, but their souls were satisfied. It was what they wanted" (260).

What is astounding, and again, historically true as well, is not only the intensified, even radical use of the inventions of industrialism, which Victorians would never have dreamed possible, but the inversion of human resistance into a supportive zeal, and even an idolization of the process and machinery of destructiveness which, were they at
all objective, they would denounce. In that respect, writes Graham Holderness, "it would be true to say that the object of the prose is at least as much the absent subject, the war, as the present subject, the mining industry (symbolizing industrial capitalism generally): a mechanical organization which combines perfect order with complete destructiveness, and which incorporates into itself, by means of their willing subjection, those whose lives are most destroyed by it. The miners who accepted the industrial and bureaucratic modernisation of their industry, and the soldiers who voluntarily enlisted and marched willingly to the living death of the Western Front, become almost indistinguishable here."

Although the military during the war was not particularly competent in its attempt at "perfect order," the patriotic fervour with which both enlisting men and previously militant workers supported the government at that time makes this point one well taken. We must also keep in mind, however, that just as Lawrence omitted actual reference to the war, he also was silent concerning other socio-political incidents—except perhaps by implication—such as the fact that in spite of general support for the modernization of industry, there was organized resistance to it. (The pre-war lock-outs are not at all related to this.) Few miners, for example, participated in the real events as they do in Lawrence's characteristically exaggerated, Faustian version of destructive industrial "progress." And yet in Women in Love the exaggeration is probably intentional, in that it
establishes industrialism more obviously as the antithesis to his reformist ideology as well as the rationale for it. The second point Lawrence was suggesting in his foreword is that war only accelerates industrial development, that innovations or events ostensibly the result of war would have arisen without it, although not so rapidly, and most importantly, the war itself would not dramatically alter the course of industrial and socio-political development. What individuals suffered during the war they would continue to suffer afterwards. Without insight into this, and into the necessity for immediate, purposeful change, life would remain intolerable, urban industrial experience "a vision of hell ... cold, somehow small, crowded, and like the end of the world" (407-08). To paraphrase Guy Debord, the final commodity of industrial capitalism is alienation, and certainly behind the estrangement of the characters in this novel lurks always the industrial society that produces it. If war is never mentioned, if the novel is meant to occur in post-war Europe, the aftermath nevertheless remains as a kind of symbol of modern socio-psychological experience, and what follows, what takes place in Women in Love, can be summarized using a phrase Lawrence once considered as a title: Dies Irae, the day of wrath or judgment.

Women in Love, then, characterizes individuals affected by a modern society which has become more oppressive, for various reasons, than ever before. It is an oppressiveness
explicitly felt and expressed by the characters—none of whom are exempt—as they experience this sense of wrath or impending doom. More significantly, they react not so much against society as against each other, bringing antagonistic relationships to crisis and even occasionally disrupting more amicable ones. "The very deepest psychic processes," Scott Sanders has observed, "and the most intimate personal relations are affected ... individual and society, nature and culture, are thoroughly integrated in the process of dissolution, so that public strife, conflicts within the unconscious and struggles between lovers all seem to be part of the same historical phenomenon."6 The violence this phenomenon fosters pervades Women in Love; at one time or another every character is subject to an almost involuntary rage extending at times to a desire for violence, even murder. The first we see of this, almost from the outset, is Gudrun's ill-repressed fury at the Crich wedding. When a spectator ridicules her emerald-green stockings, "a sudden fierce anger swept over the girl, violent and murderous. She would have liked them all annihilated, cleared away, so that the world was left clear to her" (14).

If Gudrun's is momentary and possibly a recent tendency, Hermione's, on the other hand, although usually more contained, is a violence she inherited during childhood, from a mother who when angered would react "'with very murder in her face. She had a face that could look death'" (239). As an adult the daughter, whose struggle for power--
fueled by an insecurity incapable of sustaining even the most general criticism—culminates in an attack against Rupert with a paperweight, characteristically exudes "violent waves of hatred and loathing ... dynamic hatred and loathing, coming strong and black out of the unconscious" (116). Gerald, too, has known violence since his youth. During the collier riots he had "longed to go with the soldiers to shoot the men" (254); later he does, although accidentally, shoot his own brother, and later still his very philosophy embraces a perverse desire for the submission of others to his will. Hatred and violence, psychological and at times even physical, characterize his feelings towards most men, women and animals.

It soon becomes evident, however, that these characters are not literally homicidal, nor even genuinely misanthropic, although the intensity and repetitiveness of their anger does become perverse, even sadistic, for at least some of them. The tyrannical outbursts that result could be described as variations of the sado-masochism produced by an alienating industrial society, the extremes of which, in this novel, are Hermione’s sadism—less noticeable than Gerald’s but more dangerous, more complex, less likely to involve her own self—and the masochism of the miners. Between those extremes, though, there is a spectrum of subtler emotions, the result of victimization rather than a desire for power: outbursts against a feeling of oppression
which include Rupert's bullying, Ursula's hostility, Gudrun's perversity, Gerald's cruelty to his mare, his miners, Gudrun, and finally to himself. In this sense the four characters are surprisingly (or perhaps not so surprisingly) similar. All of them at some point realize their alienation, their sense of meaningless, repetitious, unchallenging lives, a sense of repression, powerlessness, intense loneliness and despair. All have visions of escape—solutions or alternatives of various degrees of plausibility, idealism, or abstraction—and all have great difficulty communicating both their alienation and their alternatives to others, even to lovers. All of them want to be independent, free and strong, able to retain and develop their own identities and their sense of identity, and the women as well want adamantly to be equal to the men. All fear subjugation, even, or especially Gerald, for whom indomitability of will is everything. All, I think, are sympathetic; certainly none of them wants to be master except Gerald (in moments of exaggerated rhetoric Birkin seems to, but I question his sincerity, except in his relationship with Crich). All sense that industrial, "mechanical" society is the main source of their alienation; all react, in various ways, against society; all eventually leave.

It becomes just as evident that violent reaction is equally derived from a sense of vulnerability, and acts therefore as a kind of protection. Hermione, for example, walks with an uplifted face, as if "not to see the world"
(16), as if invulnerable as well, and yet, "her soul was tortured ... vulnerable ... there was a terrible void, a lack, a deficiency of being within her" (17-18). Gudrun affects a usually reserved demeanor beneath which she is often similarly "frozen with overwrought feelings" (435). Birkin, who is described at one point as being akin to a chameleon (22), is revealed beneath his nihilistic misanthropy as a man who in fact fears others more than he hates them, a man whose "dread" of mankind "amounted almost to horror, to a sort of dream terror" (121). Ursula lives in a comparable state of terror, "horrified in her apprehension of people" (276). And Gerald, who tends to enact on principle the role social propriety has created for him, believing that "you can't live unless you ... come into line somewhere" (230), nevertheless proceeds with a "strange guarded look," feeling, and this is yet another symptom of alienation to be observed in most of the characters, "as if he did not belong to the same creation as the people about him" (15). At the wedding reception Birkin and Mrs. Crich are also described as outsiders; standing apart, Birkin feels that they, "he and the elderly, estranged woman were conferring together like traitors, like enemies within the camp of the other people ... 'I don't know people whom I find in the house,'" Gerald's mother confesses. "'You can't expect me to know them, just because they happen to be there. As far as I go they might as well not be there.'"
Birkin appears to agree. "'People don't really matter,'" he says. "'It would be much better if they were just wiped out. Essentially, they don't exist, they aren't there'" (26-27). If that were literally to happen, he later explains to Gerald, if one day "'mankind is destroyed, if our race is destroyed like Sodom, and there is this beautiful evening with the luminous land and trees, I am satisfied ... Let mankind pass away--time it did'" (65). "'If we want hate,'" he says later, "'let us have it--death, murder, torture, violent destruction--let us have it ... I abhor humanity, I wish it were swept away. It could go, and there would be no absolute loss, if every human being perished tomorrow. The reality would be untouched. Nay, it would be better'" (141).

Even Ursula, usually more at peace with herself and therefore with others, is not above violence, although hers is of a more personal kind, directed against Gerald, Hermione, and Birkin, for whom at one point she "felt such a poignant hatred ... that all her brain seemed turned into a sharp crystal of fine hatred. Her whole nature seemed sharpened and intensified into a pure dart of hate ... She did not know why she hated him, her hate was quite abstract. She had only realized with a shock that stunned her, that she was overcome by this pure transportation. He was the enemy, fine as a diamond, and as hard and jewel-like, the quintessence of all that was inimical" (221-22). Birkin is not the enemy, however, so much as an almost fortuitous
external target for previously self-destructive feelings. Just before this moment of invective, Ursula has been feeling depressed, "crushed and obliterated in a darkness that was the border of death. She realized how all her life she had been drawing nearer and nearer to this brink, where there was no beyond ... She knew all she had to know, she had experienced all she had to experience, she was fulfilled in a kind of bitter ripeness, there remained only to fall from the tree into death. And one must fulfil one's development to the end, must carry the adventure to its conclusion. And the next step was over the border into death. So it was then! There was a certain peace in the knowledge....

"Then let it end,' she said to herself. It was a decision. It was not a question of taking one's life--she would never kill herself, that was repulsive and violent. It was a question of knowing the next step. And the next step led into the space of death. Did it?--or was there--?" (214-15). That final doubt turns apathy into violence, not repulsively directed towards herself, but involuntarily, yet self-protectively outwards, towards Birkin because he is there and because his enigmatic statements provoke frustration, as we see also in his relations with Hermione. That frustration of Ursula's is in turn transmuted into anger.

Birkin is a foil or surrogate in the sense of being the recipient of sublimated aggression, as are other indi-
viduals, and humanity generally. What these characters are expressing, through violent feelings, is a pervasive if ill-comprehended alienation, an unconscious sense of doom which, from a desire for self-protectiveness developed in the face of what is perceived as increasing oppression, explodes outwards, changing as it does so from apathy to desperation. It is a desire which accounts for much of the disruptiveness and violence of sexual relations, not only between Gerald and Gudrun, but Ursula and Birkin as well. With the second couple, it is Birkin's doctrine of dissolution leading to rebirth of individuality at any cost that is partly responsible for this: a doctrine which seems at times to have been designed not to achieve unison in separateness so much as disintegration in unison. When Birkin uses two cats to make a point concerning human affairs, for example, Mino, standing in "pure superiority," boxes the female in order that she "acknowledge him as a sort of fate, her own fate" (166): evidence, Birkin observes, of intimacy. And yet what Birkin says is partly induced by a suspicion that Ursula may in some way pose a threat. Thus when we hear him insisting upon an elusive combination of control and mutual independence, we do not know whether this is a token of self-sufficiency by which he wants to define the marriage, or a defensive strategy. If the latter, it has likely been unconsciously devised to guard himself against too close a relationship with Ursula, in which case he fears he might suffer some sort of loss.
"To ask whether such feelings are reasonable," Richard Drain writes, "is hardly to the point. For Lawrence they are there in the world about him that is his subject," feelings which "whether they reflect an involuntary flinching or a committed judgment, express an acute dislocation between the self and much of the reality outside the self." That dislocation, furthermore, is made obscure by the very alienation which causes it, so that the individual concerned can never be certain whether the fault is his or society's. "He may attempt to quench the doubt with a vehement attack on things outside," Drain continues, "but a subtle insecurity remains ... the stronger this becomes, the more it creates a subjective distortion of vision and feeling in the observer that prevents his view, and consequently his judgments, from being fully objective."  

This escalating process accounts for much of the ambivalence which characterizes the protagonists throughout, an ambivalence most notable when they realize or come close to realizing that virtually the only consequence of attempts to find relief from the suffering they must endure--attempts to seek alternatives, in other words--is increased alienation.

I would suggest, following from Drain's observations, that the reason alienation intensifies is that the alternatives are never in fact true alternatives, for invariably what motivates an alienated person is the need to protect himself, to preserve "the barrier between himself and
others, himself and society. But that barrier is his alienation, and behind it he lives unnourished, his reality goes unrecognized and unvalidated, he sickens for some dramatic breakthrough to the other person, for some immersion in the larger flow of life." At the same time, however, he is inclined either to subjugate the other, as revenge for having failed to resolve his alienation, or to withdraw. Thus in Women in Love we see characters "tempted to preserve themselves by repudiating the world, society, people; that is, by clinging to their alienation; yet they are also tempted to stake everything on breaking out of this imprisoning alienation, by clutching desperately at another person, or by letting themselves go and giving themselves up to some blind tidal wave of instinctual abandon." This applies equally to Birkin, Gerald, Gudrun and Ursula.

Although it may have been intended as an optimistic work, Women in Love is permeated by a despair of sufficient consequence that it is not really the sequel to The Rainbow it was meant to be. The optimism of the earlier work, writes another critic, H.M. Daleski, most obvious in Ursula’s final vision of social reform, is in this novel "transmuted into an abiding sense of the imminent collapse into calamity of a whole way of life." More significantly, Women in Love becomes a "sustained dramatization" of Lawrence’s belief, at the time of writing, "in a personal immunity amid the public disaster." Daleski earlier cites a letter from Lawrence to Lady Ottoline Morrell, 7 February,
1916, which elucidates that belief. "You cannot really do anything now:" he writes, "no one can do anything. You might as well try to collapse now, in violence and injustice and destruction, nothing will stop it ... The only thing now to be done, is either to go down with the ship, sink with the ship, or, as much as one can, leave the ship, and like a castaway live a life apart. As for me, I do not belong to the ship, I will not, if I can help it, sink with it. I will not live any more in this time. I know what it is. I reject it. As far as I possibly can, I will stand outside this time, I will live my life, and, if possible, be happy, though the whole world slides in horror down into the bottomless pit."

This sense of calamity in Women in Love, Daleski notes, not only motivates the characters, directing their actions and the novel generally, but in effect reduces earlier concerns with relationships to a secondary role. Of primary importance now is the survival of the individual. The characters "are shown to be on board a ship which is rapidly heading for destruction, and their personal relations are not only qualified by their response to the danger but are the measure of a psychic drive towards life or death which such a predicament intensifies."10 Thus Birkin's ideology of "unison in separateness," Gerald's obverse tendency to identify with society, Ursula's desire for the security of passionate life, Gudrun and Hermione's efforts to control
their destinies, the latter through "Wille zur Macht" (Will to Power), are all attempts not so much any more to resolve personal alienation as—in an industrial world in which war has extended the sources of alienation to apocalyptic extremes—primarily to stay afloat; not so much, in other words, to develop but to prevent further self-destruction. Thomas Crich and his wife, Loerke, Halliday and his decadent associates, the "underworld men" of dead Beldover, "ghouls" sounding like "strange machines, heavy, oiled" (128), the equally mechanistic if intellectual inhabitants of Breadalby, as well as the explicit, murderous violence and the several deaths provide ample evidence of a society disintegrating, a sinking ship dangerously apt to draw unwary citizens into a vortex as it does so.

Such is the devastation wrought by society that the torment these characters suffer clearly originates as a social malaise, exacerbated by war-intensified industrialism. Thus the violence is a symptom, as are arrogance and solipsism, of a struggle to escape a process that reduces individuals to "mere mechanical instruments." Moreover, as victims "in service of the machine ... the impure abstraction, the mechanisms of matter" (R, 350) who are soon bereft of human feeling, they can eventually become complacent, "satisfied to belong to the great and wonderful machine, even whilst it destroyed them" (260). It is that final complacency which horrifies someone as sensitive as Birkin, and yet at the same time he, and the others, in various ways
often rationalize their own less than idyllic lives, as well as their projected alternatives to subjugation and meaninglessness. Not development of individual identity, then, as was the major concern in the two previous novels, but more basically, survival above all else: that is the unspoken credo, echoing throughout *Women in Love*, which accounts for the rationalization and the ambivalence. It explains, too, the self-centred determination, the pervasive narcissism, which might appear to be Darwinian and individualistic, but of course is not, for it is fear which has created that credo in the first place. Furthermore, as all the characters involved understand at some point, it is not something palpable or concrete they need fear, not even death, but rather the oppressiveness of repetitive life, a life in which subservience and helplessness become threats to their very sanity. For this reason they do seek the comfort of others, but only others who do not threaten them, who are their equals, or more often, and this tends to be a subconscious desire, are slightly weaker than they.

Theirs is not a quest for power, however, but a symptom, like violence, of the greater conflict with society, the escape from which is really what compels them to be assertive, to achieve independence, to find meaning in their lives. In other words, survival is defined as autonomy or freedom, and for all of them, except Gerald, that quest is expressed, if idyllically, as a desire to escape
from industrial society to a simpler, more primitive way of life. The ability to live without material possessions, and especially without clothes, becomes almost a symbol of that ideal life. Birkin, lying naked among the primroses after running from Breadalby, feels that if he were "on an island, like Alexander Selkirk, with only the creatures and the trees, he would be free and glad, there would be none of this heaviness, this misgiving" (121). Similarly, it is among "the trees, far from any human beings," where Ursula experiences "a sort of magic peace. The more one could find a pure loneliness, with no taint of people, the better one felt" (276).

Like Birkin and her sister, Gudrun too wishes to escape the "terrible bondage" of contemporary life. Her greatest fear, in fact, is that "there might be no escape from it, no escape ... The thought of the mechanical succession of day following day, day following day, ad infinitum, was one of the things that made her heart palpitate with a real approach of madness" (522). Even for Gerald freedom is expressed in terms of isolation from "the mob," although he so identifies with society that for him isolation is usually an expression of class, and even within his class, of superiority based on an indomitable will. That is, he attempts to gain autonomy through domination, and isolation through aristocratic elitism. It is Gerald, however, who first suggests leaving England, after realizing by the end of "The Industrial Magnate" that he can no longer dominate in an age.
in which technology is indomitable. Within an industrial society, as Birkin has previously tried to convince him, all of humanity is in the end so reliant upon that technology that all are made subservient to it.

II

Although survival is of primary concern, relationships still remain an important issue in this novel. The problem arises, therefore, as to how these two goals can be reconciled, if indeed that is even possible. In fact, much of the angst the characters experience has to do with the suspicion that the two are irreconcilable, and that to achieve one is by definition to be incapable of attaining the other. If that is true, which then is to be sought, for to be gloriously free is to suffer loneliness and continued insecurity; to marry is to risk the threat of new forms of oppression. This dilemma, extending to the final pages of the novel, is established in the first chapter, which begins with a discussion between Ursula and Gudrun concerning marriage. The conversation, at first casual, soon proceeds to a more discriminate consideration of the social expectations of that institution in the light of personal responsibility and individual goals. While in the abstract it might be seen as "'the inevitable next step'" (9), in fact neither woman is inclined to seek marriage in those terms, each having a reticence akin to Birkin's (223) about what is
likely to follow the initial romance. Although Gudrun suggests, out of curiosity, it would seem, that marriage is "bound to be an experience of some sort," while Ursula feels it more likely "to be the end of experience" (7), both sisters view it at this point, if at all plausible, as being no more than a means of providing materialistic security: Ursula has been tempted by a "thousand a year, and an awfully nice man"; Gudrun would consider "a highly attractive individual of sufficient means" (8).

The issue then, involves personal growth. Both sisters agree that "things fail to materialize," that "everything—oneself ... withers in the bud," to which Ursula adds that it is frightening, but the solution, in concrete terms, is probably not marriage. In the end, however, Gudrun alone refuses to marry, resisting the temptation to compromise a fervent desire for independence. It will be a difficult choice to resist, for if she is not strong enough to achieve autonomy and a strength of will sufficient to combat external threats to her well-being, she will not survive. And yet she will endure for as long as possible because, as she tells her sister: "One must be free, above all, one must be free" (422).

Although that determined, singular bid for autonomy at times approaches a desire for power, Gudrun remains one of the more sympathetic characters in *Women in Love*, honourably motivated, honest, not inclined to perversity or victimization for the sake simply of power. She is of course ambiva-
lent, unsure at times of the means to be used in achieving her goal, occasionally even uncertain of that goal. Given what she is, however, a woman, an artist, a member of the working class, it becomes understandable, particularly in her relationship with a man like Gerald, that she would waver, and also that when she does become more sure of herself, that she would proceed with a determination that seems similar to that of Gerald or Hermione. In fact, her actions tend to be the result of almost completely antithetical motives. What complicates our appreciation of Gudrun is that she appears more sensual and yet more repressed or insecure than, say, Ursula, and at the same time sympathetic towards other victims. She admires Loerke, for example, and is fascinated, almost mesmerized at one point by the colliers and their families, whom she sees as aboriginal, in some way exotically alien, of a "marvellous" other world. That is not to say, however, that she approves, but rather, as the word marvellous suggests, that she is both curious and surprised that there could exist such an improbable scene. She actually finds the town "sordid," "defaced," a place of "shapeless, barren ugliness," inhabited by "ghouls." As she passes through Beldover, she feels "like a beetle toiling in the dust. She was filled with repulsion ... 'Everything,'" she tells her sister, "'is a ghoulish replica of the real world, a replica, a ghoul, all soiled, everything sordid. It's like
being mad, Ursula," she concludes, feeling "half dazed" and "afraid" (11-12).

Although she occasionally sounds brave, Gudrun is a rather timorous individual. Her reaction, for example, at the sight of the wedding crowd is to return home. She convinces herself that she must "go forward" figuratively as well as literally, but still she clings to Ursula, her heart "crying, as if in the midst of some ordeal ... 'Let us go back,'" she says. "'There are all those people'" (13). This plaintive cry of insecurity changes the way we must perceive Gudrun's reaction to the taunt concerning her stockings. Unlike her sister's later invective against humanity (275), Gudrun's is not so much contemplated misanthropy as the unthinking, even selfish response of a frightened child. This is reinforced by her sudden and inexplicably intense burst of anger, and more significantly by what immediately follows: a rather petulant admission to herself that "she hated walking up the churchyard path, along the red carpet, continuing in motion, in their sight," and finally the abrupt decision not to enter the church (14). I think that if we realize the extent of Gudrun's insecurity and immaturity, we will see that she is not as ruthless as she appears to be, nor as confident. Many of her subsequent acts--dancing in front of the Highland cattle, taunting Gerald, even her attraction to him--can then be understood as attempts to overcome this, often characterized by a mixture of self-assurance and fear. Even

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Ursula, who at times appears, as she did in *The Rainbow*, as protector, describes her younger sister as delicate and playful, a woman whose naive vitality, at times delightful, at others "caused a restraint over Ursula’s nature, a certain weariness" (14), a consequence, no doubt, of contending with a sibling who masks her anxiety behind troublesome and often embarrassing bravado.

Gudrun uses other techniques as well in her struggle to survive the perplexing and therefore threatening world around her, and in that sense "master" her environment by subduing her own fear of it (a fear apparently heightened by the more immediate, personal quality of town life as compared to the relative anonymity of London, from which she has recently returned). One technique to which she resorts is the reduction of that world through her art, in that she tends, as Ursula has observed, to "'always work small things, that one can put between one’s hands, birds and tiny animals’" (42), as if observing the world through an inverted opera glass. A further strategy is to avoid notice, although that is often undermined by an artistic penchant for colourful clothing. Because Gudrun is not content with this persona, she is envious of the apparent immunity to criticism or even to attention of her older sister, who refuses to feel humble. "'I,’" Ursula proclaims in response to Gudrun’s admission of timidity, "'don’t care what they think of me. Je m’en fiche.’" Gudrun, on the other hand,
believes, or at this point wants to believe that it is necessary to be "absolutely ordinary, so perfectly commonplace and like the person in the street, that you really are a masterpiece of humanity, not the person in the street actually, but the artistic creation of her ... the artistic creation of ordinariness" (56).

As Gudrun matures, something she does more noticeably than the other characters in Women in Love, it becomes even more apparent that although she wishes to change, what she desires is not mastery but equality. The only time she aspires to the former is during those scenes with Gerald in which she feels she must conquer or be conquered. As to equality, she feels herself "as if damned, out there on the high road" when she stops to observe Gerald swimming naked in the pond, "without bond or connexion anywhere, just himself in the watery world." Gudrun envies him "almost painfully" for being capable of attaining such complete if temporary and, as we realize, illusory independence. "God, what it is to be a man!" she cried ... "The freedom, the liberty, the mobility ... You're a man, you want to do a thing, you do it. You haven't the thousand obstacles a woman has in front of her ... Supposing I want to swim up that water. It is impossible, it is one of the impossibilities of life, for me to take my clothes off now and jump in. But isn't it ridiculous, doesn't it simply prevent our living!" (52).

Ursula, on the other hand, does not understand Gudrun's
outburst because she realizes that the quasi-independence Gerald is exhibiting is of little social significance. Certainly Gerald does not possess, nor even desires, the kind of freedom in isolation he is apparently enjoying in the pond. He, like Gudrun, is committed to a rather conservative social existence, in which the opinion of others is important, whereas Ursula, who is not, consequently never troubles herself about inequality as an external imposition. As a result, when she is alone, at the Crich water-party, she too swims naked. Interestingly, her sister joins her, but in the larger social context Gudrun still only aspires to a feminine equality Ursula assumes to be hers already.

Another graphic example of this difference between the two sisters also arises at the Crich party, during which Gudrun, in a confrontation with a small herd of curious if potentially threatening cattle, engages in what I would describe as a representative dance of autonomy, a dance inspired, that is, not from a compulsion to master the animals but only to relate to them in some primitive, even sensual manner. Gudrun approaches the cattle tentatively, and yet feeling "as if she were confident of some secret power in herself, and had to put it to the test ... lifting her body towards them as if in a spell, her feet pulsing as if in some little frenzy of unconscious sensation, her arms, her wrists, her hands stretching and heaving and falling and reaching and reaching and falling, her breasts lifting and
shaken towards the cattle, her throat exposed as in some voluptuous ecstasy towards them, whilst she drifted imperceptibly nearer .... She could feel them just in front of her, it was as if she had the electric impulse from their breasts running into her hands. Soon she would touch them, actually touch them. A terrible shiver of fear and pleasure went through her" (187). It is the repetition of the words "as if" which indicates that what Gudrun is engaged in at this time is an imaginative and yet constrained rehearsal, rather than the actual experience of the feelings being described.

It is only after Gerald arrives that Gudrun ventures to dominate the cattle, as an indication to him of her strength and her refusal to be subservient or afraid. She strikes him on the face for the same reason. "'You have struck the first blow,'" he says; "'And I shall strike the last,' she retorted involuntarily, with confident assurance" (191). Having established the terms of their relationship, momentarily at least, Gudrun is then able to appreciate something of the man beneath Gerald's characteristic facade while he, shocked by the unexpected resolve of this woman, and understanding neither her motives nor the reasons for such an abrupt change of mood, feels his will losing control. "His mind was gone, he grasped for sufficient mechanical control, to save himself ... The terrible swooning burden on his mind, the awful swooning, the loss of all his control, was too much for him. He grasped her arm in his own hand, as if
his hand were iron." At that moment their sense of equilib-
rium is lost, as Gudrun realizes. "She looked at the face
with the fixed eyes, set before her, and her blood ran cold"
(192). Thus the oscillating tenor of their affair is estab-
lished: subjugation and subservience, love and hatred, a
violent shifting from one to the other, the result of vir-
tually no understanding or communication, particularly on
Gerald's part.

The extent to which Gudrun already appreciates the
complexity and threatening qualities of this man whom she
nevertheless loves and admires marks the extent of her own
maturation. Conversely, her first impression of Gerald
recalls Helena Verden, or even Ursula upon meeting
Skrebensky. That is, she romantically perceives him then as
an individual who seems to embody those characteristics she
herself lacks, characteristics, as it turns out, which he
does not possess, or which she is fancifully exaggerating.
The consequences are not unexpected; for example, her
general perception of Crich is as someone who also does not
"belong to the same creation as the people about him" (15),
and that imagined affinity tends to overwhelm a subsequent
feeling of "significant, sinister stillness in his bearing,
the lurking danger" of an "unsubdued temper" (15-16). She
does not ponder that significance, paying attention only to
the extent of his appeal and her own desire to see him
again. What she fails to recognize, in spite of her recent
experience, is that he too is of the colliers' world, similarly foreign, similarly foreboding, with his "strange guarded look." She sees instead only a primitive sensuality in his "gleaming beauty, maleness, like a young, good-humoured smiling wolf ... 'His totem is the wolf,' she repeated to herself. 'His mother is an old, unbroken wolf'" (15-16).

To Gudrun, Gerald is like the colliers, but positively so. He is to her a "potent" man, from a "world of powerful, underworld men," a "strong, dangerous underworld, mindless, inhuman" man (128). Those are qualities she thinks are requisite to survival, particularly the mindless indifference to distractive humanistic emotions such as Ursula expresses, emotions which to Gudrun are evidence of weakness. When, for example, Ursula protests against Gerald's aggressive attempts to control his mare, Gudrun hates her sister "bitterly for being outside herself. It was unendurable that Ursula's voice was so powerful and naked" (123). For Gudrun, the "world reeled and passed into nothingness ... When she recovered, her soul was calm and cold, without feeling. The trucks were still rumbling by, and the man," not "Gerald," but the detached "man and the mare were still fighting. But she herself was cold and separate, she had no more feeling for them. She was quite hard and cold and indifferent" (124). Ironically, now admiring Gerald's indomitability, Gudrun will subsequently expend considerable strength in resisting his attempt, similar to that with the
mare, and with Minette, aggressively to subjugate her. At the present moment she feels that she must also achieve indomitable, whatever the cost in loss of sensitivity or feelings generally. She must become master of her own circumstances. In this, as we discover in a further assessment of the scene with the mare, she appears disconcertingly to resemble the man she now admires, but will eventually regard with distaste.

Gerald is being particularly perverse here; the mare creates a conflict of wills and for him any conflict must be decided in his favour. When Gerald has in effect conquered the mare and yet continues spurring her bleeding flanks is perhaps when the perversity begins, or at least it is at that moment we are told that Ursula "alone understood him perfectly, in pure opposition" (124). At that same time, as if she is unwilling to admit to what she also sees, Gudrun forces herself to ignore the scene before her, aware only that Gerald's will remains "bright and unstained" (124). She wants the scene to provide evidence to support her belief in the necessity and the possibility of a superior, impersonal will. In terms of achieving equality as a woman, this is particularly important to Gudrun sexually, and when later reflecting upon what she has chosen to observe, she recalls the event specifically in sexual terms. She is impressed "in her mind by the sense of indomitable soft weight of the man, bearing down into the living body of the
horse: the strong, indomitable thighs of the blond man clenching the palpitating body of the mare into pure control; a sort of soft white magnetic domination from the loins and thighs and calves, enclosing and encompassing the mare heavily into unutterable subordination, soft-blood-subordination, terrible" (126). Gudrun does not want to be dominated in this way; she wants to be able to dominate, if that becomes necessary, and to achieve this kind of self-assurance (an understandable desire, given the scene immediately following, in which two labourers discuss her as potential chattel, to be bought for sexual pleasure). In other words, she is attracted to Gerald partly as mentor, as someone from whom she can learn how to conquer her own fear and insecurity and subdue those who might otherwise intimidate her, including, as it turns out, Gerald himself.

That need for impersonal will leads to a momentary attraction to Beldover as well. Overcoming an earlier loathing, Gudrun begins to understand that the people of Beldover, particularly the men, are struggling for a not dissimilar kind of physical dominance over their environment. They are "potent," she realizes, and now only "half-repulsive ... In their voices she could hear the voluptuous resonance of darkness [of the mines as well as, figuratively, in sexual terms], the strong, dangerous underworld, mindless, inhuman. They sounded also like strange machines, heavy, oiled. The voluptuousness was like that of machinery, cold and iron" (128). The attraction is also
prompted by a feeling of isolation and a desire to overcome it by gaining a sense of belonging, even in a community such as Beldover. Gudrun begins to feel "a nostalgia for the place. She hated it, she knew how utterly cut off it was, how hideous and how sickeningly mindless. Sometimes she beat her wings like a new Daphne [in Greek mythology a nymph who changed into a laurel-tree to escape Apollo], turning not into a tree but a machine. And yet she was overcome by the nostalgia. She struggled to get more and more into accord with the atmosphere of the place, she craved to get her satisfaction of it" (129). It is significant that the new Daphne will turn into a machine to escape intolerable circumstances; as Ursula discovered in "the man's world" of teaching, one way to resolve the anguish of such experience and yet remain a part of one's environment is to assimilate. In this case, to escape victimization in Beldover, one acquires a "sense of power and of inexpressible destructiveness" (131) which would seem to solve the problem, but—again as Ursula discovered—the solution is attained at high personal cost. This is because such extreme measures tend to induce a "fatal half-heartedness, a sort of rottenness in the will" (131), a perverse, "demonical" imitation of true strength and confidence.

The colliers themselves accept and in some respects exhibit the same if reduced penchant for destruction as evidence of power. They may be subservient to Gerald, to
authoritarian forces generally, but they in turn perceive themselves as masters of the destructive machine, although that of course is not true. Having to labour "hard, much harder than before" at work "terrible and heart-breaking in its mechanicalness," the miners are "reduced to mere mechanical instruments" in the service of the new cutting machines which, ironically, are referred to as the "great iron men" (259). On the other hand, the miners are unaffected by humanistic morality, and their will, if perverse, nevertheless appears to Gudrun as evidence of their ability to survive, even to triumph over their environment by being a part of it. As such they evoke in her a nostalgia, a longing for the familiar, the romantic element of which, as with her impression of Gerald, prevents her from understanding the significance of what she observes in these men. Theirs is not the union with nature or the sociable community to which she aspires, and yet to her the miners project a "strange, distorted dignity, a certain beauty ... they had a strange glamour, their voices were full of an intolerable deep resonance, like a machine burring, a music more maddening than the sirens' long ago ... They aroused a strange, nostalgic ache of desire, something almost demoniacal, never to be fulfilled" (129-30). As Birkin would inform her, it is just as well that Gudrun is beginning to realize such a state is inaccessible.

What the miners have attained is the industrial equivalent of the earlier Brangwens' "intercourse between heaven
and earth, sunshine drawn into breast and bowels ... feeling the pulse and body of the soil, that ... clung to their feet with a weight that pulled like desire" (R, 8). Now the sunshine is shut out, the soil is coaldust, the intercourse is between hell and earth. The regressive nature of both the perversity of passion and the nostalgia for it are later elucidated, in the form of a letter of Birkin's read by the inebriated Halliday. In it Birkin notes that there seems to be a "phase in every race ... when the desire for destruction overcomes every other desire. In the individual, this desire is ultimately a desire for destruction in the self ... a desire for the reduction-process in oneself, a reducing back to the origin, a return along the Flux of Corruption, to the original rudimentary conditions of being ...")"going back to the savages for our sensations--always seeking to lose ourselves in some ultimate black sensation, mindless and infinite--burning only with destructive fires, ranging on with the hope of being burnt out utterly---"'" (432-34).

