

THE LOVE-DEATH THEME IN D. H. LAWRENCE'S
EARLY NOVELS

by

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ABSTRACT

The thesis explores the various aspects of the love-death theme in the parent-child, man-man, and man-woman relationships in four of D. H. Lawrence's early novels: The White Peacock, Sons and Lovers, The Rainbow, and Women in Love.

However, before this theme can be examined, it is necessary to establish, in detail, what Lawrence considers to be the underlying cultural factor determining the destructiveness in the love relationships: the Christian teaching of self-denial. Christianity has led the individual to deny his Self, his distinct personality, his instinctive individuality. He becomes a "sacrificed," "selfless" creature. Lawrence sees modern industrialism, nationalism and education as secular extensions of Christianity: in all of them, the individual no longer counts. He becomes a mere unit in the great machinery of industrialism, in the impersonal institution of nationalism, and in the education system with its falsified Truths and "vulgar authority." A "dissociation of sensibility" has taken place. Individuals have lost the capacity to respond spontaneously with the "whole" man. They have become "not me" creatures.

Because modern man has denied Selfhood, the love between man and woman, which should receive first place, is frequently replaced by parent-child love. The woman cannot love and respect the weak man with the destroyed Self. In her desperate attempt to find the fulfillment that she cannot find with her husband, she turns to her children. They become the substitute lovers to which she "sacrifices" herself. By turning to her children, she humiliates her husband and thus further destroys him, as well as herself. And the children, too, become "crippled" as the result of such a parent-child relationship: they feel obligated to return the sacrificial love to the parent and thereby rob themselves of love that should find expression elsewhere.

Not only does the weak man fail to maintain the love and respect of the woman, but also he frequently fails to establish a wholesome relationship with other men. According to Lawrence, a man must unite with other men for the "purposive, creative activity" of building a world. The weakling has no distinct Selfhood to bring to this man-to-man friendship.

In the four novels examined, the love between the man and woman is usually destructive: a form of death occurs for either the man or woman, or both. Frequently they bring a destroyed Self to the relationship and a further destruction takes place. Occasionally, the destruction in the man-woman relationship is a purgation through which the individual becomes free; through destruction he experiences a rebirth to a capacity for a new, spontaneous love.

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INTRODUCTION

In one of his essays Lawrence writes: "A woman is one bank of the river of my life, and the world is the other. Without the two shores, my life would be a marsh. It is the relation to woman, and to my fellow men, which makes me myself a river of life."¹ Establishing satisfactory human relationships is of vital importance to Lawrence. It is the all-important subject of his novels. While both the relation to the woman and to his fellow men are absolutely essential to make a man "a river of life," his relation to the woman is paramount. Lawrence stresses this in his essay "Morality and the Novel": "The great relationship, for humanity, will always be the relation between man and woman. The relation between man and man, woman and woman, and parent and child, will always be subsidiary."² Although the other relations are subsidiary, they are extremely important; frequently they determine the success of the man-woman relationship in the novels. In fact, all the relationships are intricately bound together and dependent upon one another.

The relationships represented in Lawrence's novels exist in a civilization that is continually changing. With the change has come corruption. Lawrence maintains that the corruption has its source in the Christian-oriented society. Christianity emphasizes self-denial: just as Christ denied himself and sacrificed his life for mankind, so the Christian must deny his Self. According to Lawrence, this teaching of self-denial has become the underlying factor of the culture in which the person, whether Christian or not, finds himself. In this culture the individual man no longer counts. He has become a meaningless figure in the great machinery of industrialism and in the impersonal institution of nationalism. The individual has lost his distinct personality; he is no longer a unique entity. His Self has been "sacrificed" and consequently destroyed. A person with a

destroyed Self has lost the capacity for the spontaneous response of love; he can give only a forced, sacrificial love. In any relationships, such a love is disastrous. It destroys the Self of others. Thus the Christian teaching of self-denial has corrupted our civilization. Man has become a depersonalized individual.

Lawrence's novels are centrally concerned with human love relationships. Usually these relationships are destructive. Sometimes the individual dies a physical death which is symbolic of his psychological destruction; at other times the destroyed individual continues a life-in-death existence; a few individuals die to the self-denial way-of-life and are reborn to a new Self. It is the love-death relationship of the man-woman, man-man, and parent-child that I wish to examine in this paper.

It is my intention to explore the different aspects of the love-death theme as presented in four of Lawrence's early novels: The White Peacock, published in 1910, Sons and Lovers, 1913, The Rainbow, 1915, and Women in Love, 1920.³ These four novels have been chosen because they present very adequately the underlying cultural factors that determine the death in the individual love relationships.⁴ In The White Peacock, the love-death vision has its germination. In Sons and Lovers, this vision expands; new aspects are introduced. Then in The Rainbow and Women in Love, which are generally considered Lawrence's greatest novels, the vision of love and death achieves full bloom; the cultural factors determining the love between the man and woman, the man and man, and the parent and child are presented clearly, dynamically, and with full complexity.

Before the love-death theme can be examined, it is necessary to establish in detail the underlying cultural factor that determines the destructiveness in the relationships. Chapter one will attempt to do this. Chapter two

will then examine more directly the church's destructiveness as related to the man-woman relationship. In the third chapter, the institutions, corrupted by Christian teaching, will be discussed. Then the last three chapters will explore more specifically the love-death theme of the individual relationships: the parent-child, the man-man, and finally the all-important man-woman relationship.

FOOTNOTES

1. D. H. Lawrence, "We Need One Another," in Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D. H. Lawrence, ed. E. D. McDonald (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1936), p. 192.

2. D. H. Lawrence, "Morality and the Novel," in Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D. H. Lawrence, p. 531.

3. After Lawrence had written The White Peacock, he hurriedly wrote his second novel, The Trespasser. In D. H. Lawrence: Novelist, page 19, F. R. Leavis summarizes his criticism of this novel in one statement: "It shows an unconventional power of the rendering of passion and emotion; the deadlock at Siegmund's home has an oppressive reality; but short as the book is, it is hard to read through, and cannot be said to contain any clear promise of a great novelist." The latter part of this statement could also apply more specifically to the love-death theme, for there is no "clear promise of a great novelist" in the rendering of this theme in Lawrence's second novel. Therefore, since no great development of Lawrence's concept of love and death is shown in The Trespasser, that novel will not be discussed in this paper..

4. Some of Lawrence's later novels, for example, The Plumed Serpent and Lady Chatterley's Lover, also present the underlying cultural factors. But in order to limit the paper, it will concern itself with the four early novels only.

CHAPTER I
THE CULTURAL FACTOR DETERMINING
THE DESTRUCTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

According to Lawrence, the Christian teaching of self-denial has been the source, in our culture, of the destruction of love in individual relationships. The critic Mark Spilka maintains that "the chief moral criterion for love in Lawrence's world, or for any emotional experience, is this: does it affirm or deny, renew or destroy, the sacred life within us?"¹ Lawrence is convinced that Christianity denies and as a consequence destroys "the sacred life" within the individual, and is therefore detrimental to love. In the "Study of Thomas Hardy," he explains what the Christian life demands:

In Christ we adjure the flesh, there is no flesh. A man must lose his life to save it. All the natural desires of the body, these a₂ man must be able to deny before he can live.

Lawrence feels that this denial "kills" a vital part of man; the sensual man, the "flesh," becomes dead. In Twilight in Italy, he indicates the only possible direction that a denying of one's natural sensual desires can take.

The [Christian] movement all the time was in one direction, towards the elimination of the flesh. Man wanted more and more to become free and abstract. Pure freedom was in pure abstraction. The Word was absolute. When man became as the Word, a pure law, then he was free.

However such a freedom would be ironic. Man would have freed himself by killing the "flesh," the desires of the sensual man within him. By killing the sensual, he would have denied the Self, his distinct individuality, his subjective being. Finally as a selfless creature, he would be abstract. As a pure abstraction, he would be "free"! He would be a nonentity. Such a creature would be dead.

Lawrence feels that Christianity emphasizes death. People worship a dead Christ. In the chapter "The Crucifix across the Mountains" in Twilight in Italy, Lawrence describes the different images of Christ. All show a dead, crucified Christ. The ugly, bleeding wounds are always prominent. The body is stiff and lifeless.

The body . . . of the Christus is stiff and conventionalised, yet curiously beautiful in proportion, and in static tension which makes it unified into one clear thing. There was no movement, no possible movement. The being is fixed, finally.⁴

The body of Christ is dead; the "flesh," the sensual man in him, has been killed. The Western world worships such a Christ; He teaches the people how to deaden their bodies. At the same time, the body of Christ is "curiously beautiful." People admire the beauty of Christ's body; worshipping it becomes an aesthetic admiration to the man-woman love relationship. Frequently the woman is the "aesthetic" lover: she admires the body of the man but refuses to give her body to his. She is in love with the "idea" of the man's body and responds to the idea instead of to the body. She has denied her sensual desires and sublimated them to an aesthetic admiration; thus she has destroyed her distinct individuality, her Self. At the same time, she has destroyed his Self by refusing to satisfy his sensual man.

Lawrence illustrates how grossly out of proportion the body of the dead Christ has become in a Christian-ridden culture. He describes a crucifix on which the body of Christ is larger-than-life and a dead weight.

In the cold gloom of the pass hangs the large, pale Christ. He is larger than life-size. He has fallen forward, just dead, and the weight of the full-grown, mature body hangs on the nails of the hands. So the dead, heavy body drops forward, sags, as if it would tear away and fall under its own weight.⁵

The man whose Self has been destroyed by the teaching of Christianity is a weakling. He can, in Lawrence's opinion, make only a feeble pretense of authority. The woman, who cannot respect his lack of masculinity, frequently turns to her children for fulfillment. She may "sacrifice" herself to her children in her desperate attempt to find the love that she cannot find in the man-woman relationship. But, according to Lawrence, the children should never take the place of the man. Frieda Lawrence, who had three children by her first marriage, left them to go with Lawrence. In her book Not I, But the Wind, she includes a letter that Lawrence wrote to her sister, Else, in which he states his views on the parent-child relation in Frieda's particular case:

If Frieda and the children could live happily together, I should say 'Go' because the happiness of two out of three is sufficient. But if she would only be sacrificing her life, I would not let her go if I could keep her. Because if she brings to her children a sacrifice, that is a curse to them. If I had a prayer I think it would be 'Lord, let no one ever sacrifice living stuff to me--because I am burdened enough.' Whatever the children may miss now, they will preserve their inner liberty, and their independent pride will be strong when they come of age. But if Frieda gave all up to go and live with them, that would sap their strength because they would have to support her life when they grew up. They would not be free to live of themselves--they would first have to live for her, to pay her back.⁶

In Fantasia of the Unconscious, published in 1922, Lawrence devotes an entire chapter to "Parent Love." In it he discusses the disastrous effects of the Oedipus complex. Here is a brief excerpt:

At the very 'age dangereuse', when a woman should be accomplishing her own fulfillment into maturity and rich quiescence, she turns rabidly to seek a new lover. At the very crucial time when she should be coming to a state of pure

equilibrium and rest with her husband, she turns rabidly against rest or peace or equilibrium or husband in any shape or form, and demands more love, more love, a new sort of lover, one who will 'understand' her. And as often as not she turns to her son.

... ..
Here, in her son who belongs to her, she seems to find the last perfect response for which she is craving. He is a medium to her, she provokes from him her own answer. So she throws herself into a last great love for her son, a final and fatal devotion, that which would have been the richness and strength of her husband and is poison to her son.⁷

Not only does the man weakened by the teaching of self-denial fail to maintain the love and respect of the woman, but frequently he also fails to establish a wholesome relationship with another man. In Fantasia of the Unconscious, Lawrence stresses the importance of the man-man friendship. A man must unite with other men for the "purposive, creative activity" of building a world.⁸

United, they become strong as men; then when they return to their women, the strength they have found with their fellowmen makes them equally strong to satisfy the sexual needs of their women. The man with a destroyed Self has no distinct personality, no subjective being, to bring to the man-man relationship. He cannot establish a friendship with a man because he has no individuality to offer. Consequently he finds no strength in the man-man relationship which in turn will make him strong in his relationship with the woman.

Lawrence sees the Christian teaching of self-denial as the chief instigating force of industrialism. By denying the Self, the person becomes a "not me" creature. "When I am all that is not me, than I have perfect liberty, I know no limitations. Only I must eliminate the Self,"⁹ Lawrence reasons. Then he links the "not me" concept with industrialism. The machine is the perfect expression of

the "not me," the selfless power, the abstract force.

It was this religious belief [elimination of the Self] which expressed itself in science. Science was the analysis of the outer self, the elementary substance of the self, the outer world. And the machine is the great reconstructed selfless power. Hence the active worship to which we were given at the end of the last century, the worship of mechanised force.¹⁰

An excellent illustration of the selfless power of mechanization as an outgrowth of Christian selflessness is shown in Women in Love. Mr. Crich, the Christian, denies his Self so he can give himself to his workmen. In order to come near to God, Mr. Crich feels he must come near to the people. They become his "mindless Godhead of humanity."¹¹ They do not exist as individuals; they are abstractions, objects that he worships. He has lost his Selfhood, and then he destroys theirs. His son Gerald, resenting his father's Christian weakness, turns to the machine and it becomes his "mindless Godhead." The irony involved is that his father's Christianity has also taught Gerald to worship an abstraction. Instead of worshipping the selfless people, he worships the selfless power of the abstract machine. Lawrence sees modern industrialism as co-extensive with Christianity; they have the same effect on the workmen. In both cases, the Self of the individual is destroyed; their hearts "die within them." The critic Julian Moynahan expresses Lawrence's view thus:

The industrial system, like the system of the medieval church . . . solves the problem of living in one mode only. It satisfies the economic needs of men and their hunger for order by arranging their activities according to an intellectualized, simplistic model of human reality. The workmen are satisfied in their soul but their hearts 'died within them'. The centres of their feelings dry up.¹²

When men, like Mr. Crich and Gerald, bring a denied Self to the intimate man-woman love relationship, their weaknesses suddenly become very apparent. They have no Self to offer; their women declare them "impotent." Their women destroy them for they cannot respect them.

Christianity is co-extensive with industrialism, and it is also related to a type of selfless nationalism. Many individuals deny real Selfhood in order to dedicate themselves to the nation. They pretend to find self-fulfillment as they swear allegiance to their country, but it is a perverted self-fulfillment. In an essay, Lawrence, in an ironic tone, comments on this type of falsified allegiance.

So we go to war to show that we can throw our lives away. Indeed, they have become of so little value to us. We cannot live, we cannot be. Then, let us tip-cat with death, let us rush, throwing our lives away. Then, at any rate, we shall have a sensation--and--'perhaps', after all, the value of life is in death.¹³

Such a perverted self-fulfillment thrives on sensation. While the real Self finds fulfillment in creation, the perverted self finds fulfillment in destruction.

When the man who has sold himself to the nation comes to the woman, he brings with him his corrupted self. The woman recognizes the falseness, and the inevitable end of their love relationship is a further destruction of the man and also the woman.

Christianity, with its emphasis on denying a vital part in man, fosters a people who cannot respond with the "whole" man. A "dissociation of sensibility" has taken place within them.¹⁴ They have separated the spirit and the body (or one could say, the mind and the body). Consequently some individuals respond to love only with the mind; others respond only with the body. Individuals like Hermione in Women in Love experience love

through the mind; hers is a spiritual knowledge of love. Those whom the West African statue represents, on the other hand, love only with the body; theirs is a "purely sensual, purely unspiritual knowledge" of love.¹⁵ Both types of individuals have lost the capacity to respond with the whole man. Both have lost, what Eugene Goodheart in The Utopian Vision of D. H. Lawrence calls, a response of the "profound spontaneous soul of men."¹⁶

The last paragraph of "The Lemon Gardens," in Twilight in Italy, is an excellent summary of what Lawrence believes is happening to our civilization, particularly in industrialized England.

There it [industrialized England] lay, vast masses of rough-hewn knowledge, vast masses of ideas and methods, and nothing done with it, only teeming swarms of disintegrated human beings seething and perishing rapidly away amongst it, till it seems as if a world will be left covered with huge ruins, and scored by strange devices of industry, and quite dead, the people swallowed up in the last efforts towards a perfect, selfless society.¹⁷

To conclude, the culture of a Christian-oriented society fosters, in Lawrence's view, a selfless people. Such individuals bring a form of destruction to every love relationship.

FOOTNOTES

1. Mark Spilka, The Love Ethic of D. H. Lawrence (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955), p. 22.
2. D. H. Lawrence, "Study of Thomas Hardy," in Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D. H. Lawrence, ed. E. D. McDonald (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1936), p. 456.
3. D. H. Lawrence, Twilight in Italy (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1956), p. 34.
4. Ibid., p. 7.
5. Ibid., p. 9.
6. Frieda Lawrence, Not I, But the Wind (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1935), p. 57.
7. D. H. Lawrence, Fantasia of the Unconscious (London: Heinemann Ltd., 1923), pp. 111-2.
8. Ibid., pp. 98-9.
9. D. H. Lawrence, Twilight in Italy, p. 40.
10. Ibid., p. 40.
11. D. H. Lawrence, Women in Love (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1960), p. 242.
12. Julian Moynahan, The Deed of Life (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 79.
13. D. H. Lawrence, "Study of Thomas Hardy," p. 406.
14. Robert L. Chamberlain, "Pussum, Minette, and the Africo-Nordic Symbol in Lawrence's Women in Love," PMLA, LXXVIII, (Wisconsin, 1963), p. 414.
15. D. H. Lawrence, Women in Love, p. 285.
16. Eugene Goodheart, The Utopian Vision of D. H. Lawrence (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), p. 10.
(The paragraph on page 10 and 11 on the "dissociation of sensibility" may appear as an oversimplification of the problem. Both Hermione and the West African statue will be discussed in greater detail in a later chapter.)
17. D. H. Lawrence, Twilight in Italy, p. 54.

CHAPTER II

THE "ROTTEN" CHURCH AND THE DESTRUCTIVE MAN-WOMAN RELATIONSHIP

In Lawrence's novels, a culture established on the church's Christian vision is the source of the deathliness in the man-woman love relationship. The "spiritual" woman worships the man as she worships the dead body of Christ. She admires the man's body but refuses to respond spontaneously to it with her body. When she does respond physically, it is in the form of a sacrifice. Her sacrificial love "kills" a part of the man for it humiliates his masculinity; he is made to feel ashamed of his sensual desires. Then, again, the strong-willed woman, a second type of destroyer, kills a part of the man who has been weakened by the Christian culture and has become a selfless creature.

Not only is the woman the destroyer: the man may also destroy as he "loves." He, too, may be the "spiritual" lover who admires the beauty of the woman but is afraid to respond sensually to her body. He may sublimate his love: Cyril in The White Peacock writes poetry, Paul in Sons and Lovers paints, and Will in The Rainbow studies the architecture of churches--the church becomes the "perfect womb." Thus the "spiritual" lover destroys his natural desires, and consequently also the woman's.

In The White Peacock, Annable defines the destructive woman through his comments on the central image, the peacock. Then Cyril, the narrator, links the image to the church.

A peacock, startled from the back premises of the Hall, came flapping up the terraces to the churchyard. . . . The peacock flapped beyond me, on to the neck of an old bowed angel, rough and dark, an angel which had long ceased sorrowing for the lost Lucy, and had died also. The bird bent its voluptuous neck and peered about. Then it lifted up its head and yelled. The sound tore the dark sanctuary of twilight. . . .

