

Chapter IV :

Women in Love: An Expression of Psychology and Symbolism

An Expression of Psychology & Symbolism:

Lawrence is no doubt an outstanding psychological novelist, who is influenced by Sigmund Freud's 'Psychoanalytical theory'. In 'Women in Love' one finds that Lawrence widely uses psychological descriptions to portray and analyse the characters and that is conducive to reveal the theme - the mixed feelings of love and hate of the characters. F. R. Leavis says:

The Psychological pattern created by Lawrence is used to describe the characters and to promote the development of their relationship. (Leavis: 1995, p. 135)

The Psychology of characters is the basic element in the novel - the subconscious mixed feelings of love and hate is driving like a force to promote the development of the novel and establish a relationship, which in a sense becomes a kind of 'psychodrama'. According to F. R. Lewis in chapter 'Breadalby', Hermione and Birkin are walking towards the end of their relationship and Lawrence uses exquisite style to manifest the tensed relations and psychological struggle between Hermione and Birkin. There are neither any inner soliloquies and quarrel nor any explicit expression of their action, but only intuition and impulse. Hermione bears a sense of hatred for Birkin. Lawrence puts great emphasis on psychological confrontation between Hermione & Birkin. The whole chapter is based on Psychological rhythm & is much like a Psychodrama". (Leaves: 1995, p. 114)

Women in Love is a sequel to *The Rainbow*. It is interpreted as a novel of relationships between man and woman, man and nature and mind and body. D.H. Lawrence's point of view on these relationships finds its best expression through the perspective of psychology and symbolism. It also suggests regenerating natural and inexorable relationships between man and woman and man and nature to explore the mystery of life. In this novel, Lawrence shows the mental inner conflict

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as well as struggle for individual identity. It is one of Lawrence's masterpieces and also one of the important novels of the 20th century. Being a modern novelist, Lawrence uses a lot of modern writing techniques to mould his characters. He uses a technique, which is contrary to the traditional way, to arrange the structure of the novel so as to achieve his goal. It is true that the narrative structure of *Women in Love* is complicated. On one hand, it has lucid narration technique to draw the outline of its theme and on the other hand, it has the psychological description which is unique and has profound symbolism.

Being a sequel to *The Rainbow* it continues the story of Ursula's attempt to achieve a satisfactory love relationship and bringing her sister Gudrun into new prominence. The novel can be praised on several grounds - for structural simplicity and toughness, for psychological penetration, for the ambitious presentation of men and women in relation to the forces of modern industrialisation and for its great sense of untranslatable symbolic power. But it is the combining of all these in an organically related works of art that makes 'Women in Love' such a remarkable achievement.

The self-substantial world that Lawrence creates in *Women in Love* is not an isolated world. It is a parallel creation that reflects and comments on reality. The criticism of industrial society which it contains is intended as a serious diagnosis of the evils affecting the real world.

Women in Love portray the way of life of Ursula's generation, the generation growing up in early 20th Century England. Actions happen at the same time, though in different places. In his discussion of the novel, Philip Hoksawn explains that each chapter focuses on an event which is a literal narrative, but which has also symbolic overtones.

In the chapter called 'Diver', a man's swimming shows; he inhabits a medium quite different from those watching him.

Suddenly, from the boat - house, a white figure ran out across the old landing - stage. It launched in a white arc through the air, there was a bursting of the water and among the smooth ripples, a

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swimmer was making out to space, in a centre of faintly heaving motion. The whole underworld, wet and remote, he had to himself... And she stood motionless, gazing over the water at the face which washed up and down on the flood, as he swam steadily. From his separate element, he saw them and he exulted to himself because of his own advantage, his possession of a world to himself. He was immune & perfect. (Lawrence: 1920, pp. 39-40)

'Coal - Dust' is an evocation of the industrial background of the novel. So, it is throughout the book, a particular event not only gives each chapter in its atmosphere, but also acts as a framework for the psychological notation therein. One finds in the novel, one pair of Lovers converging while another pair diverges. He also mentions a Dostoevskian influence in the background, particularly in the disaffection from a society which some of the characters display.

Gerald was ready to be doomed. Marriage was like a doom to him. He was willing to condemn himself in marriage, to become like a convict condemned to the mines of the underworld, leaving no life in the sun.... It was a committing of himself in acceptance of the established world. (Lawrence: 1920, p. 345)

In the novel, Lawrence adopts a kind of symmetry in dealing with the two pairs of characters who are in love and this becomes the basic thread to link the whole story together. Also, this is one of the major themes of the novel. Brangwen Sisters: Ursula and Gudrun fall in love with Birkin and Gerald respectively at the beginning. Gerald ended his temporal sensual relationship with model 'Minette' and was captivated by the Cold Sculptor Gudrun, Their relationship represents 'death'. Birkin parted with Hermione and established the polarized male and female relationship finally with Ursula and their relationship represents 'life'.