Gudrun too, as her sister once did, eventually becomes aware of this; sometimes she "would start aside, see it all, see how she was sinking in. And then she was filled with a fury of contempt and anger. She felt she was sinking into one mass with the rest--all so close and intermingled and breathless. It was horrible. She was stifled" (131). Her desire to belong, therefore, becomes easily supplanted by
another attraction: Gerald. He, she decides, will be "her escape from the heavy slough of the pale, underworld, automatic colliers" (133). With him she will have a sense of belonging, in that "they were of the same kind, he and she, a sort of diabolic freemasonry subsisted between them," which, she believes, Gerald will be incapable of denying. "Wherever they met, they would be secretly associated. And he would be helpless in the association with her. Her soul exulted" (135). Thus she sees security in a bond which will continue for some time; in that respect alone she calls him "master": not victimizer, but teacher, a man revealing a particular skill in having achieved that to which she aspires. If there exists as well the other sense of the term, subjugation is something she will risk.

To incur the possibility of subjugation, however, is not to desire it; in that sense I disagree with Daleski, who believes that Gudrun "oscillates between a desire for victimization and for dominance," an ambivalence he finds most explicit in the scene in which Gerald enters her room in the middle of the night. If "she capitulates here in 'an ecstasy of subjection,'" Daleski argues, "she soon enough resents the 'burden of his beauty' which can 'compel her and subjugate her.' It is only a matter of time before she forms 'the deep resolve ... to combat him, steeling her soul with strength in the knowledge that 'one of them must triumph over the other.'" But capitulation from helplessness, for Gudrun feels certain that she "had no power at
this crisis to resist" (388), is hardly a desire for victim-
ization, nor is an "ecstasy of subjection" during which she
feels "the terrible frictional violence of death ... in
throes of acute, violent sensation" (388). Gerald has "come
for vindication"; he has in a sense raped her, certainly
violated her, overpowered her, and if that experience is for
Gudrun intense, even ecstatic, we must remember Lawrence
uses words literally. Ecstasy, according to the Oxford
English Dictionary, means "to throw into a state of frenzy
or stupor"; "to raise to a high state of feeling"; to exper-
ience intense emotion. Only recently has the word been used
in the sense of being pleasurable.

While it is true that Gudrun soon afterwards resolves
"to combat him" (465) and be triumphant, that resolve is
derived from two specific phenomena: Gerald’s admitted
promiscuity as a means of further conquest, and her intensi-
fying eagerness to test her developing potency by engaging
in conflict with a worthwhile adversary. It is a matter of
deciding to end equivocacy, a decision that makes her laugh
with "confidence. It woke a certain keen, half contemptuous
pity, tenderness for him: she was so ruthless" (465). That
is indeed a strange response, and one which evokes the
query: has Gudrun attached so much importance to survival
that she has suppressed sensitivity and even sensuality?
Has she, in combatting Gerald as he combats the machines and
machine-like miners, become as ruthless as he, convinced,
like him, that for her there are in life two opposites: her will "and the resistant Matter of earth" (256)? She still feels pity and tenderness, but also feels she must prove to Gerald that she is not afraid of him, that "he could never cow her, nor dominate her, nor have any right over her; this she would maintain until she had proved it. Once proved, she was free of him for ever" (520).

Of course, she is really trying to prove to herself that she possesses such strength; she also understands that she may not triumph—thus does she cry as the "climax" of their relationship approaches—for she instinctively appreciates Gerald's desire "to destroy her rather than be denied." She awaits death, certainly the death of their relationship, for Gerald is now alien to her, his desires, his desperate insecurity incomprehensible. When he swears he will always love her, she looks at him "as at something she could never understand, never: as a child looks at a grown-up person, without hope of understanding, only submitting" (452). Gudrun is submissive because she feels helpless, or perhaps more to the point, from a sense of awe with respect to the violence of Gerald's movements and words: an irrationality which eventually causes him to actually consider and then attempt murdering her.
It is not only Gudrun, of course, who fails to understand the other, for Gerald is at a complete loss concerning her, a failure complicated by the fact that he is also far less capable than she at self-analysis. However, and here I recall an earlier comparison with Ursula and Skrebensky, if Gudrun resorts to a ruthlessness even greater than that which her sister exhibited in her efforts to escape the cloying, apathetic Anton, Gerald is also more complex, and more difficult to combat than the other man. Certainly Gudrun is baffled by his mixture of irrationality, ambivalence, acumen combined with will, and yet undermined at times by an almost infantile dependency. In the end we, the readers, are the only ones capable of understanding Gerald to any significant extent, this owing not a little to a profile we have of him, comprehensive enough that it includes a sketch of his childhood. Knowing something of his parents as well, we understand, for example, that he has inherited his mother's "dark" sensuousness, his father's materialism and individualism, and that as a result he was at school both romantic and rebellious. "During his childhood and his boyhood he had wanted a sort of savagedom. The days of Homer were his ideal, when a man was chief of an army of heroes, or spent his years in wonderful Odyssey ... The world was really a wilderness where one hunted and swam and rode. He rebelled against all authority. Life was a condition of savage freedom" (249).
That condition extends briefly into adulthood, until, after travelling "into the savage regions that had so attracted him," he discovers that humanity is "very much alike everywhere, and to a mind like his, curious and cold, the savage was duller, less exciting than the European. So he took hold of all kinds of sociological ideas, and ideas of reform. But they never went more than skin-deep, they were never more than a mental amusement. Their interest lay chiefly in the reaction against the positive order, the destructive reaction" (259). By the time we meet him, Gerald defines himself as an adherent of "the dullest conservatism ... the strictest Toryism" (249), who thinks humanitarianism "ridiculous. The suffering and feelings of individuals did not matter in the least. They were mere conditions, like the weather. What mattered was the pure instrumentality of the individual. As a man as of a knife: does it cut well? Nothing else mattered" (251). It is with those feelings that he exchanges dilettantism for the high priesthood of commercial enterprise, a tranformation brought about by the discovery at last of a purpose. It is a religious moment for Gerald when that occurs; "suddenly, with a sort of exultation, he laid hold of the world ... he saw his own name written on the wall. Now he had a vision of power" (250), a vision both mystical and entrepreneurial, combining zeal with a financially commonsensical plan to revitalize the mining industry.
Before assuming the directorship of the Crich mines, Gerald has never been concerned with pragmatism, particularly in a socio-economic sense. As he assumes his new role, therefore, the initial, romanticized challenge is soon coloured by an overwhelming sense of his own shortcomings and the realization that he is alone—that is to say, without his father. Unsettled both philosophically and emotionally, he feels like the "first mate of a ship that has lost his captain, and who sees only a terrible chaos in front of him. He did not inherit an established order and a living idea. The whole unifying idea of mankind seemed to be dying with his father, the centralizing force that had held the whole together seemed to collapse with his father, the parts were ready to go asunder in terrible disintegration ... all his life he had been wrenching at the frame of life to break it apart. And now, with something of the terror of a destructive child, he saw himself on the point of inheriting his own destruction" (248).

He survives that transition, however, formulating as a replacement for his father's a new "unifying idea of mankind," a "great and perfect system that subjected life to pure mechanical principles." This is meant to result in "the destruction of the organic purpose, the organic unity, and the subordination of every organic unit to the great mechanical purpose ... pure organic disintegration and pure mechanical organization ... the first and finest state of chaos." This is the only way Gerald feels he can contend
with his anxiety, by literally repressing emotions: his own and those of his employees. When to his mind that happens, he is finally if temporarily satisfied. "He had succeeded. He had converted the industry into a new and terrible purity" (260). In spite of a previous fear of similar phenomena, this destruction by Gerald of organic or human relations in favour of logical ones, and the ensuing chaos the mines must endure before economic reform is completely inaugurated, are intentional. Eventually, however, he re-lives that earlier terror—the collapse of a "centralizing force": in the first instance his father, in the second the indomitability of his own will--this time actually "inheriting his own destruction."

In this process, Gerald repeats the errors of his father, who feels in retrospect that perhaps "he had loved his neighbour even better than himself" (241), an abnegation of self to which his son vows he will never succumb. But it soon becomes evident that Gerald loves his social position—"Master" and efficient, machine-like producer—better than himself. The results are similar. Birkin accuses Gerald of "chopping" himself "down to fit the world' ... as if he were limited to one form of existence, one knowledge, one activity, a sort of fatal halfness ... It was the insistence on the limitation which so bored Birkin in Gerald. Gerald could never fly away from himself, in indifferent gaiety. He had a clog, a sort of monomania" (230, 232-33). In his
work at the mine especially, Gerald does indeed become monomaniacal, although he attributes his behaviour to different reasons. He defines himself in social terms, agreeing with an earlier suggestion by Birkin that because "you are of high importance to humanity you are of high importance to yourself. That is why you work so hard at the mines. If you can produce coal to cook five thousand dinners a day, you are five thousand times more important than if you cooked only your own dinner" (61). Gerald, not upset by those words, is pleased to be described as a "Napoleon of industry" (70), and admits he lives "to work, to produce something, in so far as I am a purposive being" (61). But more than that, he strives to be efficient—that is, he identifies with his work economically—and, from that efficiency and his social status combined, believes himself socially superior, because of the evidence just cited, but more importantly, because "he would not claim intrinsic personal superiority, because he would never base his standard of values on pure being. So he wobbled upon a tacit assumption of social standing" (235). As becomes clear after he assumes complete control of the mines, Gerald realizes that he also cannot base his identity solely upon social standing. To be only an entrepreneur, especially a successful one, is eventually to be nothing.

For Thomas Crich, whose own self-denial derives not from his adherence to conventional religious tenets, but
from an eccentric interpretation of them, "poverty and labour were nearer to God than he." Crich is unwilling, however, to "give up his goods" (253) when the men refuse to accept a reduction in wages, choosing instead to comply with a Masters' Federation decision to close the pits, thus denying "the means of life to his sons, his people" (252-53). And yet, paradoxically he "had always the unacknowledged belief that it was his workmen, the miners, who held in their hands the means of salvation. To move nearer to God, he must move towards his miners, his life must gravitate towards theirs. They were unconsciously, his idol, his God made manifest. In them he worshipped the highest, the great, sympathetic, mindless God of humanity" (242). Such a belief may be the result of guilt, but in the end, as his actions suggest, although divorced from the tenets of both Christianity and capitalism, Thomas Crich nevertheless understands something of the latter. "He wanted his industry to run on love," and yet is forced to draw "the sword of mechanical necessity" because he lives no longer in a Christian but in a capitalist society. "God was the machine," and the workers now "claimed equality" in that new "Godhead of the great productive machine. Every man ... was part of this Godhead. But somehow, somewhere, Thomas Crich knew this was false. When the machine is the Godhead, and production or work is worship, then the most mechanical mind is purest and highest, the representative of God on earth.
And the rest are subordinate, each according to his degree" (253-54).

That, prophetically, describes the ideology to which Gerald eventually subscribes. In doing so, he fails to understand that the mechanical "mind," the indomitable, unrelenting will most closely associated with "this inhuman principle" (256) is the machine. Gerald cannot become "the God of the machine, Deus ex Machina" (256-57), for the machine is God. As his father intuited, all that even a superior—in Gerald’s terms the most mechanical, depersonalized—mind can become is "the representative of God on earth," and that is soon a redundant status. A similar subservience can be attributed to the colliers as well, who are in the process of being "reduced to mere mechanical instruments" of the "great iron men, as the cutting machines were called ....But they submitted to it all. The joy went out of their lives, the hope seemed to perish as they became more and more mechanized. And yet they accepted the new conditions. They even got a further satisfaction out of them ... as time went on, they accepted everything with some fatal satisfaction. Gerald was their high priest, he represented the religion they really felt. His father was forgotten already. There was a new world, a new order, strict, terrible, inhuman, but satisfying in its very destructiveness. The men were satisfied to belong to the great and wonderful machine, even whilst it destroyed them. It was what they wanted. It was the highest that man had
produced, the most wonderful and superhuman. They were
exalted by belonging to this great and superhuman system
which was beyond feeling or reason, something really god-
like. Their hearts died within them, but their souls were
satisfied. It was what they wanted. Otherwise Gerald could
never had done what he did" (259-60).

In this new religion, the equipment serves as both ikon
and worker of miracles, and as happens sometimes with
religion, particularly religious cults, the miners are made
to feel a part of the magic, as if they too, by becoming
machine-like, will eventually acquire the power of the
machines. It is propagandistically effective, for by the
time the miners would realize otherwise, they are committed
either to continuing in the mines or resigning their posi-
tions, with no likely alternative but to then be unemployed.
Except that such an alternative is not literally applicable
to him, the same can be said of Gerald. Just as his father
is forced to repudiate love for "mechanical necessity," he
must acquiesce in the economic necessity of a system in
which efficiency begets even more efficiency. Eventually
that system functions virtually by itself, without the need
for planning or even supervision, and Gerald becomes irrele-
vant except as a kind of figurehead. Furthermore, again
like Thomas Crich who, in repudiating love, repudiates a
vital part of himself, Gerald, as part of "the great social
productive machine" (255) which no longer requires his will
to be productive, is faced with the "terror" of "not knowing what he was." Although "his will yet held good," it is an instrument of subjugation with nothing to subjugate, and his mind, whose function he once thought to be in the obedient service of his will, is even more devastated: still active, but "like a bubble floating in the darkness. At any moment it might burst and leave him in chaos. He would not die. He knew that. He would go on living, but the meaning would have collapsed out of him, his divine reason would be gone. In a strangely indifferent, sterile way, he was frightened. But he could not react even to the fear. It was as if his centres of feeling were drying up" (261).

This is a devastating critique not only of industrialism, but of Gerald as well. He is portrayed most critically for his belief in will and thereby his ability to achieve supremacy by mastering nature and "lesser" men through the use of what is in essence an extension of will: the machine. It is this kind of mentality to which Birkin is most averse; his rejection of Hermione for espousing and acting upon a similar belief, his rejection of humanity generally for its mechanical routine is based on an abhorrence of the inhuman quality of mechanical will which, whether in control or being controlled, effectively stifles potential. It is this very position, however, which Gerald has posited as the means of developing his potential, achieving "the pure fulfilment of his own will in the struggle with the natural conditions" (251-52). His collapse is the consequence of
making subservient to that will his own personality as well as those of his employees. And yet Gerald is convinced, as he reorganizes the mines, that the key to entrepreneurial, and for him, therefore, personal success is the "will of man ....Man was the arch-god of the earth. His mind was obedient to serve his will. Man's will was the absolute, the only absolute ....There were two opposites, his will and the resistant Matter of the earth. And between these he could establish the very expression of his will, the incarnation of his power, a great and perfect machine, a system, an activity of pure order, pure mechanical repetition, repetition ad infinitum, hence eternal and infinite" (251, 256).

This concept of motion, ostensibly progressive and therefore meaningful, is in fact the antithesis to development. It is cyclical motion, leading nowhere and unknown in the organic world. And yet it is this very "confusion in nature," the "substitution of the mechanical principle for the organic" (260), which attracts Gerald, and Loerke, to mechanical motion. Both are mesmerised by its hypnotic quality, which gives them at once a sense of power and a release from personal anxiety and responsibility: for Loerke, through the abolition of illusion; for Gerald, by attaining a kind of singularity which makes him seem at times so similar to Birkin as well. But Gerald's is actually a quest for the obverse: stasis rather than development,
the subjection of life to "pure mathematical principles"—that is, to intellectualism rather than intuition—the suppression of self, repetition rather than change, the elimination of external, particularly sensual or aesthetic stimuli, reduction rather than expansion of experience. Ultimately, it is the desire, at least by implication, of death over life, destruction over creation, apathy over survival. Both Gerald and Birkin desire the impersonal, but to Gerald that goal is a quasi-mechanical repression of distractive feelings, whereas for Birkin it is the transcendence of that which stifles individuality: namely, personality or ego. They both also wish to be absolved of responsibility, but again, Gerald's is an evasion of self-responsibility, while Birkin's involves the avoidance of responsibility towards others.

As an industrialist, Gerald does not believe in humanitarianism, as we saw earlier, nor is he unduly concerned with such issues as identity, personal development or collectivism. "Only work," he argues, "the business of production" holds men together; otherwise they are isolate, "free to do as they like" (114). Indeed, early in the novel Gerald himself appears to revel in isolation. When Ursula and Gudrun observe him swimming alone, for example, "he saw them and he exulted to himself because of his own advantage, his possession of a world to himself. He was immune and perfect ... He was alone now, alone and immune in the middle of the waters, which he had all to himself. He exulted in
his isolation in the new element, unquestioned and unconditioned ... without bond or connexion anywhere, just himself in the watery world” (51-52). But of course Gerald has connections, with the mines. So long as he is able to identify himself as a functioning, productive and therefore meaningful individual, it is true that he feels he does not need other people, or their criticism. When the meaningfulness of his position at the mines ceases, however, and he feels worthless, without motivation or future, then he very explicitly cannot contend with isolation. In that respect, therefore, his earlier revelry in the pond, like Birkin’s desire for life on a deserted island, does not provide an accurate indication of his true feelings. When he is “really left alone, he could not bear it.” He feels like "a man hung in chains over the edge of an abyss," a feeling which is exacerbated after he is no longer needed to run the mines, and after his last connection with them—his father—no longer exists. Then he suffers intensely, "suspended in chain of physical life, over the bottomless pit of nothingness. And he could not bear it. He could not bear it. He was frightened deeply, and coldly, frightened in his soul. He did not believe in his own strength any more. He could not fall into this infinite void and rise again. If he fell, he would be gone for ever ... He did not believe in his own single self any further than this" (381).

This should not be a revelation, for as he earlier
admits to Birkin, Gerald has always lived only "‘to work, to produce something ... Apart from that,’” he adds, "‘I live because I am living’” (61). He cannot, however, answer Birkin’s subsequent question, and in fact is "taken aback" when the other man asks: "‘What do you think is the aim and object of your life, Gerald?’” (62). That is because, simply stated, work is his life, his reason for living, even the means of self-identification. When Birkin later introduces him to Minette as "‘a Napoleon of industry ... ruling over the coal-miners,’” he feels "proud" and "full of male strength." Because that strength and that Napoleonic fervour, combined with will, determination, and the materialistic possessiveness of a good capitalist, are virtually his only characteristics, they are as a result all that inform his relations with other people as well, especially women. Consequently, his first reaction to Minette is one of sexual aggression, a feeling of "awful, enjoyable power over her, an instinctive cherishing very near to cruelty. For she was a victim. He felt that she was in his power ... He would be able to destroy her utterly in the strength of his discharge” (71). Although Minette is a sensuous and possibly acquiescent woman, Gerald reacts before he can really know that or anything else about her. From the little we are told concerning her previous relationship with Halliday, she seems, although immature, a woman nevertheless capable of considerable assertiveness and independence. She considers reinstating that relationship,
for example, with the "intention, ultimately ... to capture Halliday, to have complete power over him" (89). While she is only curious and sexually attracted to Gerald, therefore, he perceives her as "slave-like" and "absorbed in him," a potential conquest, in other words. Her "look of a violated slave, whose fulfilment lies in her further and further violation, made his nerves quiver with acutely desirable sensation. After all, his was the only will, she was the passive substance of his will" (88).

There is a certain desperate tone here, however, for Gerald is attempting to convince himself of his own potency, using sexuality, perhaps not sadistically, but certainly as a means of asserting and thus substantiating the invincibility, the very existence of his will. As we have seen, that is characteristic of Gerald; in whatever situation he finds himself, whether it be with his mare or Bismarck the rabbit, his employees, Minette, Gudrun or casual acquaintances, he must assume control, as if constantly feeling himself on the brink of defeat by other, stronger forces, whether they be people, inanimate objects or abstractions. As a result Gerald experiences a series of crises, having to do with purpose and social position, isolation, impotency, will and, during his father's illness, mortality.

While Thomas Crich is dying, Gerald is afraid that he will succumb emotionally, losing his "perfect sang froid" (362), and the desire not to, especially in the presence of
his father, provides a new challenge for his will. Moreover, he is actually afraid of death itself, fearful that he too will "collapse ... before the omnipotence of death" and yet determined to confront that fear and conquer it. The ordeal that results is devastating and grotesque as Gerald becomes a kind of disembodied will engaged in a "ghastly wrestling for death in his own soul. And his own will should triumph. Come what might, he would not bow down or submit or acknowledge a master ... But as the fight went on, and all that he had been and was continued to be destroyed, so that life was a hollow shell all round him, roaring and clattering like the sound of the sea ... and inside this hollow shell was all the darkness and fearful space of death, he knew he would have to find reinforcements, otherwise he would collapse inwards upon the great dark void which circled at the centre of his soul. His will held his outer life, his outer mind, his outer being unbroken and unchanged. But the pressure was too great. He would have to find something to make good the equilibrium. Something must come with him into the hollow void of death in his soul, fill it up, and so equalize the pressure within to the pressure without" (363-64). Otherwise, he feels certain he "would perish if this went on much longer" (376). He needs "something" to reinforce his will, a lifeforce or vitality to counter the death in his soul. "In this extremity his instinct led him to Gudrun" (364), and to the beginning of a relationship which, to a degree greater even than Ursula and
Birkin's, will be characterized by ulterior motives—
Gerald's need for revitalization and security, Gudrun's
desire to use Gerald as a kind of test case for equality—
and by a lack of communication and complete
misunderstanding.

Gerald is originally attracted to Gudrun's will as a
kind of perceived complement to his own and as a new chal­
lenge to his pride of supremacy, the latter in the face of
an increasing impotency, both sensed and real. Where once
he had found easy relief in shortlived sexual encounters, it
has lately become difficult "to keep up his interest in
women ... He didn't care about them any more. A Pussum was
all right in her way, but she was an exceptional case, and
even she mattered extremely little. No, women, in that
sense, were useless to him any more. He felt that his mind
needed acute stimulation, before he could be physically
aroused" (262). Requiring a new challenge, Gerald turns to
Gudrun because to him she seems intellectually stimulating.
He also senses in her a sympathetic nature. He becomes
interested, for example, when she is neither repulsed by his
treatment of the mare nor frightened by the animal itself,
and he first declares his love for her after she dances in
front of the Highland cattle and then strikes him. It is a
blow which sets the tone of their relationship: a conflict
of wills, the nature of which neither really understands,
for it is characterized by involuntary, almost unconscious
manifestations of a desire in both of them to be triumphant. Gudrun has specifically challenged Gerald to a battle for equality, letting him know that unlike his mare she will not be subservient. Gerald, on the other hand, for whom all challenge involves a bid for supremacy, assumes that he must master Gudrun or be made subservient to her. He has said of his mare that if "'your will isn't master, then the horse is master of you'" (155); he has related to his employees with the same conviction, and he has assumed that when Bismarck the rabbit attacks Gudrun, and she retaliates instinctively from surprise and pain, that her fury is a "sullen passion of cruelty" (270) similar to his. What Gerald fails to realize is that whereas he smiles, his face gleaming from an almost perverse pleasure as he wrestles and then subdues the rabbit, the smile that "twisted" Gudrun's face is one of humiliation. "She knew she was revealed" (271), not as a woman of like perversity, but as having shown evidence of weakness. Both of them are at that moment ambivalent. Gudrun, hating the fact that Gerald had to "save" her, is at the same time sexually attracted to him for his vitality. Still more or less convinced she is strong enough to achieve equality with him, she also feels weak and vulnerable from her desire. Thus when she looks at Gerald, he sees "strange, darkened eyes, strained with underworld knowledge, almost supplicating, like those of a creature which is at his mercy yet which is his ultimate victor." As with Minette, then, Gerald is inclined to be aggressive, but in
Gudrun's presence, although she seems on the one hand to be potentially "a soft recipient of his magical, hideous white fire," he simultaneously feels "unconfident," as he experiences "qualms of fear" (272).

Besides doubt, there is also a submissiveness in Gerald, which emerges after Gudrun slaps his face, suggesting that perhaps he has discovered someone whom he can trust. If that is so, and the following passage indicates that it is, then clearly Gerald is undergoing at least a partial change of personality. He is attracted to Gudrun's frankness and apparent dependability because in some respects he wants a noncompetitive relationship, as a respite, perhaps, from anxiety and despair. It may be that the recognition of this desire is not premeditated, but comes after the experience, and it certainly does not lead to a complete change. Gerald remains for the most part a man determined to conquer, to seek new challenges and meet them successfully. Nevertheless, as he and Gudrun leave the island, his mind "lapsed out for the first time in his life, into the things about him. For he had always kept such a keen attentiveness, concentrated and unyielding in himself. Now he had let go, imperceptibly he was melting into oneness with the whole. It was like pure, perfect sleep, his first great sleep of life. He had been so insistent, so guarded, all his life. But here was sleep, and peace, and perfect lapsing out" (199). In subsequent scenes with Gudrun this
childlike surrender of his will recurs, as if he is unconsciously seeking the womb, as if it were: a haven to which he can occasionally regress in order to escape responsibility. It is not rebirth, such as Birkin desires, for Gerald still fears the void of life, even meaningless life, discarded, but perhaps an attempt to reformulate existing values and find harmony within himself and with others.

Gerald is able to surrender to Gudrun, but she is not able to assist him in proceeding beyond the peace such relaxation produces, because she understands neither what is occurring nor what is expected of her. She does, however, remain sympathetic; those "strange, blank silences, which she could not read, moved her and made her wonder over him, made her feel reverential towards him" (364). Ironically, she is attracted to a man who characterizes himself as a "bubble filled with darkness" (364), a man attempting to preserve an identity that has been reduced to the ability to "experience the whole process of slow death without wincing or flinching" (363). And yet, Gudrun admires Gerald's determination and strength, and in doing so experiences a dilemma, for this same man, she feels, is beginning to gain "power over her. She felt almost mesmerized ... as if she were caught at last by fate, imprisoned in some horrible and fatal trap" (365, 367). That insight moves her beyond desire; she will have to develop, to gain the strength to resist being completely overwhelmed and conquered by this powerful yet desperate man, a man who in fact is at this...
point only powerful and threatening because he is desperate.

Previously fanciful, and then ambivalent as doubt penetrates romanticism, Gudrun is now beginning to understand something of the actual Gerald. As a result, their relationship soon becomes for her a "fatal elation," frightful, terrible, "like a madness"; Gerald's embraces crushing; his love poisonous (371-73). "Blind to her, thinking only of himself," Gerald, on the other hand, feels himself becoming "liberated and perfect, strong, heroic" once again. When he speaks, the "exultation in his voice was like a sweetish, poisonous drug to her ... Why did she so lose courage?" she asks herself. And yet, although she senses the danger, and knows as well that what she and Gerald are experiencing is not intimacy, that in fact they "were such strangers," she nevertheless continues to believe that "it was what she wanted." She is awed by what she describes as the power of his embrace and the concentration of his love as he gathers her "into himself, drinking in the suffusion of her physical being, avidly. He lifted her, and seemed to pour her into himself, like wine into a cup" (371-73). More objectively, Gerald is almost literally filling "the hollow void of death in his soul" with Gudrun's vitality in a characteristic and unrelenting effort to refuel his own insatiable will. He overwhelms Gudrun until "gradually her mind went, and she ... was passed away and gone in him, and he was perfected" (374).
As well as being somewhat figurative, Gerald's revitalization is temporary, for Gudrun, as he will discover, unlike the miners or even Minette, has an insatiable will of her own. She realizes, when she is not mesmerized, that in some respects Gerald is her enemy, "foreign," and "dangerous," and she "like Eve reaching to the apples" is reaching to the forbidden "tree of knowledge" by becoming acquainted with him. And yet she appreciates, too, that Gerald provides a unique opportunity for her because he possesses a will unlike any she has previously known. If she "could have the precious knowledge of him, she would be filled, and nothing could deprive her of this ... How much more of him was there to know? Ah, much, much, many days' harvesting for her large, yet perfectly subtle and intelligent hands upon the field of his living, radio-active body. Ah, her hands were eager, greedy for knowledge. But for the present it was enough, enough, as much as her soul could bear ... For the time, her soul was destroyed with the exquisite shock of his invisible fluid lightning. She knew. And this knowledge was a death from which she must recover" (374-75). And she will recover, of that Gudrun is convinced, for she is beginning to understand that while Gerald possesses a stronger will, one which, even as she comes to know it, could destroy her—in that sense, not in the sexual, is the knowledge forbidden—he is also, in his desperation, the more vulnerable of the two. He needs her, in other words, more than she needs him; he "could not help himself. Her
fingers had him under their power. The fathomless, fathomless desire they could evoke in him was deeper than death, where he had no choice" (374-75).

Gerald does indeed require Gudrun, for without the challenge of the miners, he is "faced with the ultimate experience of his own nothingness" (381). To him, it is an impending experience as well: one from which he blindly runs, for after the trauma of a series of recent crises, including the death of his father, his will, his ability to confront, even conquer, has betrayed him. In his first attempt to allay an attendant anxiety and sense of alienation he stops, interestingly, at a cemetery: "Here was one centre then [one alternative], here in the complete darkness beside the unseen, raw grave." Only after standing there for several moments, feeling the "cold and sticky" clay, is he able to conclude that perhaps "there was nothing for him here," that "he had nothing to stay here for" (382). He then decides to find Gudrun, now not even for vitality, but security, warmth, and comfort. When he enters her room, his clothing black, his boots and trousers covered in graveyard clay, his face "strange and luminous," he reaches towards her "blindly" (386), a figure literally returned from the grave, incapable of seeing the woman before him as a separate, autonomous individual. Again, Gudrun misinterprets his appearance, finding in him a "mystic attractiveness" that "fascinated her with the fascination of pure beauty, cast a
spell on her, like nostalgia, like an ache" (387). As Lydia was to Tom, and Will to Anna, Gerald is still an exotic, mysterious figure to Gudrun, merely for being different from the "ordinary and unassuming" middle-class men she has known (130). Wishing to escape such a life, her reaction to the appearance of a dashing aristocrat of "obvious" strength and courage is as to a miraculous vision; he appears "godlike," an "apparition, the young Hermes" (388), messenger of the gods, herald of change.

Gerald comes to Gudrun, "for vindication," by which I think Lawrence means justification of existence. Arriving from the cemetery, spiritually dying, he draws from Gudrun "a wonderful creative heat that penetrated his veins and gave him life again" (388). In a grotesque version of Birkin's quest for rebirth (specifically by avoiding the "merging and mingling" of sexual intercourse), Gerald "felt himself dissolving and sinking to rest in the bath of her living strength ... All his veins, that were murdered and lacerated, healed softly as life came pulsing in ... His blood, which seemed to have been drawn back into death, came ebbing on the return ... He felt his limbs growing fuller and flexible with life, his body gained an unknown strength. He was a man again, strong and rounded. And he was a child, so soothed and restored and full of gratitude.

"And she, she was the great bath of life, he worshipped her. Mother and substance of all life she was. And he, child and man, received of her and was made whole ... as if
he were bathed in the womb again ... Ah, if only she would grant him the flow of this living effluence, he would be restored, he would be complete again. He was afraid she would deny him before it was finished. Like a child at the breast, he cleaved intensely to her, and she could not put him away ... He was infinitely grateful, as to God, or as an infant is at its mother's breast" (389-90).

As Gerald is aware, the urgency of his need to be rejuvenated makes him dependent and therefore vulnerable, while a consequence of Gudrun's complaisance is her ability to deny him. In that sense Gudrun has control, and yet she is dissatisfied, perhaps from the suspicion that another, future consequence of her continued acquiescence could well be Gerald's complete restoration, at which time he would regain control. Even now hers is an empty supremacy for it is not necessary to control Gerald in his present, unthreatening state. After their second consummation, then, as Gerald drifts into "the sleep of complete exhaustion and [potential or partial] restoration," Gudrun lies awake, having experienced no ecstasy and sensing as well, like Gerald previously, a certain stasis and meaningfulness in her life. "She was suspended in perfect consciousness--and of what was she conscious?" (390). Nothing, or at least nothing hopeful, nothing likely to change unless she develops the ability to determine her own future. That process will begin when she decides to resist subsequent attempts by
Gerald to revitalize himself at her expense, a not unsympathetic decision made easier through ignorance of an internal struggle the nature and origins of which Gerald himself is not explicitly aware of.

Gudrun knows little of Gerald's state of mind before or after they consummate their relationship, but what she does realize afterwards is something of the perhaps irreconcilable differences existing between them. He appears, for example, to be able to achieve perfection "far off, in another world," while she "could see so far, as far as eternity--yet she saw nothing ... They would never be together. Ah, this awful, inhuman distance which would always be interposed between her and the other being ... She felt an overwhelming tenderness for him and a dark, understirring of jealous hatred, that he should lie so perfect and immune, in another world, while she was tormented with violent wakefulness, cast out in the outer darkness" (390-91). And yet that wakefulness, that quest for self-awareness, and her determination will only increase the distance between her and Gerald, although to her benefit. For now, however, she feels used, violated, and lacking the strength either to acquire indomitability or to reject Gerald. It is a dilemma, for on the one hand his will and his knowledge are possessions she wants for herself, but that desire makes him fatally attractive, which in itself is a weakness. As well, she knows that either she will become stronger, or he will triumph.
In the next phase of this violent and complex relationship Gudrun establishes a new assertiveness by refusing to marry Gerald. It is not "her aim in life ... to have a hubby and a little grey home ... the very thought of it," she informs Ursula, "sends me mad. One must be free, above all one must be free. One may forfeit everything else, but one must be free--one must not become 7 Pinchbeck Street—or Somerset Drive—or Shortlands’’ (422-23). That resolve, however, is countered by an insecurity which produces a characteristic ambivalence. To resist conventional marriage means the possibility of never being satisfied, although to acquiesce is to risk even more. And yet there is something appealing in "the wonderful stability of marriage. She did want it, let her say what she might. She had been lying. The old idea of marriage was right even now--marriage and the home. Yet her mouth gave a little grimace at the words. She thought of Gerald and Shortlands--marriage and the home! Ah well, let it rest! He meant a great deal to her--but--! Perhaps it was not in her to marry. She was one of life's outcasts, one of the drifting lives that have no root. No, no--it could not be so. She suddenly conjured up a rosy room, with herself in a beautiful gown, and a handsome husband in evening dress who held her in his arms in the firelight, and kissed her. The picture was entitled 'Home'. It would have done for the Royal Academy" (424-25).