The keeper looked at me and smiled. He nodded his head towards the peacock, saying: 'Hark at that damned thing!'

Again the bird lifted its crested head and gave a cry, at the same time turning awkwardly on its ugly legs, so that it showed us the full wealth of its tail glimmering like a stream of coloured stars over the sunken face of the angel. 'The proud fool!--look at it! Perched on an angel, too, as if it were a pedestal for vanity. That's the soul of a woman--or it's the devil.

He was silent for a time, and we watched the great bird moving uneasily before us in the twilight.

'That's the very soul of a lady,' he said, 'the very, very soul. Damn the thing, to perch on that old angel. I should like to wring its neck.'

Again the bird screamed, and shifted awkwardly on its legs; it seemed to stretch its beak at us in derision. Annable picked up a piece of sod and flung it at the bird, saying: 'Get out, you screeching devil! God!' he laughed. 'There must be plenty of hearts twisting under here,'--and he stamped on a grave, 'when they hear that row.'

He picked another sod from a grave and threw at the big bird. The peacock flapped away, over the tombs, down the terraces. 'Just look!' he said, 'the miserable brute has dirtied that angel. A woman to the end, I tell you, all vanity and screech and defilement.'

... 'The church,' said I, 'is rotten. I suppose they'll stand all over the country like this, soon--with peacocks trailing the graveyards.'

Here, then, is a picture of the destructive woman: a "screeching devil" with a "voluptuous neck" and awkward ugly legs, perched upon something that is sacred--a dead angel--and daring to defile it. The graveyard has become the peacock's resting place; in the background stands the "rotten" church. The destructive woman, represented by the peacock, and the church are united by the graveyard; theirs is a union of death for both have lost the capacity for a life-giving experience of love. The church has taught the woman to destroy in as much as she only pretends to love.

Annable is quick to give an example of the "peacock," the destructive woman: he describes his wife, Lady Crystabel, as a woman who gets her ideas on love from a "sloppy French novel." She loves Annable with a grasping, clutching love that never allows him out of her sight. She views him "in an aesthetic light" as a "Greek statue," meanwhile humiliating him as she denies him her body. Thus she destroys his pride in his masculinity. All her love is pretense; it is not a spontaneous response to his "life flame." Therefore her love is a negation of life. It is a destructive love.

Just as Lady Crystabel destroys a part of Annable, so Lettie Beardsall destroys a part of George Saxton. Lettie teases him with her kisses, arouses his emotions, admires his body, yet refuses to give herself to him. She "plays" at loving him, but in reality she does not know what a meaningful love experience is.

The man as the "spiritual" lover is also introduced. Cyril "plays" at being in love with Emily Saxton. He enjoys having tea with the Saxtons and admiring Emily as she helps her younger brothers and sisters. At the Christmas party, he comments on Emily as she arrives: "Emily, ruddy from the cold air, was wearing a wine coloured dress, which suited her luxurious beauty."² Occasionally he may kiss her, but in a hesitating and embarrassed manner. Cyril continues his "playing" with love for more than ten years, meanwhile sublimating his sensual desires in writing poetry and watching George and Meg, and Leslie and Lettie have their romances.

In The White Peacock, through Lady Crystabel and Lettie, the reader becomes acquainted with the spiritually destructive woman, and through the image of the peacock in the church graveyard, her relationship to the "dead" church is shown. Then in Sons and Lovers, this causal relationship between the destructive woman and the church

is developed more fully. Miriam Leivers is the spiritual lover; her destructiveness lies in her identification with Christ. Paul Morel is also a spiritual lover. Both Miriam and Paul are destructive as they struggle to suppress their sensual desires. Both have had the teachings of the church instilled in them by their mothers. Miriam has been taught by her mother to "treasure religion" inside herself, to love Christ and God "tremblingly and passionately."³ She has been taught by her mother that sexual intercourse is the "one thing in marriage that is always dreadful, but women have to bear it."⁴ Paul's mother has a background similar to Miriam's. Her father, George Coppard, is described as "proud in his bearing, handsome, and rather bitter; who preferred theology in reading, and who drew near in sympathy only to one man, the Apostle Paul; who was harsh in government, and in familiarity ironic; who ignored all sensuous pleasure."⁵ Although Mrs. Morel has been taught to "ignore all sensuous pleasure," she is attracted to it in Walter Morel: "the dusky, golden softness of this man's 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."⁶ Mrs. Morel never satisfactorily resolves her conflict: she is torn between her Puritanic indoctrination of self-denial and her desire to respond to the "man's sensuous flame of life." Mr. Morel's drinking and consequential irresponsibility towards his family compounds Mrs. Morel's conflict. In her frustration, she turns destructively to her sons, Paul, who is very close to his mother and resents his father, perhaps subconsciously chooses, in his attempt to please her, a girl like her. Mrs. Morel is what Miriam could become were she to marry another Walter Morel; Miriam, although seemingly shy, has a similar destructive potential.

As a young girl, Miriam is afraid of physical experience. Her brothers and Paul enjoy letting the hen peck corn from their palms. Miriam is afraid the hen will hurt her.⁷ When she and Paul are trying out the swing, she is afraid of swinging too high.

"Ha!" she laughed in fear. "No higher!" "But you're not a bit high," he remonstrated. "But no higher."
He heard the fear in her voice, and desisted. Her heart melted in hot pain when the moment came for him to thrust her forward again. But he left her alone. She began to breathe.⁸

There is nothing free and spontaneous about Miriam. Her eyes are dark and brooding; her body is stiff and lifeless:

All the life of Miriam's body was in her eyes, which were usually dark as a dark church, but could flame with light like a conflagration. Her face scarcely ever altered from its look of brooding. She might have been one of the women who went with Mary when Jesus was dead. Her body was not flexible and living. She walked with a swing, rather heavily, her head bowed forward, pondering. . . . There was no looseness or abandon about her. Everything was gripped stiff with intensity, and her effort, overcharged, closed in on itself.⁹

Miriam is identified with the "dark church;" her love, like the church's, is "closed in on itself." She is, as Paul later calls her, a nun who has found her lover in the church. When she brings her spiritual love to the "real" world, the results are disastrous. For example, she loves the flowers with an absorbing love and thus "destroys" them. Paul hates her for it. He interprets

her love as negative: "'You don't want to love--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.'"¹⁰ When she "smothers" her little brother with affection, the child becomes uneasy and begs to be released.¹¹

Although Paul hates Miriam's "absorbing" love for the flowers and accuses her of being afraid of physical experience, he cannot always respond spontaneously either. He, like Miriam, attaches religious significance to many of his ordinary experiences. "Everything took a religious value."¹² When he and Miriam are in church together, "he felt the strange fascination of shadowy religious places. All his latent mysticism quivered into life. She was drawn to him. He was a prayer along with her."¹³ When Miriam does make a feeble attempt to respond physically, Paul becomes very upset: "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."¹⁴

Both Miriam and Paul destroy themselves as they suppress their natural sensuous desires. When they finally do allow these desires to find expression in sexual intercourse, it becomes a sacrificial experience for Miriam and, in part, also for Paul.

He never forgot seeing her as she lay on the bed, when he was unfastening his collar. . . . Her big brown eyes were watching him, still and resigned and loving; she lay as if she had given herself up to sacrifice: there was her body for him; but the look at the back of her eyes, like a creature awaiting immolation, arrested

him, and all his blood fell back. . . .He could hardly bear it. She lay to be sacrificed for him because she loved him so much. And he had to sacrifice her. For a second he wished he were sexless or dead.¹⁵

This is not an experience of love: this is a sacrifice. Miriam's sacrifice humiliates Paul; he feels ashamed that he wants her body. "The fact that he might want her as a man wants a woman had in him been suppressed into shame."¹⁶ Every contact with Miriam increases his feeling of humiliation; "there remained afterwards always the sense of failure and of death."¹⁷

At the beginning of the novel, a comparison is made between Walter and Gertrude Morel. He has a "sensuous flame of life that flowed off his flesh like the flame from a candle;" by comparison, her flame is "baffled and gripped into incandescence by thought and spirit." Both Paul and Miriam, like Mrs. Morel, have their "flames of life" "baffled and gripped into incandescence by thought and spirit." Although Paul compares himself to the Norman arch that symbolizes the "leaping forward of the persistent human soul, on and on, nobody knows where," he is at times very much like Miriam, whom he compares to the Gothic arch, which "leapt up at heaven and touched the ecstasy and lost itself in the divine."¹⁸ Whenever Miriam's response to Paul cannot "lose itself in the divine," it becomes a "sacrifice." Paul, although struggling to free himself from the limiting Gothic arch, again and again also becomes "lost in the divine" as he interprets his responses in religious terms. Neither can respond spontaneously. Both are too closely bound to the "rotten church" with its life-denying emphasis.

In The Rainbow, the "peacock," the destructive woman, is not the spiritual lover of the earlier novels: in this later novel, the "peacock" is the strong-willed woman who pushes the church into the background. She is the one who defiles the once-sacred angel. Something happens to the church in The Rainbow. At the beginning of the novel, to the Brangwens the church is a symbol of "something above and beyond:" "whenever one of the Brangwens in the field lifted his head from his work, he saw the church-tower at Ilkeston in the empty sky. So that as he turned again to the horizontal land, he was aware of something above him and beyond him in the distance."¹⁹ At the end of the novel, Cyril's prediction in The White Peacock has been fulfilled in Ursula's vision: she sees "the old church-tower standing up in hideous obsolescence."²⁰ For Ursula's grandfather, the church was a distant symbol of the Unknown, of "something above and beyond him;" for Ursula the church has become ugly and out-of-date. What has happened to the church has been caused, partially, by the destructive women, Anna and Ursula. The woman is not entirely to blame, for her man, by his very nature, forces her to ridicule him and to destroy his values based on the no-longer-valid concepts of the church.

In The Rainbow, the individuals who rely on the church turn to it because of a lack within themselves. They hope, although it is a false hope, the church will be a substitute for their deficient Selfhoods. Someone like Lydia does not need the church for fulfillment. She can transcend the restrictive teachings of the church: her religion is an intuitive response to life and to God. Her religion is very similar to that of the early Brangwen men who saw the church as a distant symbol of the Unknown, yet a symbol of protection. Her religion is not confined to any particular dogma or creed.

She had some beliefs somewhere, never defined. She had been brought up a Roman Catholic. She had gone to the Church of England for protection. The outward form was a matter of indifference to her. Yet she had some fundamental religion. It was as if she worshipped God as a mystery, never seeking in the least to define what He was.

... ..
 She shone and gleamed to the Mystery, whom she knew through all her senses, she glanced with strange mystic superstitions that never found expression in the English language, never mounted to thought in English. But so she lived, within a potent, sensuous belief that included her family and contained her destiny.²¹

Then in the two succeeding generations, those who try the church or its Christian teachings as an escape from an unfulfilled life discover both to be inadequate.

Will and, briefly, Anna use the church as an escape from an unfulfilled life, but the church proves an unsatisfactory refuge. Anna, as a young girl, tries the church: "Many ways, she tried, of escape. She became an assiduous church-goer. But the language meant nothing to her: it seemed false."²² The church does not fulfill her need. Although she may feel righteous if she practices the teaching of self-denial in serving others, she cannot establish her all-important Selfhood by doing so. Because she realizes the inadequacy of the church, and yet at the same time because she is incapable of discovering her own religion in the "sensuous belief that includes her family and contains her destiny" (as her mother, Lydia, could), Anna resorts to ridiculing the church and her husband, who finds his strength in the church, the false Absolute. Just as she laughs at him the first time they go to church together before their marriage, so she laughs at him again and again after their marriage when she notices his false

aspirations to the church. Unable to find fulfillment in the church, Anna finally attains some sort of fulfillment through the magnificence of her pregnancies. Bearing children becomes a partial fulfillment for her: she achieves her "Mount Pisgah," her mountaintop vision.

She had a slight expectant feeling, as of a door half opened. . . . She was straining her eyes to something beyond. And from her Pisgah mount, which she had attained, what could she see? A faint, gleaming horizon, a long way off, and a rainbow like an archway, a shadow-door with faintly coloured coping above it. Must she be moving thither? Something she had not, something she did not grasp, could not arrive at. There was something beyond her.²³

Unlike Lydia, who shares with Tom the rainbow that spans their marriage, Anna can catch only a distant glimpse of the rainbow. "The token of the covenant," that all flesh will not be destroyed,²⁴ is given to Lydia; Anna catches only a glimpse of the token, for she has not found Self-fulfillment. She has destroyed the church as an Absolute both for herself and Will, yet she has not found her complete Selfhood; her child-bearing is only a substitute for the Self.

For Will the church is an escape from an unfulfilled life. He loves the church passionately, but this passion is not an experience with life; it is an escape from life. He already has this passion for the church before he meets Anna. Anna, at first, finds this attractive in him:

Listening to him, as he spoke of church after church, of nave and chancel and transept, of rood-screen and font, of hatchet-carving and moulding and tracery, speaking always with close passion of particular things, particular places,

there gathered in her heart a pregnant hush of churches, a mystery, a ponderous significance of bowed stone, a dim-coloured light through which something took place obscurely, passing into darkness: a high, delighted framework of the mystic screen, and beyond in the furthest beyond, the altar.²⁵

Will tries to make his passion for the church come alive, but he does not succeed: the "Creation of Eve," which he is carving for the church, never comes alive. Try as he will, he cannot get his Eve "tender and sparkling."²⁶ "She was a keen, unripe thing. With trembling passion, fine as a breath of air, he sent the chisel over her belly, her hard, unripe, small belly. She was a stiff little figure, with sharp lines, in the throes and torture and ecstasy of her creation."²⁷ His Eve is a distortion of the real woman, a substitute for her. A passion for the real woman can bring him Self-fulfillment, whereas his passion for Eve, linked with his passion for the church, is a passion for something dead and distorted.

When Will marries Anna, he continues his passion for the church. Anna resents this. She recognizes this passion as a weakness. She cannot respect his lack of masculinity. She does not want to be bullied by a weakling, therefore she defies his flaunting of authority.

"Fool!" she answered. "Fool! I've known my father, who could put a dozen of you in his pipe and push them down with his finger-end. Don't I know what a fool you are!"

He knew himself what a fool he was, and was flayed by the knowledge. Yet he went on trying to steer the ship of their dual life. He asserted his position as the captain of the ship. And captain and ship bored her. He wanted to loom important as master of one of the innumerable domestic craft that make up the great fleet of society. It seemed to her a ridiculous armada of tubs jostling in futility. She felt no belief in it. She jeered

at him as master of the house, master of their dual life. And he was black with shame and rage. He knew, with shame, how her father had been a man without arrogating any authority.²⁸

Will feels he is denied his proper position, yet he is too weak to enforce his authority. Lacking masculinity, he cannot gain Anna's respect. So, in his frustration, he turns again to the church, "the perfect womb," where he will never be denied. The church, as female, does not challenge his masculinity. In it his emotions can run freely, his passions can always be gratified. He feels unthreatened. When he enters Lincoln Cathedral, the experience is described in sexual terms; he has his "sexual intercourse" with the church:

Here the stone leapt up from the plain of earth, leapt up in a manifold, clustered desire each time, up, away from the horizontal earth, through twilight and dusk and the whole range of desire, through the swerving, the declination, ah, to the ecstasy, the touch, to the meeting and the consummation, the meeting, the clasp, the close embrace, the neutrality, the perfect, swooning consummation, the timeless ecstasy. There his soul remained, at the apex of the arch, clinched in the timeless ecstasy, consummated.²⁹

Like Miriam in Sons and Lovers, Will loses his soul in the "apex of the arch." In the ecstasy of the divine, his soul finds fulfillment, at least, so he imagines. He continues his "passionate intercourse" with the cathedral until Anna begins to jeer at his infatuation with the sacred carvings. The experience ends in chaos for him: "that which had been his absolute, containing all heaven

and earth, was become to him as to her, a shapely heap of dead matter--but dead, dead. His mouth was full of ash, his soul was furious."³⁰ He realizes the church "doorway was no doorway. It was too narrow, it was false He had lost his absolute."³¹ Anna has succeeded in destroying his Absolute.

After his passion for the church has been destroyed, he finds himself free to accept the "Absolute Beauty" of the body of a woman.

He had always, all his life, had a secret dread of Absolute Beauty. It had always been like a fetish to him, something to fear, really. For it was immoral and against mankind. So he had turned to the Gothic form, which always asserted the broken desire of mankind in its pointed arches, escaping the rolling, absolute beauty of the round arch. But now he had given way, and with infinite sensual violence gave himself to the realization of this supreme, immoral, Absolute Beauty, in the body of woman.³²

Although the "rainbow" never spans Will's marriage with Anna, although he and Anna never attain the Selfhood of Tom and Lydia, Will, after being destroyed by Anna in the church and after finding his Absolute Beauty in the body of Anna, does experience a rebirth of a feeble Self. He becomes free to take an interest in public life, specifically in the education system.³³ He is no longer bound by the limiting "apex of the arch" of the church.

Ursula also tries the church as a possible doorway to fulfillment. But even more than her mother, she questions the validity of some of the Christian teachings. She cannot understand why so great an emphasis is placed on the bleeding hands and feet of a crucified Christ. It seems vulgar to her to imagine placing one's fingers in His wounds. The cross, the tomb and "the smell of grave-clothes" overshadow the Resurrection.

It was becoming a mechanical action now, this drama: birth at Christmas for death at Good Friday. On Easter Sunday the life-drama was as good as finished. For the Resurrection was shadowy and overcome by the shadow of death, the Ascension was scarce noticed, a mere confirmation of death.³⁴

Ursula cannot accept the church's emphasis on death. Christianity becomes a negation of life: instead of glorifying the resurrected Christ who had conquered death, Christianity clings to the crucified Christ who died an ugly, vulgar death.

As a teenage girl, Ursula briefly accepts Christ as her spiritual lover. He becomes the male substitute for her: in her imagination she lays her head upon His breast and finds satisfaction. "And all the time she knew underneath that she was playing false, accepting the passion of Jesus for her own physical satisfaction."³⁵ But when Anton Skrebensky comes along, Ursula quickly forgets the church and Christ, her "spiritual" lover. She turns to Anton, a lover of flesh-and-blood.

Thus both Ursula and Anna become the peacock who defiles what was once sacred. They have defiled the sacred teachings of the church, declared them no longer valid. They have pushed the church into the background because it is "rotten." The church that was the symbol of the distant Unknown for the older generations of the Brangwens has become a "church-tower standing up in hideous obsolescence."

By the time Lawrence writes Women in Love, the church, as a formal institution, has become obsolete. But the influence of Christianity, its disastrous effects, are still very much a part of the culture. Christ's teaching of self-denial in loving one's fellowmen continues to have its destructive effect on the intimate love relation-

ship between the man and the woman. The relationship of Mr. and Mrs. Crich serves as an example.

Mr. Crich believes in Christian charity, in loving his neighbours. He denies his Selfhood in order to commit himself to his workmen, the "mindless Godhead of humanity.."

He had been so constant to his lights, so constant to charity, and to his love for his neighbour. Perhaps he had loved his neighbour even better than himself--which is going one further than the commandment. Always, this flame had burned in his heart, sustaining him through everything, the welfare of the people. He was a large employer of labour, he was a great mine-owner. And he had never lost this from his heart, that in Christ he was one with his workmen. Nay, he had felt inferior to them, as if they through poverty and labour were nearer to God than he. 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 God made manifest. In them he worshipped the highest, the great, sympathetic, mindless Godhead of humanity.⁵⁶

Mr. Crich denies his Self to worship the workmen, "the mindless Godhead of humanity," the people who have become abstractions upon whom he can bestow his Christian charity. He is not concerned with them as individuals; they have become the "God made manifest" which his denied Self can worship.