In the words of F. R. Leavis

The symbols in *Women in Love* can be categorized into two groups: Images indicate life, vitality, hopefulness and

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prosperity: and images that suggest coldness, hopelessness, decadence and death. (Leaves: 1995, p. 205)

The images that accompany Birkin & Ursula are linked to the first group of images. The Couple tries their best to escape the ugly misery of the world & react against mechanical civilization. Images associated with Gerald and Gudrun are quite different from the former pair and represent the second groups of images. The relationships between the two pair of lovers develop towards the opposite sides. In a perfect symmetry, the narrative devices form an antithesis which reflects the main theme of the novel. Later Birkin and Ursula experienced the hardship and struggle both in idea and feeling, and at last achieved harmonious love while another pair Gerald and Gudrun seem to be in harmony with each other, but actually at variance, especially in their idea and thinking, finally ended their relationship with Gerald's death in the snow.

Throughout *Women in Love*, Lawrence and his spokesman Birkin, try to promulgate a new set of values to recover the human will to live an individual life and means to natural fulfilments. Birkin preaches the viability of conjugal love as a foundation for all other human values and every effort is made in the novel to convince us that the centre of man's experience must be, as Birkin tells Gerald, a 'Perfect Union with a Woman' - Sort of ultimate marriage and there isn't anything else. Such a marriage would reach deeper into character than a relationship of conscious love. Birkin achieves 'Ultimate Marriage' with Ursula but he remains haunted by doom because he does not have any enduring connection with another man.

On the whole, he hated sex, it was such a limitation. It was sex that turned a man into a broken half of a couple, the woman into the other broken half. And he wanted to be single in himself. He wanted sex to revert to the level of the other appetites, to be regarded as a functional process, not as a fulfilment.... He wanted further conjunction, where man had being and woman had being, two pure beings, each constituting the freedom of the other. (Lawrence: 1920, p. 143)

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Sigmund Freud, the first scholar to write an analysis of human sexuality, wrote that every person has the ability to become bisexual at sometime in his or her life. He based this on the idea that enjoyable experience of sexuality with the same gender, whether sought or unsought, acting on it or being fantasized, in social upbringing becomes an attachment to his or her needs and desires. Birkin also had similar needs and desires. He recommends another bond outside of marriage: an eternal union with a man, another kind of love. He looks too manly love as a necessary support to marriage and as a liberating extension of our unconscious life into a new civilization. At the end of the novel, as he sits over the body of Gerald, who allowed himself to freeze to death in the mountains, Birkin feels devastated by the failure of their friendship.

The novel commands respect for the way in which it reconciles its traditional narrative with a psychological notation that Lawrence evolved to indicate the inner moods and changing affinities of his central characters.

IV.1 Psychoanalysis of Characters in *Women in Love*:

In the novel, Lawrence adopts a kind of symmetry in dealing with the two pairs of characters who are in love and this becomes the basic thread to link the whole story together, this is also one of the major themes of the novel. Brangwen sisters Ursula and Gudrun fall in love with Birkin and Gerald respectively at the beginning. Gerald ended his temporal sensual relationship with model Minette, and was captivated by the cold sculptor Gudrun, their relationship represents 'death' (Leaves: 1995, p. 114) Birkin parted with Hermione and established the polarized male and female relationship finally with Ursula and their relationship represents 'life' (Leaves: 1995, p. 114). The relationship between the two pairs of lovers develops towards the opposite sides. In a perfect symmetry the narrative devices form an antithesis which reflects the main theme of the novel. Birkin and Ursula experienced the hardship and struggle both in idea and feeling, and at last achieved harmonious love. While another pair Gerald and Gudrun seem in harmony with each other, but actually at variance, especially in their idea and thinking, finally ended with the Gerald death in the snow.

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Lawrence being influenced by Sigmund Freud, his technique in expressing the psychology of the characters surpasses his contemporary writers and the traditional concept. Lawrence says -

You mustn't look in my novel for the old stable ego of the character. There is another ego, according to whose action the individual is unrecognizable and passes through, as it were allotropic states which it needs a deeper sense than any. We've been used to exercise, to discover... like as diamonds and coal are the same pure single elements of carbon. The ordinary novel would trace the history of the diamond... but I say 'Diamond what! This is Carbon'. And every diamond might be coal or soot and my theme is carbon. (Kirkpatrick and Venson: 1979, p.708)

Lawrence creates a direct portrait of the characters' psychology, a peculiar psychological rhythm in his novels. In order to understand the characters in *Women in Love*, one should penetrate into the details of psychological rhythm.