Given Gudrun’s artistic predilections, the preceding
vision moves undeniably to sarcasm, even self-parody, for
while she cannot accept the thought of a repetitive life
such as Will and Anna live, neither can she accept the
prospect of being a social outcast. She desires stability
or security but within what she would define as a life of
freedom. One might attain both in an aristocratic domestic
life, but that is so improbable, so romanticized that she
consciously develops the image to fanciful lengths, and is
beset almost immediately afterward by a feeling of "incom­
prehensible bitterness ... In the midst of her most active
happiness, ah, how unhappy she was!" (425).

Gerald, by contrast, characterizes marriage as a part
of the social matrix with which he exclusively identifies
himself; other than that, he is not particularly enamoured
of the institution, nor critical of it. Interestingly, it
is Birkin who so vehemently despises the social convention
of marriage (223), and yet who wishes to marry Ursula.
Marriage "'in the old sense,'" he explains to Gerald,
"'seems to me repulsive. Egoisme à deux ... a sort of tacit
hunting in couples ... it's the most repulsive thing on
earth.'" Yet apparently he requires the legal confirmation
of a relationship for the security it provides, while at the
same time despising the common results of marriage: the
"bondage ... of mistrustful couples insulated in private
houses" with "no further life, no further immediate, no
disinterested relationship admitted: a kaleidoscope of
couples, disjoined, separatist, meaningless entities of
The solution, Birkin suggests, is to "avoid this home instinct" (347) and to end the exclusivity of marriage by engaging in an "additional perfect relationship between man and man" (398) as an alternative to "sex love ... between man and woman." The result of this will be "greater freedom for everybody, a greater power of individuality both in men and women." Feeling that he lacks the volition to do so, Gerald cannot accept Birkin's offer. Instead he is prepared apathetically to accept conventional marriage and its consequences, "willing to condemn himself in marriage, to become like a convict condemned to the mines of the underworld, living no life in the sun, but having a dreadful subterranean activity. He was willing to accept this ... But he would not make any pure relationship with any other soul. Marriage was the committing of himself into a relationship with Gudrun. It was a committing of himself in acceptance of the established world, he would accept the established order, in which he did not willingly believe, and then he would retreat to the underworld for his life" (398).

As we have seen, Gerald identifies himself, although not always willingly, in terms of inherited, class-oriented responsibility, and even in relationships, therefore, as a social being whose private or individual self is unimportant. He believes, for example, in social superiority rather
than "intrinsic personal superiority," and characterizes himself, consequently, in terms of his ability and achievements as a public figure. More to the point, he is caught in a nebulous area between feeling uncomfortable with relationships and completely incapable of contending with isolation except in the most superficial way. This is important in understanding how he relates to Gudrun. For reasons of appearance and social expectations he will marry her, but not for love. In fact, the best description he can offer, when Gudrun asks the extent of his feelings for her, is that "I couldn't bear not to have you here. I couldn't bear to be alone" (372). When he enters her bedroom and she asks why, the response is an equally evasive "I came--because I must" (387). It is not that Gerald fears physical isolation, and is compelled to seek companionship, for as he has admitted, he retreats "to the underworld for his life" (398) even in the company of others. Rather, social interaction provides both a diversion from self-contemplation, and evidence of his own superiority, so that when he is alone he has the strength to endure a sense of self he continually associates with hell, damnation, the "darkness and fearful space of death" (363), chaos and impending insanity. It is self-alienation, then, which torments him, and from which he cannot escape.
IV

It is Gerald who first proposes what is ostensibly a combined Christmas vacation and "honeymoon" in the Alps, but which is also meant to be yet another diversion for him and a kind of self-exile for the others. All four, as the time of departure approaches, "prepared for flight" (429). All of them, as they embark, are experiencing dilemmas, and all see in exile a chance to isolate personal problems from the distractions and oppression of English society. The Alps, then, will become a testing ground: there Ursula and Birkin will attempt to reconcile the differences his ideology has created; Gerald will endeavor to rejuvenate his disintegrating will and at the same time reduce an intensifying sense of worthlessness (trying, as he does so, to establish an identity not inextricably a part of and confused with his social role); Gudrun will continue in her quest for strength of will and equality. In doing so, she will confront the man she loves and fears, a man acknowledged as both potential mentor and conqueror, and as a threat, therefore, to the very ability to survive she wants to develop. Hers, as a result, is possibly the most traumatic dilemma; certainly she is most committed to resolving it in the Tyrol.

It is significant that those mountains, fancifully embraced by Ursula and Birkin as a region of paradise, and by Gerald as the epitome of invulnerability, are for Gudrun simply a geographical formation, and a part of Europe. As such, they represent the future, a future that is to include
fulfillment, a sense of belonging, and culture: specifically, European culture. In spite of feeling, upon arrival, "divorced, debarred, a soul shut out" of the Tyrolean landscape, Gudrun is determined to remain realistic and optimistic. "This was the centre, the knot, the navel of the world ... she wanted to climb the wall of white finality, climb over, into the peaks ... there, in the infolded navel of it all, was her consummation ... her place ... If she could but come there, alone, and pass into the infolded navel of eternal snow and of uprising, immortal peaks of snow, infinite silence, the sleeping, timeless, frozen centre of the All" (450, 461).

Although sounding similar, this is not at all like Gerald's perception of the Alps. Gudrun wants to become an intrinsic part of society, even if that society, as just described, recalls Birkin's metaphor of European culture as the fulfillment of the "mystery of ice-destructive, snow-abstract annihilation" (286). For Gudrun there is no place else, and yet within this society she will remain critical, struggling to formulate creative alternatives to bourgeois materialism and mechanical repetition. At the same time Gerald, who feels "there was no way out" (451), experiences in the Alps an intensification of his previous conflicts: the one with an increasingly independent, determined, at times even self-assured Gudrun, the other with his fear of death, both literal and figurative, insofar as it relates to
his dissipated will. He struggles in both arenas, becoming "hard and strange ... more like some powerful sigh than a man" (473-74) as he almost suicidally challenges the icy mountain slopes or homicidally begins "to exert his own will blindly" (496) over Gudrun. All pretense of sympathy for Gudrun's desire to become equal, all respect and appreciation of her is soon cast aside.

Just as Gerald apprehends Gudrun's awakening self-sufficiency, and the threat it imposes upon his will, she as insightfully detects the change in him. "He would destroy her rather then be denied" (452), she knows, and in response the "deep resolve formed in her to combat him. One of them must triumph over the other. Which should it be? Her soul steeled itself with strength" (465), a strength like that suggested by the rocky, impregnable peaks, and the impassiveness of the frozen landscape, a strength required to battle a man whose "hands were living metal, invincible," his heart a clanging bell (451), eyes impersonal and predatory, like those of a wolf, "eyes that seemed to smile" but only reflect "his uncanny, black-art consciousness" (466).

And just as we are cautioned that to show fear can often incite a predator about to attack, Gudrun consciously attempts to mask her own feelings as she prepares for the "strange battle," knowing she is "done for, for ever," if he observes her nervousness, and aware also that the battle is to be one of wills for which she is as yet ill-prepared. Diversion, theatrics, pretense, a greater awareness of the
nature of both Gerald’s character and the conflict, the self-imposition of a "hard, metallic wakefulness" (469) become her additional weapons.

Comparing her capability to Gerald’s, Gudrun realizes, too, on the eve of climax, that the conflict between them involves different kinds of wills. Gerald’s is the more powerful and, so she thinks, the more independent but is also the more mechanical, the more single-minded and therefore less resourceful, less capable of responding to unforeseen circumstances, less ingenious. "She knew that if he were confronted with any problem, any hard actual difficulty, he would overcome it. If he laid hold of any idea, he would carry it through. He had the faculty of making order out of confusion. Only let him grip hold of a situation, and he would bring to pass an inevitable solution ... He only needed to be hitched on, he needed that his hand should be set to the task, because he was so unconscious ... he was a perfect instrument ... And at the same instant, came the ironical question: 'What for?'" (470-71). In other words, even if their differences can be resolved, which is unlikely, the question Gudrun asks herself is whether she could be content with a man whose values are so foreign to her: specifically, one who is not at all artistic, nor even creative.

In a moment or two of rapid insight Gudrun proceeds from mockery to sympathy, then ambition—derived from
Gerald's capabilities and her insecurity—and finally to a conception of what exactly life in Gerald's social milieu would mean. She has previously been beset by a similar ambivalence (424-25) in which insecurity and fear of loneliness yielded to fantasy. The first time she was only aware of the fantasy, but now she mocks it, for she is not socially ambitious. She does not wish to live as "one of life's outcasts, one of the drifting lives that have no root" (424), but even more intense is her determination never to become involved in the "terrible struggles" to achieve social mobility and distinction. Thus she rejects wanting to be a member of "Shortlands, with its meaningless distinctions, the meaningless crowd of the Criches ... London, the House of Commons, the extant social world" (470).

This is not to say that Gudrun has as yet rejected Gerald--she feels that in spite of his background they can have "perfect moments"--but she is gradually defining her own values and the extent to which her principles will bear compromise. More importantly, she now appreciates the nature and quality of her own strength and her own potential which, it is becoming clear, are based not on a desire for power but on a quite expansive intellect and perspicacity. It is no coincidence that of all the characters Gudrun has the least defined philosophy or ideology and yet in many respects is the most pragmatic and the most insightful, both socially and psychologically. Certainly she continually suffers anxiety, fear and envy, all of which cloud her
perceptions, but having no preconceptualized solution she is aware of alternatives, particularly those espoused by others. As a result, she is able to maintain a pervasive objectivity and sense of practicality which allow her to criticize the illusions of herself and those around her, and in doing so perhaps to avoid the inherent entrapment of dreams.

It is this which partly accounts for Gudrun's attraction to Loerke. "Everybody else had their illusion, must have their illusion, their before and after. But he," she observes, "with a perfect stoicism, did without any before or after, dispensed with all illusion. He did not deceive himself in the last issue" (480). Having recognized, and then overcome her own illusions, concerning Beldover, the miners and Gerald, Gudrun is now able to chart a course, albeit a rather tenuous one, between Birkin's and Ursula's illusion of escape from society, on the one hand, and the "terrible bondage ... the mechanical succession of day following day" (522), that meaningless repetition, on the other, from which they wish to free themselves, and from which Gudrun feels, if she were to accept the tantalizing security of marriage, there can be no escape. If there is any alternative to both the "dead mechanical monotony" of conventional materialist existence and the belief that one can completely escape it, it is perhaps the aesthetic, creative life she will choose to live with Loerke. The
possibility of success with him will be the consequence, Gudrun hopes, of her understanding Loerke and his limitations, but more importantly, she tells herself, of the fact that he "is an artist, he is a free individual" (522) with whom it might therefore be possible to remain a part of society, to enjoy the benefits of its culture—the opera and the theatre, for example—while somehow avoiding the abhorrent elements of such a life. She is not sure how this can be attained, except that it will involve living as a bohemian (522), but it nevertheless excites her to a degree not evident since her initial meetings with Gerald.

The issue at hand, which existed as well in The Rain-bow, is an important one because it is central to Lawrence's struggle at this time to provide remedies for contemporary social problems. The solutions to date were acquiescence, critical assimilation, or exile. The first of those was of course unacceptable and the latter, it was becoming clear, seemed to create as many problems as it was meant to solve (problems I will discuss in the following chapter). For Gudrun, the future will involve the second of these three choices. She will not, as Gerald and Skrebensky before him, accept uncritically or passively the pressures and problems of contemporary society as the price "civilized" human beings must pay for the security of collectivism and socially defined roles. She also will not substitute social for individual identity. Nor, however, will she, as Ursula and Birkin are doing, seek paradise in exile: a fantasized,
idealized place where solutions can never succeed, for if they can only do so in isolation then they are by definition impractical. Gudrun's future, then, is one which most importantly will remember the past and derive from an insightful and pragmatic understanding of the present.

It is not an easy task; at times she is "exhausted, wearied" (391); at others, she is ambivalent, for her convictions tend to alienate her from Ursula, Birkin and especially from Gerald. Yet she is convinced she must continue in "this state of violent active superconsciousness," a state in which she is beginning to mature, to gain insight into herself, the world around her, and the place she might most productively situate herself in that world. She is now, she realizes, becoming "conscious of everything --her childhood, her girlhood, all the forgotten incidents, all the unrealized influences and all the happenings she had not understood, pertaining to herself, to her family, to her friends, her lovers, her acquaintances, everybody. It was as if she drew a glittering rope of knowledge out of the sea of darkness, drew and drew and drew it out of the fathomless depths of the past, and still it did not come to an end, there was no end to it, she must haul and haul at the rope of glittering consciousness, pull it out phosphorescent from the endless depths of the unconsciousness, till she was weary, aching, exhausted, and fit to break, and yet she had not done" (390-91). Nor will she ever be done, which is
what distinguishes her from Gerald. Life continues to be a challenge for her, socially and in terms of self-awareness and personal development, while he has tried to live according to a more or less premeditated philosophy, with determined and therefore restrictive goals.

It is not only challenge which inspires Gudrun, however; as with marriage, Beldover, and Gerald, she is curious as well about life generally, wanting to know as much as possible about the world around her. She does not contemplate escape; she of all the characters is the least misanthropic; she rejects the idea, to which Birkin so often refers, of equilibrium or transcendence. Nor will she disown the past she so vividly recalls. As she advises Ursula, "'you'll want the old connexion with the world—father and the rest of us, and all that it means, England and the world of thought—don't you think you'll need that, really to make a world? ... One wants a new space to be in, I quite agree,'" she continues. "'But I think that a new world is a development from this world, and that to isolate oneself with one other person isn't to find a new world at all, but only to secure oneself in one's illusions ... one is of the world if one lives in it. But isn't it really an illusion to think you can get out of it? After all, a cottage in the Abruzzi, or wherever it may be, isn't a new world. No, the only thing to do with the world, is to see it through'" (492-93). As she will continue to be in her relations with Loerke, albeit with the occasional lapse,
Gudrun is curious yet objective in that she tries to be aware of both the faults and the sources of further insight to be gained from others. For her there are few if any illusions or ideals remaining, and no Paradise, no final goals, no end points. Life is a continuum with an unforeseeable future; only the present and the past can be known.

As I have suggested, Gudrun has little in common anymore with Ursula who, like Birkin, wishes to divorce herself from her past--actually, to continue divorcing herself from the past; she has previously, in The Rainbow, spent considerable time attempting to extricate herself from family, religion and tradition--so as to start anew. Gudrun also has difficulty accepting Birkin, and especially his ideology, which she views with suspicion. She does not want to, and does not think it is even possible to transcend social identification, as do Ursula and Birkin. Conversely, she resists the uncritical acceptance of exclusive societal experience because of its inherent denial of individuality, based on the assumption that social roles are the foundation of identity. One of her first criticisms of Gerald has to do with this very subject: the alienating process of identifying individuals primarily by occupation, which Gerald believes to be the unifying principle of society. "I can imagine it," is her sarcastic response, followed by a parody of imagined introductions. "'I am Mrs. Colliery-Manager Crich--I am Mrs. Member-of-Parliament Roddice. I am
Miss Art-Teacher Brangwen." Very pretty that" (114). What Gudrun wants, and what attracts her to Loerke because she thinks that he has achieved it, is autonomy: the freedom within society and within a relationship to remain assertive, self-responsible, independent (her version of unison in separateness). It is as an artist that she feels she can achieve this, and it is the artist, suffering against oppression, that to her mind exists beneath Loerke’s eccentricity and buffoonery. He has a "look of misery" in his eyes, "an old man’s look that interested her, and then, beside this, an uncanny singleness, a quality of being by himself, not in contact with anybody, that marked out an artist to her" (474). Even his appearance attracts her—he has the "figure of a boy, almost a street arab" habitually dressed in a "simple loden suit, with knee breeches" (474)—as if that too is evidence of individuality, and of a man who has experienced the "real" world: a world of vagrants, poverty, toil and therefore meaningfulness.

There is a suggestion here of the same romantic idealization which at one point characterized Gudrun’s view of Beldover’s miners as powerful, voluptuous men who in spite of being dehumanized were, in their association with the earth, somehow closer to life than she is. However, Gudrun seems also to perceive in Loerke the odious consequences of such experience, as she has with the miners. The sculptor’s hands, for example, look "prehensile, and somehow like talons, like ‘griffes,’ inhuman" (476), and later she is
"fascinated by him, fascinated, as if some strange creature, a rabbit or a bat, or a brown seal, had begun to talk to her" (480). In Gerald, too, she observed from the outset and was even fascinated by a savagery, a wolf-like, cunning quality. It is almost as if Lawrence was implying that the two—indepenence or quasi-independence and aggression—must sometimes be related, one the consequence of the other. And yet Gudrun inevitably chooses to ignore the aggressiveness of those to whom she is otherwise attracted and if, as with Gerald, she cannot do that, such behaviour still does not initially sway her. As a result she continues to strive for what is in some respects a commendable goal and yet one not without problems capable, in the adherence to that goal, of creating a quandary: namely, to what extent does the aggressiveness developed to attain autonomy cause a loss or repression of the very attributes—sensitivity, for example—which that autonomy is meant to preserve?

Another problem, obvious in the passage just quoted, has to do with isolation, and related to it, with Loerke's alienating presumption that one must divorce art from life, and reject life. Although Gudrun questions that position, on the other hand she vehemently objects to the idea of the artist revealed in his work, or the psychoanalytic interpretations which in Ursula's opinion enhance one's appreciation of art. More revealing yet, Gudrun's art and her views on the subject express what are also feelings of personal,
particularly sexual, inadequacy, and a lack of responsiveness to others. She seems in the process of unconsciously accepting those shortcomings, however, by developing an air of detachment. In artistic terms, she is attracted to and emulates in her own work the static, abstract sensuality of the African carvings, and in personal terms it is Loerke and the Alps which to her represent European culture. Such a qualified definition of community would suggest that she is rationalizing deficiency through attempts to become a part of an environment in which such inadequacy is not considered a liability. Certainly Loerke, whose ironic facade cannot hide from Gudrun evidence of alienation similar to her own, is in turn not perturbed by her. On the contrary, and to her amazement and delight, he seems the only character content to accept her for what she is and what she wants to be.

Although one tends immediately to criticize Loerke, he is an artist, in that unlike the decadent Pompadour artistes, for example, he strives to be creative, to develop his art and to be pragmatic. Art, he insists, should attempt to confront that which most affects individuals in contemporary society. Recalling Will Brangwen in The Rainbow, whose artistic endeavors in the continued interpretation of religion could only be derivative, obsolete and not even creative, because they were not attempts to reify personal and thus visionary responses to contemporary experience, we can appreciate something of Loerke's ideology.
However, his failure to distinguish between confrontation with and interpretation of industry is problematic, as is his statement that art is "'nothing but work.'" In itself, that could be interpreted as another example of pragmatism—as he tells Gudrun: "'You have never worked for hunger, or you would know what god governs us'" (477)—but combined with his belief that in addition to being visionary art must be an integral part of society, such a statement contains the suggestion of something more than pragmatism: a loss of personal integrity, and the perversion of human values.

Loerke begins, and here even Ursula is intrigued, with the statement that industrial architecture need not be ugly. In fact, he argues, there is not only "'no need for our places of work to be ugly, but their ugliness ruins the work, in the end. Men will not go on submitting to such intolerable ugliness. In the end it will hurt too much, and they will wither because of it. And this will wither the work as well'" (477). The last sentence is a significant one, for it reveals something of Loerke’s fundamental concern which is, like Gerald’s, with the work itself rather than with the workers, and related to that with such entrepreneurial concepts as efficacy, technology and profit. For Loerke this is a personal concern because his one or two thousand pounds a year income is derived from contracts with industrialists. More revealing, although ambiguous as well, is his response to Gudrun’s sceptical query as to whether he
thinks art should therefore serve industry. "'Art should interpret industry as art once interpreted religion,'" he replies, but then, in a description of the frieze he is presently constructing—a representation in granite of a fair—he states that what "'man is doing in a fair like this ... is fulfilling the counterpart of labour—the machine works him instead of he the machine. He enjoys the mechanical motion of his own body.'" That, he adds, is all there is to life: "'Nothing but work!... nothing but this, serving a machine, or enjoying the motion of a machine—motion, that is all'" (477).

Such contradictions emphasize the fact that it is not always easy to determine precisely what Loerke means, for he seems deliberately to project ambivalence and enigma. It is as if he wishes to disguise his own alienated personality, while at the same time alienating others in order to ensure that they remain at a distance from him. He fails to achieve this with Gudrun, however, and thus it becomes important, in determining the nature of her development as the novel approaches its conclusion, to discover what kind of person Loerke is, for her attraction to him owes considerably to certain similarities between them. The most obvious, perhaps, is that of the four visitors to the Alps, Gudrun is the only one who, like Loerke, is working; "'I have worked,'" she replies in response to his acknowledgment of "'what god governs us' ... 'And I do—I work now for my daily bread'" (478).
More specifically, she has struggled, in London and Beldover, to be a working artist, prepared to compromise where necessary, to balance aesthetic idealism with opportunities available in order to earn money from her art. As such she is intrigued by Loerke's reconciliation, on a much larger scale than her own, of industrial society and his artistry, a process in which he not only works in that society but actually makes it the subject of his art. He does so, he explains, because an artist--a sculptor, for example--should not produce palm-sized artifacts kept in isolation. Instead, sculpture must be a part of architecture. "The day for irrelevant statues, as for wall pictures, is over. As a matter of fact, sculpture is always a part of an architectural conception. And since churches are all museum stuff, since industry is our business, now, then let us make our places of industry our art--our factory area our Parthenon, ecco!" (476).

Loerke would seem to be demanding that art be an integral part of culture, as it historically has been. If that is indeed what he is saying, then at this point (for he soon changes) he is either consciously or inadvertently arguing against the already widespread modernist repudiation of social responsibility, as contained in the credo: "Art for art's sake." He would be anticipating, if he does so, a later statement by Lawrence that the "business of art is to reveal the relation between man and his circumambient uni-
verse, at the living moment." But Loerke defines the word
"business" more literally than does his author, and seems to
be more cynical generally in his conception of what the
business of art should entail, and the "circumambient uni-
verse" necessarily entails, in spite of his argument for
aestheticism in industrial architecture. As artists, he
explains, "'we have the opportunity to make beautiful
factories, beautiful machine-houses'"; indeed, "'the
machinery and the acts of labour are extremely, maddeningly
beautiful'" (477), a statement recalling the Crich miners' appre-
ciation of recent technological innovations, particu-
larly the cutting machines they call "iron men."

Such a belief may appear to be idealistic, but if so it is,
as Gudrun believes, idealism tempered by cold pragmat-
ism, while Birkin concludes that it is not even idealism.
Loerke, he explains to Gerald, has no illusions, no ideals,
and in fact "'hates the ideal utterly, yet it still domi-
ates him'" (481). This is a crucial point in understanding
Loerke, for it suggests, and I think this is true of him,
that he has attempted to resist becoming a part of a society
whose values he fundamentally opposes, or once opposed
before hunger drove him to accept industrial contracts and
ambiguity replaced resistance. It is a struggle, therefore,
that he is in the process of losing, which is not surprising
so far as Birkin is concerned. He is convinced that one
must proceed beyond resistance to the formulation of one's
own ideals, for to have ideals is to have alternatives, the
most important of which involves the expedient escape from a repressive society. Because Loerke lacks these, and more than that, still functions within society, he must, according to Birkin, by definition accept and therefore be a part of the social corruption the other man detests. As a man with an independent income Birkin is of course simplistic in his conclusion, but the point about the necessity of alternatives remains one well taken.

Loerke would counter with the assertion that he does have an ideal, and artistic integrity. For him, the work of art as interpretation, or impression of society, remains the governing idea. The vision is the artist's, and while it is inspired by an idea or concept, in Loerke's work industrial architecture, it is not controlled or even necessarily restricted by that concept. In the end, therefore, he believes that art becomes autonomous, having "no relation to anything outside" it (483), a direct denial of his earlier insistence upon the need for a relationship between industry and art. Perhaps this qualification derives from Loerke's understanding of the dilemma involved: to interpret industrial society is to risk being compromised by industry; the problem therefore is how to remain independent, not just in terms of artistry but of a ubiquitous economic system which ultimately affects not only industry but art itself. In that earlier statement there was also the implied suggestion that in being autonomous art is capable of revealing
something about the world and the artist not otherwise or at least not easily perceived.

Again we see why Loerke would want to qualify such an implication. An indication of this occurs when his statue is being discussed, a statue of a horse which Ursula rejects for not being "horse-like." "Look how stock and stupid and brutal it is," she remarks. "Horses are sensitive, quite delicate, and sensitive, really'" (483). Horses, of course, can be brutal or sensitive, but more important is the observer's reaction to them, and the artist's impression of them. In that sense Ursula is correct in her belief that Loerke's statue is "a picture of himself" (484). Whether or not that is literally true in terms of the brutality involved, and she of course can suspect but not know for certain if it is, the point is a valid one. Whatever art interprets or even depicts, it must also reflect the artist who has been so creatively (personally) involved. Loerke apparently disagrees with this because he does not want to confront and is even attempting to repress the contradictions within himself related to artistic autonomy, independence and idealism on the one hand, and the treacherous process, on the other, whereby he has become like Crich's miners little more than a slave of industrialism. More significantly, and again like the miners, he now idolizes the very technology which has enslaved him.

In response to Ursula's accusations, Loerke argues that his statue is "a work of art, it is a picture of nothing,
of absolutely nothing. It has nothing to do with anything but itself, it has no relation to the everyday world of this and other, there is no connexion between them, absolutely none, they are two different and distinct planes of existence, and to translate one into the other is worse than foolish, it is a darkening of all counsel, a making confusion everywhere. Do you see, you must not confuse the relative work of action with the absolute work of art’” (484). So long as the art is absolute, then the worth and integrity of the artist is derived from his ability to "reveal things in their different relationships." In doing so, Lawrence wrote in "Art and Morality," the "true artist doesn’t substitute immorality for morality. On the contrary, he always substitutes a finer morality for grosser." The failure to understand this, the inability to appreciate, for example, Cézanne’s still lifes because they do not look realistic, is the result, Lawrence suggests, of "a very curious habit that civilized man has" of being too literal, too uncritical, "of seeing just as the photographic camera sees."14

What Loerke is discussing, and there is a subtle but consequential difference between his and Lawrence’s theories, would appear to address the ways in which an individual as artist can objectively perceive and thus more fully appreciate industrial society. For Gudrun, who does not see or refuses to see the inherent contradictions in most of what he says, especially compared to what he does,
Loerke's sentiments constitute an intellectual revelation. And in personal terms, his statue of a "naked girl, small, finely made, sitting on a great naked horse" (482) apparently expresses something of her own feelings, her own sense of continuing helplessness or insecurity, particularly in her relationship with Gerald. Certainly, in spite of what she later says in defense of Loerke's assertion that his art is completely divorced from life, and most assuredly from himself, she is affected. She pales, "and a darkness came over her eyes, like shame" (483) as she studies the horse, a "massive, magnificent stallion, rigid with pent-up power," its neck "arched and terrible, like a sickle, its flanks ... pressed back, rigid with power" (482-83), and the girl sitting upon it, "her face in her hands, as if in shame and grief, in a little abandon," her legs dangling "childishly over the side of the powerful horse, pathetically, the small feet folded one over the other, as if to hide. But there was no hiding. There she was exposed naked on the naked flank of the horse" (482).

What Gudrun does not seem to realize is that the work, formed in green bronze, can also be interpreted as an impression of the kind of industrial experience which turns miners into automatons and women into sexual slaves. Were she to realize that, she might feel, instead of shame, the kind of anger which eventually allows her to reject Gerald and all that he represents for both workers and women. She
might also have been able to see the similarities between Gerald and Loerke and to have realized that her own reaction to the work is specifically the result of its not being divorced from reality. Nor is it moral, as Lawrence defines the word, but a rather uncritical depiction of perverted morality. Even though it is subtle rather than didactic in its portrayal of a society whose values relate to materialism, mechanization, and dehumanization rather than to humanity, that implication is derived from our interpretation of what has been inadvertently suggested by the sculptor. For Loerke, as he patiently tries to explain to Ursula, the horse is only "'part of a work of art, a piece of form. It is not a picture of a friendly horse to which you give a lump of sugar'" (483) any more, one could add, than Cézanne's are paintings of fruit one might eat for lunch. The difference of course involves neither subject matter nor artistic technique but the artist's attitude towards, and how he perceives his place within, society. In that respect Loerke has little in common with either Lawrence or Cézanne.

The most disconcerting aspect of Loerke's ideology is this acquiescence in industrial capitalism, particularly the commodification of art. Granted, the selling of art is often a necessity and, as a consequence of that, a compromise the extent of which depends upon the individual artist's response to idealism. Loerke's, however, is a compromise of a different sort, for although he may strive for autonomy from the oppressiveness of industrialism, his subject is
still industry. More explicitly, his work is the celebration, even the glorification of industry. Even Gudrun has problems with this part of Loerke's rhetoric and in fact openly opposes his belief in the harmonious potential of the relationship between man and machine. But Gudrun has by now become self-confident enough that she is not overwhelmed by Loerke even if she does endorse many of his views on art. She admires certain qualities in him, she grants him a provisional respect, but most importantly she appreciates the fact that he has inspired her to reevaluate her own artistry.

Having previously been attracted to primitive sculpture and to small works as if, as Ursula suggests, to ensure control of her world, she is now curious about Loerke's art, which is exactly the opposite: large works interpreting industry, intellectual rather than exclusively sensual, confronting, in Birkin's terms, the "mystery of ice-destructive knowledge" rather than "purely sensual understanding, knowledge in the mystery of dissolution." Birkin, however, believes that both describe the "fall from the connexion with life and hope, from creation and liberty" (286), and that the ideal to which an individual must aspire would be a synthesis of these two extremes. And yet for Gudrun, who is not at all attracted to Birkin's position, and who in fact criticizes his desire for exile as shirking social responsibility, it is Loerke's point of view which
seems (in spite of its problems) potentially at least to be the most plausible ideology in terms of survival and even continued self-development. She does not wholly agree with Loerke--she is in fact both attracted to and repulsed by him and his ideology--but she does find his arguments a fascinating alternative to anything she has until now contemplated.

Certainly the novel would seem to be suggesting that Loerke himself, a self-assured and calm man, is to be preferred over the increasingly violent, pathologically insecure Gerald, just as Loerke’s attitudes towards art and society are for Gudrun preferable to Gerald’s unequivocal acceptance of Western social values, domesticity and ultimately the meaningless tedium and repetitiveness which to her outweigh the advantages of being Mrs. Crich of Shortlands. Gudrun wants to be free, and whatever else that may mean to her, it most decidedly has to do with avoiding "the mechanical succession of day following day, day following day, ad infinitum," which to her is "one of the things that made her heart palpitate with a real approach of madness. The terrible bondage of this tick-tack of time, this twitching of the hands of the clock, this eternal repetition of hours and days--oh God, it was too awful to contemplate" (522). In other words, while she realizes that there may be no escape from such a life, no hope of complete extrication, neither does she wish to engage in any kind of confrontation. Thus she believes, or hopes, that by taking part in
"German Bohemian life" with Loerke, she "will escape from so much, that is the chief thing, escape so much hideous boring repetition of vulgar actions, vulgar phrases, vulgar postures. I don't delude myself," she inwardly admits, "that I shall find an elixir of life in Dresden. I know I shan't. But I shall get away from people who have their own homes and their own children and their own acquaintances and their own this and their own that. I shall be among people who don't own things and who haven't got a home and a domestic servant in the background, who haven't got a standing and a status and a degree and a circle of friends of the same. Oh God, the wheels within wheels of people, it makes one's head tick like a clock, with a very madness of dead mechanical monotony and meaninglessness. How I hate life, how I hate it. How I hate the Geralds, that they can offer one nothing else" (522).

Loerke, on the other hand, although he will use Gudrun as she intends to use him, seems to her to be offering, in the form of Bohemian artistic life in Dresden, an alternative to the stasis of middle class domesticity as represented by the Criches. For that reason, while we may seem him as an extremely alienated, dehumanized man who like Gerald identifies with industrialism, Gudrun does not or does not choose to see completely the abhorrent side of him; she in fact does not really see the man at all, except as an object and the means of attaining her goals. And even that
which she does recognize and even resists—the idea, for example, of life being "'nothing but work—mechanical work,'" and more than that, work defined in terms of "'serving the machine'" which brings her close to tears (477)—does not repel so much as mesmerize her. It is as if she interprets Loerke's commitment to his art, even at the expense of human emotions and humanistic values, as having granted him that strength and confidence which so fascinates, even overwhelmns her, and which she so desperately wants to develop in herself. As a result Loerke seems to be secure, untroubled by his artistic position, and thus in her eyes he also represents the kind of self-sufficiency she seeks. That Gudrun interprets these attributes in Loerke the way she does indicates as well that she does not perceive him as a threatening figure, and therefore as a possible impediment to those goals she has established for herself. Refusing to acquiesce in or run completely away from society (to the wilderness, for example), and yet ill-prepared to become any kind of a social radical proposing alternatives to contemporary conditions, Gudrun is now able to consider an option which in effect avoids most of the problems relating to her previous attempts to become an uncompromised woman.

The fact that Loerke, unlike Gerald, appears not to be a threatening figure is a significant point, for it again reveals the extent to which Gudrun is already a self-aware, determined and strong woman, a woman prepared, in her rela-
tionship with Gerald, for example, to resort to whatever means necessary to protect, and more importantly, to prove to herself and to him that she does indeed possess the confidence and the will to live her own life as she wants to live it. At the same time, however, Gudrun’s attraction to Loerke and her dissatisfaction with Gerald also involves a desire for protection, and in that sense I would suggest that she sees in Loerke a father-like figure who can possibly provide what she knows Gerald cannot provide: namely, sympathy, kindness, and above all, security. "Oh, why," she asks, "wasn’t somebody kind to her? Why wasn’t there somebody who would take her in their arms, and hold her to their breast, and give her rest, pure, deep, healing rest. Oh, why wasn’t there somebody to take her in their arms and fold her safe and perfect, for sleep. She wanted so much this perfect enfolded sleep. She lay always so unsheathed in sleep. She would lie always unsheathed in sleep, unrelied, unsaved. Oh, how could she bear it, this endless unrelief, this eternal unrelief" (524).