Mrs. Crich considers her husband a weakling: "She could not bear the humiliation of her husband's soft half-appealing kindness to everybody."⁵⁷ Mrs. Crich associates denying oneself and living for others with death: "it seemed to Mrs. Crich as if her husband were some subtle funeral bird, feeding on the miseries of the people."⁵⁸

In worshipping the "mindless Godhead," Mr. Crich is committed to an abstraction. Consequently, he offers his wife a similar abstract, self-denied love. In the intimate man-woman relationship, this type of love can never satisfy. He knows she is ~~des~~ destroying him because she cannot respect him, yet he refuses to admit it. Instead he tries to convince himself of her "white snow-flowered"³⁹ virginity and her whole-hearted love for him. All the while she is "bleeding" him to death: "the terrible white, destructive light that burned in her eyes only excited and roused him. Till he was bled to death and then he dreaded her more than anything."⁴⁰ His slow physical death is symbolic of his slow and torturous spiritual death.

What effect does Mr. Crich's Christian philosophy have on Gerald? There is a conflict within Gerald: he hates his father's Christian charity, yet he is dominated by it; he despises his father, yet he has a feeling of tenderness for him:

Gerald was in reaction against charity; and yet he was dominated by it, it assumed supremacy in the inner life, and he could not confute it. So he was partly subject to that which his father stood for, but he was in reaction against it. Now he could not save himself. A certain pity and grief and tenderness for his father overcame him, in spite of the deeper, more sullen hostility.⁴¹

When he becomes the "Industrial Magnate," he is determined to reject Christian charity: "the whole Christian attitude of love and self-sacrifice was old hat."⁴² Although he rejects the Christian attitude of self-sacrifice and the commitment to "the mindless Godhead of humanity," Gerald commits himself to an equally "mindless" abstraction. Gerald denies Selfhood and becomes committed to

a "life subjected to pure mathematical principles."⁴³
 This commitment is as abstract as Mr. Crich's sacrifice to his fellowmen.

Gerald, "God of the machine,"⁴⁴ meets his defeat in the love relationship with the woman. Just as Mrs. Crich destroys Mr. Crich, so Gudrun destroys Gerald. Although Gerald's powerful will holds good at the industrial level, in the intimate man-woman relationship it breaks. The strong man is revealed as the weakling; Gudrun proves him "impotent." His abstract commitment to the machine makes him "impotent" in the intimate love relationship with Gudrun.

While some individuals in Women in Love are destroyed in the man-woman love relationship because they bring to it the falsified Self that is committed to an abstraction, others like Birkin and Ursula, are capable of establishing a new religion based on an equilibrium between the Self and the Other, the "pure balance of two single beings."⁴⁵ Their love relationship becomes the new religion for them. In the climactic "Excuse" chapter, the minster bells are playing the hymn:

Glory to Thee my God this night
 For all the blessings of the light--⁴⁶

This hymn is Ursula and Birkin's response at this time. It is a hymn of praise to the "God of love." It is not a hymn of Christian self-denial; furthermore, it is not a hymn of Christ's sacrificial love. One of the "sons of God" is discovering one of the "daughters of men"⁴⁷ and the "God as a mystery" that Ursula's grandmother's Lydia experienced "through all her senses"⁴⁸ is giving his blessing. Birkin and Ursula's consummation of love becomes a rich religious experience for them:

This was release at last. She had had lovers, she had known passion. But this was neither love nor passion. It was the daughters of men coming back to the sons of God, the strange inhuman sons of God who are in the beginning.⁴⁹

In conclusion, how is the out-dated concept of Christianity central to the love-death relationship of the man and woman in Lawrence's early novels? In Sons and Lovers, he shows the man and woman who are governed by the concepts of the church. Paul and Miriam live a life of self-denial by trying to suppress the "life-force" within them. They feel humiliated and ashamed of their bodily desires. For Lawrence, the life of self-denial demanded by Christianity is wrong because it destroys the natural "life force" within man. In The Rainbow, he shows the man or woman who, not finding fulfillment in the man-woman relationship, turns to the church for a substitute lover. Lawrence implies that Christianity appeals to the inadequate, unfulfilled individual. But the church cannot be a satisfactory fulfillment because Christianity emphasizes a dead Christ. In Women in Love, although the Church as a formal institution is not mentioned, the influence of a self-denying Christianity leaves its drastic effects on individuals. Through self-denial, individuals worship abstractions.

FOOTNOTES

1. D. H. Lawrence, The White Peacock (London: Duckworth and Co., 1921), pp. 226-7.

2. Ibid. p. 171.

3. D. H. Lawrence, Sons and Lovers (New York: The Viking Press, 1958), p. 142. (subsequent page references to this edition of this novel.)

4. pp. 290-1.

5. p. 10.

6. p. 10.

7. pp. 126-7.

8. p. 151.

9. pp. 153-4.

10. pp. 173 and 218.

11. p. 153.

12. p. 147.

13. p. 167.

14. p. 173.

15. pp. 289-290.

16. p. 178.

17. p. 290.

18. p. 177.

19. D. H. Lawrence, The Rainbow (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1949), p. 7. (subsequent page references to this edition of this novel.)

20. p. 495.

21. pp. 103-4.

22. p. 106.

23. p. 195.

24. p. 325.

25. p. 113.

26. p. 149.

27. p. 120.

28. pp. 173-4.

29. p. 202.

30. p. 205.

31. p. 206.

32. p. 237.

33. p. 238.

34. p. 281.

35. pp. 287-8.

36. D. H. Lawrence, Women in Love (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1960), p. 241-2. (subsequent page references to this edition of this novel.)

37. p. 242.

38. p. 244.

39. p. 245.

40. p. 245.

- 41. p. 246.
- 42. p. 255.
- 43. p. 260.
- 44. p. 256.
- 45. p. 164.
- 46. p. 351.
- 47. p. 352.

48. D. H. Lawrence, The Rainbow, pp. 103-4 (see Footnote 21.).

49. D. H. Lawrence, Women in Love, p. 353.

CHAPTER III

THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY ON INSTITUTIONS AND THE RESULTING DESTRUCTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

At the beginning of The White Peacock, Lawrence, through his persona, Annable, describes civilization as a "painted fungus of rottenness."¹ He then proceeds to describe the rotten condition and to explain its cause. Later, in Sons and Lovers, The Rainbow, and Women in Love, Lawrence examines this theme further. He gives examples of individuals who cannot survive the rotten civilization and examples of those who have become the "painted fungus," who have furthered the decay. Usually such an individual is a part of a basically rotten institution. According to Lawrence, the most important institution in our culture has been the church. Its rottenness affects all the other institutions: the school, the university, the nation, and the industry. Basically the corruption is caused by the denial of the Selfhood which is taught by Christianity; the individual lives a falsified Self that is committed to "ideas" or is subservient to an abstract higher force. The corruption is further caused by the individual who forces his will upon others and thus destroys their Selfhood. This corruption in civilization drastically affects the love relationship of the man and woman. The man who is committed to an "idea" or to an abstract force will bring a similar abstract love to the intimate man-woman relationship, and this type of love can never satisfy. The man who exerts his will either "kills" the distinct individuality, the Self, in the woman or clashes with her will, and the relationship becomes a battle in which the Self of each is destroyed.

In The White Peacock, through the use of animal imagery, Lawrence draws the reader's attention to the corrupting change in our civilization, to the individual

who cannot survive this change, and to the individual who causes the corruption. The setting of this early novel is the seemingly peaceful English country-side; many of the episodes take place in the woods and meadows. However, one soon notices that the setting is not as idyllic as it at first appears. Again and again the torture, pain, and death of animals is introduced as the creatures struggle in a cruel survival-of-the-fittest environment. The incident that follows immediately after Annable's description of civilization illustrates the description very fittingly: Cyril Beardsall, when walking through the woods, finds a dead rabbit with maggots feeding upon it.² Because Annable has just called civilization "the painted fungus of rottenness," the reader immediately associates the dead rabbit with the rotten civilization and the repulsive maggots with the individuals who are furthering its decay.

On another occasion, Cyril and his sister, Lettie, are on their way to Strelley Mill when they find a wounded cat with both its hind-paws torn from being caught in a gamekeeper's trap. They take the bleeding animal to the Mill where the Saxton family lives. They bathe the injured creature and do all they can to help it, but in the end George Saxton drowns the cat in order to relieve it of its misery.³ The incident foreshadows a similar torture and death struggle that George will experience when he, the wounded beast, will not be able to survive in an environment that forces him off his land in order to make room for the impersonal machine. After he is forced from the farm, he moves to the inn; but away from the farm he cannot find fulfillment. His marriage only aggravates his already unhappy and unfulfilled life. Just as he earlier helped the animal out of its misery, so he wishes someone would help him to a quick death, for he has become the "condemned man" who can only say, "'... the sooner I clear out, the better.'"⁴

One day, from a window, Lettie and Cyril watch the dreary outdoors. A strong gale is blowing and a drizzling rain is falling. Occasionally a black, wet leaf is torn from a tree and staggers down "in a dance of death." Suddenly Lettie and Cyril notice some crows fighting the weather. Four of them light upon a holly tree and cling to it. Lettie maintains that crows are an omen of death because old Mrs. Wagstaff heard a crow croak in her tree every night for a week before her husband's death. Lettie feels glad that the "drunken old wretch" drowned in the canal, yet she feels uncomfortable that the crows are now so near to her. They continue to watch as three of the crows, one by one, try to fly away, but are all pushed by the wind, born down into the stream, and swept away to their death. One crow remains: "only the first ghoul was left on the withered, silver-grey skeleton of the holly."⁵ The destruction in nature is symbolic of the destruction in civilization. The crows are symbolic of Lawrence's characters. Just as the three crows could not survive the raging storm, so some of Lawrence's characters--George, for example--cannot survive their "storms." When the Squire demands changes with which George cannot comply, he and his family are finally forced off the farm. As soon as he has left the old way of life, he begins to deteriorate; the destruction of the old way is a destruction of his very Self. Later, other Lawrencian characters will be other "crows" that fight the storm and finally succumb to it. Still others will be like the "ghoul" crow that survives; they will be individuals who continue to corrupt society by their death-in-life existence.

Thus in The White Peacock, the death of the animals foreshadows the death of the individual whose Self is destroyed. George maintains his Selfhood, at least to a degree, on the farm where he functions as an individual. Away from the farm, his individuality is destroyed. The

destruction of his individuality is a destruction of his spontaneity. With a destroyed Self, George becomes the weakling who lacks the courage to establish a love relationship with Lettie and later cannot sustain the relationship with Meg.

In Sons and Lovers, Lawrence gives examples of individuals who, like George in The White Peacock, enjoy the old agrarian way of life.⁶ Paul Morel is attracted to the Leivers who live on Willey Farm. Paul enjoys working with the Leivers brothers--hoeing the turnips, working in the hayfields and milking the cows. When they are tired of working, they lie in the haystacks, they go for walks, or Paul teaches them a new song. He enjoys the freedom to do as he pleases, to act spontaneously. In contrast, Paul sees individuals who have lost their spontaneity. He hates to see the miners returning in the evening, walking along the road like a herd of dirty creatures. He hates to go to the pay-room and wait in line to collect the wages for his coal-mining father. He is humiliated by the rough and impersonal treatment he receives. It has been engrained into him by his mother that he shall never go "underground" like his father. Paul has no desire to be a miner; he despises the dirt and the ugliness of the coal-mines; he detests the vulgar uniformity of the coal-miners. They have lost their spontaneous life; they seem like prisoners to him.

Although Paul does not go "underground," he becomes a "prisoner of industrialism" of another sort. While looking for a job, he already feels "taken into bondage."

Already he was a prisoner of industrialism. Large sunflowers stared over the old red wall of the garden opposite, looking in their jolly way down on the women who were hurrying with something for dinner. The valley was full of corn, brightening in the sun. Two collieries,

among the fields, waved their small white plumes of stream. Far off on the hills were the woods of Annesley, dark and fascinating. Already his heart went down. He was being taken into bondage. His freedom in the beloved home valley was going now.⁷

When he and his mother go to Jordan's where he is to work, Paul feels as though he is going to his death: "They ventured under the archway, as into the jaws of the dragon. . . . Charles I mounted his scaffold with a lighter heart than had Paul Morel as he followed his mother up the dirty steps to the dirty door."⁸ For Paul the peaceful life of the Leivers' farm is gone; it has been replaced by the impersonal life of industry at Jordan's. Although it is not as dirty as the life of the coal-miner, it has the same imprisoning effect.

In The Rainbow, Lawrence further explores what is happening to civilization: he examines more fully the "dead rabbit," he acquaints the reader with the "maggots" that are feeding on it. Or using the other illustration from The White Peacock, Lawrence presents some more "crows" that cannot survive the storm and also some of the "ghoul" crows that do survive.⁹

Tom Brangwen, like George Saxton, belongs to the agrarian way of life. On the farm his forefathers and he thrived: "so the Brangwens came and went without fear of necessity, working hard because of the life that was in them, not for want of the money."¹⁰

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, dazing with looking towards the source of generation, unable to turn round.¹¹

The spontaneous "blood intimacy" is enough for the Brangwen men--so they think, at least. The Brangwen women looked out "from the heated, blind intercourse of farm-life to the spoken world beyond"¹² whereas the men "faced inwards to the teeming life of creation, which poured unresolved into their veins."¹³

Tom Brangwen marries a Polish woman, Lydia Lensky. Lydia, unlike the Brangwen women but like her husband, Tom, has become immune to the outside world; she has within her "a potent, sensuous belief that included her family and contained her destiny."¹⁴ Hers are instinctive responses very similar to Tom's "blood intimacy."

For at the Marsh life had a certain freedom and largeness. There was no fret about money, no mean little precedence, nor care for what other people thought, because neither Mrs. Brangwen nor Brangwen could be sensible of any judgement passed on them from outside. Their lives were too separate.¹⁵

The freedom at the Marsh exists because the agrarian way of life allows an individual, like Tom, to choose and respond in his own way. Tom is not pressured by outside commercialism. He lives for himself and his family. Furthermore, the freedom of the Marsh exists because of the two people involved: both Tom and Lydia have the capacity to live as two separate beings, to be unconsciously aware of the other person, yet to be free in their individuality.

This freedom is, however, soon lost; Tom Brangwen will be the last to enjoy it. A canal leading to the nearby collieries is constructed in the meadows of the Marsh Farm. Thus industrialization is brought closer to them. Although the Brangwens try to remain isolated from it as long as possible, the colliery is spinning in the near distance and the smoke from the city blurs the horizon. The Brangwens see the red, crude colliers' homes in the valley; when they drive home from town, they meet the "blackened colliers." Then one night during a heavy rain, the canal embankment breaks and Tom Brangwen, who is returning from town, drowns in the flood. Thus Tom is indirectly destroyed by the uncontrollable industrialization. Just as the crows in The White Peacock died in the rushing stream, so Tom drowns in the flood.

In the utter darkness, the unconscious, drowning body was rolled along, the water pouring, washing, filling in the place. The cattle woke up and rose to their feet, the dog began to yelp. And the unconscious, drowning body was washed along in the black, swirling darkness, passively.¹⁶

When the body is discovered the following day, "hay and twigs and dirt were in the beard and hair."¹⁷ The soil and the meadows that were so much a part of Tom's life seem to go with him to his death. The "hay and twigs and dirt" way of life dies with Tom.

Tom Brangwen's son, Tom, who seems the most defiant towards the force that caused his father's death, is, ironically, the first of the Brangwens to become a leading agency of that very force. His defiance is evidenced when little Ursula, unexpectedly, comes across her Uncle Tom after the funeral:

Only afterwards Ursula, flitting between the currant bushes down the garden, saw her Uncle Tom standing in his black clothes, erect and fashionable, but his fists lifted and his face distorted, his lips curled back from his teeth in a horrible grin, like an animal which grimaces with torment, whilst his body panted quick, like a panting dog's. He was facing the open distance, panting, and holding still, then panting rapidly again, but his face never changing from its almost bestial look of torture, the teeth all showing, the nose wrinkled up, the eyes unseeing, fixed.¹⁸

At this point, the young Tom is enraged at the force that killed his father. His fists are lifted towards "the open distance"--in the direction of the distant collieries, the smoking city, and the crude, red houses. His face has a bestial expression of torture; Ursula never forgets this look. Later he becomes manager of the collieries and uses the force that destroyed his father to destroy the individuality of others. The Marsh Farm is no longer separate: a member of the Brangwen family has become a part of the ugly, red houses and the blackened colliery. He controls the people who live in the "mass of homogeneous red-brick dwellings."¹⁹ The homogeneous dwellings become indicative of their homogeneous inmates. In contrast to the freedom, beauty, and individuality of the Marsh, the confinement, ugliness, and conformity of the colliers' homes is apparent.

The streets were like visions of pure ugliness; a grey-black macadamized road, asphalt causeways, held in between a flat succession of wall, window and door, a new-brick channel that began nowhere, and ended nowhere. Everything was amorphous, yet everything repeated itself endlessly.²⁰

When Ursula and Winifred Inger come to visit Tom, Ursula recognizes the bestiality in Tom that she had noticed as a little girl, and she is horrified. Tom has lost his humanity; for him the individual no longer exists. The colliers have become animals to him: "Like creatures with no hope, but which still live and have passionate being, within some utterly unliving shell, they passed meaninglessly along, with strange, isolated dignity. It was as if a hard, horny shell enclosed them all."²¹ Tom cannot love a human being: "the pit was the great mistress" for him.²² In choosing Winifred as a "mate," Tom chooses someone who, like him, can only love in a perverted way. Her earlier homosexual perversion is now merely transferred to a new perversion of love--love of the machine. Both Tom and Winifred have substituted "the impure abstraction" for pure Selfhood.