The theme of 'Life and Death' determines the general psychological rhythm of the characters in *Women in Love*. Gerald is compared to the White Moon, the Alps and to the Arctic Snow Wilderness. The things that accompany him are always chilly, cold, hopeless and desperate. Gudrun has a negative, destructive mental self-consciousness in the depth of her soul. She belongs to the same group of Gerald and their relationship represents death. While in contrast to Gerald, Birkin symbolises the natural, spontaneous life, the man alive and lived wholly as a man of integrity, the invincible life force that tries to overflow and stimulate him. While his beloved Ursula is sensitive and protective, believes in true love and resents Birkin's lectures on the subject and his hope for something beyond.

Ursula relates the foulness of his sex life to his spirituality, she says,

You truth - lover! You purity monger! It stinks, your truth and your purity. It stinks on the offal you feed on... you are foul, deathly thing... you and love! You may well say, you don't want love... you are so perverse. (Lawrence: 1920, p. 157)

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Together with Birkin, they are in Lawrence's sense "man alive and woman alive". Besides this, all the other characters contribute to the theme and interact with the main characters to reflect the psychological movement of the main characters.

The complex interleaving and transposition compose the framework of the characters' psychology in the novel. We can perceive many detailed and particular psychological description in the novel.

Lawrence makes us aware of untamed, wild areas in the human personality that the individual can never master or fully express in a social role. He highlights those aspects of human personality and human needs that cannot be fully expressed through our social identity. Our natural selves are seen to be in constant struggle against our social selves.

Karen Horney states that,

Freud regarded the human body as an organic septum that consumes food, converts it into energy & uses this energy to perform both physical & mental activities. Energy is used to fuel the activities of three hypothetical personality structures - the id, ego & super ego. The id is a part of our biological make up. The ego operates on the reality principle; the super ego provides a set of internal social controls over behaviour. Freud proposed that the three structures are constantly competing for psychic energy to provide them with the 'Power' to control behaviour. The person is thus constantly in a state of intra psychic conflict - a clash among the opposing forces represented by the Three Psychic Structures. (Horney: 1939, p. 502)

An individual needs to find new ways of exploring the deep inner recesses of human personality, those inner drives and compulsions where we are all much the same, rather than those outer, more superficial aspects of our characters, created by social training.

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Lawrence believed that the healthy way of the individual's psychological development lies in the primacy of life impulse or the sexual impulse. Human sexuality to Lawrence is a symbol of life force. Through presenting psychological experience into individual human life and human relationships and exploring the personalities of his characters, Lawrence has opened up new territory in the writing of novel.

The reading of the novel gives the readers an insight into the human psychology of characters. It centres around four characters, two women and two men who scrutinize their lives and personal needs in an effort to discover something that makes the future worth living. The personal and social traumas of post World War I, combined with the rise of industry and urbanisation, have affected all four main characters, often at cross purposes as they explore love and its role in their lives. Intensely introspective and self-conscious, each character shares his/her thoughts with the reader, allowing the reader to participate in the inner conflicts and crises that each faces. As the love affairs of these four characters play out, filled with complications, disagreements about the meaning of love, questions about love's relation to power and dominance and the role of sexuality, Lawrence projects the tumult of post-war England as the values of the past yield to newer, more personal goals. In 'Women in Love', the characters do not exhibit any stereotypical or easily describable behaviour, Ursula, Gudrum, Birkin and Gerald are fascinating, complex people and the study of their psychology is equally fascinating.

IV.1.1 Psychoanalysis of the Character of Rupert Birkin:

The character of Rupert Birkin is universally acknowledged to be a self-portrait of Lawrence in philosophy and manners, but one sharp difference with 'Sons and Lovers' is the criticism and even outright mockery which the other characters seem to treat him, Ursula in particular. Birkin, the man who becomes the Ursula's lover and husband is rather too much of a preacher. He tries to educate Ursula in a different understanding of the Will, as part of his vision of the ideal human relationship as a 'pure, stable equilibrium' of individual wills, in which neither of the individuals fully succumbs nor dominates. Birkin advocates

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that marriage is essential because it theoretically assures the stability necessary for the leap into star equilibrium in which man and woman can sexually engage one another without losing their separate identities. The result of this achievement is fulfilment of the self, arrival at individuality, contact with life itself and self transformation. All this process supposedly enables the man and woman in their temporal state to experience the sexual act without fear of 'the horrible merging, mingling, self-abnegation of love'. (Lawrence: 1920, pp. 39-40)

At the same time, the man and man relationship prevents the possibilities of merging, assures an external connection with the outside world and assists in maintaining Psychic balance.