Gerald, she realizes, cannot offer her that kind of relief; he "needed putting to sleep himself—poor Gerald. That was all he needed. What did he do, he made the burden for her greater, the burden of her sleep was the more intolerable, when he was there" (524). The solution, therefore, the way to resolve this kind of suffering, it is becoming clear to Gudrun, is to seriously consider leaving
Gerald and moving with Loerke to Dresden. Loerke himself attempts to convince her that this is undeniably the right decision. "'You are an extraordinary woman,'" he tells her, so "'why should you follow the ordinary course, the ordinary life?'" (515). It is a description she readily accepts, for she feels and to some extent has always felt that she is a remarkable woman. She realizes too that what she has detested most about people is in fact their "passion to make everything of one degree, of one pattern. In England it was chic to be perfectly ordinary. And it was a relief to her to be acknowledged extraordinary. Then she need not fret about the common standards" (515).

This recalls our introduction to Gudrun, a woman described in terms of, and derided because of, her colourful clothing—a silky dress with lace and ruffles in peacock hues (8)—a woman attracted to the Beldover colliers for being other than commonplace, a woman who at the beginning of the novel has told her sister that if "'the really chic thing is to be absolutely ordinary'" then she will proceed one step further, becoming "'a masterpiece of humanity, not the person in the street actually, but the artistic creation of her'" (56), a creation, I would add, that would avoid the vulnerability associated with real, as opposed to imagined, ideal persons. Even then, although that was the best she could envision for herself, it was a goal described in artistic terms, and it was still less than she wanted.

"'One longs,'" she confesses to Ursula, "'to be high-flown,
and make speeches like Corneille, after it," or in Ursula's words, "'to strut, to be a swan among geese'" (56). Of course in saying that, Gudrun is being somewhat frivolous—she was, for example, "flushed and excited over her own cleverness" (56)—and yet I think the frivolity and the sense of cleverness derive from a delight in the way she is expressing herself as much as, or even more than, from insincerity. She does want what she has just described, although at that point she does not know how to achieve such distinction. Believing that her sister does, she "looked up at Ursula with a queer, uncertain envy and dislike ... 'the only thing to do is to despise them all--just all,' she said" (56-57).

Now she feels that she does understand how to achieve such distinction, how to transcend the commonplace. It is, and this she has alluded to from the outset, a matter of developing her artistry, her artistic self, and ignoring rather than despising those not involved with art. She accepts Loerke's ideal, which clearly he does not adhere to in his sculpting business, and yet which presumably serves to repress the overwhelming despair he might otherwise feel. To both of them now "Art and Life" are the "Reality and the Unreality," and of the two, Gudrun decides, "'life doesn't really matter--it is one's art which is central. What one does in one's life has peu de rapport, it doesn't signify much.' ... 'What one does in one's art,'" Loerke adds,
"that is the breath of one's being. What one does in one's life, that is a bagatelle for the outsiders to fuss about.'"

It is a revelation which fills Gudrun with "a sense of elation and freedom ... She felt established for ever" (504). Having previously struggled to establish herself in life, to gain and retain a sense of autonomy, of individuality, to resist subjugation and domesticity and meaninglessness, now she can simply ignore all of that, including Gerald, who is now also "bagatelle" (505), even including love or sexuality.

It is important here to note that Gudrun's and Loerke's relationship is not a sexual one. They only talk, discussing art and life, developing an exclusively intellectual and detached rapport, just as through their art they create what is meant to represent sensuality or tactile gratification, even though the creations themselves are wooden, granite, or bronze. In other words they continue and in some respects increase their alienation by producing and relating to artifacts which stand between, and become barriers to, a synthesis of the physical and the mental. Now, Gudrun feels, even love "was one of the temporal things in her life, except in so far as she was an artist." And here she recalls, as if intending to establish herself as one of them, those women in history who have achieved distinction as mythical, almost superhuman individuals: specifically, as women not known for their vulnerability. "She thought of Cleopatra--Cleopatra must have been an artist: she reaped
the essential from a man, she harvested the ultimate sensation, and threw away the husk; and Mary Stuart, and the great Rachel, panting with her lovers after the theatre, these were the exoteric exponents of love. After all, what was the lover but fuel for the transport of this subtle knowledge, for a female art, the art of pure, perfect knowledge in sensuous understanding" (505).

It is perhaps not coincidental that Gudrun’s final description of her proposed artwork repeats almost exactly Birkin’s criticism of African art as the "process of purely sensual understanding," a process, he adds, leading ultimately to "knowledge in the mystery of dissolution" (286). But there is something else involved here, which can render such a comparison nonexclusive. Firstly, in drawing a parallel between her intentions and what she interprets as the accomplishments of these women from the past, Gudrun is implying that what they did and what she will do is the inverse or the feminine equivalent of what men have done to her, and traditionally have done to most women: victimized them by using them as objects of sexual gratification and artistic inspiration. It is what Loerke has done with the model he used for his sculpture and now it seems likely that it will be what Gudrun in turn will do, not for revenge, but because unlike her sister (as teacher in The Rainbow), she does not see how she can survive in a "man’s world" except by assuming those characteristics which in men seem so
invariably to account for the success they attain. Gudrun does not intend, for example, to be used by Loerke, and yet he, as a kind of perverted lover, is clearly perceived as possible "fuel" for her artistic fire. In other words, she feels exactly as he does about the importance of art and of identifying herself as an artist. For both of them people are seen as being the useful means of artistic achievement, and with persons of the opposite gender, even sex is to be sublimated, used as artistic stimulus or medium. In that respect there is yet another distinction to be made between Gudrun’s appreciation of "female art" and Birkin’s criticism of African art, for what he describes as "purely sensual understanding" represents an actual physical experience, whereas what Gudrun wants, "the art of pure, perfect knowledge in sensuous understanding," is, according to Birkin’s earlier definition of the two terms (49), a detached, conceited and merely intellectual conception of sexuality.

I think it is clear by now that Gudrun is a complex woman, perhaps more so than one might first surmise, and that this is partly a consequence of her own ambivalence and contradictory nature. While those are not uncommon traits in Lawrencean characters, with Gudrun I begin to suspect that the complexity can be attributed as well to an ambiguousness in Lawrence concerning who she is and to what extent she can be portrayed sympathetically, or must be
presented critically. Such indecision is to me understandable, for I have found myself in a similar position: inclined to criticize her, and yet also able to view her with a certain sympathy, and even optimism, not because I agree with her rather perverse interpretation of the artist’s role in society, her appreciation of Loerke, her belief in the necessity to use people as a way of preventing herself from being victimized. Those attitudes are as abhorrent to me as they are to other readers, and even to Lawrence himself. On the other hand, I cannot accept, and indeed find simplistic and overly moralistic, the argument that Lawrence agrees with Ursula and Birkin, and completely disagrees with Gudrun. He creates characters who are far too complex for that to be true, even of Gerald and Loerke, and certainly of Gudrun. Moreover, he tends where possible to sympathize, to some extent at least, with most of his characters, and he is able to do that because he does not create villains, any more than he creates heroes. Rather, he creates characters who live and breathe, who are as realistically portrayed as possible, and are, therefore, ambivalent, insecure, anxious, alienated, at times misguided, cruel, overly ego-centric, deceptive, even dishonest, with themselves and with others.

Most of all, however, Lawrence has attempted to imbue these characters with vitality, a sense of self-awareness, the concept of progress: to make them live, in other words, for nothing, he wrote in his essay, "Why the Novel Matters,"
is as important as life. "And for myself, I can absolutely see life nowhere but in the living. Life with a capital L is only man alive ... I am man alive, and as long as I can, I intend to go on being man alive.

"For this reason I am a novelist," he added, because the "novel is the one bright book of life. Books are not life. They are only tremulations on the ether. But the novel as a tremulation can make the whole man alive tremble." Therefore, he advises near the end of the essay, let us "learn from the novel. In the novel, the characters can do nothing but live. If they keep on being good, according to pattern, or bad, according to pattern, or even volatile, according to pattern, they cease to live, and the novel falls dead. A character in a novel has got to live, or it is nothing." The implication, clearly stated in another essay, "Morality and the Novel," is that the characters must be true to themselves, must be given the freedom to develop in accordance with their own personalities, even if that development in the end contradicts the author's original intentions, and even if the author disagrees with their views, their values, with who they have become. If the author cannot allow that to happen, if he cannot understand one of Lawrence's primary rules of writing--namely: "Everything is true in its own time, place, circumstance, and untrue outside of its own place, time, circumstance"--then he can not only be accused of intolerable didacticism, but of writing a lifeless and therefore
meaningless work. That is to say: "If you try to nail anything down, in the novel, either it kills the novel, or the novel gets up and walks away with the nail."16

Taking those views into account, I feel free to look at Women in Love as a book about life, and as well to believe that where Lawrence's own didacticism interferes he, had he perceived this of himself, would have been his own strongest critic. And I do think Lawrence becomes didactic at times; so determined is his conviction that individuals must and can free themselves of the shackles of industrialism which inhibit them that his expectations and ideals extend beyond what is humanly possible, at least within the context of this novel. In spite of whatever sympathy he himself may feel towards Gudrun, therefore, I think his expectations are too great, too idealistic, even too simplistic (in that he does not fully take into account the complexities of contemporary society) for me to completely agree with his criticism of her and, as I suggest at the end of both this and the following chapter, with his pessimism concerning her future. My position here is of course not derived solely from an interpretation of the novel because at this point I step outside it in an attempt to perceive Gudrun as if she were a real person and to discuss her and the society within which she chooses to remain in terms of what an individual could and still can realistically expect to achieve. I can appreciate Lawrence's optimism or idealism concerning
change, and even wish that what he desires for individuals might be more plausible, but I feel that what Gudrun will probably experience, as unfortunate as that may be, is in fact more likely. She may only be able to contend with alienating society, that is, by becoming absorbed by it, and therefore remaining far more alienated than her author could accept, but until society itself is somehow transformed from a mechanized industrial complex to a more humanistic community, that will remain the fate of most urban working and middle class individuals.

It is possible of course that Gudrun may not achieve what she desires, even through her art, and especially through Loerke, whom she prefers over Gerald at this point as a more likely collaborator. In fact the two men, in effect inverse figures of each other, are more similar than different, and what Gudrun is on the verge of engaging in is once again a kind of mutual victimization rather than the fanciful transcendence of victimization she assumes Loerke is experiencing on a social level. To the contrary, Loerke has failed, and that failure is evident in his very art. His sculpture, for example, is not only uncritical, but clearly celebrates industrial capitalism not only because that is his subject but more significantly because, as I previously mentioned, it upholds all that Gerald believes in and represents: victimization, dehumanization and enslavement in service of the machine which ironically is simultaneously idolized. In that sense Ursula is correct when
she accuses Loerke of having to separate "your world of art and your world of reality ... because you can't bear to know what you are" nor, I would add, what he is in fact doing as an industrial sculptor. "The world of art," she adds, "is only the truth about the real world, that's all—but you are too far gone to see it" (485).

So too is Gudrun apparently "too far gone" to recognize that in agreeing with Loerke, especially in terms of divorcing art from reality, she will be avoiding that which she finds distasteful in industrial society, and in some respects avoiding herself as well, just as she would were she to seek some kind of Zauberland as an alternative. And yet she is not physically leaving Europe, and within that society she is refusing to acquiesce to its expectations involving marriage, parenthood, domesticity: all of those facets of middle class life she has come to associate with and hate in Gerald. In other words, the potential for growth and change is there, but unfortunately in choosing Loerke and favouring his perverted ideology she is accepting an alternative to her present situation and life with Gerald which is certainly no better and indeed in many respects worse that that of Ursula and Birkin. The difference, and a reason for viewing Gudrun sympathetically, is that hers is a position more the result of ignorance and desperation than of reflection and analysis such as characterizes Birkin's or even Loerke's ideology. In that sense one can sympathize
without necessarily agreeing with the position she has taken regarding her art, her intended use of people and her sense of self in relation to other people.

It is a position she is in the process of quite adamantly adopting, however, and as her belief in it develops, Gudrun realizes she must reject Gerald in order to escape his perplexing dependency and the desire for subjugation which so terrifies her. Not a simple decision, it is made easier by her admission that she does not nor, she explains, has she ever loved him; he was in such a "\textit{fearful state}'" when they first met that "\textit{I had to take pity on you. But it was never love}'" (497). Gerald in turn feels that he must kill Gudrun so as to completely extinguish such an overwhelming denial of his being. Ironically, he does not see that although "her pity for him was as cold as stone, its deepest motive was hate of him, and fear of his power over her, which she must always counterfoil" (498). Nor does he understand that while her insight into the nature of that power and the reasons for it has produced a corresponding loss of affection, at one time she did sincerely pity him. Still central to Gerald's sense of survival is the issue of \textit{Wille zur Macht}, and it says something about his appreciation of Gudrun's strength that he now feels it necessary to consider drastic measures in order to triumph.

In Gerald's life, then, the contentiousness of challenge is approaching yet another climax. He has mastered,
and effectively subdued, his employees; he has repressed a
terror of death at his father's bedside; and now, he is con-
vinced, he must conquer Gudrun or be conquered. But he
cannot abandon her, for while he may believe that she is
becoming self-sufficient, he is not, nor, prophetically,
does he feel he ever can be (501). In light of that it
would seem he does not intend literally to murder her,
although at this point he is not completely rational.

Gudrun, meanwhile, who has until recently admired Gerald for
being "so superbly fearless, masterful ... a perfect instru-
ment" (470), and a man who, were she to control him, could
effect virtually any change he, or she, desired, now real-
izes the diabolical nature of his impersonal strength, if
not of her own. He cannot be controlled; therefore,
although having once rejected conflict of wills in favour of
cooperation, she now understands that their relationship is
incontrovertibly a battle and one moreover in which she is
fighting for survival. Yet like Gerald she will not leave
until the conflict has been resolved. She is willing to
risk her life rather than depart, as if that would in itself
be a form of defeat. Gudrun believes, too, that there
remains for her a last vestige of experience in Gerald's
company, a final moment of insight concerning him, the
world, and herself. "He was to her the most crucial in-
stance of the existing world ... Knowing him finally," she
could then seek new worlds. In the meantime, a "fine thread
still united her to him ... She had farther to go, a farther, slow, exquisite experience to reap, unthinkable subtleties of sensation to know, before she was finished" (508-09).

That sounds perverse, and in fact is perverse, but such is the desperation with which Gudrun is struggling for further self-confidence. She wants to prove to Gerald, and to herself, to experience the sensation of knowing that "whatever he was, she was not afraid of him; when she had proved that, she could leave him for ever ... And she wanted to be confident in herself. However many terrors she might have, she would be unafraid, uncowed by him. He could never cow her, nor dominate her, nor have any right over her; this she would maintain until she proved it" (520). The implication is that once proven, the extent and quality of this now evident self-confidence will allow her to continue with her life, unafraid of whatever doubts she may have concerning Loerke, Dresden, or the experience of being an artist in a "man's world." A "superb" representative of that world--an "iron man" with a brain "hard and invincible ... like a jewel" (500), "the face of a statue" (506), a "clenched, mechanical body" (512), the tenderness "of a self-satisfied lamp-post" (522), "his motion, his life" that of a "terrible clock," or a mill, grinding and ticking "with a million wheels and cogs and axles" (522-23, 525)--Gerald Crich will have proven to be less than her equal, a man she has defeated.
After rejecting Gerald, Gudrun turns completely to Loerke as someone to whom she thinks she can relate, if only artistically: a cosmopolitan, a multilingual, a man well versed in the history of painting, literature and sculpture, a man who distrusts materialist society yet attempts to find somewhere in it a place for himself, a man who seeks and who values above all else "companionship in intelligence" (516). Gudrun, however, does not "worship Loerke," but respects him for being, in her terms, "a free individual. He is not stiff with conceit of his own maleness [only, perhaps, of his own artistry, which is not threatening]. He is not grinding dutifully at the old mills" (521). He is an artist, and although he may be bound by bourgeois values, work ethics and materialism, he is to Gudrun a self-sufficient individual, searching for the same kind of personal fulfillment through art that she is. And in Loerke Gudrun clearly hopes to find a sensitive, sympathetic man as well, because she is not yet and perhaps never will be free of insecurity, not yet able to contend with, let alone desire, loneliness, isolation or exile. She has succeeded, that is, in recognizing those qualities—strength, determination, self-insight—necessary to achieve self-sufficiency, and she has overcome her illusions concerning Beldover, the miners, and Gerald by continually trying to question her life, evaluate her motives and goals, and even reevaluate her art. The question remaining, of course, is: will she
now do the same with Loerke? And even if she does eventually realize that her present appreciation of him is somewhat inflated, will she yet again repeat this characteristic cycle of illusion, despair, and then the subsequent, painful rejection of the other?

It is very likely that she will, and yet if she has not succeeded to any degree in overcoming alienation, even if she has become more alienated, she has at least attempted throughout the novel to be aware of the nature and the extent of that alienation, within herself and others, and aware too of the problems she sees inherent in the alternatives which Ursula and Birkin propose in order to resolve their estrangement. The lingering problem for Gudrun has been exactly how to overcome her own alienation. While she understands the goal—neither uncritical and complete acceptance of contemporary social values, many of which she perceives as being the cause of alienation in the first place, nor escape from society, but some kind of reconciliation or compromise from within it—she has not worked out the means of attaining that goal. However, while I would not deny that Gudrun is as a result more alienated than Ursula and Birkin, I would suggest that because the industrial social experience is the primary source of individual alienation, if society as well as the individual can change, it is then plausible to assume that someone like Gudrun, attempting to remain a member of society, will conceivably benefit at least as much as Ursula and Birkin
will in their attempt to foresake social experience and create what they hope will be a better life outside it. But I anticipate: whatever else I might say now could not, I think, serve to further illuminate Gudrun's decision as being expedient or misguided before a comparison is made between her goal and the alternative, as espoused by Birkin and then Ursula. Such a comparison will allow us to see just how complex the issues in *Women in Love* are, and how difficult it was for Lawrence even to suggest solutions that were not to some degree ambiguous and therefore possibly abstruse. What may seem, therefore, to be an overly optimistic view of Gudrun, as just described, is not a complete one; I will reserve my final appraisal of her until the end of the following chapter.
Unto what must man be born again? Unto knowledge of his own separate existence, as in Woman he is conscious of his own incorporate existence.

D.H. Lawrence, "Study of Thomas Hardy"

"There isn't any such thing as love, Lilly," she said. "Men are simply afraid of being alone. That is absolutely all there is in it: fear of being alone."

D.H. Lawrence, Aaron's Rod

For a novel concerned to some extent with relationships, it is remarkable how often characters in Women in Love contemplate isolation, even as they express or exhibit apparent feelings to the contrary. It becomes for us a matter of distinguishing between instinct and rationalization, and for the characters of choosing between coinciding and equally preeminent objectives, such as autonomy and companionship or, although to a lesser degree than in previous novels, the varieties of sexuality. Nor is this predilection for solitude confined to individuals; indeed, my decision to discuss Gerald and Gudrun separately was considerably determined by the observation that except for occasional, and rather inconsequential, meetings--at Breadalby, the Crich water-party, in the Alps--the two
couples do not interrelate. In chapter after chapter we see either Gudrun alone or with Gerald, Birkin alone, with Ursula, less frequently with Gerald, or Ursula alone. Even the sisters, apparently intimate at the outset, seldom meet after their Crich picnic in exile, and each time they do they seem progressively to have less in common. By the end of the novel, in fact, Gudrun is openly jealous of her older sister, while Ursula, who feels at one point that "with Birkin, she had just come into life," asks herself: "What had she to do with parents and antecedents? She knew herself new and unbegotten, she had no father, no mother, no anterior connexions, she was herself, pure and silvery, she belonged only to the oneness with Birkin ... Even Gudrun was a separate unit, separate, separate, having nothing to do with this self, this Ursula, in her new world of reality. The old shadow-world, the actuality of the past--ah, let it go! She rose free on the wings of her new condition" (460).

This "new condition," and related to it, Ursula’s satisfaction with belonging "only to the oneness with Birkin," is in some respects the realization, in her mind at least, of the kind of relationship she has wanted for some time, and represents as well her partial success in persuading Birkin to accede to her demands. Before they arrive in the Tyrol and then leave together for Italy, she has argued against his "'hankering after a sort of further fellowship'" in addition to their own relationship. "'You see,'" he
explains, "'I always imagine our being really happy with some few other people--a little freedom with people.'" Ursula disagrees. "'You've got me,' she said. 'Why should you need others? ... You must learn to be alone'" (409). Although Birkin's wish to relate to other people, and especially to one other person--Gerald--is derived from much more than a simple desire to be sociable (as I will discuss later in this chapter), nevertheless I think he is correct in his attempts to resist the kind of solitude Ursula wants. By way of explaining that, I will describe at the outset what is for me a problem with this novel, as well as those points at which I disagree with Lawrence, or at least with his intentions, for as I mentioned in my introduction, I believe that what he accomplishes in his fiction is not only sometimes unconscious but may differ from and even contradict what he thought he was creating. One example of this is the rebirth he clearly wants Ursula and Birkin to achieve during the chapter "Excurse," an experience which I believe does occur as he intended it to within that chapter, and yet one which does little to resolve their social and some of their marital problems afterwards. Another example, related to the first, involves this desire for escape and solitude in the face of inescapable social reality.

Since Marx, modern socio-cultural theory has been based partly upon the observation that a person is socially conditioned to the extent that the idea of an autonomous, self-referring or independent and therefore free individual can
probably never be realized and is in that case largely a
dream. If this is true, and I think it is, then that part
of Lawrence’s ideology based upon the belief that a person,
like Ursula, can become liberated socially as well as sex-
ually is erroneous. I believe as well that Lawrence himself
sometimes suspected this, even during the writing of Women
in Love. (Certainly after the war he begins to write more
about social responsibility and reform than individual
development, in essays such as "Democracy," "Education of
the People," and later, "The Individual Consciousness v. the
Social Consciousness" as well as in his fiction: Aaron’s
Rod, to a certain extent, and especially Kangaroo.) In this
novel, although I see Gerald as primarily identified in
social rather than individual terms, and therefore not sur-
prisingly presented as someone unlikely to develop as an
individual, I see on the other hand Ursula and Birkin trying
to identify themselves in just as exaggerated a way in terms
of a kind of asocial individualism. This is clearly not
what Lawrence intended, but in having them return to
England, their dream of paradise in isolation foiled
(ostensibly but not primarily by Gerald’s death), perhaps he
too realized this by the end of the novel.

What I see, therefore, as social estrangement, and what
Lawrence sees too, for he often describes its effects in
personal terms—Ursula’s and Birkin’s misanthropy, Paul’s
feeling of being a prisoner of industrialism, Siegmund’s
sense of being victimized by an anthropomorphic city—is a significant part of contemporary experience, although perhaps in the reading of this work more so for me than for Lawrence. That is, while he does portray society in these early novels as a source of individual alienation, he does not necessarily or always include the social in his vision of reform or resolution. Nor, however, does he seem able to satisfactorily reify in his fiction the idea of resolution outside of society. Siegmund and Helena cannot sustain their Zauberland, nor in the end can Ursula and Birkin; Paul walks towards the city at the end of Sons and Lovers, feeling that is where his future lies; the Brangwen women at the beginning of The Rainbow face the city, and Ursula at the end of the same novel envisions a better future not as one in which people will divorce themselves from social reality, but as one in which they will resist the monster of industrialism and rehumanize society. In this novel, however—Women in Love—Ursula and her author have apparently changed their views, as revealed, for example, by her delight in being alone with Birkin, and that, as I will indicate more specifically throughout this chapter, creates an enduring and fundamental problem not only for me as critic, or for the reader, but for Ursula and Birkin themselves. This is especially evident in terms of the disparity between their personal ideas as to what will constitute the ideal solution to existing and for the most part social problems, and following from that, to a satisfactory
relationship for both of them. Central to these issues and
to my own criticism is the idea of isolation.

II

As a result of the disparity itself, Ursula and
Birkin’s relationship is from the outset, like Gerald and
Gudrun’s, often fraught with anxiety, ambivalence, mistrust
and a lack of communication. Birkin, fearful of what he
characterizes as the inherent repressiveness of marriage and
yet, it seems clear, unable to deny a strong sexual craving,
attempts to alleviate that fear through the formulation of
an ideology which I see as serving, in part at least, to
rationalize his abnegation of responsibility in relation­
ships. Consequently, Ursula, who wants a total commitment
in love, finds it difficult at times to overcome her mis­
trust of Birkin as a kind of dilettante. What eventually
unites them, and this becomes a reason for Ursula’s
estrangement from her sister, is an abhorrence of society
leading to the decision to escape, in order to be free of
the meaninglessness of "mechanical repetition." Ironically,
in spite of Birkin’s personal feelings for his friend, both
he and Ursula realize that the quality of life they demand
is not possible in England because men like Gerald, who
possess the real social power over individuals, seek as a
means of establishing industrial efficiency exactly what the
two hate most: a system based on "the pure machine-principle

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of perfect coordination into one pure, complex, infinitely repeated motion, like the spinning of a wheel: but a productive spinning, as the revolving of the universe may be called a productive spinning, a productive repetition through eternity, to infinity" (256). This is the new cosmology, the modern religion, the cult of "ice-destructive knowledge, snow-abstract annihilation" (286) which Birkin so vehemently repudiates and whose messengers, including Gerald, he thinks of as "demons from the north," functioning as inadvertent prophets of Armageddon.

Birkin does not detest Gerald personally, but rather that which he represents, and in fact suggests at one point, quite accurately, as we know, that Crich himself is aware of neither the nature nor the likely consequences of his profession and particularly of his identification with it, to the exclusion of all other stimuli affecting personal identity. And yet Birkin at the same time admires Gerald, for qualities he either covets or already possesses. Although this is not always evident, the two are in some ways remarkably similar. For example, one of Gudrun's earliest characterizations of Gerald attributes to him a "gleaming beauty," a "maleness" reminiscent of a "young, good-humoured, smiling wolf," whose smile nevertheless cannot mask, "did not blind her to the significant, sinister stillness in his bearing, the lurking danger of his unsubdued temper" (15-16). In the "Prologue," Birkin also is a man whose "chief attraction"—his eyes "full of life and
warmth"—is "a false one. Those who knew him best knew that his lovable eyes were, in the last issue, estranged and unsoftening like the eyes of a wolf. In the last issue he was callous, and without feeling, confident, just as Gerald Crich in the last issue was wavering and lost."² Although the two men are in many respects dissimilar—Gerald a muscular, energetic, physically active man; Birkin thin, bony, of delicate health—their similarity resides in the facades both of them present to the world. Just as Gerald the explorer and industrialist, apparently motivated and adept at giving orders, is "wavering and lost," so too is Birkin's ostensible affability, passivity and lack of evident energy belied by aloofness and reserve. Tending to be "strongly centred in himself," he "never gave away in his soul, to anyone. He remained in the last issue detached, having no communion with any other soul."³

In the novel, this description of Birkin remains generally true. Ursula, who has previously known him only in the capacity of school inspector, perceives "a certain hostility, a hidden, ultimate reserve in him, cold and inaccessible" (22). We are told, too, that he walks "with a slight trail of one foot, which came only from self-consciousness" (21), and that he "affected to be quite ordinary," achieving "a verisimilitude of ordinary common-placeness that usually propitiated his onlookers for the moment, disarmed them from attacking his singleness" (22).
Again, the "Prologue" becomes useful, this time in determining the source of such odd behaviour. Estranged from his own feelings, we are told, Birkin is overwhelmed by a dilemma; "consumed by sexual desire"—a desire which remains evident in the novel itself when, for example, he visits Ursula in the classroom (39), or watches her dancing at Breadalby (102)—he is at the same time adamantly convinced that such desire is best fulfilled with a woman he loves, and yet he describes himself as devastatingly incapable of spontaneous love. "Never to be able to love spontaneously, never to be moved by a power greater than oneself, but always to be within one's own control, deliberate, having the choice, this was horrifying, more deadly than death. Yet how was one to escape? How could a man escape from being deliberate and unloving, except a greater power, an impersonal, imperative love should take hold of him? And if the greater power should not take hold of him, what could he do but continue in his deliberateness, without any fundamental spontaneity?"  

The spontaneity, and its relationship to impersonal love, Birkin describes in the novel as being an alternative to Hermione's kind of love: neither egotistical nor intellectual, but "'a fulfilment--the great dark knowledge you can't have in your head--the dark involuntary being. It is death to one's self--but it is the coming into being of another'" (46-47). To achieve this, Birkin knows that he must not only refute the ego but, as he realizes in the
"Prologue," "unite the two halves of himself, spiritual and sensual. And this is what no man could do at once, deliberately. It must happen to him ... He might will it, he might act according to his will, but he did not bring to pass that which he willed. A man cannot create desire in himself, nor cease at will from desiring. Desire, in any shape or form, is primal, whereas the will is secondary, derived. The will can destroy, but it cannot create."^5

What Birkin wants, then, is what he describes to Ursula as an impersonal relationship, one that is "beyond love, beyond any emotional relationship" (161). Specifically, he elaborates to her a few moments later: "'What I want is a strange conjunction with you ... not meeting and mingling;--you are quite right;--but an equilibrium, a pure balance of two single beings:--as the stars balance each other'" (164). To effect such a state will involve problems not easily surmounted, for it will depend upon the accomplished union or synthesis within each individual of potentially disparate varieties of love--spiritual and sexual--and between individuals the transcendence of will, ego, and possessiveness in love. But those are perhaps not the significant obstacles to fulfillment; more to the point, such a relationship is desired by a man who believes, if the passage from the "Prologue" just cited still applies, that to desire anything is at once a wish to possess something and an emanation of will more likely to destroy than to create.
And, too, Birkin is by nature a man characteristically suspicious of others, including Ursula. He even mistrusts love, having become convinced that the passion of sexuality such as Hermione possesses and he has experienced will always dominate and therefore threaten his ill-defined, tenuous sense of identity.

This is not surprising, for it would appear likely that an alienated person like Birkin, feeling that he must create and then sustain a barrier between himself and those foreign others, is not cognizant of the fact that the barrier intensifies and in some respects is his alienation. In other words, feeling alienated, he naturally desires to protect himself, and in doing so he sustains that alienation. This is most evident in Birkin's explanation of unison in separateness, which is a formulation intended to protect him from the threat of love as a smothering, engulfing and therefore destructive phenomenon. The formula itself, however, is not only alienating, but mediates against his other desire: to be loved for his "real self" by someone mature enough, in his terms, to understand him and sympathize with his myriad fears and anxieties. What he proposes, it seems to me, in contrast to what he desires, becomes a rhetorical defense against someone knowing him, for--knowledge being power--someone else's knowledge of him would be their power over him. Long before he leaves England, therefore, Birkin exists in what I would describe as a state of self-exile, a state exacerbated by the fact that the barriers to knowledge
of self from others are also barriers to self-knowledge.

One of the most evident of these barriers is rhetoric, particularly that which evokes conflict, for any kind of distaste or hatred becomes the antithesis to love as well as an obstruction to understanding or sympathy. Rhetoric also serves to overpower or simply disguise ambivalence, contradictions, and anxiety by suggesting, if only from the sheer quantity and abrasiveness of words, that what is being described or proposed derives from knowledge and confidence. More profoundly, however, rhetoric disguises fear. Beneath Birkin's oft-repeated hatred of humanity, for example, we discover "a dread he had of mankind, of other people" amounting "almost to a horror, to a sort of dream terror--his horror of being observed by some other people" (121). Related to this, and comprising a second barrier, is Birkin's self-alienated perception of a split between the "real," which is to be preserved and protected, and the "other," which becomes a facade used to maintain relations with the outer world. This becomes manifest after Birkin is struck on the head by Hermione and runs from the Breadalby estate to some nearby hills, to "his world," in which "he wanted nobody and nothing but the lovely, subtle, responsive vegetation, and himself, his own loving self." However, he recognizes that it is necessary "to go back into the [other] world. That was true. But that did not matter, so one knew where one belonged. He knew now where he belonged. This
was his place, his marriage place. The world was extraneous" (120). For the time being he will inhabit the extraneous world, but it will not be his real self which functions there. It is significant, following this, that Birkin then wonders if he is mad. If so, he concludes, "he preferred his own madness, to the regular society. He rejoiced in his own madness, he was free. He did not want the old sanity of the world, which was become so repulsive. He rejoiced in the new-found world of his madness" (120).

We can agree, I think, that if the world, especially as Birkin sees and experiences it, is "sane" then sanity is not something with which one would want to be labelled. And yet Birkin's madness, it seems to me, is as unhealthy, for by retreating he is effectively turning a protective barrier into a prison, divorcing himself so extensively from reality that his inner, "real" self is in danger of becoming unreal, static, and eventually unknowable to himself, in the way that Gerald loses a sense of who he is, or was before he became reduced to being only a colliery manager. Such extremes of isolation, I should think, must then lead to the impoverishment of self-insight, since that kind of experience depends upon relationships with people. To desire only "to love the vegetation and be quite happy and unquestioned, by himself" (121), is not an enlightening alternative to "the regular society," but an intensification of alienation from society and from the self. No longer wanting "to have anything to do with human beings" (120), there-
fore, includes no longer being responsive to one's self. In short, a sense of identity requires external as well as or perhaps even more than internal stimuli.