His real mistress was the machine, and the real mistress of Winifred was the machine. She too, Winifred, worshipped the impure abstraction, the mechanisms of matter. There, there, in the machine, in the 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.²³

Thus the Christian teaching of self-denial is demonstrated in the lives of individuals involved in industry. Tom and Winifred deny their Selfhood and give their love to the machine. They find their consummation in the "mechanism that held all matter." They do not find their consummation in each other; they cannot, for their Selfhood has been destroyed by the "impure abstraction." Thus Winifred and Tom are a part of "the painted fungus of rottenness" that Annable of The White Peacock mentions

in his description of civilization. Whereas Tom's father is one of the "crows" of The White Peacock that cannot survive, the young Tom and his wife become the surviving crow, "the ghoul . . . left on the withered, silver-grey skeleton of the holly."²⁴ In fact, as Ursula observed Tom and Winifred, she noticed that "there seemed something ghoulish even in their very deploring the state of things. They seemed to take a ghoulish satisfaction in it."²⁵

In Women in Love, Gerald Crich, like the young Tom Brangwen, destroys the Self of others by exerting his will upon them. The individual does not matter to Gerald: his prime aim is to improve mass production. Whereas in The Rainbow Tom and Winifred's way of living is analyzed by Ursula, in Women in Love Gerald's behaviour is interpreted by Rupert Birkin, the "Salvator Mundi." At the opening of the novel Gerald hears Birkin's comment on how he thinks people should respond. The novel begins with a wedding scene. Just before the wedding ceremony, the young bride bolts away from the bridegroom and races to the church door. Many of the onlookers think this is a rather undignified way of acting; Birkin, however, thinks it shows great courage and spontaneity on the part of the bride. "'It's the hardest thing in the world to act spontaneously on one's impulses . . .'" Birkin claims. To this Gerald remarks: "'I shouldn't like to be in a world of people who acted individually and spontaneously as you call it.'"²⁶ To allow others to respond spontaneously seems too dangerous to Gerald. He feels that the way to control people, animals, and things is to subjugate them to his will. He forces his will on the horse that does not want to stand still as a train thunders by; the bleeding animal means nothing to him except as an indication that his will has triumphed over the creature.²⁷ Just as Gerald cannot "dare" to allow the horse to respond

to impulse, so he cannot allow Bismark, the rabbit, to have his way. When the rabbit struggles in Gudrun's grasp, Gerald hurriedly takes the rabbit and gives it a violent blow on the back of its neck. The rabbit screams an unearthly cry of death, gives a final convulsion, and sulks into submission; its will has been broken, at least temporarily, by a stronger will.²⁸

A "convulsion of death," similar to the one experienced by the horse and the rabbit, runs through the old system of the collieries when Gerald takes over from his father. Mr. Crich tries to maintain the principle of Christian self-denial and further his own industry.²⁹ He plays the part of the Christian socialist to his workers. He feels that in order to move nearer to God, he must move nearer to the people. At the same time, he is the owner of the collieries, and he wants his industry to be a success. In time, by trying both to be a Christian socialist and a successful capitalist, he loses touch with reality and has the respect of neither his workers nor his family. Mr. Crich's slow physical death is symbolic of the slow spiritual death he suffers because of his failure. Like Tom Brangwen, Mr. Crich cannot survive the changing civilization. But unlike Tom, who looked noble and stately in death because he had lived a fulfilled life, Mr. Crich, when dead, looks "as if life never touched" him. Instead of experiencing a fulfilled life in the Self, he has sacrificed his Self to his workers, to his family, and to the Christian cause. Gerald is determined he will not make the same mistake, but, ironically, he makes a mistake in which he denies his Selfhood in another way. When he takes over, improvements in machinery and production are made very quickly. The workers are forced to accept whatever Gerald demands. Gerald becomes "the God of the machine."³⁰ Everyone and everything becomes obedient to his will.

And it was his will to subjugate Matter to his own ends. The subjugation itself was the point, the fight was the be-all, the fruits of victory were mere results. It was not for the sake of money that Gerald took over the mines. He did not care about money, fundamentally. He was neither ostentatious nor luxurious, neither did he care about social position, not finally. What he wanted was the pure fulfillment of his own will in the struggle with the natural conditions. His will was now, to take the coal out of the earth, profitably. The profit was merely the condition of the victory, but the victory itself lay in the feat achieved.³¹

For Gerald, "Matter" includes the coal in the ground, the machinery to remove the coal, and the workmen who operate the machinery--everything is only Matter to him, something which his will can control. "Mathematical principles" are his substitute for the Selfhood of the individual. Gerald has learned from his Christian father how to destroy his Self and the Selfhood of others by denying their existence. For Mr. Crich, the workers became an abstract Christian charity effort; for Gerald, the workers become a part of the abstract "mathematical principles" that will speed up production. For Lawrence, "the great and perfect system that subjected life to pure mathematical principles," the result of Christian self-denial, was the most destructive thing that existed.

It was the first great step in undoing, the first great phase of chaos, the substitution of the mechanical principle for the organic, the destruction of the organic purpose, the organic unity, and the subordination of every organic unit to the great mechanical purpose. It was pure organic disintegration and pure mechanical organization. This is the first and finest state of chaos.³²

Just as Gerald has been able to break the will of the horse and the rabbit, so he is able to break the wills of the colliers. His own will holds good until he tries to force it upon Gudrun in an intimate man-woman relationship. Here, the result is disastrous. At first, it appears as though his will "kills" a part of Gudrun; in the end she destroys him. After his father's funeral, he comes to Gudrun during the night. The wet clay from his father's grave has been caked on his boots. He brings with him a "convulsion of death" similar to the one he forced upon the horse, the rabbit, and the colliers. Just as he "kills" a part of everything he touches, so he will kill a part of Gudrun, and she will kill a part of him.

He had come for vindication. . . . Into her he poured all his pent-up darkness and corrosive death and he was whole again. . . . And she, subject, received him as a vessel filled with his bitter potion of death. She had no power at this crisis to resist. The terrible frictional violence of death filled her, and she received it in an ecstasy of subjection, in throes of acute, violent sensation.³³

That night Gudrun experiences a form of death. Her relationship with Gerald continues, and in the Northern mountains it becomes intensified. The clashing of wills which began at the water party is greatly magnified in the cold Northland. The deadly struggle between the two wills reaches a climax. "She hated him with a power that she wondered did not kill him. In her will she killed him as he stood, effaced him."³⁴ Gudrun is determined to destroy Gerald entirely, and Gerald is equally determined to destroy Gudrun. "He [Gerald] was one blind, incontinent desire to kill her."³⁵ "One of them must triumph over the other. Which should it be? Her soul steeled itself

with strength."³⁶ "Death was inevitable, and nothing was possible but death."³⁷ Gerald is the first to die, physically. Gudrun "chokes" the life out of him as the drowning Diane Crich choked the life out of her young man at the water party.³⁸ Gudrun gives her final blow as she prophesied she would give.³⁹ In life, Gerald had reduced everything and everyone to Matter; in death, he becomes "cold, mute Matter."⁴⁰ This, then, is the end of someone who does not believe that people should act "individually and spontaneously;"⁴¹ this is the end of someone who denies the Selfhood to worship abstractions. Gudrun also dies a psychological death. Their destructive love relationship has "killed" them both.

According to Lawrence, the nation as an institution is also corrupt. The nation, like industry has been taught by Christianity to destroy the Self. Cultural idealism leads individuals to be loyal and subservient to the state as an abstract force. The Selfhood is destroyed and a falsified Self swears allegiance to the nation; this form of self-denial is an outgrowth of the self-denial demanded by Christianity.

One had to fill one's place in the Whole, the great scheme of man's elaborate civilization, that was all. The Whole mattered--but the unit, the person, had no importance, except as he represented the Whole.

... ..
The good of the greatest number was all that mattered. That which was the greatest good for all, collectively, was the greatest good for the individual. And so, every man must give himself to support the state, and so labour for the greatest good of all. One might make improvements in the state, perhaps, but always with a view of preserving it intact.⁴²

This is Anton Skrebensky's belief. Yet, this cannot bring vital fulfillment to him. Ursula realizes this, and she accuses him of believing in "old, dead things."⁴³ Just as Gerald had sold himself to the machine, so Skrebensky has sold himself to the nation. Consequently both have destroyed their Selfhood; their women cannot love selfless men. Just as Ursula declares Skrebensky "impotent" in his contribution to the nation, so for her he also becomes sexually impotent. Both Gerald and Skrebensky are destroyed finally by their women. Gerald dies a physical death; Skrebensky continues a death-in-life existence pretending to serve his country in India.

Lawrence, also, examines the school and the college, and, as in the case of the church, these institutions have the Gothic arch as their doorway to Truth. Just as allegiance to the nation has become a substitute for fulfillment of the Self, so the school and the college have come to provide only substitutes for fulfillment. Ursula accepts a teaching position at the Ilkeston school. With eager anticipation she arrives the first day. "She entered the arched doorway of the porch. The whole place seemed to have a threatening expression, imitating the church's architecture, for the purpose of domineering, like a gesture of vulgar authority."⁴⁴ Ursula's youthful hopes and noble ambitions are shattered when the "domineering" and "vulgar authority" foreshadowed by the architecture becomes a living reality in the classroom. Ursula is forced to comply with the system. The children are accustomed to the iron rule of the head-teacher, Mr. Harby, and they know no other discipline than that of sheer, brutal force.

This he [Mr. Harby] had it in his power to do, to crystallize the children into hard, mute fragments, fixed under his will: his brute will, which fixed them by sheer force. She too must

learn to subdue them to her will: she must. For it was her duty, since the school was such. He had crystallized the class into order. But to see him, a strong, powerful man, using all his power for such a purpose, seemed almost horrible.⁴⁵

The whole system is "wrong and ugly." It becomes a matter of the adult forcing his will upon the child and the child's will being crushed until it is broken. The teacher must forget the child as an individual in order to control the children as a class. The mass of children can be controlled only by terrorizing them into respect. Both teacher and student lose their individuality; both are destroyed. Ursula, with great bitterness, finally concludes: "Never more, and never more would she give herself as individual to her class."⁴⁶ After brutally beating a big boy, Ursula gains the fearful respect of the children. "But she had paid a great price out of her own soul, to do this, It seemed as if a great flame had gone through her and burnt her sensitive tissue. . . . She would rather, in reality, that they disobeyed the whole rules of the school, than that they should be beaten, broken, reduced to this crying, hopeless state."⁴⁷

When Ursula begins college, she again enters through the Gothic arch.⁴⁸ At first she is very enthusiastic and keen to learn the Truth from the learned men, but she soon realizes that it is not the Truth, but a falsified, outdated, and empty one.

The life went out of her studies, why, she did not know. But the whole thing seemed sham, spurious; spurious Gothic arches, spurious peace, spurious Latinity, spurious dignity of France, spurious naiveté of Chaucer.⁴⁹

The college seems cheap and barren to Ursula. A "commercial commodity" has been substituted for the Truth. "And barrenly, the professors in their gowns offered commercial commodity that could be turned to good account in the examination room; ready made stuff too, and not really worth the money it was intended to fetch; which they all knew."⁵⁰

In the case of Tom Brangwen Jr., Winifred Inger, Gerald Crich, Anton Skrebensky, and the pupil Ursula, the basic thing that seems to have gone wrong is that, either by their own choice or because of the system forced upon them, they have falsified the Self and committed it to an abstract force or a substitute for the genuine thing. The substitute can sometimes be subtly disguised and appear very real. People become committed to an idea of the thing instead of the thing itself. Thus their experience is not primary but merely secondary. Lawrence illustrates the falseness of this kind of commitment through the character of Hermione, among others. She, as the "Kulturtrager," claims that the greatest accomplishment is "to know." Her craving for knowledge is very deliberate. She craves it as much as Gerald craves exerting power. In both cases, all spontaneity is destroyed. Birkin lashes out at Hermione: "'To know, that is your all, that is your life--you have only this, this knowledge.'"⁵¹ "'You've got that mirror, your own fixed will, your immortal understanding, your own tight conscious world, and there is nothing beyond it.'"⁵² Just as neither Gerald nor Skrebensky can sustain the intimate love relationship with a woman because each has exhausted his energy on abstract forces, so Hermione becomes sexually impotent because she exhausts her passions on "knowing," on experiencing the idea of the sexual act instead of the act itself. Again Birkin violently expresses his disapproval:

'You are merely making words,' he said; 'knowledge means everything to you. Even your animalism, you want it in your head. You don't want to be an animal, you want to observe your own animal functions, to get a mental thrill out of them. It is all purely secondary--and more decadent than the most hide-bound intellectual. What is it but the worst and last form of intellectualism, this love of yours for passion and the animal instincts? Passion and the instincts--you want them hard enough, but through your head, in your consciousness. It all takes place in your head, under that skull of yours.'⁵³

Hermione's knowledge through the mind is dissociated from primary experience and therefore corrupting to civilization. In Women in Love, Lawrence also emphasizes another kind of dissociated knowledge. Whereas Hermione's is a spiritual knowledge, the other kind is a physical, sensual knowledge. Both are equally corrupting. When Gerald and Birkin are at Halliday's place in London, they notice a statue of a West African woman in child-labour, "conveying the suggestion of the extreme of physical sensation, beyond the limits of mental consciousness."⁵⁴ She has a tiny crushed beetle-like face. Later in the "Moony" chapter when Birkin is resolving whether the "phallic cult" is enough for him, he suddenly remembers the statue. He concludes that her race must have died thousands of years ago: for thousands of years at least "the goodness, the holiness, the desire for creation and productive happiness" must have been dead. For thousands of years primitive Africans probably functioned with "purely sensual, purely unspiritual knowledge." Birkin draws this conclusion after examining her figure: the long and elegant body, the short, ugly legs, the heavy buttocks, the protruding stomach, and the crushed beetle-like face. There has been a dissociation of the mind and

the body. Physical sensation without the response of the mind has in time formed the beetle face. Birkin then, associates Gerald with this kind of "sensual, unspiritual" knowledge. Just as the African race died many years ago, so Birkin fears Gerald will have to die. Just as the African race had died in "the burning death--the abstraction of the Sahara," so Gerald, the Nordic, in a different way will be destroyed by "the destructive frost mystery." Both have lost "the goodness, the holiness, the desire for creation;" both think only of physical gratification.⁵⁵

Basically, Hermione and the African statue represent the same corruption: Hermione is obsessed with the desire "to know" through the mind; the African statue is obsessed "to know" through the body. And as a result both know only a distortion of love. Neither can respond spontaneously, instinctively.

Amid all the examples of decay, Lawrence gives Birkin's vision of a new way. Whereas Annable of The White Peacock thinks there is no hope, Birkin in Women in Love feels there is, but as he says, "'You've got very badly to want to get rid of the old before anything new will appear--even in the self.'"⁵⁷ Birkin's answer is found in the complete destruction of that which is, in effect, dead. Some new form of life will arise and a new civilization will be built. He gives his answer to Gerald as the two of them are on the train travelling to London.

Birkin looked at the land, at the evening, and was thinking: 'Well, if 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. That which informs it all is there, and can never be lost. After all, what is mankind but just one expression of the incomprehensible. And if mankind passes away, it will only mean that this particular expression is completed and done. That

which is expressed, and that which is to be expressed, cannot be diminished. There it is, in the shining evening. Let mankind pass away--time it did. The creative utterances will not cease, they will only be there. Humanity doesn't embody the utterance of the incomprehensible any more. Humanity is a dead letter. There will be a new embodiment, in a new way. Let humanity disappear as quick as possible.⁵⁸

Birkin finds his answer in the destruction of the "mass of mankind:" the young Tom Brangwens, the Gerald Criches, the Hermiones and the other "living dead" will have to be destroyed. This kind of "humanity" will have to disappear. The "creative utterances" will be a "new embodiment" in the "new" Birkin and Ursula figures of a new civilization.

FOOTNOTES

1. D. H. Lawrence, The White Peacock (London: Duckworth and Co., 1921), p. 224. (subsequent page references to this edition of this novel.)

2. p. 224.

3. pp. 18-21.

4. p. 496.

5. p. 126.

6. In Sons and Lovers, the theme of the changing and corrupting civilization is perhaps not as evident as in the other three novels under discussion in this paper. Nevertheless, I think it is important to include Sons and Lovers, although only briefly, in this chapter so as to give a continuity to the development of the theme. For example, Paul Morel, although quite different from George Saxton, has very similar feelings towards freedom on the farm and imprisonment away from it.

7. D. H. Lawrence, Sons and Lovers (New York: The Viking Press, 1958), p. 89.

8. Ibid., p. 93.

9. I am not suggesting that all of Lawrence's characters have to be either "crows" that die or "ghouls" that survive. The analogy drawn does break down--Lydia, for example, is neither a "crow" that dies or a "ghoul" that survives. Nevertheless, the analogy is worth using.

10. D. H. Lawrence, The Rainbow (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1949), p. 7. (subsequent page references to this edition of this novel.)

11. pp. 8 and 9.

12. p. 8.

13. p. 9.

14. p. 104.

15. p. 101.

16. p. 247.

17. p. 250.

18. pp. 251-2.

19. p. 345.

20. p. 345.

21. p. 346.

22. p. 349.

23. p. 350.

24. D. H. Lawrence, The White Peacock, p. 126.

25. D. H. Lawrence, The Rainbow, p. 349.

26. D. H. Lawrence, Women in Love (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1960), p. 36. (subsequent page references to this edition of this novel.)

- 27. pp. 122-5.
- 28. pp. 269-271.
- 29. p. 255.
- 30. p. 250.
- 31. pp. 251-2.
- 32. p. 260.
- 33. p. 388.
- 34. p. 512.
- 35. p. 520.
- 36. p. 465.
- 37. p. 526.
- 38. p. 212.
- 39. p. 191.
- 40. p. 540.
- 41. p. 36.

42. D. H. Lawrence, The Rainbow, p. 328. (subsequent page references to this novel.)

- 43. p. 462.
- 44. p. 369.
- 45. p. 388.
- 46. p. 395.
- 47. p. 405.
- 48. p. 430.
- 49. p. 434.
- 50. p. 436.

51. D. H. Lawrence, Women in Love, p. 43. (subsequent page references to this novel.)

- 52. p. 45.
- 53. p. 45.
- 54. p. 82.
- 55. pp. 285-7.

56. D. H. Lawrence, The White Peacock, p. 224.

57. D. H. Lawrence, Women in Love, p. 59.

58. Ibid., p. 65.

CHAPTER IV

THE UNFULFILLED PARENT AND THE CHILD

In the second chapter, the man-woman love within the Christian culture has been examined. According to Lawrence, the woman who models her love for the man after the sacrificial love of Christ destroys a part of the "life flame" within the man. Her love is based on an "idea," the idea of Christian love, and is therefore not an instinctive response to life. The man, again, who turns from the woman to the church for a substitute lover finds only the limiting Gothic arch and the statues of the dead Christ and the saints. In the third chapter, the corrupted institutions have been examined. Individuals belonging to these institutions have lost an instinctive and spontaneous response of the Self and have fostered a deliberate response of a perverted self. In this chapter, a further destructive element in the civilization will be examined: love between man and woman, which should receive first place, has been replaced by parent-child love. A destruction takes place: often either the man or the woman is destroyed, and the children are severely injured.

Lawrence believed that the man-woman relationship was central to all human relationships and should, therefore, receive first place in both the man and woman's lives. In his essay "We Need One Another" he writes: "The relationship of man and woman is the central fact in actual human life. Next comes the relationship of man to man. And, a long way after, all the other relationships, fatherhood, motherhood, sister, brother, friend."¹ In his novels, Lawrence shows what happens if this order is not followed. The woman who does not find fulfillment in her husband lover turns to motherhood for a substitute fulfillment. She may turn to her children as substitute lovers, or she may sacrifice herself to her children and play both the father and mother role to them. By turning to her

children, she humiliates her husband and destroys him; she "kills" a vital part in him. The husband, again, who is too weak to maintain the love and respect of his wife, may turn ravagingly to his children to exert his power over them and thus prove his strength. The unfulfilled man-woman relationship usually "cripples" the children in some way: they feel obligated to return the sacrificial love of the parent and thereby rob themselves of love that should be spent elsewhere. The child "crippled" by the wrong love of the parent "dies" or continues a dismal death-in-life existence unless he is able, in some way, to free himself of his parent.

In The White Peacock, the reader becomes acquainted with several unfulfilled man-woman relationships which result in damaging the parent and child. Perhaps the most obvious one is that of Cyril and Lettie's parents. Mr. Beardsall makes a brief, mysterious appearance in the novel, and the reader is hardly prepared for his sudden death. One day as Cyril Beardsall and George Saxton are walking through the woods, they come across a man lying under the trees. The mystery as to the identity of the man is solved in the following chapter when Mrs. Beardsall receives a letter from her dying husband. When Cyril and his mother go to the father, who by this time is dead, Cyril recognizes him as the forsaken man in the woods. It seems that he died because of heavy drinking which began as a result of a breakdown in the love relationship between himself and his wife. He left home and slowly deteriorated. One is made to understand that Mrs. Beardsall, by her superior and condescending attitude towards her husband, had forced him away from home, and he did not dare to return. Thus indirectly, Mrs. Beardsall has caused his death. At first the children have been given the impression

that the father was entirely to blame for depriving them of a father, but after the mother receives the letter she admits her guilt.

'You know,' she said, 'he had a right to the children, and I've kept them all the time.'
 'He could have come,' said I.
 'I set them against him, I have kept them from him, and he wanted them. I ought to be by him now,--I ought to have taken you to him long ago. . . . He would have come--he wanted to come--I have felt it for years. But I kept him away. I know I have kept him away. I have felt it, and he has. Poor Frank--he'll see his mistakes now. He would not have been as cruel as I have been. . . . I have felt in myself a long time that he was suffering; I have had the feeling of him in me. I knew, yes, I did know he wanted me, and you, I felt it. I have had the feeling of him upon me this last three months especially . . . I have been cruel to him.'²

After Mrs. Beardsall returns from seeing her dead husband, she again admits her guilt: "'You might have had a father--'"; then she adds, "'If ever you feel scorn for one who is near you rising in your throat, try and be generous, my lad.'"³

Here then is an unfulfilled love relationship in which the woman destroyed the man by denying him both her love and her children's. How does this affect the children? When Lettie hears of her father's death, she remarks: "'Then it's a good thing he is out of the way if he was such a nuisance to mother.'"⁴ The attitude reflected in this comment seems as cold and harsh as her mother's earlier attitude which forced her father's abandonment. The daughter has learned from her mother. Both know how to be cruel to their lovers. Leslie, on one occasion, calls Lettie "a cold little lover."⁵ Coincidental as it may seem, it is significant that both mother and daughter hate the feel of wedding rings. The mother says to Let-

tie when she complains about the heaviness of the ring that Leslie has given her, "'You are like me, I never could wear rings. I hated my wedding ring for months.'"⁶ Both mother and daughter would like to cast off the ring, the symbol that binds a marriage relationship.

There is a further effect that the unfulfilled relationship has on the children. The death resulting from the unfortunate marriage leaves a permanent impression upon Cyril and Lettie: "the unanswered crying of failure." Cyril comments:

The death of the man who was our father changed our lives. It was not that we suffered a great grief; the chief trouble was the unanswered crying of failure. But we were changed in our feelings and in our relations; there was a new consciousness, a new carefulness.⁷

"The unanswered crying of failure" haunts them. As the mother has failed, so the children feel they will fail. Lettie says to George, on one occasion, "'You wonder how I have touched death. You don't know. There's always a sense of death in this home. I believe my mother hated my father before I was born. That was death in her veins for me before I was born. It makes a difference.'"⁸ George does not realize that Lettie will use the deadliness received from her mother's veins to destroy him. By refusing him and choosing Leslie, she will kill a part of George. Again by choosing Leslie when she knows she cannot love him, she destroys a part of him. The "unanswered cry of failure" is evident in everything she does. Later, she will have to turn to her children for fulfillment. Lettie writes to Cyril after she has been married for several years: "'I hope I shall have another child next spring . . . there is only that to take away the misery of this torpor.

I seem full of passion and energy, and it all fizzles out in day to day domestics--'"⁹

Cyril's life also reveals "the unanswered crying of failure." He does not have the courage to marry Emily Saxton although he claims he loves her. After courting her for more than ten years, Cyril watches her marry someone else. All he can say is "'Mr. Renshaw, you have outmanoeuvred me all unawares, quite indecently.'"¹⁰ The whole matter is taken lightly and no one seems to mind. Cyril seems to lack the moral energy to establish and maintain a man-woman love. Lawrence's prediction concerning Frieda's children, if she were to stay with them, is fulfilled in Cyril's life. Lawrence writes in a letter concerning Frieda and her children the following:

But if Frieda gave all up to go and live with them, that would sap their strength because they would have to support her when they grew up. They would not be free to live of themselves--they would first have to live for her to pay back.¹¹

Mrs. Beardsall has "sapped" Cyril of his strength in that he feels he has to support her when he is grown up; he feels he has to pay her back. Thus he is robbed of the energy that should be spent on his relationship with Emily.

In The White Peacock, another unfulfilled man-woman relationship is George and Meg's. At first, their marriage thrives on physical sensation, but after the children arrive, the marriage soon deteriorates to a constant bickering between husband and wife. Meg humiliates George before his friends by accusing him of not taking care of the children; George, in turn, is enraged that she finds her security in her children and not in him. On one occasion when Cyril and Emily are visiting at the Ram, Meg breast-feeds the child during the meal.

She was secure in her high maternity; she was mistress and sole authority. George, as father, was first servant; as an indifferent father, she humiliated him and was hostile to his wishes.¹²

Later, Cyril, as narrator, comments on Meg's behaviour and the result it has on George: "a woman who has her child in her arms is a tower of strength that may in turn stand quietly dealing death."¹³ Meg with her "strength" deals death to George. She gives her final blow when she antagonizes her children against their father. George, who was so fond of his little daughter Gertie and saw her as "a light"¹⁴ for his dark world, is made to suffer cruelly as his little daughter insolently mocks him and disdainfully turns her back on him.¹⁵ Cyril, having watched this unpleasant scene between daughter and father, takes his leave. As George accompanies him to the door, neither speaks. Finally Cyril says good-bye and George raises his eyes: "His eyes were heavy and as he lifted them to me, seemed to recoil in an agony of shame."¹⁶

One can imagine Emily capable of making the same error that Lettie and Meg have made. On one occasion, she and Cyril are visiting at the Ram. She takes one of Meg's babies and accompanies Cyril into the garden. She chats to the baby, meanwhile half-ignoring, half-tantalizing Cyril. "Thus she teased me by flinging me all kinds of bright gages of love while she kept aloof because of the child,"¹⁷ Cyril complains. Later he moralizes on the situation:

A woman is so ready to disclaim the body of a man's love; she yields him her own soft beauty with so much gentle patience and regret; she clings to his neck, to his head and his cheeks, fondling them for the soul's meaning that is there, and shrinking from his passionate limbs

and his body. It was with some perplexity, some anger and bitterness that I watched Emily moved almost to ecstasy by the baby's small, innocuous person.¹⁸

Emily, at this point, like the "spiritual" lover discussed in the second chapter, teases the man with her "fondling," arouses his emotions, and admires his body. Yet she refuses to give her body to him; instead, she gives herself to the child.

In Sons and Lovers, Lawrence concentrates on an Oedipal parent-child relationship resulting from an unfulfilled man-woman love; he elaborates, in detail, on the crippling effect it has upon the child. The relationship between Walter and Gertrude Morel is similar to Mr. and Mrs. Beardsall's, except that Mr. Morel does not leave home, but fights his losing battle in the midst of his family. Mrs. Morel is happy for the first six months of her marriage. But when she discovers her husband's dishonesty, she is angry and begins to nag him.

There began a battle between the husband and wife--a fearful, bloody battle that ended only with the death of one. She fought to make him undertake his own responsibilities, to make him fulfill his obligation. But he was too different from her. His nature was purely sensuous, and she strove to make him moral, religious. She tried to force him to face things. He could not endure it--it drove him out of his mind.¹⁹

The one to die is Mr. Morel: spiritually, Mrs. Morel destroys him by refusing to respond to his "life-flame." At the same time, she, too, is destroyed.

The disastrous effect of the battle on the children is foreshadowed in the scene where Mr. Morel, in a drunken condition, throws a cutlery drawer at his wife who is hold-

ing the baby, Paul. The drawer misses the baby but hits the mother's brow. The blood drops from the brow of the mother unto the scalp of the baby.²⁰ So although the mother has been able to protect the child directly, indirectly the child becomes involved in the battle. The blood spilled on the child symbolically represents this involvement in the parents' battle. The blood will leave a permanent stain on him.

Whereas Mrs. Beardsall "cripples" her son, Cyril, by "sapping" him of his strength and thus robbing him of moral energy for his relationship with a woman, Mrs. Morel "cripples" her sons by becoming a "lover" to them and thus robbing them of the love they should be giving to another woman. Because Mrs. Morel has an extremely powerful personality, the effects of her attachment to her sons seem more deadly than Mrs. Beardsall's.

At first Mrs. Morel chooses her oldest son, William, as a lover. He soon leaves home and becomes engaged. When he brings his fiancé home, he compares her to his mother and finds his girl does not "measure up." Meanwhile, Mrs. Morel feels hopelessly lost at the thought of her son being attached to another woman. "Before, with her husband, things had seemed to be breaking down in her, but they did not destroy her power to live. Now her soul felt lamed in itself. It was her hope that was struck."²¹ Her hope that her son will always reserve first place for his mother is suddenly shattered; she feels destroyed. William does not marry the girl. Shortly after the visit to his home, he dies. He cannot marry any girl while his mother is still alive, so he escapes the dilemma through death. Indirectly, his mother's love has caused his death.

Mrs. Morel now turns to her second son, Paul. They become closely attached.

Paul loved to sleep with his mother. Sleep is still most perfect, in spite of hygienists, when it is shared with a beloved. . . . Paul lay against her and slept, and got better; whilst she, always a bad sleeper, fell later on into a profound sleep that seemed to give her faith.²²

When he is ill, and they cannot afford a nurse, his mother cares for him, sleeps with him, and restores in him the will to live. She inspires him in his painting, and he, in turn, dreams of some day retiring with his mother in a cottage where he will paint and keep her happy.

During his relationship with Miriam, Paul forgets his mother for brief periods of time. But again and again he returns from Miriam to find his peace with his mother; in the end he loves her best. "He had forgotten Miriam; he only saw how his mother's hair was lifted back from her warm, broad brow."²³ "Instinctively he realized that he was life to her. And, after all, she was the chief thing to him, the only supreme thing."²⁴ The same thing happens when Paul has the relationship with Clara; in the end he returns to his mother, whom he loves best. Paul says to his mother, "'I even love Clara, and I did Miriam; but to give myself to them in marriage I couldn't. I couldn't belong to them. They seem to want me, and I can't ever give it them.'" His mother replies, "'You haven't met the right woman.'" To this Paul is quick to answer: "'And I never shall meet the right woman while you live.'"²⁵

When it is discovered that his mother has cancer, Paul cares for her lovingly: "He kissed her again, and stroked the hair from her temples, gently, tenderly, as if she were a lover."²⁶ "His face was near hers. Her blue eyes smiled straight into his like a girl's--warm, laughing with tender love."²⁷ In the end, as her condition becomes very painful and he can no longer bear to see his mother suffer, he and his sister "mercy-kill"

her with an overdose of morphia. This act, too, is an act of love, yet underneath the love, one recognizes the subconscious hatred he feels for his mother who clings so tightly to him. He loves and hates his mother at the same time. This strong love-hate ambivalence towards his mother, which under normal conditions would manifest itself as love, in a time of stress reveals the hidden hatred, a deadly hatred. Subconsciously, he wants to kill the woman who destroys his capacity to love another woman.

Even after her death, he cannot free himself of her. When he goes to see his dead mother, he puts his arms around her and whispers again and again, "My love--my love--oh, my love!"²⁸ For days and weeks, he wanders about aimlessly. For him, life has lost all purpose. He gives Clara back to her former husband; he refuses Miriam's offer of marriage. He contemplates suicide.

Then, quite mechanically and more distinctly, the conversation began again inside him.
 'She's dead. What was it all for--her struggle?'
 That was his despair wanting to go after her.
 'You're alive.'
 'She's not.'
 'She is--in you.'
 Suddenly he felt tired with the burden of it.
 'You've got to keep alive for her sake,' said his will in him.
 Something felt sulky, as if it would not rouse.
 'You've got to carry forward her living, and what she had done, go on with it.'²⁹

The struggle continues within him. Again weeks go by. Suddenly his mother seems very near:

Who could say his mother had lived and did not live? She had been in one place, and was in another; that was all. And his soul could not leave her, wherever she was. Now she was gone abroad into the night, and he was with her still.³⁰

He wants to touch her; he is tempted to follow her into the darkness. Then with sudden determination, he decides against it: "He would not take that direction to the darkness to follow her. He walked towards the faintly humming, glowing town, quickly."³¹ So he does not follow her in physical death, but he follows her in spirit as he turns towards the town, the place that is representative of his mother and her bourgeois values. By turning to the town, he has made up his mind to "carry forward her living." Thus he does not free himself of his mother, and one is left to believe that he never will. Although she has died, her love lives on in him and continues destroying him.

In his next novel, The Rainbow, Lawrence examines another destructive man-woman relationship and the result it has on the small child. Anna cannot find fulfillment in Will for she resents his lack of manliness and his belief in the "Gothic arch." Bearing children becomes her pseudo-fulfillment.

It was enough that she had milk and could suckle her child: Oh, oh, the bliss of the little life sucking the milk of her body! Oh, oh, oh the bliss, as the infant grew stronger, of the two tiny hands clutching, catching blindly yet passionately at her breasts, of the tiny mouth seeking her in blind, sure, vital knowledge, of the sudden consummate peace as the little body sank, the mouth and throat sucking, sucking, drinking life from her to make a new life, almost sobbing with passionate joy of receiving its own existence, the tiny hands clutching frantically as the nipple was drawn back, not to be gainsaid. This was enough for Anna. She seemed to pass off into a kind of rapture of motherhood, her rapture of motherhood was everything.³²

So Anna continues, existing "in her own violent fruitfulness."³³ Motherhood has been placed first in her life; she has found her substitute fulfillment.

How does this affect Will and the children? Will turns to his little daughter Ursula, and a very close, almost incestuous, attachment develops between them.

Between him and the little Ursula there came into being a strange alliance. They were aware of each other. He knew the child was always on his side. But in his consciousness he counted it for nothing. She was always for him. He took it for granted. Yet his life was based on her, even whilst she was a tiny child, on her support and her accord.³⁴

Feeling inadequate with Anna, Will turns to someone with whom he will not feel insecure. With his little girl he can be a brave man; he can do daring things. For example, when he takes her swimming, he has her cling to his neck while he takes dangerous dives off the bridge. She admires his courage.³⁵ Again, when he takes her to the fair, they ride on the swingboats and he makes the boats go dangerously high. The child becomes white and mute; later she is violently sick.³⁶

Both of the examples, however, suggest more than just an insecure man seeking admiration. Right from the beginning there is a clashing of wills between Will and Ursula. There is a strong attraction, yet at the same time he wants to destroy her or destroy himself through some regressive action. Both of them come very close to death during their swimming together. One time when she is hanging on to his back as he jumps from the bridge, she falls forward and almost breaks his neck. For a brief moment both struggle with death. "He saved her, and sat on the bank, quivering. But his eyes were full of the blackness of death, it was as if death had cut between their lives, and separated them."³⁷ After the dangerous ride on the swing boats, when Anna finds out about the escapade, she becomes very angry with Will. "His golden-

brown eyes glittered, he had a strange cruel little smile."³⁸
 When Ursula sees his cruel smile, she suddenly feels a coldness towards him. "Her soul was dead towards him."³⁹
 Ursula recognizes a certain deadliness, a craving to destroy, in Will.

Will, the insecure man, and consequently the destructive man, uses his child as a "sounding board" for his anger. Because she is small and weak, she cannot retaliate, and he feels unthreatened. Although outwardly she may not appear injured, inwardly her sensitivity is seriously wounded. Will, in his insecurity, cannot accept the child as a child; he expects her to act as an adult in accepting responsibility. For example, when she helps him with the potato planting, she, in her excitement and eagerness to help, seeds the potatoes too closely, and he, as an adult, cannot accept this as a child's way of helping.

He came near.

'Not so close,' he said, stooping over her potatoes, taking some out and rearranging others. She stood by with the painful terrified helplessness of childhood. . . . Then he went down the row, relentlessly, turning the potatoes in with his sharp spade-cuts. He took no notice of her, only worked on. He had another world from hers.

... ..
 And she played on, because of her disappointment persisting even the more in her play. She dreaded work, because she could not do it as he did it. She was conscious of the great breach between them. She knew she had no power. The grown-up power to work deliberately was a mystery to her.
 He would smash into her sensitive child's work destructively.⁴⁰

When she tramples across the flower-bed in her eagerness to get some tiny buds for her tea-party, Will shouts at

her, "'I'll break your obstinate little face.'"⁴¹ Sobbing bitterly, she creeps away and hides under the parlour sofa, where she lies "clinched in the silent, hidden misery of childhood."⁴² Once again, when she is older, he slaps her with a dusting cloth:

In spite of her, her face broke, she made a curious gulping grimace, and the tears were falling. So she went away, desolate. But her blazing heart was fierce and unyielding. He watched her go, and a pleasurable pain filled him, a sense of triumph and easy power, followed immediately by acute pity.⁴³

As Ursula grows older, she comes to resent her father more and more. She hates his bullying and recognizes it as a cover-up for his weaknesses. In Women in Love, where Ursula is a young woman of twenty-six years, she still at times suffers from the bullying of her father. The proposal scene serves as a good example of her resentment. Birkin comes to Beldover to ask her father if he may marry her. She is not present at the time. When she arrives, she accuses both men of trying to bully her, of trying to force her into something. Will becomes very angry and humiliates his daughter. Birkin leaves. Ursula, greatly annoyed at the whole fiasco, goes upstairs and refuses to allow her father to influence her in any way.⁴⁴ Later when she announces to her family that she and Birkin plan to marry the next day, her father flies into a rage because he has not been told. He calls her a "shiftless bitch." Ursula, mortified at this accusation, replies: "'You only wanted to bully me--you never cared for my happiness.'"⁴⁵ Will, caught in the terrible conflict of wanting to possess her and yet wanting to destroy her, gives her a hard smack across the face. She is extremely upset and leaves the house to go to Birkin's place. She confides in Birkin: "'I have loved him, I have . . .

I've loved him always and he's always done this to me, he has.'"46 To this Birkin replies: "'It's been a love of opposition . . . you had to break with him, it had to be.'"47 Thus, on the whole, the love relationship with her father has been a destructive one, and Ursula has been severely wounded. But because of her great capacity for life and her fulfillment in her relationship with Birkin, the psychological scars made by her father eventually disappear.

In Women in Love, Lawrence also shows the results of an unsatisfactory love between Mr. and Mrs. Crich. There is a similarity between these two and Will and Anna: Mrs. Crich, like Anna, resents the lack of masculinity, the weakness of Christian charity, in her husband. She cannot respect her husband.

His passion for her had always remained keen as death. He had always loved her, loved her with intensity. . . . But she had gone almost mad. Of wild and overweening temper, she could not bear the humiliation of her husband's soft, half-appealing kindness to everybody.48

The only thing that has united them is their sexual life and their children. Like Anna, Mrs. Crich bears many children. When young, they mean everything to her. For example, if Mr. Crich takes them to the study for a whipping, she becomes extremely upset. "She paced up and down all the while like a tiger outside, like a tiger, with very murder in her face. She had a face that could look death. And when the door was opened, she'd go in with her hands lifted--'What have you been doing to my children, you coward.'"49 But as the children grow up, their mother withdraws more and more from them. When Diane drowns, Mrs. Crich seems little affected by it. In reply to Gerald's question as to whether his

mother is abnormal, Birkin says: "'No! I think she only wanted something more, or other than the common run of life. And not getting it, she has gone wrong perhaps.'" ⁵⁰ The "something more" she cannot find in her husband: he has no Self to bring to their love relationship. She cannot respect the selfless creature who has given his Self to Christian charity.