Birkin of course does not succumb to his "madness," but his fear of love and his barriers are maintained. When he feels threatened by the closeness of his relationship with Ursula, he retreats, using conflict and rhetoric to mask his anxiety, turning to Gerald, with whom he is engaged in a similar cycle of approach and withdrawal. His is an extremely ambivalent position; caught between unison and separateness, he has moments when he comprehends the danger of both. In that respect, what Richard Drain has described as one of Lawrence's concerns in the novel I would apply to Birkin himself; in criticizing Hermione, for example, it is he who "attacks the will as that which jails the natural self and bullies others," and with Ursula "criticizes the desire for total abandonment to the submerged drives as a failure of selfhood," a criticism, however, with which Ursula vehemently disagrees. At the end of "Moony," in fact, she suggests that Birkin's inability to believe in self-abandonment is the failure, for "she believed in an absolute surrender in love" (299). Because Birkin externalizes his own ambivalence, I would also describe him as "occupying a double position himself. The integral self must be kept whole and distinct, and even to some degree separate ... Yet to be cut off is a kind of death," because
to be so radically isolated is eventually not only to be
estranged from others, but from nature and ultimately, from
life itself.\textsuperscript{6}

Birkin's recognition, such as it is, of the disparity
between sensuality and logic is an appreciation, however
repressed, of the necessity to reconcile the two. That
awareness permits him to summarize his "situation. It was
as simple as this: fatally simple. On the one hand, he knew
he did not want a further sensual experience—something
deeper, darker than ordinary life could give"; on the other
hand, however, he admits that Halliday's West African figurine
has revealed "what he himself did not know ... purely
sensual, purely unspiritual knowledge" (285). That attrac-
tion, though, is a qualified one. Birkin is convinced that
sensuality to the exclusion of intellectual cognizance is
what caused the dissolution of the African race, "since the
relation between the senses and the outspoken mind had
broken, leaving the experience all of one sort, mystically
sensual" (285). Equally as frightened of the converse,
however—the exclusive intellectualism of industrialized
Europe (286)—he would apparently prefer to increase sensual
knowledge or experience only to the point of being in har-
mony with his "outspoken mind," and in doing so to create
for himself an alternative to Hermione's, and what has
previously been his, tendency only to be intellectual. In
that sense, for all of his criticism of her, which in effect
becomes self-criticism, I would suggest that Birkin is at
the outset not unlike Hermione. Lacking spontaneity, seeking the means of defending himself against the perceived dominance of others, even when he is forming his new ideology, he has carefully—that is, in a premeditated manner notably lacking impulsiveness—distinguished (near the end of "Class-room") between sensuality and sensuousness. The latter, as characterized by Hermione, is self-conscious, intellectual and therefore corrupt; the former is not exclusively sexual but an intuitive, honest response which circumvents ego, will, and the craving for power.

Although it is important, Birkin has also suggested to Hermione and Ursula in the classroom, that individuals not be "roused" to consciousness—it should come "willy-nilly"—knowledge, and intellectual stimuli generally, are vital. The point he makes is that knowledge must not be everything, but he then suggests that it is not knowledge "'that makes us unliving and self-conscious,'" nor is it "'too much mind, but too little'" which destroys spontaneity and instinctiveness (44-45). It is only knowledge, sexual or intellectual, used in a bid for power, or to increase one's sense of power, that is detestable, and for that to change, intellectualism must be balanced by sensuality: "'the great dark knowledge you can't have in your head,'" only in "'the blood'" (46-47). In this, some of the earliest rhetoric, Birkin has attempted to resolve his "situation," and yet later in the novel we see that in spite of discussing his
burgeoning theory of sensuality at great length, and even realizing himself that the idea is possibly "the interpretation of a profound yearning" (285), Birkin still cannot easily contend with the difficulty and yet the necessity to distinguish between sensuality and sexuality, the second of which he distrusts and in certain moods even fears and wishes to avoid. "It was sex," he is convinced at one point "that turned a man into a broken half of a couple ... And he wanted to be single in himself," not "tortured by unsatisfied desire," and thereby able to remain free of the "horrible merging, mingling self-abnegation of love" (225-25).

Birkin’s ideology originates as a direct response to Hermione and to his own perceived shortcomings. Those similarities between the two, which initiated the relationship in the first place, he now sees as obstacles to his own well-being, obstacles he must understand and then surmount. That understanding begins in the novel with Birkin’s articulation of the fact that Hermione also resorts to rhetoric, and that what she says often contradicts who she is and what she feels and desires. But even before then, at the wedding, the disparity between idealism and desire is brought to our attention. During a conversation with Gerald concerning patriotism Hermione says that rivalry between nations is wrong. Nations are founded upon a common "commercial instinct" and should recognize this bond. Gerald, the entrepreneur, argues that it is exactly this commercial basis which makes rivalry necessary, for business, like
freedom, is dependent upon possession. "'If I go and take a man's hat from off his head, that hat becomes a symbol of that man's liberty. When he fights me for his hat, he is fighting me for his liberty'... 'I,'" Hermione responds, "'shouldn't let anybody take my hat off my head.'

"'How would you prevent it?' asked Gerald.

"'I don't know,' replied Hermione slowly. 'Probably I should kill him'" (32). That statement quite effectively establishes Hermione's character, and her relationship with Birkin. When he first considers spontaneity as an alternative to cold rationalism, she correctly perceives the change in him as indicative of his dissatisfaction with her and of the likelihood, therefore, that he might soon depart. She reacts as she has said she would: someone, in this case Birkin himself, is attempting to take her lover, her possession, and she tries to kill him.

Hermione's reaction involves more, however, than an obvious, even melodramatic response to a kind of representative theft, for Birkin's discontent increases her own apprehension of the gap between ambition and capability. She wants Birkin, because of this, as much for his new knowledge, knowledge in her estimation to be equated with power, as for himself. Just before attacking him, for example, Hermione observes Birkin copying a Chinese drawing in order to "know" it, and she "was at once roused, she laid as it were violent hands on him, to extract his secrets from him.
She must know. It was a dreadful tyranny, an obsession in her, to know all he knew” (99), which includes knowing his technique for acquiring knowledge. This does not contradict her earlier assertion that it is preferable to be "‘animals, simply animals, crude, violent, anything, rather than this self-consciousness, this incapacity to be spontaneous’" (44), for, as Birkin then retorts, her sense or definition of spontaneity does not evolve from passion but from an almost unconscious and therefore instinctive desire for power and unassailability of will. She is, like Birkin himself, like Gudrun and Ursula, in the end motivated above all else by a terrifying suspicion that life is a matter of either being victimized or doing everything in one’s power to escape such a fate. And yet, because such a fear is repressed, for its admission contains the possibility of failure, weakness, and meaninglessness, she too tends to rationalize the attempt to achieve autonomy in idealistic terms, so that ambition becomes noble and success, like a rainbow, virtually within reach. As we have seen with Helena, Paul, and Ursula, such strategies often do succeed, as if the very creation of a vision develops the determination and the ability to reify it.

Of all these characters, Birkin, the most complex, the most confused, perhaps the most reticent, does not reach his rainbow, in part because his own ideology, his vision mediates against such success. The problem, as implied in his own statement in Ursula’s classroom, is not one of
goals, but of attainment. If consciousness, the core of Birkin's ideology, is as uncertain as he believes, then the raising of consciousness must be a sporadic, fortuitous process. And when increased consciousness is sought, as undeniably it is in Birkin, his statement to the contrary notwithstanding, it is paradoxically a purposeful quest for the involuntary based upon the premeditated (intellectual) decision to become more spontaneous or instinctive (non-intellectual). How else but intellectually does one consciously set out to drown one's mind in "the blood" or the "palpable body" in order to achieve that "death to one's self" which precedes "'the coming into being of another ... the dark involuntary being'" (46-47). The problem, Birkin's problem throughout the novel (even after "Excurse," as I will shortly explain), involves transforming a conceptualized goal into action, and the only solution for him would seem to be the acquiescence to sexual desire even when that desire contradicts his theory. One of the most evident flaws in Birkin's ideology, in fact, has to do with its contradictions, which often evolve, in spite of the assertiveness, even belligerence with which he describes the intentions of that ideology to others, because it serves, like Lawrence's own "pollyanalytics," not as vision but explanation. For that reason it is important to observe Birkin as much as listen to him, because his outbursts, his at times apparently irrelevant acts reveal far more of his
psychological state than do his words. Those acts, genuinely involuntary and unconscious, become revelations of anxiety, ambivalence, and insecurity usually disguised by rhetoric.

Recalling Hermione's attack on Birkin in greater detail, we see how it provides evidence of a similar disposition in her. As such, the act illuminates many of his own contradictions, for it is a gesture both instinctive and physical: an attack, therefore, upon the very intellectualism which she advocates and which Birkin has previously been ostensibly denouncing. When he calls her spiritual democracy "an absolute lie," and describes as a "pure falsity" her "brotherhood of man," that spiritual equality which, were we to accept it, would put an end to "this carping and envy and this struggle for power, which destroys, only destroys'" (115), Birkin "could feel violent waves of hatred and loathing of all he said coming out of her. It was dynamic hatred and loathing, coming strong and black out of the unconsciousness. She heard his words in her unconscious self, consciously she was as if deafened, she paid no heed to them" (116). And as if to prove Birkin's point, and verify his suspicions, Hermione then endeavors, in a physical, even sexual, and graphically anti-spiritual struggle for power, to "destroy" Birkin by silencing him (although I think there is no intention to actually commit murder). His "presence was the wall, his presence was destroying her. Unless she could break out, she must die
most fearfully, walled up [repressed] in horror. And he was the wall. She must break down the wall--she must break him down before her, the awful obstruction of him who obstructed her life to the last ... A terrible voluptuous thrill ran down her arms--she was going to know her voluptuous consummation. Her arms quivered and were strong, immeasurably and irresistibly strong. What delight, what delight in strength, what delirium of pleasure! She was going to have her consummation of voluptuous ecstasy at last. It was coming! ... Her heart was a pure flame in her breast, she was purely unconscious in ecstasy," a state, we recall, not unlike that in which she previously heard Birkin's words.

That both "waves of hatred and loathing" and this "pure flame" of ecstasy could emanate almost simultaneously from her "unconscious self" indicates the degree of repressed and ambivalent desire this woman suffers. To continue: "She moved towards him and stood behind him for a moment in ecstasy," relishing this "extremity of bliss." Then "she brought down the ball of jewel stone with all her force, crash on his head ... it was one convulsion of pure bliss for her ... But it was not somehow complete" (117). And afterwards the rationalization: "She was perfectly right. She knew that, spiritually, she was right. In her own infallible purity, she had done what must be done. She was right, she was pure. A drugged, almost sinister religious expression became permanent on her face" (118-19). In other
words, Hermione articulates, not a philosophy she wishes to actuate, but a facade beneath which hover inclinations of a completely different nature.

Hermione’s deceptiveness and ambiguity clearly emphasize Birkin’s own, particularly insofar as they too are related to repressed fear and desire. Birkin, for example, criticizes Hermione for her "obscene will," but condones Gerald’s treatment of his mare with the glib assertion that "horses haven’t got a complete will, like human beings. A horse has no one will. Every horse, strictly, has two wills. With one will, it wants to put itself in the human power completely—and with the other, it wants to be free, wild’” (156). A woman, he adds, "‘is the same as horses: two wills act in opposition inside her. With one will, she wants to subject herself utterly. With the other she wants to bolt, and pitch her rider to perdition’" (157). Attempting to extricate himself from the chauvinistic connotations of this, especially that man is the superior of all beings, he adds that it is "‘a dangerous thing to domesticate even horses, let alone women’” (157). Suddenly, he is rejecting Gerald’s belief that it is in the natural order of things to subjugate horses and, by implication, women. But these are words, spoken in the passion of the moment. It is difficult to determine from them alone exactly what Birkin believes or feels. Just as I would not describe the culmination of Hermione’s actions at Breadalby as attempted homicide, I would think it inappropriate, from statements such as these,
to accuse Birkin of misogyny or, from his admittedly and at
times abhorrent egotism, to charge him with being a
solipsist or a misanthropist. Rather, bravado and apparent
assertiveness effectively disguise a quest for survival as
well as a profound insecurity and uncertainty as to the form
his desperate escape from alienation will assume.

In that he perceives the source of his plight as
societal or, even more expansively, humanity as a collective
whole, Birkin believes that the solution must therefore
involve concern only with the self, with free choice, sep­
arateness and ultimately transcendence of the previous,
socially formed self. Because society is defined as un­
natural, this proposed development of an organic, instinct­
ive (natural) identity is antisocial and as such itself
alienating because of the isolation demanded. If Birkin is
not aware of this he does understand, from increased insight
into his situation, the social limitations and therefore
ultimately the inherent powerlessness of the individual to
achieve autonomy, especially alone. He oscillates, then,
between isolation and a consideration of what sometimes
appears to be the irrefutable necessity of marriage, and is
immediately overcome in contemplation of the problems asso­
ciated with that institution. Another dilemma which haunts
Birkin is that each apparent solution, each stage of his
development presents new and no less perplexing problems and
a subsequent reactivation of discontent, which in turn
forces him to seek new solutions. It is torment, then, which induces much of what Birkin does and says. He is constantly forced towards the unknown, towards a void, the gap in his awareness, compelled to resolve an inner and a social conflict, neither of which can be resolved. He must either embrace the possibility of enhanced, transcendent being, or be pushed to the disintegration of being: to nothingness.

Enhancement, however, as an individual endeavor involves isolation, loneliness, increased vulnerability, and yet conversely, the consideration of a relationship to end isolation involves forces, as we have seen with Hermione, which threaten his individuality. For Birkin, that fear of being overwhelmed, of losing his freedom of choice, his individuality, and of living a meaningless life, therefore, forces him to concentrate on insularity of being. This preoccupation with self is again similar to Hermione’s, even though ostensibly hostile. Hermione fears others, for example, from a basic sense of insignificance, and powerlessness, while Birkin, albeit far more comprehensively, fears meaninglessness. And just as Hermione’s alienating desire for power must lead to isolation, Birkin also risks loneliness in his effort to achieve authenticity as a separate, unique individual. Finally, and less similar, are their motives: while Hermione’s craving for freedom, if it is that, could be defined as the license to do as she chooses, Birkin’s is a commitment to freedom from deter-
ministic circumstances: conformism, loss of choice as the price of assimilation, fusion or oneness as the ideal form of relationship.

Knowing that he cannot return to that idyllic state of preindustrial harmony which allowed both individuality and communal support (non-isolation), Birkin can choose social submissiveness as a solution to isolation, or freedom of choice based on individuality, with its concomitant risk of loneliness. Hermione, on the other hand, seeking intellectual knowledge in order to resolve insecurity, has dismissed individuality in all respects except insofar as the power of knowledge shall define her, in the same way Gerald perceives himself exclusively as entrepreneur. Consequently, she is both isolated and repressed, as well as destructive; where knowledge does not suffice, she endeavors, whether figuratively or literally, to destroy any surmised threat to her "supremacy": in effect to her shortcomings.

It is understandable, then, that Birkin rejects relationships, defining the "love" which forms their basis as the materialistic acquisition of security by one partner through possession of the other. "Did he not know it in Hermione. Hermione, the humble, the subservient, what was she all the while but the Mater Dolorosa, in her subservience, claiming with horrible, insidious arrogance and female tyranny, her own again, claiming back the man she had borne in suffering" (224).
While it is true that Hermione tends to be possessive, striving for dominance as an antidote to her own insecurity, Birkin has several times admitted to exacerbating that neurosis. At one point he taunts and ridicules her, calling her a liar and a "one-mouthed fool," and although he does recant—"he felt, later, a little compunction. He had been violent, cruel with poor Hermione. He wanted to recompense her, to make it up. He had hurt her, he had been vindictive" (116)—when she strikes him with the paper-weight, and is raising it to strike again, he warns her: "'No you don't, Hermione,' he said in a low voice. 'I don't let you ... It isn't I who will die, you hear'" (118). Later still he once more feels guilty, vowing never again "'to break her will, and let loose the maelstrom of her subconsciousness, and see her in her ultimate madness. Yet he was always striking at her" (156).

Other than this incited behaviour, Birkin would seem to have little evidence to support his conviction that every woman is "horrible and clutching," with "a lust for possession, a greed of self-importance in love," always wanting "to have, to own, to control, to be dominant," believing "that all was hers, because she had borne it. Man was hers because she had borne him. A Mater Dolorosa, she had borne him, a Magna Mater, she now claimed him again, soul and body, sex, meaning and all" (224). Yet he does believe that of women, and consequently he fears them, for wanting to possess him, dominate him, in the end eradicate his sense of
self. From that fear in turn springs a certain hatred, and a certain desire in himself to dominate a relationship, to have the woman acknowledge him. This becomes an alternative to a kind of psychological suicide as the solution to hopelessness, an alternative ostensibly concerned with rebirth, but in fact, because he knows that such a transmutation cannot be achieved alone, really concerned with the means whereby he can remain as far from another as possible without actually being isolated, and even then in control insofar as relationships are concerned.

Birkin's rationale for desiring to be separate is that human beings are inherently isolated anyway, that any similarities which do exist "are based on accidental material conditions. We are all abstractly or mathematically equal, if you like. Every man has hunger and thirst, two eyes, one nose and two legs. We're all the same in point of number. But spiritually there is pure difference and neither equality nor inequality counts ... In the spirit, I am as separate as one star is from another, as different in quality and quantity ... One man isn't any better than another, not because they are equal, but because they are intrinsically other, that there is no term of comparison" (115-16). Such a position derives from two related but in some respects quite different attitudes, towards himself and towards humanity. Further complicated by ambivalence, these have produced a kind of quasi-
misanthropy: a facade used to mask what is not hatred but frustration. Concerning himself, he admits that he enjoys life, but at the same time feels somewhat of a failure. It "'infuriates me,'" he tells Ursula, "'that I can't get right, at the really growing part of me. I feel all tangled and messed up, and I can't get straight anyhow. I don't know what really to do.'" As a result, he adds, "'I detest what I am, outwardly. I loathe myself as a human being'" (139-41). This is countered by Ursula's perception of him as a man not all consumed by self-loathing. He is, to her, "quick and attractive," displaying "a great sense of freedom," a "wonderful, desirable life-rapidity, the rare quality of an utterly desirable man" (144).

Birkin's frustration, his "impatient fury" with himself extends to humanity, without which the world would be an improved and beautiful place. "'I would die like a shot,'" he says, "'to know that the earth would really be cleaned of all the people. It is the most beautiful and freeing thought. Then there would never be another foul humanity created, for a universal defilement'" (142). What he dislikes most about people is their misguided adage that "'love is the greatest thing; they persist in saying this, the foul liars, and just look at what they do! Look at all the millions of people who repeat every minute that love is the greatest, and charity is the greatest--and see what they are doing all the time. By their works ye shall know them, for dirty liars and cowards, who daren't stand by their own
actions, much less by their own words'" (141).

Having admitted to being no better than any other member of humanity, and prepared to be annihilated with the rest, if it comes to that (142), Birkin can also be implicated in humanity's greatest sin, hypocrisy, for he too is reluctant to act in accordance with his convictions, or often even to stand by his words. He prefers isolation to relationships because he feels he cannot love, and that he does not even want love, even if he was to involve himself in a relationship. He then proceeds to criticize love itself, not understanding, as Ursula observes, that hypocrisy "doesn't alter the fact that love is the greatest, does it? What they do doesn't alter the truth of what they say, does it?" (141). More to the point, as Ursula herself discovered in *The Rainbow*, the "weekday," or business world, which now controls all facets of experience, is no longer concerned with love. In that sense, hypocrisy is not even an issue; as Ursula has remarked earlier, "there are good people'" (140) who presumably still believe in love, while the others, the majority, embrace those characteristics—greed, materialism, bourgeois individualism and a thirst for power—which Birkin should be criticizing, rather than humanity as a generalized collective.

Passages such as those just cited suggest that Ursula is far more aware of socio-political reality than Birkin, especially in terms of the subtlety of its oppressiveness.
(which perhaps explains her desire to extricate herself more fully from it than he wants to do). Although she too often feels frustrated, hopeless, misanthropic, she nevertheless believes that Birkin's rhetoric is "only a pleasant fancy. She herself knew too well the actuality of humanity, its hideous actuality. She knew it would not disappear so cleanly and conveniently. It had a long way to go yet, a long and hideous way ... 'man will never be gone,' she said, with insidious, diabolical knowledge of the horrors of persistence," or if he does, she adds, the "'world will go with him'" (142-43). Ursula dismisses much of what Birkin proposes as fantasy, but of that which remains what she finds most disconcerting is the fact that he appears so vehemently, so furiously misanthropic, and yet does not believe and therefore, by implication, will never act upon those sentiments, or possibly any others. He seems to embody, in other words, as he has noticed of Hermione, "an interval, a strange split between what she seemed to feel and experience, and what she actually said and thought," the latter appearing as though ejected from a "maelstrom of chaotic black emotions and reactions" (156). Ursula is convinced, however, that in spite of his declamations, "in spite of himself, he would have to be trying to save the world," and yet when she confronts him with that hypothesis, asking him why then "'do you care about people at all? ... Why do you bother about humanity? ... Because you love it,'" he replies: "'If I do love it ... it is my disease' ... 'a
disease you don't want to be cured of" she adds (143-44). Having proven her point, Ursula feels that the rhetoric is moralistic and didactic, a feeling supported by what she describes as "a certain priggish Sunday-school stiffness ... priggish and detestable" which envelops Birkin when he "preaches," undermining his obvious vitality, a "ridiculous mean effacement" which turns him "into a Salvator Mundi and a Sunday-school teacher, a prig of the stiffest type" (144).

In short, Ursula is quickly able to point out the naiveté and overwhelming implausibility of Birkin's social critique, flaws which he realizes, although he is reluctant to admit to them when they are brought to his attention. He chooses instead to assume "a certain insufferable aloof superiority, and withdrawing into his distance" (144). At this point, unable to "blossom" personally, Birkin sees only two alternatives--the fanciful annihilation of humanity, or exile (147)--but neither is satisfactory. His only certainty is the conviction that one "must throw everything away, everything--let everything go, to get the one last thing one wants" which is "freedom together" (147). It is that wish to start anew, to be reborn, and in doing so to cast off the myriad anxieties and feelings of insecurity that oppress him, which provides the basis of his ideology, that tenuous theory of star-equilibrium or unison in separateness. And yet to Birkin therein exists the only certainty of personal development, for a conventional rela-
tionship, and social interaction generally, are threatening, and isolation, if safer and more secure, can nevertheless yield only stasis. Perhaps the theory itself begins as a substitute for despair, when he realizes that Ursula presents an exciting contrast to his quasi-misanthropic denial of love and life. "He saw her face strangely enkindled, as if suffused from within by a powerful sweet fire. His soul was arrested in wonder. She was enkindled in her own living fire. Arrested in wonder and in pure, perfect attraction, he moved towards her" (144-45). At that moment he admits that it is not love but the word "love" which he hates, and for the first time there is a "beam of understanding between them" (145).

For Ursula, one of the most frustrating of Birkin's contradictions is that he continually insists upon intuitiveness, and an end to the self-conscious pursuit of knowledge, but his very words and the act of contemplation which precedes them are evidence of doing what he condemns. Earlier she has tried to convince him not to be concerned with doing, but with feeling and living, being "'oneself, like a walking flower'" (140); he insists, she later argues, upon "'tearing open a bud to see what the flower will be like,'" always, like Hermione, thinking that "'everything must be realized in the head ... And that kills everything, doesn't it? It doesn't allow any possibility of flowering'" (158). She concludes that this is because Birkin trusts neither himself nor his theory. If the latter could be
trusted—that is, if it were plausible—she argues, "'it wouldn't be necessary to be so farfetched,'" referring to his "star-equilibrium" analogy. "'You don't trust yourself. You don't fully believe yourself what you are saying. You don't really want this conjunction, otherwise you wouldn't talk so much about it, you'd get it'" (170).

It is because of these contradictions, however, that Ursula, although vehemently critical, is able to contend with Birkin's theory of ascendancy. If he is so unsure of himself, then as an extra safeguard against subjugation he will posit the suggestion that it is his, the man's, responsibility to take the initiative. After all, it is his vision that the two discuss. While Ursula promptly criticizes Birkin for his "'assumption of male superiority'" (167) in defending Mino the cat's actions, it says something of her own self-assurance and insight that she can mock his words while continuing to be conscious of the insecurity behind them. In doing so, Ursula simply maintains her conviction that a man as sensitive and aware as he cannot fail eventually to realize the absurdity of his presumptions. Thus she constantly ridicules him, in order to convert him to her definition of love, and tries to instil in him a sense of trust and practicality, which in a way only confuses him further. After she criticizes him for defending Mino, and he attempts to explain himself, he then watches her "as she talked. And he seemed to listen with
reverence. Her face was beautiful and full of baffled light as she told him all the things that had hurt her or perplexed her so deeply. He seemed to warm and comfort his soul at the beautiful light of her nature" (171). At the same time, however, he "was almost afraid of the mocking recklessness of her splendid face. Here was one who would go to the whole lengths of heaven or hell, whichever she had to go. And he mistrusted her, he was afraid of a woman capable of such abandon, such dangerous thoroughness of destructivity. Yet he chuckled within himself also" (171), in recognition, perhaps, of a kindred soul.

Certainly Birkin does not ignore Ursula, even when he disagrees with her. Indeed, given that it is her criticism which will force him to reconsider his arguments, she is ultimately responsible for his shift from separateness or isolation to "unison-in-separateness," from transcendent self to transcendent marriage or "star-equilibrium." That such a change should occur is evidence as well of Birkin's respect for Ursula, even though he remains hesitant, mistrustful of the danger she as a woman potentially embodies. While respect may indicate attraction, therefore, he does not at first love Ursula, because of that mistrust and, as he has earlier explained, because "'it isn't love I want. It is something much more impersonal and harder--and rarer ... I don't feel the emotion of love for you--no, and I don't want to. Because it gives out in the last issues'" (161). Love, in other words, is for Birkin personal, and
tends to be egotistical, and possessive, and often temporary as well. What he wants is a more lasting relationship, and one which resists the delusion "that love is the root. It isn't. It is only the branches. The root is beyond love, a naked isolation, an isolated me, that does not meet and mingle, and never can'" (162). Attempting self-sufficiency in these matters, Birkin is not motivated by the expectation of gratification from others nor, he explains to Ursula, is he being "selfish at all. Because I don't know what I want of you. I deliver myself over to the unknown, in coming to you. I am without reserves or defences, stripped entirely, into the unknown" (163). In this he is most self-assured, and most critical of Ursula, whose theory of love is to him love given in anticipation of ego-serving love in return, and given with such self-abandonment, as she herself later describes it (299), as to be almost completely antithetical to his own ideal.

Birkin admits to having loved before although, from observing the dying stages of his and Hermione’s relationship, with devastating consequences, and he admits to being incapable of loving now, or at least of feeling "the emotion of love" for Ursula. What he wants to experience with her, highly abstruse in its articulation, would seem to involve almost an obsession with freedom from personal, emotional commitment. Perhaps it is because he fears the possible consequences of his own ideology, and even more of
being held responsible by others, should the spontaneity he calls for prove unsuccessful. Beyond responsibility, he emphasizes to Ursula, "there I would want to meet you—not in the emotional, loving plane—but there beyond, where there is no speech and no terms of agreement. There we are two stark, unknown beings, two utterly strange creatures, I would want to approach you, and you me." In other words, he does not want to become involved in an exchange of personalities, apparently because he wishes either not to reveal or even to refute the "personal" as opposed to the "impersonal me." And, he continues, there can be "no obligation, because there is no standard for action there, because no understanding has been reaped from that plane. It is quite inhuman—so there can be no calling to book, in any form whatsoever [no social conventions, or mores, no institutional reference]—because one is outside the pale of all that is accepted, and nothing known applies [including, therefore, no judgment, no criticism, because no standards of reference exist from which to judge]. One can only follow the impulse, taking that which lies in front, and responsible for nothing, asked for nothing, giving nothing, only each taking according to the primal desire" (162-63).

Birkin has considered all possible sources of failure, ridicule, and fear in creating an ideal or archetypical relationship which, except that it does involve one other person, would allow him everything he would have alone on an island: particularly freedom from societal pressure, expect-
ation and judgment. The only flaw is that such a relation-
ship must be based on trust: a mutual faith in the other
person's integrity and commitment implicit in Birkin's
desire that "'there needs the pledge between us, that we
will both cast off everything, cast off ourselves even, and
cease to be, so that that which is perfectly ourselves can
take place in us'" (163). At the same time, however, he
remains equivocal about related matters. He wants Ursula,
he informs her, not because he loves her but "'because I
believe in you--if I do believe in you,'" and when she asks:
''Aren't you sure?'" he replies: "'Yes, I must believe in
you, or else I shouldn't be here saying this ... But that is
all the proof I have. I don't feel any very strong belief
at this particular moment'" (163).

Exactly why or in what way he believes in her is not
clear, except that he evidently admires her straightforward
manner, her sympathy, her interest in him, and their common
feeling of social estrangement. At the same time, however,
the vehemence with which he continues to qualify that
attraction suggests that he is refusing to admit to his
feelings (possibly because she is so critical of him) and
not, as he would have her believe, simply describing their
absence. "'I don't want to see you,'" he tells Ursula.
"'I've seen plenty of women, I'm sick and weary of seeing
them. I want a woman I don't see ... I don't want to see
you or hear you ... I want to find you, where you don't know

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your own existence, the you that your common self denies utterly. But I don’t want your good looks, and I don’t want your womanly feelings, and I don’t want your thoughts nor opinions nor your ideas—they are all bagatelles to me’” (164).

What remains, and that which in his despairing and weary state definitely does attract Birkin to Ursula, is what I would term her spiritual vitality and for him, therefore, her potential for achieving that as yet unknown existence which lies beyond her common self. This potential he has earlier perceived, interestingly, when Ursula herself is experiencing an ambivalent and complex "duality of feeling which he created in her, that made a fine hate of him quicken in her bowels" (144). It is an ambivalence derived from the fact that she sees in him both a "wonderful, desirable life-rapidity, the rare quality of an utterly desirable man" and that "priggish Sunday-school stiffness" I referred to earlier. It is while Ursula has been observing these qualities in him (and recognizing his potential, in other words) that Birkin sees her in a new light. She is, he realizes, a complex woman and one who is not so far from transcendent selfhood as he has previously thought. "His soul was arrested in wonder. She was enkindled in her own living fire. Arrested in wonder and in pure, perfect attraction, he moved towards her. She sat like a strange queen, almost supernatural in her glowing smiling richness" (144-45).
It is this reaction which convinces me that Birkin does not hate the idea of love, or what love can mean, although he would call it something else to differentiate it from the range of emotions commonly described using that term. He even hates the word itself because, he explains to Ursula, "we have vulgarized it. It ought to be proscribed, tabooed from utterance, for many years, till we get a new, better idea'" (145). He is repulsed by the old idea, what he will call the "old way of love" (223), which Ursula is offering, so much so, in fact, that from this hatred (and fear), as well as his generalizations concerning women (arrived at, from what we know of him, with no evidence except what he has observed in his relationship with Hermione, whom I would characterize as an unusual, even atypical woman), he decides that he knows what kind of woman Ursula is. It is a description and a summary of her which occurs some time after the previous observation of that inner living fire and "glowing smiling richness," which he has momentarily forgotten as a still extant anxiety concerning relationships resurfaces. With an obsessive need to continue rationalizing repressed love and possibly even sexual attraction for her, while keeping her at a distance, and after articulating his reasons for refuting the old idea of love and of sex, which "he hated ... it was such a limitation" (223), he now denounces Ursula as being the same as all other women, "or the inverse. She too was the awful, arrogant queen of life,
as if she were a queen bee on whom all the rest depended. He saw the yellow flare in her eyes, he knew the unthinkable overweening assumption of primacy in her. She was unconscious of it herself. She was only too ready to knock her head on the ground before a man. But this was only when she was so certain of her man, that she could worship him as a woman worships her own infant, with a worship of perfect possession" (224-25).

Because Ursula herself expresses a certain desire for possessiveness in love, as well as humility, and even a certain willingness to be subservient (as she admits at the end of "Moony"), she cannot be described as being unconscious of this, nor does Birkin in fact "know" or "see" any overt evidence to justify such a statement. What he has observed elsewhere is evidence of her independence and, from her criticism of society and of the impractical or fanciful aspects of his ideology, evidence of a certain acumen as well. He has interpreted these traits, whether intentionally or inadvertently, as possessiveness, a lack of sympathy, and further proof, therefore, that she will indeed "go to the whole lengths of heaven or hell" to realize her goals. And yet in his more confident moments, Birkin himself is also capable of such abandon and strength of conviction, although those moments tend to be overshadowed by lengthier and more recurrent periods of intense frustration, alienation and self-loathing, during which, like Hermione and Gerald, he succumbs to anger, often blaming others for what
he recognizes as his own shortcomings. His denunciation of Ursula just cited is a good example of this; in it he has turned his reluctance to commit himself into a different reason for remaining at a distance from her: he must avoid her penchant for loving a man with the "worship of perfect possession." Such invective seems, however, to occur at times when he is more vulnerable than usual; the abhorrence of conventional love, sex and women, for example, takes place as he "lay sick and unmoved, in pure opposition to everything," knowing "how near to breaking was the vessel that held his life" (223). And afterwards, we are told: "So Birkin meditated whilst he was ill. He liked sometimes to be ill enough to take to his bed. For then he got better very quickly, and things came to him clear and sure" (225-26).

Ursula, frankness notwithstanding, is experiencing an ambivalence corresponding to Birkin's feelings about life, and about herself. In an earlier scene she finds herself "deeply and passionately in love with Birkin," but at other times, restrained by her own doubts, by his adamant resistance to her offer of love, by his contradictions and inconsistencies, she feels incapable of anything which might persuade him to respond to her love and in doing so dispel those doubts. Nevertheless she does persist, suffering his abuse, his abstruse rhetoric, his quasi-misanthropy, in part because she is attracted to him sexually. From the beginn-
ing of their relationship, in fact, she has responded to "a great physical attractiveness in him—a curious hidden richness, that came through his thinness and his pallor, like another voice, conveying another knowledge of him" (48). As upset, or critical as she is at times with him, she also likes Birkin, respects him as an intelligent, sensitive individual, perhaps, too, recognizing in him something of her own frustrations and anxiety. She appreciates his spontaneity, she loves him, and she is sometimes optimistically convinced he will eventually realize he loves her also. And in spite of himself, Birkin does gradually begin to admit to that love, while still hoping, however, to avoid the "meeting and mingling" he fears. And yet even after they admit to being sexually attracted to each other, and become more emotionally compatible, they remain for a considerable time in conflict philosophically, Ursula believing that "'love is freedom’" (169), and as such greater than the individual (299), Birkin determined, or so Ursula believes, to prove the opposite, that the individual is "more than love, or than any relationship" (299) and love, as he has himself described it, at best "'a freedom together, if you like’" (169). By that, he has earlier explained, he means a bond deriving from the acknowledgment between two individuals of the necessity and sanctity of each one's right to preserve "'a naked kind of isolation, an isolated me, that does not meet and mingle, and never can’" (162).
While Birkin's alienation is undoubtedly the most obvious, the two are compatible in other ways as well, for Ursula is hardly less alienated. Desiring love, passion, companionship, a meaningful life, she is at the same time insecure, seeing other people and society generally, for example, as potential obstacles to her quest for autonomy, and prepared if necessary, in opposition to that danger, to be "hard and indifferent, isolated in herself." At her most insecure, she views the world as "lapsing into a grey wish-wash of nothingness," herself as having "no contact and no connexion anywhere. She despised and detested the whole show. From the bottom of her heart, from the bottom of her soul, she despised and detested people, adult people. She loved only children and animals: children she loved passionately, but coldly. They made her want to hug them, to protect them, to give them life. But this very love, based on pity and despair, was only a bondage and a pain to her. She loved best of all the animals, that were single and unsocial as she herself was." At this point that is her conception of her real self. Her other self, the social facade, is "pleasant, and flattering, almost subservient," a mask behind which lies "her contemptuous mockery of the human being in himself, or herself. She had a profound grudge against the human being. That which the word 'human' stood for was despicable and repugnant to her" (275).

Granted, the preceding occurs just after Birkin has
departed for the south of France and "Ursula, left alone, felt as if everything were lapsing out" (275). And yet this despair is related as well to an earlier sense Ursula has experienced, of feeling overwhelmed by the prospect of a repetitive and therefore meaningless future, or death. "She knew all she had to know, she had experienced all she had to experience, she was fulfilled in a kind of bitter ripeness." All she can look forward to is a "life of barren routine, without inner meaning, without any real significance. How sordid life was, how it was a terrible shame to the soul, to live now! How much cleaner and more dignified to be dead! One could not bear any more of this shame of sordid routine and mechanical nullity. One might come to fruit in death. She had had enough. For where was life to be found? No flowers grow upon busy machinery, there is no sky to a routine, there is no space to a rotary motion. And all life was a rotary motion, mechanized, cut off from reality. There was nothing to look for from life—it was the same in all countries and all peoples. The only window was death ... 'Then let it end,' she said to herself. It was a decision. It was not a question of taking one's life—she would never kill herself, that was repulsive and violent. It was a question of **knowing** the next step. And the next step led into the space of death. Did it?—or was there—?" (215-16).

Ursula's sense of hopelessness, of meaninglessness, is
similar to Gerald's, in that like him, and unlike Birkin, she has formulated no course of action intended to extricate her from this despair. It is significant, however, that Gerald, inextricably a part of society, of the materialist world, is convinced he "would not die. He knew that. He would go on living" even though "the meaning would have collapsed out of him, his divine reason would be gone" (261). Ursula, on the other hand, sometimes sees death as a triumph over repugnant materialist society. "The sea they turned into a murderous alley [a reference to the war] and a soiled road of commerce, disputed like the dirty land of a city every inch of it. The air they claimed too, shared it up, parcelled it out to certain owners ... But the great, dark, illimitable kingdom of death, there humanity was put to scorn. So much they could do upon earth, the multifarious little gods that they were. But the kingdom of death put them all to scorn, they dwindled into their true vulgar silliness in face of it.

"How beautiful, how grand and perfect death was, how good to look forward to. There one would wash off all the lies and ignominy and dirt that had been put upon one here, a perfect bath of cleanness and glad refreshment, and go unknown, unquestioned, unabased ... Whatever life might be, it could not take away death, the inhuman transcendent death ... In death we shall not be human, and we shall not know" (216). She also describes death as "a great consummation, a consummating experience ... a development from life" (214).
I refer to Ursula's reflections at such length because they soon become associated with another, and a more complex, basis for her and Birkin's mutual attraction. Although apparently not derived from any compliance with Birkin's ideology, nor from anything previously known about her—in *The Rainbow* she believed that industrial society "held all matter, living or dead, in its service," and that the solution therefore was not death, but "the smashing of the great machine" (R, 350)—Ursula's appreciation of death is not unlike Birkin's. He would certainly agree, for example, that it can be a "consummating experience," a release from meaningless repetition, escape from materialist society and from the human, the personal, most importantly the "bitterness of knowledge" to a state of consciousness that is inhuman, impersonal, instinctive: in her words, "the pure inhuman otherness of death" (217). Although Ursula is thinking of actual death here, it is not necessarily a literal contemplation of suicide, for just after a previous, hesitant speculation that "the next step led into the space of death. Did it?—or was there—?" she asks herself: "'Does the body correspond so immediately with the spirit?'' (215).

At that moment, in a "kind of spiritual trance" (215), she understands, "with the clarity of ultimate knowledge, that the body is only one of the manifestations of the spirit, the transmutation of the integral spirit is the
transmutation of the physical body as well. Unless I set my will, unless I absolve myself from the rhythm of life, fix myself and remain static, cut off from living, absolved within my own will. But better die than live mechanically a life that is a repetition of repetitions" (215-16). In other words, static, repetitive, materialistic life, a life characterized by egoistic will and possessiveness such as describes Hermione, is already death, and the other, the "moving on with the invisible," the transmutation of body and spirit, is rebirth of the kind Birkin has described a few pages earlier, when he explained that he wanted "\"love that is like sleep, like being born again, vulnerable as a baby that just comes into the world,\"" love, he continues, "\"that is like death--I do want to die from this life--and yet it is more like life itself. One is delivered over like a naked infant from the womb, all the old defences, and the old body gone, and new air around one, that has never been breathed before\"" (208). Although Ursula has not yet fully considered this implication--she has listened "half attentive, half avoiding what he said" (208) when he broached the subject--it is clear, from the hesitancy and the suggestion of a possible alternative which follows her assertion as to the nature of "the next step," that she will eventually accept Birkin's notion of rebirth, of figurative, that is, rather than literal death.

That acceptance, however, will not be facile, given the extent to which Birkin continues to frustrate her. In a
subsequent meeting with him, in fact, those feelings develop into an "incomprehensible and irrational" but intense and for the time being unequivocal hatred of the man. "She did not know why she hated him, her hate was quite abstract. She only realized with a shock that stunned her, that she was overcome by this pure transportation. He was the enemy, fine as a diamond, and as hard and jewel-like, the quintessence of all that was inimical ... She saw him as a clear stroke of uttermost contradiction, a strange gem-like being whose existence defined her own non-existence" (222). I would suggest that the source of this hatred is not Birkin, although he is involved, but Ursula's own ambivalence. She loves a man whose ideology at this moment fundamentally contradicts her own, and more exasperating still, she loves a man who disavows love. To acquiesce, however, in order that their relationship be viable, would be to deny herself, or define "her own non-existence," and undermine not only her love for him but what she discerns as his repressed love for her. What is inimical, therefore, in spite of an understandable reticence, is her honest conversion to that ideology: honest in the sense of being based upon conviction rather than acquiescence.

As Lawrence had earlier implied, in a letter to Edward Garnett (5 June, 1914), an individual truly concerned with personal development must make this transition, in his words, from "diamond" to "coal": that is, from feeling,
which "presumes an ego to feel with," to being, the acceptance of "some greater, inhuman will." This, Lawrence explained, is the matamorphosis from "the old stable ego" to "another ego, according to whose action the individual is unrecognizable, and passes through, as it were, allotropic states which it needs a deeper sense than any we've been used to exercise, to discover are states of the same single radically unchanged element." In these terms Birkin is "fine as a diamond," and as such a "clear stroke of contradiction" because in spite of efforts to eradicate such feelings, he too loves, and is therefore still egotistical. Ironically, he is suspended between theory and contradictory emotions and Ursula, recognizing that he is resolutely persuaded by the former, will shift to a complete faith in it, bringing him the remainder of the way to conviction as she does so.

Presently, however, although depressed by a future likely to be devoid of opportunity unless she does change, and increasingly appreciative of Birkin's proposal, Ursula still feels, in the face of this transcendence to the unknown, egotistically, emotionally protective of the self she has known. From that reticence Birkin, not she, is perceived "as if he were a beam of essential enmity, a beam of light that did not only destroy her, but denied her altogether, revoked her whole world" (222). Her "hatred of the man," then, is really only a transference of feeling to the individual who espouses a doctrine of rebirth both
logically irrefutable and emotionally frightening, who first made her aware of such a possibility, and who can therefore be held responsible for her doubts, her fears, her ambivalence. That is one reason; another has to do with the fact that Birkin is himself ambivalent, and equivocal, articulating an alternative to meaninglessness, to "death-in-life," while clearly repressing feelings antithetical to that rhetoric. Because of this, Ursula is also confused and uncertain as to whether she can trust him. "'He says,'" she tells Hermione, "'he wants me to accept him non-emotionally, and finally--I really don't know what he means. He says he wants the demon part of himself to be mated--physically--not the human being. You see, he says one thing one day, and another the next--and he always contradicts himself--'

"'And,'" Hermione adds, "'always thinks about himself, and his own dissatisfaction,'... 'Yes,' cried Ursula. 'As if there was no one but himself concerned. That makes it so impossible ... He insists on my accepting God knows what in him ... He wants me to accept him as--as an absolute--But it seems to me he doesn't want to give anything. He doesn't want real warm intimacy--he won't have it--he rejects it. He won't let me think, really, and he won't let me feel--he hates feelings ... He wants me to sink myself ... not to have any being of my own,'" which is as frightening for Ursula as it is for Birkin. And yet she is ambivalent at this point, about Hermione, and about Birkin. Perhaps he
does not really want her to be subservient, and in some way does want her to "take something from him, to give herself up so much that she could take the last realities of him, the last facts, the last physical facts, physical and un-bearable." While we cannot be certain whether the reference to physical—and by that Ursula presumably includes the sexual—relations is Birkin's or her own, what does concern her is this: if she were to commit herself so fully, "would he acknowledge her? Would he be able to acknowledge her through everything, or would he use her as his instrument, use her for his own private satisfaction, not admitting her? That was what the other men had done. They had wanted their own show, and they would not admit her, they turned all she was into nothingness" (330-31).

For Ursula, as for us, the answers are not all obvious. While both she and Birkin fear the same threat of subjugation or even lack of recognition and respect, neither communicates this to the other. All Ursula knows of Birkin is what she perceives, suspects, and is able to discern beneath his rhetoric. Is he as misogynistic as he at times appears to be; is he indifferent to her, or only introverted, isolated from his own desires which, if he is the sensitive man he seems to be, are compatible with her own; and if the latter, is it only because he lacks the courage and perhaps even the self-awareness to confront them? Why, Ursula eventually asks him, "'must you force people to agree with you? Why can't you be single by yourself, as you are always
The question of singleness or wholeness is a particularly relevant one, because in Ursula herself there still exists that division between intellect and passion which characterized her in *The Rainbow* and which she attempted unsuccessfully to resolve with Skrebensky. Having failed twice with that man, and once with Maggie's brother, to find the partner necessary to achieve a harmonious relationship because of their insensitivity, and now uncertain enough about Birkin's idealism, which seems to disguise a certain male arrogance, that she chooses temporarily not to see him, Ursula feels "as if everything were lapsing out. There seemed to be no hope in the world," only "nothingness. She was hard and indifferent, isolated in herself" (275). As she did following her contemplation of death, when she characterized as ignominious a "life of barren routine, without inner meaning ... this shame of sordid and mechanical nullity" (216), she again externalizes frustration. This time she blames humanity, and not without some justification for her and Birkin's alienation is at least exacerbated by, if not a direct consequence of, less than satisfying social and therefore personal experience, which in turn for Ursula causes further dissatisfaction and an intensification of her alienation. Unlike Rupert, however, who at least during his calmer moments is governed by an idealism which, plausible or not, nevertheless occasionally
gives him hope of an improved future and direction, Ursula, not yet convinced of Birkin's ideology, nor his faith in it, is often reduced to only despair and frustration, knowing what she wants but having no idea as to how that desire might be fulfilled.

All she feels capable of is "contemptuous, resistant indifference ... she had no contact and no connexion anywhere. She despised and detested the whole show. From the bottom of her heart, from the bottom of her soul, she despised and detested people." Ironically, those feelings are becoming so intense and pervasive that increasingly "her heart was closed in this hidden, unconscious strain of contemptuous ridicule. She thought she loved, she thought she was full of love. This was her idea of herself. But the strange brightness of her presence, a marvellous radiance of intrinsic vitality, was a luminousness of supreme repudiation, nothing but repudiation" (275-76). Her final statement is of course not completely true, although it does suggest how frustrated ambition can be converted into a bitterness which eventually displaces the original goal, or feeling. By "not completely true" I mean that Ursula has not repudiated her "terrible desire for pure love," and is still capable of appreciating, moreover, that a "state of constant unfailing repudiation, was a strain, a suffering also" (276), and that one kind of suffering is enough. Like Birkin, then, she is not really misanthropic but in both of them the expression of such feelings indi-
cates the extent of their alienation, their feelings of impotency, and their sensitivity.

Having asked why, in spite of her doubts, her ambivalent feelings towards, and sometimes even her apparent hatred of Birkin, Ursula chooses to continue the relationship, I have suggested that the decision is based partly upon sexual attraction, and attempted also to explain the animosity as being only incidentally personal, in that it is largely caused and exacerbated by social conditions. A third reason is this terrible isolation and despair. Birkin alleviates such feelings through his vision of unison in separateness which, while in effect alienating, in theory is meant to contend with much of his anxiety and insecurity. Ursula too, as I earlier intimated, will accept at least a variation of that substitute for the degenerative aversion of humanity, the angst of loneliness and the incapability in isolation of experiencing the kind of relationship she has formerly and perhaps romantically imagined. Humanity will not change from her painful repudiation of it, so "why need she trouble, why repudiate any further? ... The knowledge of this reached a finality, a finishing in her. And the finality released her ... She was free of it all, she could seek a new union elsewhere" (276).

Of course she must return to Birkin, and resist criticizing his idea of exile and star equilibrium. But that is no longer so difficult; indeed, the idea now seems prefer-
able to conventional social life, and in the end she will proceed even further than Birkin, who will always wish that they live, not the two of them alone, but with "'some few other people'" (409). As a response to her present feelings towards society, Ursula is beginning to believe that for her the "more one could find a pure loneliness, with no taint of people, the better one felt. She was in reality terrified, horrified in her apprehension of people" (276). When Birkin admits to a similar feeling—"'I looked at England,'" he says, "'and thought I'd done with it'" (280)—Ursula decides that she too is "'done with it all'" (281). There remains, then, only the problem of compromise, of the two agreeing upon a common solution to their problems, satisfactory to both, for while they share an abhorrence of society, personally Ursula cannot accept Birkin's egocentricity. "'I want you to give me—to give your spirit to me,'" he says. "'But how can I,'" she replies, "'you don't love me! You only want your own ends. You don't want to serve me, and yet you want me to serve you. It is so one-sided!'" (281).

What Ursula fails to recognize is that Birkin is terrified of the risk to personal integrity inherent in conventional relationships, a hazard he has observed firsthand with Hermione. He cannot be certain that Ursula does not pose a similar threat. "'I want you to drop your assertive will,'" he tells her, "'your frightened apprehensive self-insistence, that is what I want. I want you to trust yourself so implicitly that you can let yourself go.'"
"'Let myself go!' she re-echoed in mockery. 'I can let myself go easily enough. It is you who can't let yourself go, it is you who hang on to yourself as if it were your only treasure. You—you are the Sunday school teacher—You—you preacher.'

"The amount of truth that was in this made him stiff... 'I know,' he said. 'While ever either of us insists to the other, we are all wrong. But there we are, the accord doesn't come'" (283). More to the point, both of them are in a way correct, for neither can let go, neither is able as a result to trust the other, both tend not to communicate, perhaps from this lack of trust, all of their feelings and anxieties concerning the other, and society generally, and both are somewhat mistrustful of themselves as well. From that apprehension both tend to be self-protective, unaware of the other's similar state of consciousness. And yet each of them is beginning to become aware of the other, and in the ensuring truce they are able to achieve a certain mutual sympathy.

The compromise, reached because they both are able to change, is nevertheless, I would suggest, more on Birkin's part. Ursula has always wanted only to love and to be loved by a man she feels she can abandon herself to and, by implication, she can trust. She has remained reticent with Birkin because of what has seemed to be his arrogant insistence upon male dominance (revealed in his defense of Mino...
the cat), and certainly his belief in the sanctity of the individual and "this mutual unison in separateness" (299) she is so unsure of at the end of "Moony." Birkin, on the other hand, is desperately seeking an alternative, a middle road between the extremes of contemporary sensibility, both of which he finds unsatisfactory: exclusively sensual fulfillment and indomitablety of will. Rejecting the "purely unspiritual knowledge" of primitive culture and the "ice-destructive knowledge" of Western rationalism, frightened and tired, Birkin begins to question even his own ideology. Still mistrustful of love, yet incapable of maintaining a completely isolationist position, and therefore desiring love of some kind, he expands his concept of unison in separateness so as to include the possibility of occasionally yielding to another will, and the implicit admission, therefore, of a certain degree of responsibility or obligation to the relationship. It is a delusive compromise, however, and one even more ambiguous than that of which Ursula has earlier accused him (167). Nor is it destined to succeed, for Birkin remains convinced, even after the scene just referred to, that ultimately "the way of freedom" involves "the individual soul taking precedence over love and desire for union, stronger than any pangs of emotion, a lovely state of free proud singleness, which accepted the obligation of the permanent connexion with others, and with the other, submits to the yoke and leash of love, but never forfeits its own proud individual singleness, even while it
loves and yields" (287). (It is to be noted that the obli-
gation is with "others"; in that way Birkin prepares to
include Gerald).

Birkin is no longer able to repress his need for love,
even his own sexual desire, nor repudiate the veracity of
what Ursula says about love, especially that it "includes
everything" (169). Overcoming reticence, he discovers as he
embraces her "such peace and heavenly freedom, just to fold
her and kiss her gently, and not to have any thoughts or
desires or any will, just to be still with her, to be per-
fectly still and together, in a peace that was not sleep,
but content in bliss. To be content in bliss, without
desire or insistence anywhere, this was heaven: to be to-
gether in happy stillness" (284). No longer thinking of
Ursula as a threat, but rather as "marvellously gentle and
sensitive ... and delicate" (287), Birkin is for the moment
prepared to qualify his earlier rejection of sex and
marriage. It is in fact Ursula who on the following day
rejects the latter, feeling after having done so "as if
escaped from some danger" (295). While she is willing to
concede to certain of his demands if he loves her "absolute-
ly, with complete self-abandon," she realizes, even without
knowledge of his concessions to his own ideology, that "he
would never abandon himself finally to her. He did not
believe in final self-abandonment. He said it openly. It
was his challenge. She was prepared to fight him for it.

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For she believed in an absolute surrender to love. She believed that love far surpassed the individual. He said the individual was more than love, or than any relationship ... She believed that love was everything. Man must render himself up to her. He must be quaffed to the dregs by her. Let him be her man utterly, and she in return would be his humble slave--whether she wanted it or not" (299).

At this point it becomes possible to believe that both Ursula and Birkin are inclined to insist upon their principles (and in doing so they are in danger of exaggerating them). In that sense what I am calling a compromise is not as forthright as it might appear to be. It is impossible, for example, given the nature of Lawrence's characterization, particularly of women, to foresee Ursula becoming a humble slave to any man. Nor does it seem likely that she would not accept Birkin's belief that, when individuals are consumed by a relationship, the relationship must fail because it has no foundation, the persons involved having become subservient to an ecstasy that is at best intermittent. Love should not involve surrender (abandonment) nor, I should think, insularity of self and it should also surpass the individual for otherwise, and both Ursula and Birkin fear this, the relationship could well become a battle of wills, each capable, in the effort to merely sustain individual identity, of exceeding that self-concern and overwhelming the other. This is not to suggest a failure of characterization, for what I am pointing out as
inherent pitfalls Lawrence himself clearly recognized, as seen in his devastating portrayal of Hermione and Birkin's relationship, and to a certain extent Gerald and Gudrun's as well. My concern here is whether Ursula and Birkin clearly and fully comprehend their own situation, a concern surfacing in light of a complex array of emotions and feelings of estrangement which would understandably mitigate against such awareness.

Complicating this state of affairs even further, and undermining much of what Birkin is apparently feeling, particularly in terms of an ostensible change of ideology, is his relationship with Gerald. It is not simply a matter of Birkin reacting to Ursula's rejection of his marriage proposal, for he has broached the subject of male relationships long before that occurs. Rather, it would seem to involve his ongoing search for a source of relief from alienation which is not itself alienating, a problem whose conceptualized solution is difficult to act upon, if comparatively simple to formulate. As early as the chapter following his dubious concessions ("Gladiatorial"), Birkin is already having problems with concepts such as singleness, and the acceptance of permanent connections with others, particularly with the other: Ursula. He may be more self-critical, but he is not much less abstract, idealistic or ambivalent. It is possible that this is because he is motivated not by an idea--the possibility of this he admits to himself--but
by a "profound yearning" and again not a yearning for "further sensual experience—something deeper, darker, than ordinary life could give" (285), but for a life expressed in terms of himself above all else, a kind of monastic and "paradisal entry into pure, single being, the individual soul taking precedence over love and desire for union" (287) both sensual and social.

If that is true, then two implications arise from it: the first is that Birkin's declaration of love for Ursula at the end of "Mino" is implicitly intended as well to provide in the ensuing relationship evidence of self-supremacy, a suggestion supported by his defense of Mino's behaviour towards the female cat. Ursula expresses her belief then that Birkin himself wants as a partner someone he can coerce. "'You want a satellite,'" she cries, "'Mars and his satellite'" (167). It is an opinion she later repeats as a reason for rejecting his marriage proposal, in response to what she sees as a conspiracy between Birkin and her father to arrange the marriage without involving her. "'You do this off your own bat,'" she says, "'it has nothing to do with me. Why do you both want to bully me?'" (294). Although there are other reasons, such as self-doubt, for Ursula's rejection of Birkin at this point, her suspicion of his motives is certainly a significant one. As Birkin leaves at the end of the preceding scene, she watches him "going up the road. He went in such a blithe drift of rage that her mind wondered over him. He was ridiculous, but she
was afraid of him. She was as if escaped from some danger" (295).

The second implication of Birkin’s "profound yearning" is that he wants to experience the unknown, for to him if the known is meaningless, then the unknown must contain (or will hopefully contain) meaning. But in thinking that, he is searching for knowledge, again like Hermione, in a very self-centred and self-conscious way. As to ever knowing the unknown, that "something deeper, darker than ordinary life could give," Lawrence in *Twilight in Italy* discusses at one point his realization that the stars are other worlds, part of a macrocosm which "absorbs me," he wrote. "But," he adds, "the macrocosm is not me. It is something which I, the microcosm, am not ... something which is unknown to me and which nevertheless exists. I am finite, and my understanding has limits. The universe is bigger than I shall ever see, in mind or spirit. There is that which is not me." Birkin, on the other hand, seems to assume that the universe is not bigger than he could possibly see, in mind or spirit. In fact he believes that the macrocosm "is only held together by the mystic conjunction, the ultimate unison between people--a bond" (169), and that he can therefore conceivably achieve with Ursula "an equilibrium, a pure balance of two single beings:--as the stars balance each other" (164). That conjunction, he adds, is transcendent, irrevocable and pure. In the pursuit of such visions,
however, Birkin intends to forsake most of humanity, community, even responsibility, thereby placing himself in an isolated state within which he can be expected not to succeed, and therefore to be disappointed and ultimately even more alienated than he now is. But as we know, he will not blame himself, nor his visions, when he does fail.

At the same time that Birkin demands knowledge, he fails to see that the source of self-knowledge resides in the self, not in that "otherness" which, significantly, he describes as being "beyond responsibility ... outside the pale," where one need be "responsible for nothing, asked for nothing, giving nothing, only each taking according to the primal desire" (163). He wishes to take from rather than yield to the unknown, and in doing so, thinks the prerequisite to such possession is a union of male and female, and because that, he intuits, cannot alone suffice, a second union of male and male, rather than what I would see as the need primarily for an internal reconciliation of spirit and senses (such as Lawrence describes in "Study of Thomas Hardy") followed by a more conventional relationship. He seeks self-knowledge, that is, or meaningful identity, outside himself, and as we see in "Gladiatorial," turns as he does so, not to Ursula but Gerald. It is as if he is convinced, in spite of his doctrinal aspirations to the contrary, that only passion, and not real intimacy, "blood-intimacy," can be achieved with Ursula. Of course that becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, in that remaining
separate will not, cannot induce anything more profound than passion, even if the relationship extends beyond, or even avoids sexuality and becomes mystical. At that point it would only achieve ecstasy, or metaphysical passion. It seems, then, that the desire to remain isolate is intellectual, self-conscious and therefore mediates against blood-intimacy, even with Gerald. This is because, the desire still remaining "all in his head," Birkin's ability to succumb to feelings remains frustrated by yet another barrier: a literal "selfishness."

Birkin originally insists to Ursula that what he wants "isn't selfish at all. Because I don't know what I want of you. I deliver myself over to the unknown, in coming to you. I am without reserves or defences, stripped entirely, into the unknown. Only there needs to be a pledge between us, that we will both cast off everything, cast off ourselves even, and cease to be, so that that which is perfectly ourselves can take place in us'" (163). That appears to be a call to faith, including the hope that beyond conscious self-awareness there exists a more developed or refined state of existence, based upon intuition: a response to the unconscious. However, the necessity is for something to happen "in us"—in other words, in himself—an assertion developed during the same conversation when Birkin defends Mino the cat as being superior in knowledge and aspiration to the "fluffy and promiscuous" female. The former is
justified in his actions for wanting "'superfine stability ... Keep your male dignity,'" Birkin urges, "'and your higher understanding'" (166-67).

Later Birkin again posits a variation of his ideology, in contrast to intuitiveness and this time even more intellectual, more self-conscious, therefore more internally divisive as well as anti-social. The "way to freedom," he decides, involves "a lovely state of free proud singleness ... stronger than any pangs of emotion," a state which ostensibly "accepted the obligation of the permanent connexion with others, and with the other, submits to the yoke and leash of love, but never forfeits its own proud individual singleness, even while it loves and yields" (287). The intention to remain undeniably if subtly in control, while appearing to compromise, recalls an earlier reference to *Wille zur Macht* (Will to Power). Birkin agrees with Ursula that Nietzsche's notion is base, but then admits to a similar conviction: a belief in *volonté de pouvoir*, or "will to ability" most noticeably manifested in the wrestling scene with Gerald. What Birkin does not appreciate, however, although his efforts to form a second relationship, with Gerald, perhaps indicates an intuitive understanding of this, is that from infancy our sense of identity, both social and psychological, is dependent to a significant extent upon relationships. The denial of relationships, therefore--the refutation of parents, family, friends, community--constitutes to a certain extent a denial of self,
and most assuredly of self-development. Conversely, and this Birkin does comprehend, to have a sense of social identity one must possess a sense of one's personal, psychological self. Furthermore, to expect meaningful relationships, one must perceive oneself as having meaning, autonomy, and perhaps most importantly, the feeling that one is in control of or able to control one's destiny. It would seem, therefore (and here, as I explained earlier, I disagree with the novel), that what should be sought is autonomy in unison: a relationship in which each individual is self-assured and trusting enough that the fear of subservience need not exist. But Birkin is specific and adamant: he aspires to separateness, and to unison, such as it will be, only with Ursula and Gerald. Separateness, then, can with these two exceptions be interpreted as effective isolation: isolation, moreover, from the collective humanity he purportedly despises. Even if that feeling is largely the effect of frustration he nevertheless believes it to a considerable extent; his, therefore, is a rejection of most others—that is, of community as a whole—even more scathing and complete than Ursula's, and is in the end, like Ursula's, a betrayal of both her and himself, for they are part of humanity.

Of course, Birkin has formulated within his ideology an alternative to this as well. If, as he believes, European society is proceeding towards the industrial, intellectual
equivalent of what befell primitive culture, he and those he chooses to take with him will escape both the primitive past and the industrial future, and in doing so will no longer be a part of a doomed humanity. But beyond temporary exile to Austria and then Italy Birkin offers no concrete description of how he intends to accomplish such an ideal, no itinerary, not even the possibility of an island commune, a Rananim or Zauberland. Given so much denial, then, and so few suggestions, Birkin’s desire for isolation is not only alienating but actually mediates against self-discovery, and following from that, against the likelihood of a successful relationship with Ursula. In rejecting, with no sense of replacement, both society and his own social self he is repudiating the fragile dialectic with his psychological self necessary for the kind of life based on some interaction with others, no matter how limited, which he so clearly seeks. And yet, in spite of dismissing oppressive, self-denying society, I think that what Birkin fears even more than humanity is absolute isolation, and in that sense, although the means of sustaining it have not been considered, what he wants with Ursula and "'some few other people'" (409) is a kind of microcosm of society.

Birkin cannot, or will not, envision a life only with Ursula—his fear of subjugation, his lack of responsibility and commitment, his very ideology mediate against that—nor does he seem capable of engaging in casual acquaintanceships, so, to solve all these problems—fear of others, fear
of a concentrated, exclusive relationship with one other, fear of isolation—he turns to Gerald, hoping that if the two of them can "swear to stand by each other—be true to each other—ultimately—infallibly—given to each other, organically—without possibility of taking back," and yet at the same time establishing that as an "impersonal union that leaves one free" (232), he will have achieved an adequate safeguard against the threat of both subjugation and loneliness.

Birkin, who, we recall, is the one to propose to Ursula, does admit that relationships have certain advantages, but not "marriage in the old sense ... the world all in couples, each couple in its own little house, watching its own little interests, and stewing in its own little privacy ... that's where all the tightness and meanness and insufficiency comes in ... One should avoid this home instinct," he concludes (397). What Birkin proposes, however, is not the antithesis to privacy or coupling nor, in its exclusivity, necessarily a desire for a limited community, but the "additional perfect relationship between man and man—additional to marriage" (398). It is necessary, he adds, "to get rid of the exclusiveness of married love. And you've got to admit the unadmitted love of man for man. It makes for a greater freedom for everybody, a greater power of individuality both in men and women."

Freedom, I would suggest—specifically, the freedom of
choice—provides the basis of this proposal, although it is clear that Birkin also seeks to diversify, as it were, not out of friendship or male camaraderie, for he does aspire to a relationship far more complex than that, but in order to establish a rapport with Gerald intended to gratify in ways he feels his relationship with Ursula does not. But if not, why not? she herself asks him (409, 541). Why would a relationship with Ursula alone be inadequate or unsatisfactory? The answer is complicated.

As he implies in "Moony," Birkin wants both satiation of sexual desire and his independence. The two seem incompatible, however, and might even constitute a logical contradiction, in that sexuality, or more specifically, and I will discuss the implications of this shortly, sexual intercourse, the "mingling and merging" of two identities, is by definition a loss of independence. And yet as loneliness and desire intensify, Birkin's recognition of the lack of agreement between sexuality and ideology leads to an awareness of the necessity to reconcile the two, which he eventually does through compromise, by condescending to a qualified acceptance of what Ursula wants from a relationship. Before then, however, it would seem that he turns to Gerald almost as an experiment. If, in a relationship with his friend, he can actually achieve that "palpable body of darkness" he has earlier described as his goal (47), he will have succeeded in his quest for sensual or "blood" knowledge in a way that is physically intimate and yet avoids sexual
intercourse. It will be a test—of strength, will, and ideology—the success of which will allow him to attempt the same thing with Ursula, granting her the love she seeks while maintaining his ideals. That will be achieved by convincing her that love can be as comprehensive and fulfilling as she wants it to be even when that love is of a different variety than the "old way": a love consummated by means of a tactile (palpable) sexuality that achieves a mystical, transcendent ecstasy.

IV

So the experiment begins. Being "mentally, spiritually intimate," Birkin informs Gerald, it is only natural that "we should be more or less physically intimate too—it is more whole" (307). That intimacy between the two men takes the form of a wrestling match, during which Birkin "impinged invisibly upon the other man, scarcely seeming to touch him, like a garment, and then suddenly piercing in a tense fine grip that seemed to penetrate into the very quick of Gerald's being" (304). It would seem improbable that the penetration is anything more than, as is suggested, figurative, for they interrupt their act to analytically discuss "methods," and practise "grips and throws," but the interplay is, from the description of what follows, nevertheless explicitly sexual. The two "became accustomed to each other, to each other's rhythm, they got a kind of mutual physical understanding. And then again they had a real
struggle," during which Birkin "seemed to penetrate into Gerald's more solid, more diffuse bulk, to interfuse his body through the body of the other, as if to bring it subtly into subjection, always seizing with some rapid necromantic foreknowledge every motion of the other flesh ... It was as if Birkin's whole physical intelligence," that "'great dark knowledge you can't have in your head'" (46), "inter-penetrated into Gerald's body, as if his fine, sublimated energy entered into the flesh of the fuller man, like some potency, casting a fine net, a prison, through the muscles into the very depths of Gerald's physical being" (304-05).

As I suggested, the alliance, although sexual, leads away from intercourse to a kind of mystical ecstasy, and yet so intense that it is as if (and note the number of times that phrase "as if" is repeated) it were copulatory. It is a dual triumph for Birkin because, apparently unnoticed by Gerald until later and then, in comparison to what he has just experienced, not objected to, the match is also a battle of wills which Birkin, the physically weaker of the two, fights with what Gerald terms almost "supernatural" strength, and wins. Gerald, therefore, is no longer a threatening figure and Birkin has succeeded in being intimate and indomitable. Having achieved this, Birkin is able to appreciate Gerald's "'northern kind of beauty, like light refracted from the snow'" and his "'beautiful plastic form'" (308), a kind of synthesis of primitive sensuality and
European rigidity. No longer is Gerald "one of these strange white demons from the north, fulfilled in the destructive frost mystery" (287). As well, however, Birkin is able to appreciate the differences between himself and Gerald—they are, he realizes, "as far, perhaps, apart as man from woman, yet in another direction" (309)—which will allow him to maintain the separateness he wants. This is exactly the ideal relationship he seeks with Ursula too; in fact, immediately following the wrestling bout Birkin's "mind had reverted to Ursula. She seemed to return again into his consciousness ... gaining ascendance ... Gerald was becoming dim again, lapsing out of him" (308-09).