Although Mr. Crich vaguely recognizes his wife as his destroyer and dreads her for it, he tries to hide his fear even from himself by telling himself how happy he has been with her.

He thought of her as pure, chaste; the white flame of her sex was a white flower of snow to his mind. . . . He had subdued her, and her subjugation was to him an infinite chastity in her, a virginity which he could never break and which dominated him as by a spell. ⁵¹

All this Mr. Crich tries very hard to believe; "only death would show the perfect completeness of the lie." ⁵² Death does show "the lie;" his wife's awful response at the sight of her dead husband is: "'Beautiful as if life never touched you.'" ⁵³ He is the one who has been "subdued" and "subjugated;" life has passed him by. Hiding behind a mask of Christian charity, he has refused to allow himself a vital and life-giving relationship with a woman; his virginity has been unbroken.

Thus the love of Mr. and Mrs. Crich ends in a physical death for him and a psychological death for her. How does the parents' love relationship affect the children? They, like Lettie Beardsall, receive death from their parents' veins. Death prevails in the Crichs' home similar to the "sense of death in the home," that Lettie experiences. Birkin thinks of Gerald as the Cain figure.

And Gerald was Cain, if anybody. Not that he was Cain, either although he had slain his brother. There was such a thing as pure accident, and the consequences did not attach to one, even though one had killed one's brother in such wise. Gerald as a boy had accidentally killed his brother. What then? Why seek to draw a brand and a curse across the life that had caused the accident? A man can live by accident, and die by accident? Or can he not? Is every man's life subject to pure accident, is it only the race, the genus, the species, that has a universal reference? Or is this not true, is there no such thing as pure accident? Has everything that happens a universal significance? Has it? Birkin pondering as he stood there. . . . did not believe that there was any such thing as accident. It all hung together, in the deepest sense.⁵⁴

The curse of Cain hangs over the entire family, and the cause of the curse can be traced back to the parents. Just as the deadliness of Cain comes as a result of the sin of his parents, Adam and Eve, so the deadliness of Gerald results, at least in part, from his parents' "sin." The wrong love has caused the "sense of death" to be always present with the children: Gerald kills his brother, Diana drowns, and finally Gerald freezes to death. When she sees her dead husband, Mrs. Crich recognizes the dilemma into which they have placed their children: "'Pray!' she said strongly. 'Pray for yourselves to God, for there's no help for you from your parents.'" ⁵⁵

In contrast to the destructive relationship of Mr. and Mrs. Beardsall, Walter and Gertrude Morel, Anna and Will, and Mr. and Mrs. Crich and the disastrous effect of the relationships on their children, Lawrence shows his readers a man-woman love which does not lead to the destruction of the children, but which leads to a new freedom and independence for them. In The Rainbow, Tom and Lydia have the essential qualities which bring freedom:

"he seemed to live thus in contact with the unknown, the unaccountable and incalculable. They did not take much notice of each other, consciously."⁵⁶ Unconsciously, they are aware of each other and find their fulfillment in one another. At the same time they are secure in their own Selfhood and do not have to lean on the child for support.

In the early days of the marriage, the child Anna questions why her mother no longer sleeps with her. The fact that a strange man has taken away her mother could have been a traumatic experience for the young child; yet it isn't, because of the way the parents handle the new situation. As they accept one another, they expect the child to accept the new situation. They do not force the child to accept the new father, but gradually as she learns to trust him, she accepts him. By doing things for her, Tom gains her confidence.

And gradually, without knowing it herself, she clung to him, in her lost, childish, desolate moments, when it was good to creep up to something big and warm, and bury her little self in his big, unlimited being. Instinctively he was careful of her, careful to recognize her and to give himself to her disposal.⁵⁷

For Tom, the big test of the child's trust in him comes when the mother is in child-labour, and the little Anna fretfully cries for her and demands to be with her. After unsuccessfully trying to hush her, he wraps her in a shawl and takes her to the barn where he is about to make his nightly round of feeding the cattle. Holding her closely to him with one arm, he takes the pan of grain in the other arm and makes his rounds. Gradually she is calmed and goes to sleep. This scene is perhaps the most touching parent-child scene that Lawrence has ever written; it is a beautiful response of an adult to a child.

The birth of his own child becomes a rich and peaceful experience for Tom. A new awareness results.

When her [Lydia's] pains began afresh, tearing her, he turned aside, and could not look. But his heart in torture was at peace, his bowels were glad. He went downstairs, and to the door, outside, lifted his face to the rain, and felt the darkness striking unseen and steadily upon him.

The swift, unseen threshing of the night upon him silenced him and he was overcome. He turned away indoors, humbly. There was the infinite world, eternal, unchanging, as well as the world of life.⁵⁸

He recognizes his capacity to create new life, "the world of life," as only a part, although a very important one, of the much greater macrocosm, "the infinite world."

The new child demands much of Lydia's time and love, and Tom realizes he will have to give up a part of her. But Lydia, although she has a new love, still reserves her first passion and love for Tom. Tom, when Lydia is occupied with the baby, turns to Anna, but not, as in Will's case, for fulfillment. Anna becomes a complementary addition to his already rich life; in Anna his desire for a further life is realized. Anna, in turn, becomes more and more carefree; "the charge of the mother, the satisfying of the mother, had devolved elsewhere than on her. Gradually the child was freed. She became an independent, forgetful little soul, loving from her own centre."⁵⁹

Lawrence beautifully summarizes the result of the love of Tom and Lydia on their little daughter, particularly after her parents are "reborn" to a new and greater capacity of love.⁶⁰ In contrast to Lettie and Cyril, little Ursula, and the Crich children, Anne has received from her parents the capacity to establish her own peace and stability.

Anna's soul was put at peace between them. She looked from one to the other, and she saw them established to her safety, and she was free. She played between the pillar of fire and the pillar of cloud in confidence, having the assurance on her right hand and the assurance on her left. She was no longer called upon to uphold with her childish might the broken end of the arch. Her father and her mother now met to the span of the heavens, and she, the child, was free to play in the space beneath, between.⁶¹

Although, in later life in her marriage to Will, Anna has many conflicts, the capacity for stability given to her by her parents always remains with her. Although the rainbow never spans the love relationship of her husband and herself, she as an individual does catch a glimpse of the rainbow.⁶²

FOOTNOTES

1. D. H. Lawrence, "We Need One Another," in Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D. H. Lawrence, ed. E. D. McDonald (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1936), p. 193.

2. D. H. Lawrence, The White Peacock (London: Duckworth and Co., 1921), pp. 51-2. (subsequent page references to this edition of this novel).

- 3. p. 66.
- 4. p. 66.
- 5. p. 127.
- 6. p. 161.
- 7. p. 67.
- 8. p. 43.
- 9. p. 443.
- 10. p. 469.

11. Frieda Lawrence, Not I, But the Wind (London: Heinemann Ltd., 1935), p. 57.

12. D. H. Lawrence, The White Peacock, pp. 419-420 (subsequent page references to this edition of the novel).

- 13. p. 446.
- 14. p. 461.
- 15. p. 475ff.
- 16. p. 478.
- 17. p. 416.
- 18. p. 423.

19. D. H. Lawrence, Sons and Lovers (New York: The Viking Press, 1958), p. 14. (subsequent page references to this edition of this novel).

- 20. pp. 39-40.
- 21. p. 132.
- 22. p. 67.
- 23. p. 162.
- 24. p. 212.
- 25. p. 351.
- 26. p. 376.
- 27. p. 385.
- 28. p. 398.
- 29. pp. 411-412.
- 30. p. 420.
- 31. p. 420.

32. D. H. Lawrence, The Rainbow (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1949), p. 213. (subsequent page references to this edition of this novel).

FOOTNOTES (cont.)

- 33. p. 220.
- 34. p. 220.
- 35. p. 225.
- 36. p. 226.
- 37. pp. 225-226.
- 38. p. 226.
- 39. p. 226.
- 40. pp. 222-3.
- 41. pp. 223-4.
- 42. p. 224.
- 43. p. 267.

44. D. H. Lawrence, Women in Love (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1960), pp. 293-295. (subsequent page references to this edition of this novel).

- 45. p. 412.
- 46. p. 415.
- 47. p. 415.
- 48. p. 242.
- 49. p. 239.
- 50. p. 234.
- 51. p. 245.
- 52. p. 245.
- 53. p. 377.
- 54. p. 28.
- 55. p. 378.

56. D. H. Lawrence, The Rainbow, p. 59. (subsequent page references to this edition of this novel).

- 57. p. 69.
- 58. p. 81.
- 59. pp. 83-84.
- 60. pp. 94-96.
- 61. p. 97.
- 62. p. 195.

CHAPTER V

"THE NATURAL FLOW OF COMMON SYMPATHY BETWEEN MEN AND MEN"

In the love-death relationship of the man and woman, death frequently takes the form of a destruction of the natural response between the individuals. This destruction is caused by a civilization which has lost the value of Selfhood through a culture limited by Christianity. Individuals cannot find fulfillment of the Self in the man-woman relationship and turn to "substitute" lovers for fulfillment. Lawrence feels that the spontaneous response between man and woman is of primary importance, but that it should be complemented by the response of man to man. In an article "The State of Funk" published in 1929, he writes: "But our civilization, with the horrible fear and funk and repression and bullying has almost destroyed the natural flow of common sympathy between men and men, men and women. And it is this that I want to restore into life: just the natural warm flow of common sympathy between man and man, man and woman."¹ Lawrence has a deep longing to restore a communion between man and man. He feels that this communion is necessary for the "health and happiness" of the man-woman relationship. Mrs. Catherine Carswell, a personal friend of Lawrence, states the following:

[Lawrence] cherished the deep longing to see revived a communion between man and man which should not lack its physical symbols. He even held that our modern denial of this communion in all but idea was largely the cause of our modern perversions. To recover true potency, and before there could be health and happiness between man and woman, he believed that there must be a renewal of the sacredness between man and man.²

For Lawrence, this "communion between man and man" is not a homosexual relationship.³ In Fantasia of the Unconscious he makes this very clear:

In this new polarity, this new circuit of passion between comrades and co-workers, is this also sexual? It is a vivid circuit of polarized passion. Is it hence sex? It is not. Because what are the poles of positive connection?--the upper, busy poles. What is the dynamic contact?--a unison in spirit, in understanding, and pure commingling in one great work. A mingling of the individual passion into one great purpose. Now this is also a grand consummation for men, this mingling of many with one great impassioned purpose. But is this sex? Knowing what sex is, can we call this other also sex? We cannot.⁴

Having declared the "communion" between man and man as not homosexual, Lawrence goes on to explain what the purpose of such a friendship is. Man must unite with other men for the "great purposive activity" of building a world. He claims, "We have got to get back to the great purpose of mankind, a passionate unison making a world."⁵ Man is the pioneer; he must join with other men to explore the Unknown. As comrades, they must work together for this great purpose. Each man maintains his Selfhood; yet at the same time he makes an "honourable" surrender of his individuality to become "one in a united body" with men.⁶ In fact, this creative activity with other men determines the completeness of his Self fulfillment: "when man loses his deep sense of purposive, creative activity, he feels lost, and is lost."⁷ Man must have this activity to complement his love relationship with the woman, for "when he makes the sexual consummation the supreme consummation, even in his secret soul, he falls into the beginning of despair."⁸ A man must be able to do both: accept his responsibility in the world of men and answer to the woman's "deep sexual call." Refusing to accept the "purposive activity" of the male world limits his capacity to satisfy the woman.

In The White Peacock and Sons and Lovers, Lawrence illustrates "the natural warm flow of common sympathy between man and man," the "communion" between them, and the therapeutic value of it. The "physical symbols" of such a relationship are presented. In The Rainbow, although the man-man relationship is not illustrated directly, Lawrence does show the frustration that results when a man fails to unite with other men for the great purpose of mankind; his love relationship with the woman is threatened. Then in Women in Love, Lawrence shows how the natural flow between man and man can complement the flow between the man and woman; on the other hand, the denial of response to the flow between man and man limits the man in his capacity to sustain the flow between himself and the woman, and a destruction takes place.

In The White Peacock, the relationship between George Saxton and Cyril Beardsall is the warmest and most constructive of all relationships shown in the novel. Cyril spends much of his time at the Saxton farm. George and he share small experiences. Together they milk the cows, work in the hayfields, and do other farm chores. Cyril comments on their work together as they spread manure on the fields: "I took a fork and scattered the manure along the hollows, and thus we worked, with a wide field between us, yet very near in the sense of intimacy."⁹ Later George's mother says to Cyril, "George is so glad when you're in the field-- he doesn't care how long the day is."¹⁰

There is a deep honesty between the two men. Whereas George cannot trust Lettie, he can always trust her brother Cyril. Cyril will always give him an honest answer, although it may be a painful one. When George asks him why Lettie has turned to Leslie, Cyril tells George that had he not been so proud and afraid of rejection he might have had her. Later when George learns from Lettie that she is about to marry Leslie, the dejected George turns to

Cyril for help. Cyril takes George to the loft and gently consoles him until he falls asleep. After George's marriage to Meg, the men continue to keep in touch. At the end of the novel, the deteriorated George, once again completely honest with Cyril, says, "The sooner I clear out, the better."¹¹

The friendship between the two men also has a physical dimension. After they have had a swim together, as they are rubbing themselves dry, they comment on each others' bodies. George begins to rub Cyril:

He saw I had forgotten to continue my rubbing, and laughing he took hold of me and began to rub me briskly, as if I were a child, or rather, a woman he loved and did not fear. I left myself quite limply in his hands, and to get a better grip of me, he put his arm round me and pressed me against him, and the sweetness of the touch of our naked bodies one against the other was superb. It satisfied in some measure the vague, indecipherable yearning of my soul; and it was the same with him. When he rubbed me all warm, he let me go, and we looked at each other with eyes of still laughter, and our love was perfect for a moment, more perfect than any love I have known since either for man or woman.¹²

This is the only relationship in the novel that is presented as entirely wholesome. This friendship is unmarred by deliberate force or restraint; it is entirely spontaneous.

In Sons and Lovers, Lawrence briefly shows the developing friendship between Paul Morel and Miriam's brothers, particularly Edgar. As in The White Peacock, where the friendship of George and Cyril developed along with the friendship of Lettie and George, and Emily and Cyril, so in Sons and Lovers the friendship between Paul and Edgar develops as Paul learns to know Miriam. The boys sing together and share trivialities. They hoe the

turnips, milk the cows, and lie in the hay. "Paul loved them dearly, and they him."¹³ As Cyril had a therapeutic effect upon George, so Edgar has on Paul.

Then he [Paul] often avoided her and went with Edgar. Miriam and her brother were naturally antagonistic. Edgar was a rationalist, who was curious, and had sort of scientific interest in life. It was a great bitterness to Miriam to see herself deserted by Paul for Edgar, who seemed so much lower. But the youth was very happy with her elder brother.¹⁴

In The Rainbow, Will and Anna, during the first days of their marriage, live entirely in a world of their own. Then Anna is ready to return again to the outside world. She plans a tea party. Will feels threatened. Anna is giving a part of herself to the world of women, and Will feels left out. He has no man to whom to turn. While she is busy cleaning the house and preparing for the party, he "hangs around" feeling miserable. She resents him for this and tells him to find something to do. But his work seems purposeless to him.¹⁵ Much later, after years of frictional, violent love with Anna, Will is reborn to a new Self.¹⁶ He is set free to a new life:

Gradually, Brangwen began to find himself free to attend to the outside life as well. His intimate life was so violently active, that it set another man in him free. And this new man turned with interest to public life, to see what part he could take in it. This would give him scope for new activity, activity of a kind for which he was now created and released. He wanted to be unanimous with the whole of purposive mankind.¹⁷

Thus his sexual life with Anna and his life with mankind are closely interrelated. As he becomes free in one, he also gains a freedom to develop in the other.

Skrebensky, however, never achieves a freedom. His allegiance to the nation is not a "purposive activity." Skrebensky has lost the Selfhood as he has committed himself to an abstract idea. He never finds fulfillment in serving the nation.

No highest good of the community, however, would give him the vital fulfillment of his soul. He knew this. But he did not consider the soul of the individual sufficiently important. He believed a man was important in so far as he represented all humanity.¹⁸

There is a subtle difference between Skrebensky's belief that "man was important in so far as he represented all humanity" and Lawrence's belief that man must have a "deep sense of purposive, creative activity" to unite with other men to build the world. In the former the Selfhood becomes meaningless; in the latter the Self is maintained. In Skrebensky's case, the woman recognizes his "deadness" and declares him "impotent;" Will, on the other hand, gains a new freedom with the woman and the outside world.

Whereas the man-man relationship in The White Peacock and Sons and Lovers demonstrates the "natural flow of common sympathy between man and man," the man-man relationship in Women in Love demonstrates the refusal of complete commitment. Birkin struggles to establish a close friendship with Gerald, and there are moments when the two men do respond warmly to one another. But again and again, Gerald refuses total commitment, and later Birkin feels that Gerald's refusal is somehow linked to his failure in the relationship with the woman.

As the novel opens, Lawrence comments as follows on the relationship between Birkin and Gerald: "They had not the faintest belief in deep relationship between men

and men, and their disbelief prevented any development of their powerful but suppressed friendliness."¹⁹ While at Halliday's in London and later at Breadalby, the two men develop a closer friendship. Gerald comes to Birkin's room before retiring and the two men have a heart-to-heart conversation. For the first time, one notices an honesty similar to that between Cyril and George. As Gerald leaves for his room "he laid his hand affectionately on the other man's shoulder and went away."²⁰ In times of disaster, Gerald turns to Birkin. After the drowning of Gerald's sister, Diana, when Birkin invites him to come to his place, Gerald remarks:

'Thanks very much, Rupert--I shall be glad to come tomorrow, if that'll do. You understand, don't you? I want to see this job through. But I'll come tomorrow right enough. Oh, I'd rather come and have a chat with you than--than do anything else, I verily believe. Yes, I would. You mean a lot to me, Rupert, more than you know.'²¹

Later when Birkin is ill, Gerald visits him. At this point, one appreciates Gerald for he seems to take the initiative in the friendship. "Gerald really loved Birkin, though he never quite believed in him. . . . It was always Gerald who was protective, offering the warm shelter of his physical strength."²² Then Birkin realizes the potentiality of a deep love in their friendship, and from there on, he takes the lead.

Suddenly he saw himself confronted with another problem--the problem of love and eternal conjunction between two men. Of course this was necessary--it had been a necessity inside himself all his life--to love a man purely and fully. Of course he had been loving Gerald all along, and all along denying it.²³

Now Birkin is ready to swear a "Blutbrüderschaft" with Gerald. Birkin explains the oath: "'we ought to swear to love each other, you and I, implicitly, and perfectly, finally, without any possibility of going back on it.'" ²⁴ It is not a "sloppy emotionalism" he is requesting, but "an impersonal union that leaves one free." ²⁵ Suddenly, Gerald, who up to this point has appreciated the friendship, feels that he cannot accept this intimate offer. He excuses himself by saying: "'We'll leave it till I understand it better.'" ²⁶ But, unfortunately, Gerald will never be able to understand it better. Birkin realizes this and he is annoyed. "It was the insistence on the limitation which so bored Birkin in Gerald. Gerald could never fly away from himself, in real indifferent gaiety. He had a clog, a sort of monomania." ²⁷ His monomania is the strong will which he must exert on others to reduce them to the pure abstraction of Matter. The "Blutbrüderschaft" demands a giving of one's Self and a recognizing of the other's Self. This Gerald will never be able to do. Birkin is disappointed. He had had the great dream of making "another separate world" with Gerald, ²⁸ and Gerald does not accept his offer.