In spite of having gained some confidence, however, Birkin is still ambivalent about Ursula, for he fears that succumbing in any way to "the old fire of burning passion" (210) is to betray a decision to avoid that kind of feeling. On the other hand, he does not want a platonic relationship, for he does not want to be "tortured by unsatisfied desires." What he suggests, then, are two options: the first has to do with conventional sexual intercourse, which he feels should "revert to the level of the other appetites, to be regarded as a functional process, not as a fulfillment." In other words, that kind of sexuality should be for procreative purposes only. But that is not for him; what he wants—the second option—seems at times to be a detached kind of union, without passion, and certainly a union neither platonic nor what is normally thought of as sexual.
"He wanted so much to be free, not under the compulsion of any need for unification ... And he wanted to be with Ursula as free as with himself, single and clear and cool ... The merging, the clutching, the mingling of love was become madly abhorrent to him" (223-24).

The preferred union will avoid "the horrible merging, mingling self-abnegation of love," by ensuring that "the individual is primal, sex is subordinate," and thus will be a conjunction in which the man and the woman are "two pure beings ... each one free from any contamination of the other ... singling away into purity ... clear and whole as angels, the admixture of sex in the highest sense surpassed, leaving two single beings constellated together like two stars" (225). This preferred relationship begins to sound suspiciously antiseptic, sterile, in all senses of the word, and abstract, even spiritual, in the way I have earlier suggested Miriam Leivers would describe an ideal relationship: that is, one providing erotic fulfillment without genital intercourse. Leo Bersani has concluded that for the "heterosexual or genitally active man," the only way of achieving this would seem to be through "chastity, or perhaps a kind of nongenital physical intimacy. The most desirable contact," therefore, in these terms would very likely be a "peaceful touching, the nonfrictional placing of one bodily surface on another bodily surface."9

Whether or not that is true, certainly distaste,
especially from a sense of pride being lost during the
process of copulation, the "horrible merging, mingling self-
abnegation of love" (225), moves Birkin to formulate this
alternative to sex "as a fulfilment" rather than "as a
functional process" (223). There are other motives, how-
ever, for as we saw in the wrestling match with Gerald--a
union sexual yet non-copulatory and therefore not distaste-
ful--the fear of self-abnegation led him to strive for
supremacy. In that he does not want to wrestle with Ursula,
either literally or figuratively, what his "nonfrictional"
union with her offers is a way of avoiding any conflict
which would result in the possibility of failure. It is
after all a fear not of women but of failure, and therefore
of relationships, which creates such intense ambivalence,
and despair. There are moments, in fact, when he appears
ready to give up, the latest on the very eve of his
"excurse" with Ursula. He asks her, "would she drive with
him in the afternoon. She consented. But her face was
closed and unresponsive, and his heart sank ... she sat
beside him. But still her face was closed against him,
unresponsive. When she became like this, like a wall
against him, his heart contracted.

"His life now seemed so reduced that he hardly cared
any more. At moments it seemed to him that he did not care
a straw whether Ursula or Hermione or anybody else existed
or did not exist. Why bother! Why strive for a coherent,
satisfied life? Why not drift on in a series of accidents--
like a picaresque novel? Why not? Why bother about human relationships? Why take them seriously--male or female? Why form any serious connexions at all? ... And yet, still, he was damned and doomed to the old effort at serious living" (340): damned, in spite of the wish to reject humanity altogether, to experience desire, loneliness, alienation, and doomed to being human. Still fearful of relationships, however, he seeks to suppress those feelings, refusing at times even to recognize them himself. He feigns nonchalance, for example, when he gives Ursula a gift of three rings, smiling only "slightly" (343) when she expresses her gratitude: an expression, perhaps, of uncertainty or ambivalence, for "he was angry at the bottom of his soul, and indifferent," torn between wanting "her to come to him," and the conviction that there "were depths of passion when one became impersonal and indifferent, unemotional" (343).

Perhaps one reason why both Ursula and Birkin overcome reticence, mistrust, fear of being forced into subservience, and "consummate" their relationship is that they are experiencing a sense of hopelessness which makes them both indifferent, desperate, and yet willing, at a moment when those feelings weaken their defenses, to take a chance, to ignore previously preconceptualized consequences. Following Birkin's feeling of estrangement between himself and Ursula, just cited, we are told that she is also feeling more alienated. Attempting to disagree with his misanthropy, she
admits that "people were still an adventure to her—but—perhaps not as much as she tried to persuade herself. Perhaps there was something mechanical, now, in her interest. Perhaps also her interest was destructive, her analyzing was a real tearing to pieces. There was an under-space in her where she did not care for people, and their idiosyncrasies, even to destroy them. She seemed to touch for a moment this undersilence in herself," and at that moment, as if for the first time recognizing a bond with Birkin—a recognition of similar feelings of isolation and alienation—Ursula "became still, and she turned for a moment purely to Birkin" (343-44). She must still be convinced that she can trust him, and for that reason they quarrel, but this moment introduces what follows the argument.

The quarrel itself is not, as previous ones, another of their disagreements made inconclusive by a serious lack of understanding and communication. This time, despite their self-avowed indifference, they actually express some important feelings regarding their views of each other. Ursula, for example, after Birkin suggests that she is jealous of Hermione (345), insightfully, if inadvertently so, then accuses him of maintaining his relationship with the other woman because he belongs "'to that old, deathly way of living'" (345). He does still belong, in that he cannot know how, except in theory, to escape; thus he feels so hopeless (340). What precipitates the argument, however, is another example of the estrangement that does still exist
between the two. Knowing that Birkin rejects her belief in passion and the sublime quality of ideal love, Ursula has clearly misunderstood his ideology as one espousing spirituality, even though at the same time she does appreciate something of his dilemma. "'Go to your spiritual brides,'" she orders him, "'but don't come to me as well, because I'm not having any, thank you. You're not satisfied, are you? Your spiritual brides can't give you what you want, they aren't common and fleshy enough for you, are they? So you ... will marry me for daily use. But you'll keep yourself well provided with spiritual brides ...' [because] I, I'm not spiritual enough, I'm not as spiritual as that Hermione ... Then go to her, that's all I say, go to her, go'" (345).

Ursula is not so much jealous as upset by her conviction that Birkin intends to use her in order merely to satiate sexual desire, and that his attraction to Hermione, as she perceives it, is based on a "spirituality" she defines, correctly, as that woman's "bullying, her conceit, her sordid materialism" (345-46): in short, a kind of perverted intellectualism which in turn reduces her own estimation of Birkin. But Ursula, admittedly not very coherent at this point, errs in assuming that Birkin wishes to continue his relationship with a woman like Hermione, and that therefore he is attracted to that kind of consciousness. On the other hand, she does have reason to believe what she says, for it is true that Birkin's ideology, his criticism of
society, even most of his responses to her are, as she suggests, spiritual, and characterized, moreover, by a diffusive mysticism. Finally, he and Hermione do have a certain affinity in that although they disagree their discussions inevitably concern subjects of interest to both. What Ursula cannot know, of course, is that Birkin’s impending "compromise"—his attempt to give up at least part of his ideology and thus reconcile himself with Ursula—is the result of a desire to be able to relate to a woman more like her than Hermione. Ursula cannot know this because, even during a relatively consequential dispute such as this, Birkin does not explain.

More significant is Ursula’s gullibility, the result, I would suggest, of her own anxiety and loneliness. Usually an insightful woman, she has apparently failed to comprehend Hermione’s deceptiveness when that woman, sounding "calmly and sanely candid" (330), sympathetic and to Ursula obviously knowledgeable, has earlier described Birkin as "'intensely spiritual'" yet "'frail in health and body'" and, she implies, not virile. "'Then,'" she adds, "'he is so changeable and unsure of himself—it requires the greatest patience and understanding to help him ... You would have to be prepared to suffer—dreadfully ... He is so uncertain, so unstable—he wearies, and then reacts ... That which he affirms and loves one day—a little later he turns on in a fury of destruction. He is never constant, always this awful, dreadful reaction'" (332). Not explaining that
he has done so in response specifically to herself, Hermione
describes Birkin with just enough truth to at least partial-
ly convince Ursula, who has herself observed some of these
characteristics firsthand. Ursula, I would point out, has
not really known Birkin for long, except as a school
inspector and, from what she first encountered as that
relationship developed, a rather persistent if sophistic
rhetorician as well. And unlike the older woman, she is
not prepared to be a martyr to Birkin's idiosyncrasies.

Birkin, on the other hand, having changed somewhat, can
now admit that Ursula is "in the main right. He knew he was
perverse, so spiritual on the one hand, and in some strange
way, degraded on the other" (347). That degradation, how­
ever, is not derived, he attempts to persuade Ursula, from
an attraction to Hermione's perverseness--she, he insists,
"'is my enemy--to the last breath'" (347)--but has to do
with his compromise of principles, and the nature of those
principles. "He knew that his spirituality was concomitant
of a process of depravity, a sort of pleasure in self-
destruction ... especially when it was translated spiritual­
ly" (348). While he is experiencing a considerable degree
of self-awareness here, claiming that he "gave up the old
position," that no doubt Ursula "was right" (348), Birkin is
perhaps being self-pitying as well, for his belief in the
necessity of literally disengaging himself, dissociating
himself from all that is wrong with humanity in order to

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achieve rebirth may be idealistic and implausible, but it is hardly a "process of depravity, a sort of pleasure in self-destruction" (348). He staunchly defends his ideology, however, as at least preferable to what either Ursula or Hermione believes in. Was not, he asks, "Ursula’s way of emotional intimacy, emotional and physical, was it not just as dangerous as Hermione’s abstract spiritual intimacy? Fusion, fusion, this horrible fusion of two beings, which every woman and most men insisted on, was it not nauseous and horrible anyhow, whether it was a fusion of the spirit or of the emotional body? Hermione saw herself as the perfect Idea, to which all men must come: and Ursula was the perfect Womb, the bath of birth, to which all men must come! And both were horrible. Why could they not remain individuals, limited by their own limits? Why this dreadful all-comprehensiveness, this hateful tyranny? Why not leave the other being free, why try to absorb, or melt, or merge? One might abandon oneself utterly to the moments, but not to any other being" (348).

Thus Birkin makes a decision. He cannot agree with Ursula, but he has changed, and will continue to change his own ideology. Having accomplished that, he feels "a darkness over his mind," not of despair but mental relaxation. "The terrible knot of consciousness that had persisted there like an obsession was broken, gone, his life was dissolved in darkness over his limbs and body. But there was a point of anxiety in his heart now. He wanted her to come back"
To achieve that, he will not accede to passion, fusion, or the tyranny of others, but he will abandon himself to the moments at hand, and to the emotions of those moments. In this, if nothing else, the argument preceding their arrival at the Saracen's Head (which has been for both him and Ursula the result of immense pressure, little of which is actually related specifically to the other person), succeeds as a kind of catharsis. Now, as Birkin, feeling vulnerable, wanting to cry, sees Ursula returning, equally purged of hostility or defensiveness, "a hot passion of tenderness for her filled his heart," and as they embrace, he experiences "peace, just simple peace ... at last. The old, detestable world of tension had passed away at last, his soul was strong and at ease" (349). Ursula notices the change, which is both welcome and uncomfortable. "His voice was so soft and final, she went very still, as if under a fate which had taken her. Yes she acquiesced—but it was accomplished without her acquiescence ... Was it all real? But his eyes were beautiful and soft and immune from stress or excitement, beautiful and smiling lightly to her, smiling with her. She hid her face on his shoulder, hiding before him, because he could see her so completely. She knew he loved her, and she was afraid, she was in a strange element, a new heaven round about her. She wished he were passionate, because in passion she was at home. But this was so still and frail, as space is more frightening than force"
Clearly Birkin is, or stands on the threshold of experiencing what he has desired for so long, and what Ursula has previously criticized and resisted. Now together they "drifted through the wild, late afternoon in a beautiful motion that was smiling and transcendent. His mind was sweetly at ease, the life flowed through him as from some new fountain, he was as if born out of the cramp of a womb ...

He drove on in a strange new wakefulness, the tension of his consciousness broken. He seemed to be conscious all over, all his body awake with a simple, glimmering awareness, as if he had just come awake, like a thing that is born, like a bird when it comes out of an egg, into a new universe" (351). This is what he has wanted, and believed possible: rebirth, a sense of consciousness not limited to the intellect or even the ego, and a consequently heightened appreciation of life. And Ursula is experiencing new sensations as well, the reality of which she can hardly believe, or articulate. "What was it all? This was no actual world, it was the dream-world of one's childhood--a great circumscribed reminiscence. The world had become unreal. She herself was a strange, transcendent reality." And Birkin, although he "seemed still so separate," she sees with new eyes "opened in her soul. She saw a strange creature from another world in him ... one of these strange creatures from the beyond, looking down at her, and seeing she was fair ... And he was smiling faintly as if there were no speech in the
world, save the silent delight of flowers in each other. Smilingly they delighted in each other’s presence, pure presence, not to be thought of, even known. But his eyes had a faintly ironical contraction" (352).

Both Ursula and Birkin, then, begin to experience sensations and emotions overwhelming in their intensity, and after they arrive at the Saracen’s Head, leave the car, and can therefore respond physically to each other as well, they begin to share those feelings. Until that moment Ursula has continued to be reserved, perhaps because of the rapidity with which Birkin has begun to respond to her in a new and even uncharacteristic manner. At first she feels him to be "still so separate" (352), and even before that she "wished he were passionate, because in passion she was at home" (350). She has not yet understood what is happening and what can be achieved; perhaps that is why Birkin, aware of this, looks at her with eyes she believes "had a faintly ironical contraction" (350). However, as soon as she moves from what I would describe as the abstract (non-physical) to the physical, and begins "tracing the back of his thighs, following some mysterious life-flow there," she discovers "something more than wonderful, more wonderful than life itself. It was the strange mystery of his life-motion, there, at the back of his thighs, down the flanks. It was a strange reality of his being, the very stuff of being," and having discovered that reality, the reification, as it were,
of what she has earlier described as "the dream-world of one's childhood" (352), she understands that this "was release at last. She had had lovers, she had known passion. But this was neither love nor passion" (353): neither, that is, the "horrible merging, mingling self-abnegation of love" Birkin has previously expressed distaste for (225), nor the passion he has tried to persuade her to move beyond in order to realize the very release she is now experiencing, a release into rather than abnegation of self, both her own and his.

Even at the Saracen's Head, however, in the parlour of a public inn, what they experience is only a preliminary to the consummation that follows in the darker solitude and tranquility of Sherwood Forest. Not all critics would agree; in fact since Leavis first discussed them, these two passages have been perhaps the most controversial in the novel, eliciting interpretations ranging from the belief that genital intercourse occurs, even in the Saracen's Head as well as in Sherwood Forest, to the completely anti-thetical conviction that in both scenes the consummation is metaphorical. Leavis himself thought that of all the faults he could find with *Women in Love*, some of the worst were in the chapter "Excurse," especially in those passages (and he quotes the one in which Birkin is sitting "still like an Egyptian Pharaoh, driving the car") where, he believed, "Lawrence betrays by an insistent and over-emphatic explicitness, running at times to something one can only
call jargon, that he is uncertain—uncertain of the value of what he offers; uncertain whether he really holds it—whether a valid communication has really been defined and conveyed in terms of his creative art." He did, however, disagree with John Middleton Murry, who in his extremely biased work, *Son of Woman*, wrote that in "Excurse" Lawrence was attempting "the reassertion of his masculinity, of which he is always dreaming," and that to the "working out of this personal argument in the imaginary consummation of Birkin and Ursula ... all else is really subsidiary in the novel."  

A later critic, on the other hand, H.M. Daleski, apparently agrees with at least part of Murry's statement (although he does not refer specifically to the other man in his discussion of this chapter). Quoting at length from the Saracen's Head scene (352-53), Daleski then wonders whether "the achieved 'purity'" described there "is a product of the experience, or whether it is antecedent to it and merely ratified by what happens," adding that "even before Ursula touches Birkin, she sees him as one of 'the sons of God': the reference to the mysterious passage in the Book of Genesis, it seems, does not only serve to assert Birkin's established independence of being but obscurely implies that his pure presence is also a matter of pure maleness, for the man who is 'no son of Adam' can be assumed to be free from any contamination of the other sex ... I do not wish to
suggest, of course," Daleski concludes, "that the experience is represented as a substitute for sexual intercourse; on the contrary, once supreme value is attached to it and not to intercourse, sex, so to speak, is put safely in its place and ceases to be a menace."

So what does happen, first at the Saracen's Head? Daleski describes it as non-phallic love, Bersani, in the passage I quoted earlier, as "nongenital physical intimacy," although I am not certain why he would describe Ursula "tracing the back of his thighs" and discovering "the strange mystery of his life-motion ... the very stuff of his being, there in the straight downflow of the thighs" (353) as nongenital. It seems clear to me that what happens at the inn is explicitly and carefully described as being not at all imaginary but very physical and sexual, and although it probably does not end in intercourse, again that is not because it is meant to be metaphorical but because they are after all in the parlour of a public inn. It seems futile, then, to continue the controversy, particularly because it tends to cloud a more important and to me relevant point, which is that what does occur at the inn is, as I have described it, a preliminary during which the conflicts that have marred Ursula and Birkin's relationship to this point, ending with the argument earlier in the chapter, are resolved, and an awareness of the potential for change and fulfillment within that relationship realized. What follows, therefore, contrary to Daleski's belief that after
having tea at the inn, Ursula and Birkin "drive off into Sherwood Forest and ... consummate their union in a more usual fashion," is directly related to what has preceded it and is, furthermore, something not at all usual, but new and exhilarating and significant for both of them.

The reason this chapter tends to be seen by some critics as being abstruse has partly to do, I think, with Lawrence's inability, or reluctance, following the censorship of The Rainbow, to be as graphic as he is later: for example, in Lady Chatterley's Lover. That in itself, however, would not seem to be much of a problem; more disconcerting, perhaps, are the words he does use, and especially those references to magic, mysticism and primitive artifacts which suggested to Leavis that Lawrence was uncertain as to the extent and quality of what Ursula and Birkin experience. In other words, do they merely engage in spiritual communion, as some of the critics I have referred to, including Leavis, imply, or is it that words like transcendent and mystic are necessary in order for Lawrence to adequately describe a relationship that has evolved beyond "the old way of love," and that cannot therefore be communicated using the old words, the old way of description? I think the latter, and I think, too, that Lawrence is not being so abstruse as it might seem, for he characteristically uses words literally, explicitly and, when they prove less than satisfactory, he becomes even more innovative, creating at
times a kind of Lawrencean supplement to the English language. Knowing that, I think words like mystery and darkness, for example, are understandable: the former used as a synonym for the unknown, the latter for sexuality, that which exists beyond the "light" of conventional, and only intellectual knowledge, as described in The Rainbow (437).

It is my belief, then, that the spiritual, mystical and other references are intended to convey the nature of Ursula's and Birkin's consummation, which they experience not only, or merely, on a physical, sexual level, and certainly not on an exclusively spiritual one, but in a much broader, more comprehensive sense. And the revelation that results, more inclusive than Birkin's idea of unison in separateness, is perhaps something even he is not wholly prepared for: an awareness of self and the other emanating from the sexual and achieved as a result of attaining "immortal potency," of knowing "what it was to be awake and potent in that other basic mind, the deepest physical mind. And from this source he had a pure and magical control, magical, mystical, a force in darkness, like electricity" (358). In other words potency, the potential to achieve primal sexuality and knowledge, is in its unfathomable profundity (according to Lawrence) by definition mystical and not capable of being articulated or expressed in any way except physically. Thus Lawrence refers to primitive Egyptian culture, in order to capture this sense of blood-consciousness, of that which exists beyond Western rational-
ism (a concept not related, therefore, to Birkin's earlier contempt for reductive primitive sensuality). Nor is this experience even capable of being understood logically (that is to say, using words), something both Ursula and Birkin realize. He finds it "difficult to speak, it was so perfect to sit in this pure living silence, subtle, full of unthink-able knowledge and unthinkable force, upheld immemorially in timeless force, like the immobile, supremely potent Egyptians, seated for ever in their living, subtle silence" (358), and she knows that this "dark, subtle reality of him" can never be "translated ...
She would have to touch him. To speak, to see, was nothing. It was a travesty to look and to comprehend the man there. Darkness and silence must fall perfectly on her, then she could know mystically, in unrevealed touch. She must lightly, mindlessly connect with him, have the knowledge which is death of knowledge, the reality of surety in not knowing" (359).

To achieve that mindless connection, she "would touch him. With perfect fine finger-tips of reality she would touch the reality of him, the suave, pure, untranslatable reality of his loins of darkness. To touch, mindlessly in darkness to come in pure touching upon the living reality of him, his suave perfect loins and thighs of darkness, this was her sustaining anticipation," as well as Birkin's: "he too waited in the magical steadfastness of suspense, for her to take this knowledge of him as he had taken it of her. He
knew her darkly, with the fullness of dark knowledge. Now she would know him, and he too would be liberated" (360). That liberation is achieved, as might be expected, through consummation although not, to recall Daleski's words, consummation "in the usual fashion." Arriving at a small clearing, Birkin turns off the car lights, the two of them "threw off their clothes, and he gathered her to him, and found her" (360) while she at the same time "had her desire of him, she touched, she received the maximum of unspeakable communication in touch, dark, subtle, positively silent, a magnificent gift and give again, a perfect acceptance and yielding, a mystery, the reality of that which can never be known, vital, sensual reality that can never be transmuted into mind content, but remains outside, living body of darkness and silence and subtlety, the mystic body of reality. She had her desire fulfilled. He had his desire fulfilled. For she was to him what he was to her, the immemorial magnificence of mystic, palpable, real otherness" (361).

What Ursula and Birkin attain--the experience of self and each other which brings them so closely and mutually together--cannot be lost; it is as immemorial as it is real, and will change the ways in which they know themselves and each other from this point on. The problem in that future, however (and here I am being speculative), might involve, not how they perceive each other, but how they contend with Western industrial society from their new perspective, which
in its attainment has proceeded beyond articulated communication to the unspeakable. Indeed, when they awake the following day, they "looked at each other and laughed, then looked away, filled with darkness and secrecy. Then they kissed and remembered the magnificence of the night. It was so magnificent, such an inheritance of a universe of dark reality, that they were afraid to seem to remember. They hid away the remembrance and the knowledge" (361). I think it perfectly understandable that they choose not to remember; perhaps in fact it is impossible to retain in memory that which cannot even be discussed, for at some point recall also requires words. But in doing so they have in some respects become isolated together in that they share a secret, as it were, which would be difficult to communicate with anyone else.

The more difficult task will be, as I suggested, to contend with a rationalist society, a difficulty Ursula and Birkin clearly appreciate when they decide instead to leave England. From their point of view (but not mine, as I will soon explain) that alternative seems the only one likely to allow them the opportunity to develop their relationship. But even so, to what extent are they likely to attain the freedom to develop in isolation, unfettered by social pressure and oppression? Or will there be problems, and obstacles, which affect their life together? And will they as a result be forced at times to compromise their vision;
is Birkin, for example, returning to his idea of unison in separateness when he expresses his continued desire to include those few other people, especially Gerald, and does Ursula resist his proposal because she has reverted to that possessiveness described on the final page of "Moony"? The potential problems these questions raise (and they are questions crucial to my understanding of what does happen to Ursula and Birkin after "Excurse," whether the problems themselves arise or not) are related, then, to the interaction and reciprocal dependency which exist between individuals and society, and to the fact that individuals in all cultures, including Western society, are an inextricable part of the community. And in some respects their very identities, as well as whatever sense of fulfillment or estrangement they experience, are in turn derived from the community. Returning to society, therefore, in terms of the latter (estrangement) means a revival to some degree of conflict, ambivalence, alienation, because to the extent that all of this is caused by social reality, it does not disappear.

For Birkin, especially, this is problematical because his idea of possible alternatives meant to eradicate personal oppression forever is more complex than Ursula's. Concerning marriage, for example: although it is Ursula who remains undecided after he takes out a marriage licence, for her the problem of marriage is a personal one. Birkin, on the other hand, questions the institution itself, attempting
to articulate its faults, redefine its intended purpose as he understands it, and propose a new kind of marriage. As he explains to Gerald, he is "not interested in legal marriage, one way or the other. It's a mere question of convenience" (396). The broader issue for him, and this is a relatively unchanged part of his ideology, is how marriage is perceived. "I tell you," he went on, "the same as I've said before, marriage in the old sense seems to me repulsive. Egoisme a deux is nothing to it. It's a sort of tacit hunting in couples: the world all in couples, each couple in its own little house, watching its own little interests, and stewing in its own little privacy--it's the most repulsive thing on earth ... One should avoid this home instinct. It's not an instinct, it's a habit of cowardliness. One should never have a home." And when Gerald says he agrees, but that there is no alternative, Birkin responds: "We've got to find one. I do believe in a permanent union between a man and a woman. Chopping about is merely an exhaustive process. But a permanent relation between a man and a woman isn't the last word--it certainly isn't ... In fact," he adds, "because the relation between man and woman is made the supreme and exclusive relationship, that's where all the tightness and meanness and insufficiency comes in" (397). As it turns out, Birkin already has in mind an alternative: "You've got to take down the love-and-marriage ideal from its pedestal," he concludes. "We want something broader.
I believe in the additional perfect relationship between man and man--additional to marriage’" (397-98).

It is clear that Birkin still refers to Gerald when he uses the pronoun "we," and indeed his earlier endeavor to establish an additional relationship--during the wrestling match--has succeeded in bringing him closer to the reification of this idea, at least insofar as it has granted him the courage to proceed. It contributes as well, therefore, to what subsequently occurs between him and Ursula, and to the fact that what does happen is not entirely successful because, and this is perhaps the most consequential reason, Birkin's expectations seem to increase in direct proportion to his achievement. Having discovered, for example, an acceptable compromise between desire and fear of sex in "Excurse," he continues to express dissatisfaction with a man and woman relationship, and he does not, I would point out, distinguish by the end of his conversation with Gerald between the conventional affairs he detests and the kind of marriage he might expect to experience with Ursula. Not some, or most, but "'a permanent union ... the relation between man and woman'" (emphasis mine), when it "'is made the supreme and exclusive relationship,'" is what creates problems. As he explains rather equivocally to Ursula, while "'I know I want a perfect and complete relationship with you; and we've nearly got it--we really have. But beyond that. Do I want a real, ultimate relationship with Gerald? Do I want a final, almost extra-human relationship
with him—a relationship in the ultimate of me and him—or don’t I?” (409-10). As the words, "real," "final" and "extra-human" (transcendent) attest, the answer at this point is affirmative; he has for some time been saying that this is what he wants.

I say at this point because Birkin does not really know what he wants, finally (which is understandable, given the disconcerting complexity of modern social and personal experience, and the comprehensiveness of Lawrence’s characterization), or even what he does not want, only what he fears. He abhors conventional marriage, for example, but again proposes to Ursula, although in doing so he does mention his idea of a relationship with Gerald to offset the "tightness and meanness and insufficiency" of conjugal life. He offers, however, few suggestions as to what a life with "some few other people" (409) might entail, except that in exile they will conceivably discover a lasting version of that natural world he envisions after leaving Breadalby, a world where he feels "he belonged. This was his place, his marriage place" (120). Detesting the isolation, the privacy of marriage, and the oppressiveness of urban life generally, he wants to be free of all influence, pressure and responsibility in this world (England), including possessions. "'You must leave your surroundings sketchy, unfinished,'" he tells Ursula, "'so that you are never contained, never confined, never dominated from the outside’” (402). Beneath
the aggressive rhetoric, however, I continue to see evidence of a man reluctant to confront society or attempt somehow to change it, a man not unlike Paul Morel when he decides at one point that the solution to his problems would be to live "'somewhere in a pretty house near London with my mother'" (SL, 429). Incapable of confrontation, in fact, Birkin suffers the angst of not knowing which is worse, isolation or a repressive society. Similarly, while sounding equivocal, at least in Ursula's presence, concerning his proposal of a second relationship, he cannot, on the other hand, consider life only with her. The decision, therefore, to leave England with Gerald and Gudrun offers an immediate if temporary solution.

When Birkin first broaches the subject, suggesting that "'we'd better get out of our responsibilities as quick as we can ... drop our jobs, like a shot'" in order to "'wander away from the world's somewheres into our own nowhere'" (355), Ursula's reaction, like her response to marriage, is another example of the comprehensiveness and the idealism of his proposed alternatives exceeding hers. She wants to be more isolated than he does, and yet is not sure that his idea of escape is plausible. "'I'm so afraid,'" she says, "'that while we are only people, we've got to take the world that's given--because there isn't any other'" (355). Birkin persists, however--"'There's somewhere we can be free,'" he continues, "'somewhere where one needn't wear much clothes--none even--where one meets a few people who have gone
through enough, and can take things for granted—where you can be yourself, without bothering’” (356)—and Ursula, affected by his enthusiasm if not his ideology, agrees. "Yes—’ she said, thrilled at the thought of travel. But to her it was only travel" (356). Although she is reserved, and later disillusioned with their destination, she does consent, and that in itself establishes another important bond between the two. For different reasons, then, but with a corresponding enthusiasm, they finalize their plans, after "Excurse,” to absolve themselves of social responsibility, to leave England, hoping that by reducing commitment they can improve the quality of that which remains. And Ursula as much as Birkin has reason to hope that a change of residence might be succeeded by a change in their relationship, particularly in terms of the idea of those "few other people" which "depressed her" (356) in the passage cited above and which continues some fifty pages later (409) to be a problem.

For Ursula this journey soon becomes more than "only travel”; it begins to represent a demarcation between past and future, security and exploration, the known and the unknown, particularly in terms of the expectation for continued fulfillment. As they travel from Dover to Ostend, "the sense of the unrealized world ahead triumphed over everything. In the midst of this profound darkness, there seemed to glow on her heart the effulgence of a paradise
unknown and unrealized. Her heart was full of the most wonderful light, goldenlike honey of darkness, sweet like the warmth of day, a light which was not shed on the world, only on the unknown paradise towards which she was going, a sweetness of habitation, a delight of living quite unknown, but hers infallibly" (437). So convinced is she of this anticipated paradise, in which she and her life with Birkin will continue to develop, that she has felt by comparison, as they prepare to leave, that she "was not herself—she was not anything. She was something that is going to be—soon—soon—very soon. But as yet, she was only imminent" (436). And as they are travelling into that unknown, an image appears which causes her to realize just how far from her past, her childhood, she has come, and how much she has yet to know about herself, and Birkin. She "saw a man with a lantern come out of a farm by the railway and cross to the dark farm-buildings. She thought of the Marsh, the old, intimate farm life at Cossethay. My God, how far she was projected from her childhood, how far was she still to go! In one lifetime one travelled through aeons. The great chasm of memory from her childhood in the intimate country surroundings of Cossethay and the Marsh Farm" (439), to the present, "travelling into the unknown with Birkin, an utter stranger—was so great, that it seemed she had no identity, that the child she had been, playing in Cossethay church-yard, was a little creature of history, not really herself" (440). In other words, she is to her own childhood somewhat
of a stranger as well.

Birkin is similarly affected by the journey. "To him, the wonder of this transit was overwhelming. He was falling through a gulf of infinite darkness, like a meteorite plunging across the chasm between two worlds. The world was torn in two, and he was plunging like an unlit star through the ineffable rift. What was beyond was not yet for him. He was overcome by the trajectory.

"In a trance he lay enfolding Ursula round about. His face was against her fine, fragile hair, he breathed its fragrance with the sea and the profound night. And his soul was at peace; yielded, as he fell into the unknown. This was the first time that an utter and absolute peace had entered his heart, now, in this final transit out of life" (437-38). This tranquility is apparently derived, partly at least, from a sense of relief at having escaped an oppressive society, and in doing so being on the threshold of achieving what has previously been, in social terms (the personal having been reached in "Excurse") only a theoretical goal. It is also the result of imbuing the escape, for Birkin; and the goal, for Ursula, with incredible potential. What is more interesting is that both feel themselves to be in a kind of void, and yet an ecstatic one, between the past and the future, the rejected known and the idealized unknown. We have seen this before: Siegmund, in the transition from Beatrice and mechanical London to the romanticized
Helena and the Isle of Wight; Paul Morel, perceiving his mother and life as an artist with her as the perfect solution to his problems with Miriam, Clara, Jordan's, and Bestwood in general, where he feels himself a "prisoner of industrialism"; and Ursula in The Rainbow, seeking in the "man's world" and in Skrebensky an escape from the Marsh.

Now Birkin contemplates an idealized future, while Ursula fancifully reflects upon their destination as an isolated mise en scène from which even the sources of unhappiness will be banished. Such has been the extent of their dissatisfaction, their frustration, even at times their estrangement from each other that the solution they have chosen is embraced with a zeal and faith that overwhelms rationalism and precludes, as a result, the possibility of it either succeeding or being perceived of as improbable. The result, as with Siegmund and Helena, Paul Morel, Ursula previously with teaching and with Skrebensky, and perhaps most dramatically, Gerald and Gudrun, is that fancy is closely and inevitably followed by despair or at best, by resignation: the acceptance of the fact that solutions may not exist, and if they do they will have little in common with the illusory future both Ursula and Birkin now envision. That this will occur becomes apparent as early as the Birkins' disembarkation at Ostend, when abruptly they both realize that they are in "the world again. It was not the bliss of her heart, nor the peace of his. It was the superficial unreal world of fact. Yet not quite the old
world. For the peace and the bliss in their hearts was enduring" (438). It will not endure for long, however. As they continue their journey by train, Ursula's disconcertion increases. This, she observes, "was an old world she was still journeying through, winter-heavy and dreary ... No new earth had come to pass," and as if now aware that it will never literally come to pass, she "looked at Birkin's face. It was white and still and eternal, too eternal. She linked her fingers imploringly in his under the cover of the rug. His fingers responded, his eyes looked back at her. How dark, like a night, his eyes were, like another world beyond! Oh, if he were the world as well, if only the world were he! If only he could call a world into being, that should be their own world!" (440).

At Hohenhausen the old world is still in evidence; indeed, it has now become ominous and impersonal: not paradise, but a "concrete heaven, all strangely radiant and changeless and silent," a world whose blanket of snow and ice and towering mountains "makes one feel so small and alone," Ursula says, "turning to Birkin and laying her hand on his arm" (447). She is "excited and happy, but she kept turning suddenly to catch hold of Birkin's arm, to make sure of him. 'This is something I never expected,' she said. 'It is a different world,'" (448), and clearly not the one she has contemplated. She begins to appreciate as well, with some consternation, the consequences of trying to sever
connections with community and family as she is again reminded of her past, a past that seems to torment her in its insistent and unbidden emergence into consciousness. And although she desperately wants not to remember, perhaps she still does so because she appreciates, in comparison, just how foreign this world is that she now resides in, and how committed she must be, therefore, to her new and strange future if she is to continue developing and not become stranded between that past and whatever might lie ahead. To do that, she must depend upon a faith in that alone, isolated from all connections with the old way of life, even, as the following indicates, from her own sister.