In the "Gladiatorial" chapter, the two men wrestle together; it seems to be a wholesome experience for both of them. After both are physically exhausted and in a half-conscious state, Gerald places his hand over Birkin's. Birkin responds with a strong, warm clasp to Gerald's sudden and unconscious gesture. Then Gerald, as he becomes conscious of what is happening, withdraws his hand.

Gerald realizes the potential of Birkin's offer and its effects on his capacity for loving a woman. He realizes, too, that his refusal to "make any pure relationship with any other soul" spells eventual doom for him.

The other way was to accept Rupert's offer of alliance, to enter into the bond of pure trust and love with the other man, and then subsequently with the woman. If he pledged himself with the man he would later be able to pledge himself with the woman: not merely in legal marriage, but in absolute, mystic marriage.²⁹

Yet Gerald refuses the offer. Later, in the last chapter, Birkin feels that Gerald suffers his terrible isolation, isolation from everyone, both man and woman, because of his refusal to accept the "offer of alliance." As he views the dead body, Birkin cries, "'I didn't want it to be like this--I didn't want it to be like this.'"³⁰ To Ursula's question as to what difference it would have made had Gerald responded to Birkin's love, he answers, "'It would! It would!'"

Birkin remembered how once Gerald had clutched his hand with a warm, momentaneous grip of final love. For one second--then let go again, let go for ever. If he had kept true to that clasp, death would not have mattered. Those who die, and dying still can love, still believe, do not die. They live still in the beloved. Gerald might still have been living in the spirit with Birkin, even after death. He might have lived with his friend, a further life.³¹

Thus Gerald's death is much more awful because of his tragic isolation. Gerald, "the denier," he who denied life to others and reduced them to "Matter," has now denied life to himself and reduced himself to "cold, mute Matter."³²

FOOTNOTES

1. D. H. Lawrence, "The State of Funk" in Sex, Literature and Censorship, Harry T. Moore, ed. (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1935), p. 66.

2. Harry T. Moore, D. H. Lawrence His Life and Works (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1951), p. 142, (Moore, at this point, is quoting Mrs. Carswell).

3. It is important to note the words, "For Lawrence." I realize that most present-day psychologists would term the "physical symbols" of the Cyril-George and Gerald-Birkin relation as homosexual, or at least as having homosexual tendencies. Lawrence, however, would probably say that anyone who terms such relationships as homosexual is suffering from the "modern perversion" of sex (see previous quotation). For Lawrence, a wholesome man-man relationship "should not lack its physical symbols."

4. D. H. Lawrence, Fantasia of the Unconscious (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1923), p. 98.

5. Ibid., p. 99.

6. This may seem like a contradiction of terms: on page six of this paper, the Self was defined as "the distinct individuality of man, his subjective being;" here the individual maintains the Self, yet at the same time makes an "honourable" surrender of his individuality. The important word is "honourable." The Self can be surrendered and maintained at the same time; the one can complement the other, and the individual need never become a selfless creature.

7. D. H. Lawrence, Fantasia of the Unconscious, p. 98.

8. Ibid., p. 98.

9. D. H. Lawrence, The White Peacock (London: Duckworth and co., 1921), p. 334, (subsequent page references to this edition of this novel).

10. p. 343.

11. p. 496.

12. pp. 340-41.

13. D. H. Lawrence, Sons and Lovers (New York: The Viking Press, 1958), p. 149.

14. Ibid., p. 157.

15. D. H. Lawrence, The Rainbow (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1949), pp. 150-2.

Footnotes (cont.)

16.. This is not a contradiction of the description of Will given in the second chapter of this paper. The fact still remains that although Will is reborn to a new Self, it is a feeble, weak Self especially when compared to the magnificent Selves of Tom and Lydia and later Ursula and Birkin. Will, by comparison, will always have a very limited capacity for "freedom."

17.. D. H. Lawrence, The Rainbow, p. 238.

18. Ibid., p. 328.

19. D. H. Lawrence, Women in Love (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1960), p. 37, (subsequent page references to this edition of this novel).

20. p. 107.

21. p. 211.

22. p. 226.

23. p. 231.

24. p. 232.

25. p. 232.

26. p. 232.

27. p. 233.

28. p. 230.

29. p. 398.

30. p. 539.

31. p. 540.

32. p. 540.

CHAPTER VI

THE DESTRUCTIVE AND CREATIVE ELEMENTS OF THE MAN-WOMAN RELATIONSHIP

In Lawrence's novels, because of the corrupt culture, the love between man and woman is usually destructive: a form of death occurs for either the man or woman, or both. However, sometimes the destruction is followed by a rebirth to a new and greater capacity for creative love: the destruction is a purgation through which the individual becomes free for his latent creativity to develop.

It is my intention in this chapter to examine the destructive and creative elements of the various man-woman relationships in Lawrence's four novels, to trace the movement towards death of some individuals as they are destroyed by the wrong kind of love, and finally to show the rebirth of others to a capacity for a new, creative love.

In The White Peacock, all the man-woman relationships are in some way destructive, and none of the individuals become capable of a rebirth to a new creativity. Annable is destroyed by Lady Crystabel, the spiritual lover who humiliates his body and "pretends" to love him; he is further destroyed by his second wife, who "breeds well" and makes him into a "good animal."¹ His premonition of death when he says to Cyril, "'I feel somehow, as if I were at an end too,'"² becomes a reality a few days later when he is crushed to death by falling rocks. His physical death is symbolic of his painful psychological death caused by the cruel "rocks," Lady Crystabel's spiritual love, that crushes his pride for three long years.

Mr. Beardsall, like Annable, is destroyed by his wife. Because of her, he is denied the rightful love of both his wife and children. He, too, dies. Both Annable and Mr. Beardsall's destructions foreshadow what will happen to George. George is destroyed by Lettie, who, like Lady Crystabel, teasingly encourages his love,

yet refuses to commit herself totally to him. George is similar to the "poor, young man" who Lady Crystabel imagines for the fabricated obituary of Annable.³ Then, similar to Annable's case, George's destruction continues in his marriage to Meg, who, like Annable's second wife, "breeds well." Meg, another Mrs. Beardsall, turns from her husband to find fulfillment in her children and later antagonizes them against their father. George, another Mr. Beardsall, deteriorates because of heavy drinking and in the end is fast moving towards death. His psychological death has occurred long before when he was "killed" by Lettie and Meg's false loves.

In the case of all three men, the woman seems to be the destroyer. Lawrence could, however, be indicating that there is a certain weakness in the man that warrants a destruction. Annable seems to lack the moral courage to defy his wife; instead he leaves her. Similarly, Mr. Beardsall takes the easy way out: he leaves his wife. George is, as Cyril says, afraid of rejection by Lettie, so he never directly asks her to marry him until it is too late.

In Sons and Lovers, Paul Morel's three love relationships are mainly destructive, although they may have some temporary creative elements in them. Paul's relationship with his mother has been examined in a previous chapter, and the conclusion was reached that in the end Paul was destroyed by the bond with his mother. Although he does not join his dead mother through a physical death, in spirit he is still as closely bound to her as ever he was when she was alive. With her strong attachment, she makes him incapable of loving another woman for any long period of time. His second lover, Miriam, also destroys a part of him. Her spiritual love has already been examined in the chapter dealing with the church, and

the conclusion was that her sacrificial love killed a part of the "life flame" within Paul. Paul's relationship with his third lover, Clara, has both destructive and creative elements. When their love finds consummation out in the fields with the peewits screaming nearby, it is a creative experience for Paul:

And soon the struggle went down in his soul, and he forgot. But then Clara was not there for him, only a woman, warm, something he loved and almost worshipped, there in the dark. But it was not Clara, and she submitted to him. The naked hunger and inevitability of his loving her, something strong and blind and ruthless in its primitiveness, made the hour almost terrible to her. She knew how stark and alone he was, and she felt it was great that he came to her; and she took him simply because his need was bigger either than her or him, and her soul was still within her. She did this for him in his need, even if he left her, for she loved him.⁴

Through this experience he can free himself of feelings of guilt that he had when he was with Miriam. It is a life-giving experience for them both: "They [Paul and Clara] could let themselves be carried by life, and they felt a sort of peace each in the other. There was a verification which they had had together. Nothing could nullify it, nothing could take it away; it was almost their belief in life."⁵

However, what began as a creative love soon deteriorates into a destructive one. Clara is not totally satisfied; she wants to possess him in the day-time as well as at night. Love-making during the day stifles Paul; he wants to live for himself and by himself part of the time. Furthermore, he realizes that he does not love her as a person, but loves only the "woman" in her. Their love-making soon becomes a repetitive act that

thrives on sensation alone. Clara "trusted altogether to the passion."⁶ But the passion cannot be sustained, and the love-making becomes mechanical.

Gradually they began to introduce novelties, to get back some of the feeling of satisfaction. They would be near, almost dangerously near to the river, so that the black water ran not far from his face, and it gave a little thrill; or they loved sometimes in a little hollow below the fence of the path where people were passing occasionally, on the edge of the town, and they heard footsteps coming, almost felt the vibration of the tread, and they heard what the passersby said--strange little things that were never intended to be heard.⁷

A nearness of death, symbolized by the black water, becomes a part of the relationship. They have to feel the urge towards death, the urge to destroy and be destroyed, before their emotions are aroused sufficiently to carry them through the sexual act. In the end, Clara leaves him to return to her former husband, of whom she says, "he loved me a thousand times better than ever you do."⁸

Thus just as the love relationships in The White Peacock are destructive, so also are Paul's three love relationships in Sons and Lovers in some way destructive. Paul is destroyed, in part, by the spiritual love of Miriam, the Oedipal love for his mother, and the purely physical love of Clara. Because Paul has a great capacity for life, he is not, to be sure, completely destroyed. But in the end he is still floundering around searching for fulfillment.

In The Rainbow, Lawrence examines both the destructive and creative elements of love in the man-woman relationship in the three generations of Brangwens. Of the three relationships, the first attains the highest degree of fulfillment. In the first generation, Tom

Brangwen marries the aristocratic Polish widow, Lydia Lensky. Lawrence beautifully describes their marriage consummation:

And 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, they were together in an elemental embrace beyond their superficial foreignness.⁹

When they are apart, they are unconsciously aware of one another; when they are together, they forget the past and the future for only the present matters. Although they have their moments of destruction, in the end of each such occasion they become capable of a greater awareness.

"He walked about for days stiffened with resistance to her, stiff with a will to destroy her as she was. Then suddenly, out of nowhere, there was connexion between them again. . . . She was sure to come at last and touch him. Then he burst into flame for her, and lost himself."¹⁰

When Lydia is pregnant, Tom keenly feels the estrangement between them, but he turns to the outdoors for release:

"Then he worked and was happy, his eyes shining, his cheeks flushed. And the zest of life was strong in him."¹¹

After the child is born, Lydia, although still reserving the greater part of her love for Tom, now devotes part of it to her baby. Tom has to learn "the bitter lesson, to abate himself, to take less than he wanted."

She came to him again, and, his heart delirious in delight and readiness, he took her. And it was almost as before.

Perhaps it was quite as before. At any rate, it made him know perfection, it established in him a constant, eternal knowledge.

But it died down before he wanted it to die down. She was finished, she could take

no more. And he was not exhausted, he wanted to go on. But it could not be.

So he had to begin the bitter lesson, to abate himself, to take less than he wanted.¹²

Briefly, Tom considers going to Cossethay to look for another woman. Although he says nothing to this effect, Lydia senses his intention. They begin to accuse one another, and one anticipates a break in their love relationship. However, the outcome of the "destructive" quarrel is a purgation and a rebirth to a much deeper love.

Blind and destroyed, he pressed forward, nearer, nearer, nearer, to receive the consummation of himself, he received within the darkness which should swallow him and yield him up to himself. If he could come really within the blazing kernel of darkness, if he really could be destroyed, burnt away till he lit with her in one consummation, that were supreme, supreme.¹³

They are reborn to a new and deeper unconscious and conscious awareness of one another. "It was the baptism to another life."¹⁴ It no longer matters that Lydia is a foreigner, that she had had another husband, that Anna is not Tom's child. They are two independent individuals; they do not have to be consciously aware of one another. "He went his way, as before, she went her way, to the rest of the world there seemed no change. But to the two of them there was the perpetual wonder of transfiguration."¹⁵

In the second generation, Will and Anna's relationship serves as a drastic contrast to Tom and Lydia's. Tom and Lydia progress in mutual creative love, whereas Will and Anna progress in mutual destructive love. In the end, Anna finds a very limited fulfillment in child-bearing. And he finds some fulfillment in serving mankind.

Both settle down to a somewhat mediocre existence in contrast to the magnificent life of Tom and Lydia.

Even before their marriage, when they are out in the cornfields setting up the sheaves, Will and Anna can never establish the right rhythm. She is always ahead of him. This is indicative of their marriage relationship: she will always be ahead of him for he lacks the independence to take the initiative. During the first days of their marriage, they shut out the rest of the world and live only to themselves. Then when Anna is ready to return to the outside world, Will's fears begin. He is afraid he will lose her and therefore wants to possess her all the time. Unlike Tom, who finds release in his work, Will finds that he cannot work on his Adam and Eve panel when he feels unsure of his wife. After their quarrels, Will and Anna, like Tom and Lydia, come together again in "acquiescence and submission, and tremulous wonder of consummation."¹⁶ But, unlike Tom and Lydia, there is little growth in understanding between Will and Anna. Further conflicts arise and new battles are fought. "So it went on continually, the recurrence of love and conflict between them. One day it seemed as if everything was shattered; all life spoiled, ruined, desolated and laid waste. The next day it was all marvellous again, just marvellous."¹⁷ At times, Anna feels that he is trying to force his will upon her, and she does not want to be bullied. Will, at the same time, feels that he wants to destroy Anna with his "bitter-corrosive love" so he can possess her completely. During her pregnancy, the fights become more intense, and she rejects him more and more. "Horrible in extreme were these nocturnal combats, when all the world was asleep and they two were alone, alone in the world and repelling each other. It was hardly to be borne."¹⁸ She finally destroys him: he dies a form of death and experiences a feeble rebirth.

He was born for a second time, born at last unto himself, out of the vast body of humanity. Now at last he had a separate identity, he existed in so far as he had relations with another being. Now he had an absolute self-- as well as a relative self. But it was a very dumb, weak, helpless self, a crawling nursling. He went about very quiet, and in a way, submissive.¹⁹

One realizes how weak he is in that he continues to use the church as a security. Later he turns to his child, Ursula, for support. Actually, very little growth has taken place within him: "He was unready for fulfillment. Something undeveloped in him limited him, there was a darkness in him which he could not unfold, which would never unfold in him."²⁰

The most distinct contrast between the relationships of the two generations is seen in the episodes where the men contemplate taking another woman. When Tom considered going to Cossethay, the outcome of the resulting quarrel between Tom and Lydia was a purgation for them; for Anna and Will, the outcome is a further and more violent destruction and only a very limited purgation. After Will returns from Nottingham, where he has had an unsuccessful little romance with a young girl, Anna senses that he is looking for a new romance. She prepares herself to meet him at his own level: "they abandoned in one motion the moral position, each was seeking gratification pure and simple."²¹ "There was no tenderness, no love between them any more, only the maddening, sensuous lust for discovery and the insatiable, exorbitant gratification in the sensual beauties of her body."²² Their lust takes on a form of fetishism:

He would say during the daytime: 'Tonight I shall know the little hollow under her ankle, where the blue vein crosses'. . . . He would

have forfeited anything, anything, rather than forgo his right even to the instep of her foot, and the place from which the toes radiated out, the little miraculous white plain from which ran the little hillocks of the toes and the folded, dimpling hollows between the toes. He felt he would rather die than forfeit this.²³

As the years go by, Will and Anna establish some form of peace. Their relationship has caused a destruction, a limited purgation. She finds a limited fulfillment in her children, and he gains a measure of Selfhood in his work at the school. Will, like the men in The White Peacock, lacks that quality of masculine independence that is so necessary in the man-woman love relationship. Anna cannot respect his lack of authority and leadership. Thus she has to find her fulfillment in her children.

In the third generation, Ursula experiences both destructiveness and creativeness in her relation with Skrebensky. The first major destruction occurs on the night of her Uncle Fred's wedding. As Ursula and Skrebensky are dancing, they feel the locking of their wills: "it was his will and her will locked in a trance of motion, two wills locked in one motion, yet never fusing, never yielding one to the other."²⁴ The urge to kill comes upon her; she wants to destroy him because she cannot respect his denied Self. "A strange rage filled her, a rage to tear things asunder. Her hands felt destructive, like metal blades of destruction."²⁵ When they are out in the stackyard, Skrebensky wants to destroy her; yet actually he is being destroyed. It becomes a deadly struggle: "yet obstinately, all his flesh burning and corroding, as if he were invaded by some consuming, scathing poison; still he persisted, thinking at last he might overcome her. Even, in his frenzy, he sought for her mouth, though it was like putting his face into some awful death."²⁶ Ursula "was there fierce, corrosive,

seething with his destruction, seething like some cruel, corrosive salt around the last substance of his being, destroying him, destroying him in the kiss."²⁷ Later that evening she wants to caress him back to life, but he is "dead." The ordeal has also left its mark on her: "there was a wound of sorrow, she had hurt herself, as if she had bruised herself, in annihilating him."²⁸ This then is their first major destruction of one another.

After several years, when Ursula is at college, Skrebensky again comes to visit her. At first their rediscovered relationship seems a creative one. When their love finds consummation in the outdoors,²⁹ one is reminded of Clara and Paul's wholesome sexual experience out in the fields. As a result of their sexual consummation, Ursula and Skrebensky feel strong, whole, and unashamed. But then gradually she again loses her respect for him and declares him a weakling with his Self given away in a pretentious service to the nation. As a selfless creature, he is unable to sustain a love relationship with Ursula. They begin to hate one another, and he is destroyed more and more. With each sexual experience comes a further death.

It all contained a developing germ of death. After each contact, her anguished desire for him or for that which she never had from him was stronger, her love was more hopeless. After each contact his mad dependence on her was deepened, his hope of standing strong and taking her in his own strength was weakened. He felt himself a mere attribute of her.³⁰

When Ursula says she will not marry him, he begins to cry. It is a very humiliating scene; his masculinity suffers badly. Finally she consoles him as a mother would a small child.

They try to make their relationship work. They go off together to Rouen and later to her friend's cottage. Ursula feels restricted in the cottage so she forces Skrebensky to make love to her in the outdoors on the downs. Like Clara in Sons and Lovers, Ursula hopes the outdoors will add sensation to their sexual intercourse, which has deteriorated to a mere mechanical, repetitive act. In the end, nothing seems to help; Skrebensky has been "killed" too many times. Humiliated, destroyed, he leaves quickly for India and within two weeks marries someone else.

Ursula, too, experiences a death. For days she walks about as in a trance. Then one day when she is walking through the woods, she is overtaken by a sudden shower. She seeks shelter under an oak tree. Here she has a traumatic experience as a band of wild horses come stampeding upon her. Scarcely missing her, they thunder past. The horses crashing upon her symbolize her death. At the same time, the beauty of the animals, their strength and their gracefulness, give her a tremendous desire for a new and beautiful life.³¹ She dies to the "dead:" Skrebensky, her mother and father, the college, and her false friends.³² She dies to everything that belongs to a Christian culture that denies the Self. She feels she is reborn as a "naked, clear kernel thrusting forth the clear, powerful shoot."³³ "Soon she would have her root fixed in a new Day, her nakedness would take itself the bed of a new sky and a new air, this old decaying, fibrous husk would have gone."³⁴

At the end, through her rebirth, she becomes capable of a vision of hope for the future: "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."³⁵ In her vision the "sordid" men cast off their "horny covering of disintegration" and become new, clean

bodies. The weak, self-denied Skrebensky is gone; with a new hope Ursula waits for her new man, a "Son of God."