Returning to the hotel one evening, she sees "a man come from the dark building, with a lighted lantern ... He unlatched the door of an outhouse. A smell of cows, hot, animal, almost like beef, came out on the heavily cold air ... It had reminded Ursula again of home, of the Marsh, of her childhood, and of the journey to Brussels, and, strangely, of Anton Skrebensky.

"Oh, God, could one bear it, this past which had gone down the abyss? Could she bear, that it ever had been! ... She wished it could be gone for ever, like a lantern-slide which was broken. She wanted to have no past ... What was this decree, that she should 'remember'? Why not a bath of pure oblivion, a new birth, without any recollections or blemish of a past life. She was with Birkin, she had just come into life, here in the high snow, against the stars.
What had she to do with parents and antecedents? She knew herself new and unbegotten, she had no father, no mother, no anterior connexions, she was herself, pure and silvery, she belonged only to the oneness with Birkin, a oneness that struck deeper notes, sounding into the heart of the universe, the heart of reality, where she had never existed before.

"Even Gudrun was a separate unit, separate, separate, having nothing to do with this self, this Ursula, in her new world of reality. That old shadow-world, the actuality of the past--ah, let it go! She rose free on the wings of her new condition" (460).

Ursula, like Birkin, must also remain optimistic about their marriage, for without him she would be alone, with little hope of continuing the kind of life and consciousness they are beginning to develop together, with not even a bearable and certainly not a paradisaic environment in which to immerse herself. With little sense of future either--should they separate--both of them, and especially Ursula, would then conceivably be in danger of experiencing a kind of stasis not dissimilar from that finality or end of purpose Birkin once saw reflected in Halliday's West Pacific figurine, or as represented by Loerke, who "in his innermost soul, was detached from everything, for him there was neither heaven nor earth nor hell. He admitted no allegiance, he gave no adherence anywhere. He was single and, by
abstraction from the rest, absolute in himself" (509). Birkin recognizes this potential, even in himself; criticizing Loerke as having proceeded "a good many stages farther than either you or I can go ... in social hatred" (481), he admits it to Gerald. "'I suppose we want the same,'" he says, apparently assuming that Gerald shares his cynicism. "'Only we want to take a quick jump downwards, in a sort of ecstasy--and he ebbs with the stream, the sewer stream'" (482).

Birkin and Ursula have in fact left England in order to avoid taking that "quick jump downwards," and yet understanding that they cannot escape the world, but only attempt to disregard it, they know as well just how essential they are to each other. It is crucial that they remain together, therefore, united in their resolve not to relinquish their goal, for in union lies the power to continue struggling to overcome obstacles to that goal. In the Alps, however, where they once thought that the kind of spontaneous, progressive relationship they desire would be easier to develop, it is becoming clear that this will not be so. The icy, rocky surroundings, the lodge in which a harsh climate often forces them to remain (enclosed with individuals not of the sort Birkin had in mind when he discussed his idea of going away with a few other people), are simply not conducive to such development. In fact for Ursula the climate is just the opposite; "the dazzling whiteness seemed to beat upon her till it hurt her, she felt the cold was slowly
strangling her soul. Her head felt dazed and numb ... She had felt so doomed up here in the eternal snow, as if there were no beyond." That feeling, however, is suddenly dispelled when it "occurred to her like a miracle, that she might go away into another world ... as by a miracle she remembered that away beyond, below her, lay the dark fruitful earth ... Miracle of miracles!—this utterly silent, frozen world of the mountaintops was not universal! One might leave it and have done with it. One might go away" (488).

Birkin suggests that they go to Italy; "'we can go tomorrow,'" he says. "'We'll go tomorrow to Verona, and find Romeo and Juliet,'" to which Ursula offers a further suggestion. "'I shall love to be Romeo and Juliet,' she said" (489). Birkin then adds a cautionary note, as if in response to Ursula's desire "to have done with the snow world, the terrible, static ice-built mountain-tops"; they will not completely escape the northern environment, he says, because "'a fearfully cold wind blows in Verona ... from out of the Alps. We shall have the smell of the snow in our noses'" (489). In that such a description can be seen as implying or referring to the "ice-destructive knowledge, snow-abstract annihilation" (286) of industrialized Europe generally, I see Birkin's statement as also confirming an awareness that escape is not completely possible, that in fact, as Lawrence himself realized from the exper-
ience he recorded in *Twilight in Italy*, there are in the whole of Europe, including Italy, only degrees of industrialization. To escape therefore (within Europe at least), to a landscape not yet affected by industrialism is no longer possible because of the "hideous rawness of the world of men, the horrible, desolating harshness of the advance of the industrial world upon the world of nature, that is so painful. It looks as though the industrial spread of mankind were a sort of dry disintegration advancing and advancing, a process of dry disintegration."

This recalls the ending of *The Rainbow*, in which Ursula sees "the hard, cutting edges of the new houses, which seemed to spread over the hillside in their insentient triumph, a triumph of horrible, amorphous angles and straight lines, the expression of corruption triumphant and unopposed ... a dry, brittle corruption spreading over the face of the land" (R, 495). At that point, however, she sees as well, symbolized by the rainbow, the possibility that such a phenomenon can be opposed, that individuals need not submit nor try to escape, but rather, because they "were living still, that the rainbow was arched in their blood and would quiver to life in their spirit, that they would cast off their horny covering of disintegration, that new, clean, naked bodies would issue to a new germination, to a new growth, rising to the light and the wind and the clean rain of heaven" (R, 496). In this novel, on the other hand, Ursula and Birkin, in leaving such corruption behind rather
than attempting to oppose it, have tried to find elsewhere a kind of pre-industrial state where a "new germination" might be possible, and if that is so, decidedly easier to attain. Because this has been an endeavor sustained for a considerable time by the refusal to believe that such is not possible, theirs has been a hope and a continued search characterized by a certain fancifulness, although at the same time it has been a staunchly optimistic ideology, held in the belief that freedom, autonomy, individual fulfillment do exist.

Certainly Lawrence himself refused ever to believe otherwise, a refusal which continues, as inspiration, to inform these novels I have been discussing. What Lawrence began to appreciate, however, was that isolation and social indifference could not provide as satisfactory a basis for individual development as could opposition to intolerable values and conditions of urban experience (which Ursula and Birkin simply flee from), and the attempt to change rather than disregard them. This Lawrence strove to achieve personally, and although much of his adult life was spent outside England, for reasons deemed necessary due to those extenuating circumstances I have earlier referred to (including the search for a dry climate to reduce the complications of tuberculosis), he nevertheless continually looked to England, waiting for and trying to suggest the means of social reform so that he could, if he chose to, return
permanently. And even in exile he was rarely isolated; he never achieved but only eventually gave up his idea of Rananim, he was economically dependent upon society through the publishing industry (although ambivalently so), and he remained in touch, personally as well as artistically, with the socio-political and cultural events of the day.

This need to remain aware of and even to oppose rather than completely disregard intolerable social conditions brings to mind the advice Gudrun at one point gives her sister. "'One wants a new space to be in, I quite agree,' she said. 'But I think that a new world is a development from this world, and that to isolate oneself with one other person isn't to find a new world at all, but only to secure oneself in one's illusions'" (492). Perhaps, by the end, Ursula and Birkin comprehend this as well. We do not know, for the novel ends rather openly, but certainly they do return from Italy to Austria, then to England. Granted, this is at Gudrun's request and affected by Gerald's death, but there is the suggestion as well of a rift in their relationship not to be accounted for only by the loss of Gerald, but also involving the differences they have had for some time concerning the kind of relationship each of them wants.

Birkin, for example, mourns not only the loss of a dear friend, but of that "additional perfect relationship between man and man'" (398) which has never in fact developed to any extent. Once aggressively optimistic, now
depressed to the point of appearing on the verge of relinquishing hope altogether, he feels that with Gerald dead either "the heart would break or cease to care. Best cease to care. Whatever the mystery which has brought forth man and the universe, it is a non-human mystery, it has its own great ends, man is not the criterion. Best leave it all to the vast, creative, non-human mystery. Best strive with oneself only, not with the universe" (538). To strive with oneself only, however, suggests the abnegation of responsibility towards his marriage, and even a certain lack of interest in what Ursula wants from the relationship. This may not be what Birkin is implying, but it recalls, interestingly, an earlier scene in which Ursula feels a similar resurgence of self-interest and a recognition that their relationship is not perhaps what it was at the end of "Excurse." (There is also no evidence that things have improved in the fifty pages subsequent to the following quotation.) Although she felt then that she "gave herself up in delight to being loved" by Birkin, she "knew that, in spite of his joy when she abandoned herself, he was a little saddened too. She could give herself up to his activity. But she could not be herself, she dared not come forth quite nakedly to his nakedness, abandoning all adjustment, lapsing in pure faith with him. She abandoned herself to him, or she took hold of him and gathered her joy of him. And she enjoyed him fully. But they were never quite together, at
the same moment, one was always a little left out. Nevertheless she was glad in hope, glorious and free, full of life and liberty. And he was still and soft and patient, for the time" (490).

By the end that apprehension is exacerbated by the intensity of Birkin's bereavement, and its effect on both of them. On the eve of their return to England she watched "the living man stare at the frozen face of the dead man. Both faces were unmoved and unmoving ... 'You've got me,'" she says, trying to bring her husband back to the living. "'If I die,'" he responds, "'you'll know I haven't left you'" (540), a statement that does not completely satisfy Ursula. "'But need you despair over Gerald?'" she asks, and again, after they return to the Mill: "'Did you need Gerald?' she asked one evening ... 'Aren't I enough for you? ... 'No,' he said. 'You are enough for me, as far as a woman is concerned. You are 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. Why isn't it the same with you?'

"'Having you, I can live all my life without anybody else, any other sheer intimacy. But to make it complete, really happy, I wanted eternal union with a man too: another kind of love,' he said.

"'I don't believe it,' she said. 'It's an obstinacy, a theory, a perversity ... You can't have two kinds of love.
Why should you! ... You can't have it, because it's false, impossible' ... 'I don't believe that,' he answered" (541).

V

I think it significant that this point of disagreement, which they have discussed more than once, is the topic of conversation which ends the novel. Throughout, Ursula has continued to express her desire to be alone with Birkin; on the last page of "Moony," for example, she has felt unsure of his idea for unison in separateness, wanting instead that he love her "absolutely, with complete self-abandonment" (299); and again, when she recalls her childhood for the second time, at Hohenhausen, she rejects that memory, preferring to belong "only to the oneness with Birkin" (460). She has also been dissatisfied with his wish to live with "a few other people." The idea has "depressed her" (356) at one point, and at another, as it does in the passage above, has even angered her. Why, she has asked even before they leave England, "should you hanker after other people? Why should you need them? ... You've got me ... Why should you need others? Why must you force people to agree with you? Why can't you be single by yourself, as you are always saying?"" (409).

Birkin, however, although he does want a certain degree of autonomy, does not want to be single by himself, as he has often explained. And yet, while he clearly has in mind
some sort of community, he never satisfactorily describes what he wants, certainly not to Ursula, except in terms of Gerald. The problem, then, has always involved the future, and the alternative within that future which must be established to replace their refutation of society, including social responsibility, contemporary values, and their past. This has been particularly crucial for Ursula (we in fact know little of Birkin's past); she has been prepared, not without some difficulty, to sever those connections, but has believed that in doing so everything in her past would be replaced by a future with Birkin alone, for he is the only other person who understands, or even can understand, what that future is to embrace, what it will mean, and how it will be related to and develop from what they experienced in "Excursus." Hers, then, I would describe as a fragile, tenuous situation not only because, as I personally believe, it is in fact impossible to escape society, at least to the degree Ursula desires, but because her future depends so much on her marriage.

By the end of the novel, then, Ursula possesses what I think is an unattainable goal—to permanently escape alone with Birkin—while he has in mind a perhaps more plausible but vague idea of escape with a small contingent of other, like-minded individuals. In other words, while both of them have a clear sense of what they do not want in life, and are able to articulate their reasons, as an otherwise harmonious couple the two have never been able to completely agree upon
an alternative to the kind of life, values and marriage they reject. My point, therefore, concerns the state of their relationship to society, and not the possibly ambiguous state of their marriage itself at the end of the novel, for they have achieved to a considerable extent, more possibly than any other couple in these earlier works, a harmony and understanding which may very well continue to develop. Having through their relationship to each other resolved what in my introduction I call psychological alienation, that is, they have not been able to accomplish a similar resolution of social estrangement, and maybe that is because, given the nature of what they wish to achieve together, such is in fact impossible.

The problem in establishing a sense of social awareness or community, even with a few others, is that this idea of Birkin’s is intended to facilitate the repudiation of a society characterized by individuals isolated, in their conjugal privacy, from most others, and encouraged to believe in competition, private enterprise, and aggressive self-assertion as being superior to cooperation, communalism and consideration for others. And yet Ursula, in some respects demanding even more isolation, rejecting her past and her family, objecting to Birkin’s wish for exile in the company of peers, is hardly different. And even though Birkin’s ideology is in many ways an explicit rejection of industrial capitalism, it too requires isolation in order to
effect a kind of autonomy or indomitability of spirit not unlike Gerald Crich's belief in the indomitability of will. The convictions of both men, that is, derive from or are the consequence of industrialism, Birkin's being a kind of puritan desire to escape that which Gerald wishes to conquer.

Both men ascribe to a similar notion as well that there is some kind of natural order to which humanity must return, an order which is eternal, in that it is believed to exist as a state of being rather than being a consciousness towards which mankind must evolve. As a result, the ideological convictions of these men, and indeed of Lawrence himself, do not take into account the complexity of contemporary socio-economic phenomena and especially the rapidity with which industrial society changes, becoming as it does so more pervasive, more inescapable. Thus neither Birkin's idea of exile nor Gerald's aristocratic neo-feudalism is likely to succeed, for both propose that individuals be essentially isolate. In isolation, however, as we have seen with Gerald when technology renders him redundant, defences can weaken, antagonism between individuals can become more hostile, and the oppression originally intended to be vanquished can in fact intensify. I am not suggesting that in the end this novel is expressing a sense of utter hopelessness, but only that individual development and fulfillment is likely to be more complete, and more satisfactory, if social reality (the very source of the alienation such
development is meant to dispel) is taken into account.

It was with this conviction in mind that I described Gudrun, at the end of the previous chapter, in what may have seemed unjustifiably optimistic terms. Having since then discussed Ursula and Rupert, I can now clarify those statements by again describing the Birkins' failure as clearly not personal but social in nature. On the other hand, because she has not been able to overcome alienation or experience any kind of satisfactory relationship, I would describe Gudrun as having failed in personal terms. What she implicitly advocates, however, and what she wants to accomplish in Dresden is still to me more socially plausible than what Ursula and Birkin have endeavored to attain in exile. That is to say, although I do not see explicit evidence of hope for Gudrun herself, I do believe that her decision to remain within society rather than escape is the preferable course. She may, like Ursula and Birkin, leave England but she does not forsake society as they have done, even though they return to it. She, like her author, has felt the pulse of England, and has tried to be a productive part of English and now German society while attempting to remain objective about its faults.

It is this conviction, then, if not the attainment or even the expectation of attainable goals related to such a belief, from which I derive a sense of optimism concerning Gudrun, or more accurately, in terms of a real person in
Gudrun's position and with her aims. And, too, like her author, she is attempting to contend with society as a working artist. She is also, therefore, being realistic in her determination to continue earning money from her art and implicit in such a decision, whether she knows it or not, is the knowledge that an individual can never escape the economics of social experience, nor that experience generally. Indeed, it is more likely that one's social identity determines one's individual (intellectual, spiritual, even sexual) consciousness, and I say this in spite of knowing that Lawrence often believed, or fervently hoped, that the reverse was true. In these terms, then, Ursula and Birkin cannot completely escape social reality, not even economically, for his 400 pounds or so a year obviously has a source related to financial institutions (such as interest from a banked inheritance). He cannot end his dependency upon that, for if he does the alternatives—whatever they might be: employment, gifts, handouts from begging—still tie him in other ways to the same infrastructure or economic foundation of society.

In criticizing Ursula and Birkin's social ideology, I do not forget what they have achieved personally. Ursula in particular, whom we have known from birth, has evolved from a confused young woman to a self-assured adult in *The Rainbow*, and now to a wife and lover whose relationship (except for this one point of contention concerning where, how and with whom, if with anybody other than Birkin, it will
develop in the future) is as much of an accomplishment as anything she, or Paul Morel before her, have attained. The point, which I made in my introduction, is simply that for me Lawrence’s own success in the novels I have discussed derives from his observation of the nature and characteristics of contemporary socio-psychological experience and from his suggested alternatives to the kind of alienation so inescapably a part of that experience. The alternatives or solutions tend to concentrate on individuals, singly or in comparatively isolated relationships, rather than on society itself, but even so, and in spite of the concerted efforts by them and their author, the inability of these characters to change significantly the quality of their lives becomes increasingly apparent.

Siegmund, overwhelmed by conflicts he never really tries to resolve but only to escape in a manner destined to fail, returns to the city and admits failure. Paul Morel, having partially resolved his conflicts and attained a certain sense of self, walks towards the city with some assurance, and yet we do not know if he will fare any better than Siegmund. Ursula, as a kind of successor to Paul, discovers in fact that in the city confrontation or compromise can be achieved only at the expense of personal, especially sexual, integrity (which is also Gudrun’s experience, although she is not nearly so aware of it and its consequences, particularly in personal terms). At the end of *The Rainbow*,

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Ursula is still optimistic, envisioning an affirmative culture symbolized by a rainbow bridging the chasm between man and woman, the individual and society, and especially blood and spirit, but by Women in Love, she too is leaving industrial England, hoping to experience with Rupert a kind of paradise recalling that of which Siegmund and Helena once dreamed and which perhaps even Paul contemplates: a "glowing 'town" whose "gold phosphorescence" (SL, 511) is more than a little utopian in its conception.

Of those characters who do at some point reside in the city, with the possible exception of Gerald none can unequivocally accept its values and conditions, and yet of those who try none can successfully escape from it either, for unless they would choose to live in a distant jungle, Western industrial society is a virtually universal and thus inescapable phenomenon. And yet Lawrence and his characters never give up; they persist, and understandably so, in criticizing and denouncing contemporary society: a society in which progress during Lawrence’s lifetime was becoming defined increasingly in materialistic terms, and history, as a result, not the unfolding of a more developed human consciousness but a chronicle of economic and technological advancement. And unless things changed drastically the future, it seemed reasonable to assume, could only be a continuation of values degenerating from the humanistic to a kind of capitalistic amorality.

I understand, therefore, and sympathize with the wish
to escape, even if it approaches the irrational, for to stay requires either complete apathy and acquiescence or a faith in the prospect of change which may be unjustified. Perhaps society can never change, and perhaps this is because the alienation Lawrence depicted in the best of his fiction describes not a period of human evolution, but a part of human nature. Perhaps: but Lawrence never believed it, and what he bequeathed to us as a result is the sustained conviction that somehow we are capable of overcoming and therefore can overcome oppression, mistrust, alienation, and can attain the kind of future in which Paul, Ursula and Birkin, even Helena and Siegmund at one point, have so adamantly believed: a time when we will more fully understand ourselves and others, a time when communication and relationships will derive from a shared belief in the sanctity of human life above all else, a time when we will speak the same language. "Life will find a way," Lawrence wrote in one of his later poems. "Life always finds a way."
NOTES

Chapter 1

1 For Lawrence especially, it was to be an age of anger and frustration, growing as the Great War approached, and finally exploding during the years 1914-1918. As Paul Delany has so aptly described them, those years were almost literally a nightmare for Lawrence: a time when his characteristic optimism and faith in humanity's potential were virtually swept away in a storm of vituperation and disgust. See Lawrence's letters, particularly those written during the war, and Delany's work, D.H. Lawrence's Nightmare (New York: Basic Books, 1978).

2 According to the government report submitted in August 1904 by the Inter-Department Committee on Physical Deterioration, although Britain's urban population had in the previous 50 years increased from 50 to 75 per cent of the total, because little had been done to improve housing, health and social standards to accommodate this influx, the working class was in some respects more impoverished that it had been. The infant mortality rate, as one consequence of this, had increased between 1850 and 1900, although it began to decrease after then. By contrast, the aristocracy was wealthier and more conspicuous; the gap, therefore, between the "two nations" was for the poor wider than ever. See Samuel Hynes, The Edwardian Turn of Mind (Princeton, N.J.:
Thompson also covers the same material in Parts III and IV of *The Edwardians* (1975; rpt. London: Paladin, 1977), but from a more general perspective. He begins, however, in Part I with a description of what he describes as the "Dimension of Inequality" existing in Edwardian England, and then, following in the footsteps of Henry Mayhew's *London Labour and London Poor* and Charles Booth's *Life and Labour of the People of London*, he provides in Part II an oral history of the time, extracted from interviews he conducted with 500 individuals of all classes born during or just before the reign of Edward. Finally, Ruth Adam, *A Woman's Place 1910-1975* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1975), pp. 9-63 describes the plight of women during this period as well as the Suffragette's response to the socio-political environment of the time. Although brief in her account, Adam is far more critical and perceptive than most others writing on the same subject, such as Duncan Crow, *The Edwardian Woman* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1978), who seems more interested in contemporary upper class social life, or Marian Ramelson, *The Petticoat Junction* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1972), whose history of women in revolt is pedestrian if comprehensive.

3 The one group with which Lawrence, if not actually a member, did closely associate himself was the Eastwood Socialists, whose membership included William and Sallie Hopkin and Alice Dax. He also met several of their visiting
speakers, most notably Beatrice and Sidney Webb, who had founded the Fabian Society as a dissident offshoot of The Fellowship of the New Life, formed in 1884. In a letter to William Hopkin, 24 August, 1910, Lawrence expressed regret at having lost touch with that "old 'progressive clique.'"

4 See Samuel Hynes, pp. 87-131, for a comprehensive discussion of the Fabian Society within the context of the Edwardian age.


9 Frieda Lawrence, Not I, But the Wind ... (Toronto: Macmillan, 1934), p.90.

10 D.H. Lawrence, Kangaroo (1923; rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1950), p. 240. The following three quotations are
from the same novel.

11 The Letters of D.H. Lawrence, eds. James T. Boulton and George J. Zytaruk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), II, p. 350. The specific date of this letter is unknown, although the editors suggest that it was written sometime in June, 1915.


14 "Study of Thomas Hardy," Phoenix, pp. 411-12.


17 Letter to Edward Garnett, 19 November, 1912. See Author's Note for sources.

Ibid., p. 151.


D.H. Lawrence, "Love," *Phoenix*, pp. 155-56. See also "A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover" (also titled "My Skirmish with Jolly Roger"), in which Lawrence defines culture as the harmonious relationship between social and physical consciousness.

Stanley Diamond, *In Search of the Primitive* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1974), p. 40. This is Diamond's definition of progress, an important aspect of culture. Although anything opposed to cultural harmony is usually individual, there are also certain trends—capitalistic tendencies, for example—which appear to promote harmony—through the conformity of mass consumption, to continue the example—and therefore may look cultural, but are not.


Chapter 2

1 Depending upon one's interpretation, Gerald Crich may be defined as a (lesser) protagonist and, given the increasing confusion and despair which marks his progress through the novel, his death may be described as suicidal. My point, however, remains valid because *The Trespasser* is so exclusively concerned with Siegmund, with his alienation, with the reasons for and the inevitability of an act which so effectively dramatizes the complete absence of hope or potential. While the same may be said of Crich, it cannot be said of *Women in Love*, which is permeated with feelings of optimism, idealism and the projection of possible alternatives to the alienation which is pervasive but not thematically exclusive.

2 For an analysis of the development of *Sons and Lovers* from a less than adequate manuscript to the masterful work it became, see my essay, "The *Sons and Lovers* Manuscript," in *Studies in Bibliography*, Vol. 37 (1984), 234-43. As with *The Trespasser*, although this time more exclusively, it was the formidable editorial talent of Edward Garnett which was at least as responsible as the author's own at times perceptive but often erratic ability to revise that enhanced the quality of the work so dramatically.

3 Cited in the Cambridge Letters, 1, p. 178n.
'Interestingly, Mr. Verden, Helena's father, calls her Nellie. The relationship, I think, between repressed or alter-identities and alternate names is more than coincidental.'

'John Stoll, for one, has said just this, in The Novels of D.H. Lawrence: A Search for Integration (Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1971), p. 44; but he adds that Helena is a mother-figure, and therefore what Siegmund desires is incest, at which point it becomes difficult to accept anything further of his interpretation.

Stoll derives his incest theory particularly from one passage (p. 74) in which Siegmund, lying half asleep with Helena standing over him, murmurs to himself "Hawwa--Eve--Mother!" Hawwa, the name Charles Doughty gives Eve in his play Adam Cast Forth (which Lawrence read in 1908), is a
Hebrew and Arabic word meaning to breathe or to give life.  Siegmund's incantation, therefore, seems more likely a call, in his weakness and despair, feeling like a child, for more passion and energy than even Helena could offer, if she were so inclined--the energy of Womanhood, of Motherhood--and not a literal perception of Helena as his mother, and thus a desire for incest. At this point it seems unlikely that he would have the strength to consummate an affair with any woman, an observation graphically developed in the following pages of the novel.


12 Ibid., p. 762.

13 Niven, p. 30.

14 This remains true to the real events; not only did Helen Corke reject Lawrence as a sexual replacement for Macartney, but as late as May, 1910, ten months after the Isle of Wight vacation, she was still writing a diary in the form of a letter, in the present tense, to the deceased man.


17 Ibid., p. 353n. Lawrence can also be associated with Cecil Byrne, the man who comforts Helena (Helen Corke)
after her lover commits suicide. But that does not detract from Hampson as an authorial figure; Lawrence is simply creating, as he often does, more than one character from his own experience, feelings and beliefs.

18 See Lawrence's "Study of Thomas Hardy," Phoenix, pp. 398-516; and, for an insightful explication of that work, the first chapter of H.M. Daleski's The Forked Flame (London: Faber and Faber, 1965).


Chapter 3

1 Although all editions read "'Let him not' be killed at pit,'" in the manuscript, following sensibly from "'Lord let my father die,'" Lawrence wrote "'Let him be killed at pit'" (Ms, Chapter IV, p. 102). The change was probably a printer's error, and certainly not the only one in this novel: "He could not unite his real self with this shell" (Ms, XII, p. 439), for example, is in all editions "He could not write his real self with this shell" (Penguin, p. 371), and in the last utterance Paul makes in the novel--
"'Mother!' he whimpered—'mother!'—the verb in most editions is "whispered."

To explicate through example the methodology I discussed in my introduction: while I remain aware of the development of narrative in *Sons and Lovers*, I occasionally present quotations in an order other than the chronological. It is not my intention, in doing so, to distort. However, there are times when a passage does not as adequately emphasize what I am saying until after a discussion of a later scene. At those times I will go back to it, but only when what is being expressed in it is still relevant. In the preceding paragraph, for example, although the penultimate quotation comes after the final one, Paul's feelings have not changed. I present them in this order so as to stress the fact that Paul dares not kiss Miriam because even at this point he misinterprets and fears her motives, although he does not articulate those fears so clearly as he will in the later passage.

Within this and subsequent chapters I will where possible indicate by page number when I am disturbing the chronology, or when, as sometimes also happens, after a quotation I am drawing conclusions from it and other passages, so that the reader will not think I am making statements incapable of being supported by the one quotation alone.

4 Ibid., p. 76.

5 Ibid., p. 77.


7 But not just Moynahan: Graham Hough, The Dark Sun (London: Macmillan, 1965); Yudhishtar, Conflict in the Novels of D.H. Lawrence (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1969); Richard D. Beards, "Sons and Lovers as Bildungsroman," in College Literature, 1, No. 3 (Fall, 1974), 204-217; the list continues.


Chapter 4


2 Ibid., pp. 155-56.

3 "Foreword to Women in Love," *Phoenix II*, pp. 275-76.

Given the history of these two novels, *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, and the context in which they were written, it is fair, I think, to suggest that this introduction is as applicable to the former as it is to the work directly mentioned in its title.

Concerning the two wars indirectly associated with *The Rainbow*—the Boer War, never mentioned by name but apparently that into which Skrebensky is conscripted, and World War I, on the brink of and during which Lawrence was writing the novel—it is interesting to note the extent to which the latter influenced his work. This is most graphically evident in terms of the chronology which, albeit confused and inconsistent, seems to have subtly changed as the novel progressed. A brief illustration: from the few dates and ages given we know that Tom Brangwen was 28 when he met
Lydia (28), a woman six years older than himself (47). When Tom dies she is 60 (254); he, therefore, is 54. Ursula, who is eight when her grandfather drowns (243), is sixteen when Skrebensky is called to fight (she is 17 when she completes her studies [357], and has one year left when he leaves [334]). We also know that Tom’s father Alfred is married in or soon after 1840 (13), and that Tom is the last of six children, which means that the earliest he could have been born, there being no evidence of twins, is 1846. Simple arithmetic dates his death at 1900, and Skrebensky’s departure at 1908, six years after the Boer War ended. It is possible, however, that Alfred and his wife did not have a child every year, and that Tom, therefore, was born after 1846. If, for example, he was born in 1851 (a child every two years), he would have died in 1905, and Skrebensky would have left to fight this nameless war in 1913.

This is not to suggest that Lawrence consciously changed his chronology—he could not, for that would have Skrebensky returning to England after the novel had been completed—but that he may have been unconsciously moving the protagonists, especially Ursula, forward so as to experience even more contemporaneously that “period of crisis” out of which the novel emerged.

4 Miko, p. 160.

6 Ibid., p. 127.


9 Letter to Edward Garnett, 5 June, 1914.

10 Miko, p. 166.

11 Ibid., p. 165.

12 During the war, especially in his relations with Bertrand Russell, this conviction rapidly gained precedence over the utopian Rananim and it was not until after the war that he actually sought self-exile.


14 Ibid., p. 43.

15 Ibid., p. 58.
Ibid., p. 53.


Ibid., pp. 411-12.

I say this even though Lawrence himself wrote to the contrary, in _Fantasia of the Unconscious_, that the "novels and poems come unwatched out of one’s pen. And then the absolute need which one has for some sort of satisfactory mental attitude towards oneself and things in general makes one try to abstract some definite conclusions from one’s experience as a writer and a man. The novels and poems are pure passionate experience. These ‘pollyanalytics’ are inferences made afterwards, from the experience" (57). While that is sometimes what happens as I have just said, the reverse also occurs. Perhaps the best example of the latter is _Lady Chatterley’s Lover_, which in many respects represents the culmination of a process of formulating, developing and refining ideologies with which Lawrence was involved for most of his adult life. Of course, had he lived he may have made even further inferences after his tenth novel, but that still does not contradict what I have been saying, for essentially Lawrence did both: he developed hypotheses, as it were, tested them in his novels and poems, drew conclusions afterwards, and from those proceeded to refine his theories and develop new hypotheses.
Chapter 5


2 Phoenix II, p. 275.

3 In the 1910-11 South Wales mine strike the employees protested against the colliery managers' attempt to reduce wages and they in turn asked the army to intervene. This may have been the event on which Lawrence based his episode in Women in Love, or possibly this and the national strike in 1912 of 800,000 miners, which ended when the government agreed to the establishment of a legal minimum wage.

4 Holderness, pp. 207-8.


8 Ibid., p. 80.

9 Daleski, p. 127.

10 Ibid., pp. 128-29.
Women in Love (New York: Random House, 1922), p. 403. This quotation is part of two paragraphs omitted in the British editions. Following Birkin's statement (Penguin, 398) that the "additional perfect marriage between man and man" is not "the same--but equally important, equally creative, equally sacred, if you like," the omitted passage begins:

"Gerald moved uneasily. 'You know, I can't feel that,' said he. 'Surely there can never be anything as strong between man and man as sex love is between man and woman. Nature doesn't provide the basis.'

"'Well, of course, I think she does. And I don't think we shall ever be happy till we establish ourselves on this basis. You've got to get rid of the exclusiveness of married love. And you've got to admit the unadmitted love of man for man. It makes for a greater freedom for everybody, a greater power of individuality both in men and women.'"

Both editions then continue with: "'I know,' said Gerald, 'you believe something like that.'" In the following chapter I discuss what I think is the meaning and the significance of Birkin's proposal, here and elsewhere; for now I am concerned only with Gerald.
Chapter 6

Although Lawrence chose not to include what is now referred to as the "Prologue to Women in Love," there is no evidence to suggest that in doing so he was rejecting the characterizations contained there. What may have perturbed him was that this excerpt tends to function as a summary, at the expense of drama or artistry. (In a letter to Edward Garnett, 29 January, 1914, he refers generally to a problem with "the artistic being in the background" as "that which troubles me most.") In other words, we are told about the characters, whereas in the novel they are introduced to us and we come to know them gradually, often through the perceptions of others, and always in a far more dramatic context.

The Prologue, then, may not be artistically as satisfactory as the novel itself, but what we learn in it of the characters nevertheless does not disagree with the novel's
portrayal of them. I refer to it, therefore, because it is helpful, and because I do not see it as, for example, I do the deleted pages of a revised manuscript: that is, to be disregarded except in a bibliographical approach to the novel.


3 Ibid., p. 93.


5 Ibid., pp. 102-103.

6 Richard Drain, "Women in Love," in D.H. Lawrence: A Critical Study of the Major Novels and Other Writings, ed. A.H. Gomme (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1978), p. 85. Drain, writing generally about the concepts and issues which inform Women in Love, is here discussing the idea that the "integral self must be kept whole and distinct, and even to some degree separate" without isolating oneself completely from "the influx of life, the forces of nature, the touch of the other. These two tenets are not contradictory ... Yet to keep faith with them both can be tricky ... as he [Lawrence] sensitively shows us in Women in Love through Birkin" (p. 85).


10  Leavis, p. 155.

11  Daleski, pp. 176-77.

12  Ibid., p. 177.

13  *Twilight in Italy*, p. 154.

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