In Women in Love, Lawrence examines mainly two man-woman relationships. To show the development of the relationships, he frequently sets two episodes side by side, or in closely following chapters, in which he shows the one couple, Birkin and Ursula, as they move towards creative death, and the other couple, Gerald and Gudrun, as they move towards destructive death.

One of the first important episodes takes place in the "Classroom" chapter where Birkin, the school inspector, watches Ursula teach and Hermione, the "Kulturtrager," happens to come along. During the incident Birkin acquaints the readers with his philosophy, saying to Hermione in defiance of her craving for abstract knowledge: "'You've got to learn to be, before you can come into being . . . we have a conceit of ourselves. . . . We'd rather die than give up our little self-righteous self-opinionated self-will.'" ³⁶ Having acquainted the reader with Birkin's philosophy, Lawrence, in the "Diver" chapter, reveals Gerald's nature through Ursula's remark: "'He'll have to die soon, when he's made every possible improvement, and there will be nothing more to improve.'" ³⁷ In this scene, he is recognized as the Cain-figure with a "primitive desire for killing."³⁸ In the two incidents, Birkin's emphasis on "being" is contrasted with Gerald's strong-willed, impulsive emphasis on "doing" even though it leads to destroying.

In the "Totem" and "Breadalby" chapters a second set of episodes occurs which further contrasts Birkin and Gerald. In the "Breadalby" chapter, Birkin, who has been held bound for years in Hermione's clutches, attempts to free himself. He realizes that their relationship has reached the point where one must destroy the other. Hermione fears she will lose him, and in her desperation

to possess him totally, she tries to kill him with a paper weight. Although she only injures him physically, he dies a psychological death. He dies to her spiritual cravings, frees himself and is reborn to give himself to a creative relationship with Ursula. In "Totem" Gerald, too, is temporarily caught by Minette, and he has to free himself of her. After a few passionate nights during which Gerald destroys Minette, and furthers his own destruction, he becomes tired of her and she, in turn, becomes "hard and cold, like a flint knife" towards him.³⁹ Both are glad to get rid of one another. Gerald is now free and ready to turn to Gudrun, who, ironically, is basically like Minette. In contrast to Birkin, Gerald has not experienced a rebirth: he has merely freed himself from one woman, so that he is ready to exert his power over another one. He does not realize that with the next woman his power will not hold good.

Two succeeding juxtaposed episodes, "An Island" and "Coal-dust," further contrast the men and also the two women. As Ursula watches Birkin fix the punt and later as they row to the island, the stillness and peace of the surroundings seem to prompt Birkin to make his statement about love on this occasion:

I don't believe in love at all--that is any more than I believe in hate, or in grief. Love is one of the emotions like all the others--and so it is all right whilst you feel it. But I can't see how it becomes an absolute. It is just a part of human relationship, no more. And it is only part of any human relationship. And why one should be required always to feel it, any more than one always feels sorrow or distant joys I cannot conceive. Love isn't a desideratum--it is an emotion you feel or you don't feel, according to circumstance.⁴⁰

Birkin is striving for something "beyond love," a something that will bring the stillness, peace, and freedom

he experiences in the natural surroundings. Ursula recognizes this although she cannot understand and accept it. Gudrun, on the other hand, establishes a bond, "a sort of diabolic freemasonry," with Gerald as he exercises his will over the horse, in the "Coal-dust" episode, by forcing it to stand still as the train rushes by. Gerald disregards the bleeding animal; his main objective is to demonstrate his power, which forces subjection of the other at any cost. The "will to power" is what attracts Gudrun. This "Wille zur Macht,"⁴¹ which in actuality is the will to destroy, the urge to kill, in each of them is what attracts them to one another and later destroys them.

Birkin's concept of "beyond love" and Gerald's emphasis on the powerful will are further expounded in the "Mino" and "Rabbit" chapters. In each chapter, Lawrence uses an animal image to illustrate the ideas. Birkin has been telling Ursula, who is having tea with him in his new flat, that "we want to delude ourselves that love is the root. It isn't. It is only the branches. The root is beyond love, a naked kind of isolation, an isolated me, that does not meet and mingle and never can. . . . there is a beyond, in you, in me, which is further than love."⁴² Birkin speaks of "an equilibrium, a pure balance of two single beings--as the stars balance each other."⁴³ Then they watch the cat, Mino, as he attracts the attention of a female cat and establishes an agreement with her. Birkin contrasts this with the way Gerald forces the horse to submit to his power: "with the Mino, it is the desire to bring this female cat into a pure stable equilibrium, a transcendent and abiding rapport with the single male. Whereas without him, as you see, she is a mere stray, a fluffy sporadic bit of chaos."⁴⁴ The interaction of the two cats demonstrates for Birkin the "law of creation," that is, the establishing of a "pure balance

of two single beings." The animal incident in the "Rabbit" chapter shows not only Gerald's and Gudrun's characters but also what happens when two strong forces meet. The "demonic" in the rabbit is forced to become subject to the "demonic" in Gerald. When Gerald hits the rabbit and it gives an "unearthly abhorrent scream," Gerald and Gudrun experience a "mutual hellish recognition" and a league "abhorrent to them both" is formed. Gerald has cruelly shown his power; at the same time he has recognized Gudrun's "sullen passion for cruelty" and Gudrun knows that she has been revealed. Again, as in the horse scene, the urge to kill, the attraction to death, is revealed in both of them. The incident concludes with the following conversation between Gerald and Gudrun:

'God be praised we aren't rabbits,' she said in a high, shrill voice. The smile intensified a little on his face.
'Not rabbits?' he said, looking at her fixedly. Slowly her face relaxed into a smile of obscene recognition.
'Ah, Gerald,' she said in a strong, slow almost man-like way. '--All that, and more.'
Her eyes looked up at him with shocking non-chalance.⁴⁵

Lawrence further contrasts the two relationships in the "Moony" and "Industrial Magnate" chapters. In "Moony," Birkin, thinking he is unobserved, is throwing stones at the white reflection of the moon in the water; he curses it and smashes it into fragments only to see it come together again on the surface of the lake. The critic Graham Hough states that "the moon is the white goddess, the primal woman image, 'das ewig weibliche', by whom Birkin is haunted."⁴⁶ Here then is Birkin trying to come to terms with what Ursula, as "das ewig weibliche," means to him. He is trying to free himself from the type of love which she by her very nature, as the "eternally

woman", is affirming. This is what he is trying to shatter. He doesn't want to have his will magically lured and bound to her. At the same time, he does not want to force his will upon her. "'I want us to be together without bothering about ourselves--to be really together because we are together, as if it were a phenomenon, not a thing we have to maintain by our own effort.'"⁴⁷ He doesn't want the relationship to be an exertion of the will, but a being content without desire and insistence: "to be together in happy stillness."⁴⁸ Gerald Crich, as the "Industrial Magnate," wants the very opposite: he wants to exert his will. In fact, his will is to be the absolute. He succeeds in reducing everything to pure Matter. But although Gerald's will brings great improvements at the industrial level, it does not give him personal satisfaction. The chapter concludes with the statement that "he knew there was no equilibrium."⁴⁹ Gerald is still searching for something to fill the craving within him. The destruction of the individual at the industrial level by Gerald's will has not satisfied him; he must seek to destroy the individual at the personal level, or find a renewal, something to satisfy the craving within him.

Perhaps the best contrast of the two relationships is shown in the chapters in which each of the couples' sexual love finds consummation. "Excuse" begins with an argument as Ursula and Birkin attempt to "work out" their relationship. Lawrence seems to be suggesting that an argument between lovers is, perhaps, periodically necessary; it is an outward demonstration of a vital "polarity." It is because of the argument that they can come to an understanding which is a release for both of them. After the argument, their union is flooded with "rich peace, satisfaction." It is a profound sexual experience, "deeper than the phallic source."

She had thought there was no source deeper than the phallic source. And now, behold, from the smitten rock of the man's body, from the marvelous flanks and thighs, deeper, further in mystery than the phallic source, came the floods of ineffable darkness and ineffable riches.⁵⁰

... ..
They would give each other this star-equilibrium which alone is freedom. . . . 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.⁵¹

For both the immediate result of their sexual communion is a "night of unbroken sleep."⁵² In the morning they remember the "magnificence of the night" with an almost holy and sacred wonder. In contrast, the "Death and Love" chapter describes the deadly consummation of the other couple. Whereas Birkin and Ursula's love finds consummation in the peaceful stillness of nature, Gerald and Gudrun's takes place in her room. Gerald brings with him the clay from his dead father's grave. Just as the clay clings to his shoes and is conveyed to Gudrun's room so death and destruction is conveyed from his body to hers. "He had come for vindication. . . . And she, subject, received him as a vessel filled with his bitter potion of death. She had no power at this crisis to resist. The terrible frictional violence of death killed her, and she received it is an ecstasy of subjection, in throes of acute, violent sensation."⁵³ It is a warm and rich experience for him; it is a destroying experience for her. He falls into a "sleep of complete exhaustion and restoration;" she feels like screaming in torment because she is "isolated" from him. Wearied and exhausted she waits for the long, tortured hours of the night to pass. The sexual experience with Gerald has not brought release

for Gudrun; she waits for the morning to bring her release. A great weight falls from her when he finally leaves.

When the two couples are in the Northern mountains, Gerald and Gudrun's destruction reaches a climax. They are determined to "kill" one another. In the end, Gerald is killed. Gudrun continues a death-in-life existence. Both are extremely tragic figures. Gerald, who forces the "convulsion of death" to run through everything that comes within his powerful will, is finally destroyed by someone who has a similar urge to kill. For Gerald, death brings release. Gudrun, on the other hand, has to continue suffering as she listens to "the terrible clock with its eternal tick-tock" and thinks of the "mechanical succession of day following day, day following day."⁵⁴ The clock that ticked away the torturous hours during her first night with Gerald will continue to tick away the equally torturous and meaningless hours of the nights she will spend with the future Loerke-figures, "the little ultimate creatures," that happen to come along when one destructive relationship comes to an end and another begins.

Although the end of Gerald and Gudrun is tragic, the basic cause of their destructive love is equally tragic for it will continue destroying future Gerald and Gudrun figures. The cause is rooted in the "rotten" civilization in which the Christian vision has emphasized denying the Self and committing a falsified Self to an idea, an abstraction. Mr. Crich, the Christian socialist, has denied the Self to worship the "mindless Godhead of humanity;"⁵⁵ his son, the Industrial Magnate, has also denied the Self to commit himself to the abstraction, the machine. In both cases, the all-important Selfhood has been destroyed. The Self of the workers has also been destroyed. Gerald has reduced everything to Matter. Then in the man-woman love relationship, ironically, the "strong" man reveals himself as the weakling. He has

exhausted his energies on the abstractions. With the workmen, he is the seemingly powerful leader; with the woman, he is clearly humiliated because he cannot maintain leadership. Thus the "male" is destroyed by the woman.

For Birkin and Ursula, the experience in the North becomes one of vision. They become aware of a new dimension of their love relationship. In their creative love there can be a wholesome destructiveness. Ursula recognizes in herself a simultaneous attraction and repulsion towards Birkin.

Clear before her eyes, as in a vision, she could see the sardonic licentious mockery of his eyes, he moved towards her with a subtle, animal, indifferent approach. . . . For a moment she revolted, it was horrible. . . . And yet she was fascinated. . . . He was so attractive and so repulsive at once. . . . she gave way, he might do as he would. His licentiousness was repulsively attractive. But he was self-responsible, she would see what it was.

They might do as they liked--this she realized as she went to sleep. . . . How good it was to be really shameful! There would be no shameful thing she had not experienced. Yet she was unabashed, she was herself. Why not? She was free, when she knew everything, and no dark shameful things were denied her.⁵⁶

This new dimension gives them a new freedom. Their love is not restrictive; in contrast, it gives them a freedom to do as they like.

And in the Northland, they experience still another awareness. They recognize the limitations of their love. After several days in the Northern mountains, Ursula says to Birkin: "'I hate the snow, and the unnaturalness of it, the unnatural feelings it makes everybody have.'"⁵⁷ She wants to leave because she feels that the surroundings are too threatening to their love. Birkin feels a similar threat, and he is saddened by the realization that their

love has its limitations.⁵⁸ At the same time, the experience brings them to a new awareness: an acceptance of each other with their limitations, a reconciliation with the imperfect, and a calm and glad hope for the future.

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.⁵⁹

FOOTNOTES

1. D. H. Lawrence, The White Peacock (London: Duckworth and Co., 1921), p. 231, (subsequent page references to this edition of this novel.)

2. p. 231.

3. p. 231.

4. D. H. Lawrence, Sons and Lovers (New York: The Viking Press, 1958), p. 353, (subsequent page references to this edition of this novel.)

5. p. 354.

6. p. 364.

7. p. 364.

8. p. 383.

9. D. H. Lawrence, The Rainbow (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1949), p. 59, (subsequent page references to this edition of this novel.)

10. p. 62.

11. p. 73.

12. pp. 82-83.

13. p. 95.

14. p. 95.

15. p. 96.

16. p. 156.

17. p. 167.

18. p. 189.

19. p. 190.

20. p. 210.

21. p. 235.

22. p. 236.

23. pp. 236-7.

24. p. 318.

25. p. 319.

26. p. 321.

27. p. 322.

28. p. 324.

29. p. 451.

30. p. 463.

31. D. H. Lawrence, Fantasia of the Unconscious (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1923), pp. 154-5.

32. D. H. Lawrence, The Rainbow, p. 493, (subsequent page references to this edition of this novel.)

33. p. 493.

34. p. 493.

35. p. 496.

36. D. H. Lawrence, Women in Love (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1960), p. 48, (subsequent page references to this edition of this novel.)

- 37. p. 53.
- 38. p. 54.
- 39. p. 89.
- 40. p. 143.
- 41. p. 167.
- 42. p. 162.
- 43. p. 164.
- 44. p. 167.
- 45. pp. 273-4.

46. Graham Hough, The Dark Sun (London: Gerald Duckworth and Co. Ltd., 1956), p. 29.

47. D. H. Lawrence, Women in Love, pp. 281-2, (subsequent page references to this edition of this novel.)

- 48. p. 284.
- 49. p. 262.
- 50. p. 354.
- 51. pp. 360-1.
- 52. p. 361.
- 53. p. 388.
- 54. pp. 522-3.
- 55. p. 242.
- 56. pp. 463-4.
- 57. p. 489.
- 58. p. 490.
- 59. p. 490.

CONCLUSION

If one could summarize in one word Lawrence's conception of the basic cause of death in the love relationship between the man and woman, man and man, and the parent and child, the word would be self-denial: a denial of one's own self and the self of the other person. The Christian-oriented culture fosters a people who have destroyed their distinct personalities, who have lost their individuality through a denying of the Self.

Stephen Spender, a Lawrence critic, states:

Our death is a loss of individuality. In a mechanized age, an age of mass production, this kind of death haunts life. Yet, as Lawrence very clearly saw, the assertion of one's individuality, the insistence of one's will is not the answer of life to this modern form of death. The answer is, in fact, in a life that is deeper than individuality; that has no assertive individuality that can be taken away from it. In short, it is not death that matters, but the reality of death. The deathly aspect of our civilization is not a real death at all: it is an unreality which makes life into a ghost. Real dying is preferable to this.

The importance, then, of Lawrence as a revolutionary and a preacher, is that he insisted on real and living values: real life, real sexual experience, real death. All ideas of love and honour could be sacrificed to the realities.¹

Most of the characters in Lawrence's novels exemplify this form of death, the "loss of individuality." In The White Peacock, George's physical death is symbolic of his slow psychological death, his loss of individuality. Mr. Beardsall and the gamekeeper also die: They are destroyed by the "unreality" of the "spiritual" lovers, their wives. The "real and living values" that Lawrence stresses are foreign to both the men and the women. In Sons and Lovers, Paul and Miriam do not have a "real sexual experience"; they can only "sacrifice" themselves. Mrs.

Morel, searching for a way to regain her lost individuality, turns to her children, and both she and they suffer a further loss. In The Rainbow there is both the death through "loss of individuality" and the "real death" which results in a rebirth. Will and Anna experience both to a limited degree. Through their "loss of individuality" they at first destroy one another. Through their "real sexual experience" they are reborn, although only in a limited way, to a capacity for "real life." Ursula and Skrebensky also destroy one another: Skrebensky continues a life-in-death existence, "the unreality which makes life a ghost;" Ursula is reborn to "real and living values." In Women in Love, Gerald, determined that "the assertion of one's individuality, the insistence of one's will" is the answer to life, forces subjection on animals and people. But he discovers it is no satisfactory answer; he, the weakling, is destroyed in the relationship with Gudrun, another person with a "lost" individuality. Birkin and Ursula, in contrast to Gerald and Gudrun, begin to experience "real life;" "all ideas of love" are replaced by "reality." They discover, at least in part, "the answer of life."

In his essay "The Study of Thomas Hardy," Lawrence defines this "answer of life" thus:

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. 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 work, the children.²

In The White Peacock, no one attains "the full achievement," the "real Me." George Saxton, Mr. Beardsall, the game-

keeper, and even Cyril Beardsall fail; all are, in some way, destroyed creatures. The women, Mrs. Beardsall, Lettie, and even Meg, too, fail to attain the "real Me." They may think they find a partial "achievement" in their children, but this achievement is merely a substitute. In Sons and Lovers, Lawrence again shows his readers persons who have not achieved the "real Me." Mr. and Mrs. Morel fail; theirs is a mutual destruction. Paul and Miriam fail in their "sacrificial" love. Paul suffers further loss through his attachment to his mother. In the end he is still searching for "the answer." In The Rainbow, Lydia seems, although in a limited way and for a particular generation, to have "the answer." Through her capacity for a beautiful spontaneous response, she can give "the answer" to Tom. They attain, for their particular time, "the full achievement," the "flower" which then "will bear the fruit of its nature." The rainbow spans their lives. The granddaughter Ursula seems to have the capacity for instinctive life that her grandmother had. Although her parents, Will and Anna, achieve only a limited "not Me," Ursula after being destroyed by Skrebensky is reborn to a creative, spontaneous life with a capacity for expressing the true Self. In Women in Love, she and Birkin, in contrast to Gudrun and Gerald, experience creative destruction. They rid themselves of all "ideas" of love. The "real and living values" are important to them. They aim for the "full achievement."

Thus for Lawrence, although the Christian-oriented culture fosters a "denied Self" resulting in destructive death, the possibility of achieving the "real Me," the all-important Selfhood, is present. The response of the "whole" man to "real life, real sexual experience, real death" brings "full achievement." "Of the complete Me will come the complete fruit of me:" the creative relationship between the parent and child, the "purposive activity" of men, and the all-important love between the man and woman.

FOOTNOTES

1. Stephen Spender, The Destructive Element (London: Jonathan Cape, 1935), p. 180.

2. D. H. Lawrence, "Study of Thomas Hardy" in Phoenix The Posthumous Papers of D. H. Lawrence, ed. E. D. McDonald (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1936), p. 403.

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