Birken proclaims to Gerald his need for a 'Sort of Ultimate marriage'

"It seems to me there remains only this perfect union with a woman - sort of ultimate marriage". (Lawrence: 1920, p. 57)

Yet he also wants to break free from society and social validation of his relationship,

"So they wrestled swiftly, rapturously... bodies clinched into oneness". (Lawrence: 1920, p. 339)

Energy is channelled, frustration exorcised, 'Selfhood' confirmed, despite a society a way of living, that is always threatening to take it away. As Birken says when it is all over, "such physical closeness' makes one sane. He seeks to supplement his relationship with Ursula with a different kind of love, the love of a man. But Gerald drifts to his death and Birkin is left with Ursula.

If Lawrence uses Birkin as a mouthpiece for some of his own ideas, he also puts him up as a target for satire, both by means of parody, as in the pompadour scene where one of Birkin's ridiculously sermon-like letters is read aloud and by subjecting him to straight forward attack from Ursula. One such attack reveals a very real weakness in Birkin and indicators of capacity for self-criticism. Pleading for spontaneity, Birkin says to Ursula:

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"I want you to trust yourself so implicitly, that you can let yourself go" Ursula replies, "I can let myself go, easily enough, It is you who can't let yourself go, it is you who hang on to yourself as if it were your only treasure - you - you Sunday School teacher - you - you preacher". (Lawrence: 1920, p. 19)

IV.1.2 Hermione Roddice's Suffocating Influence on Birkin:

Hermione seems to hybridize several women, Lawrence knew. The suffocating influence she exerts over Birkin recalls Paul Morel's relationship with Mirnam, which Lawrence based on his own with Jessie Chambers.

Lawrence portrays Hermione to be a character of strong will and this can be understood when Birkin angrily states that she is power hungry and like to control everything around her.

"You only have your Will and your conceit of consciousness and your lust for power to know". (Lawrence: 1920, p. 121)

The deadly sterile element in Birkin's life centres upon his relationship with Hermione. As the novel begins, his affair with her is already coming to an end, but it still has something of a hold over him and it is of considerable importance as indicating the kind of relationship that Birkin has cultivated in the past. Hermione is a cultured hostess who has a devouring interest in intellectual life. She is completely lacking in spontaneity and everything for her is so forced into consciousness and so subjected to Will that there is a total split in her, between knowing and being which threatens to disintegrate her. There seemed to be a split between what she seemed to feel and experience and what she actually said and thought.

"She seemed to catch her thoughts at length from off the surface of a maelstrom of chaotic black emotions and reactions and Birkin was always filled with repulsion, she caught so infallibly, her Will never fail her. Her voice was always dispassionate and tense and perfectly confident". (Lawrence: 1920, p. 126)

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Birkin, strong as his repulsion is, cannot quite cut himself off from Hermione. Now, of course, now Hermione is willing to let him. Birkin's capacity for free, spontaneous action becomes her substitute for life. She is one more variation on the constant theme in *Lawrence* of a clinging dependence, though hidden by an appearance of confidence and self-control - that comes from a failure to achieve normal wholeness of being.

No one could put her down, no one could make mock of her, because she stood among the first... she was invulnerable, beyond the reach of the world's judgement. And yet her soul was tortured, exposed. She suffered a torture, under her confidence and pride, feeling herself exposed to wounds and to mockery and despite. She did not know herself what it was. It was a lack of robust self, there was a terrible void, a lack, a deficiency of being within her. And she wanted someone to close up this deficiency, to close it up forever. She craved for Rupert Birkin. When he was there she felt complete, she was sufficient, whole... yet she could never stop up the terrible gap of insufficiency. (*Lawrence*: 1920, pp. 63-64)

The Subterranean Currents that control their relationship are felt in scene after scene of rudeness and disagreeableness between them. Since, Hermione functions symbolically as the possessive woman eager to assimilate him, Birkin feels his very existence threatened and the relationship comes to an end.

IV.2 Birkin Ursula relationship - a relationship of Psychic balance (a quest for star equilibrium):

Ursula is serious, responsible and a bit shy. At time she suffers from inferiority complex and needs to be reaffirmed in a continual way. Birkin has a complicated mind. On one hand, he is very sensitive, but on the other hand, he can be very cruel.

Their relationship is passionate but stormy. They have total mental compatibility and form a perfect couple.

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Ursula is the woman to whom Birkin turns as a relief after his unsuccessful relationship with Hermione. These two women have not only different characters and temperaments, but also different life principles. Ursula is a character of impulse rather than of deliberate Will. In her relationship with Birkin, she is put in the Paradoxical situation of being made an offer of marriage by a man whom she instinctively likes, but on terms that she instinctively rejects. In the end, she accepts him seemingly on the spur of the moment. Unlike Hermione, whose will power involves a deadly suppression of her true feelings, Ursula speaks her mind bluntly and this makes the quarrel a catharsis which purges all the difference causing surface conflict between the two lovers but leaves the permanent bond between them unbroken. However, Birkin's relationship with Ursula is, from the first difficult in its own way. Much of the reason has to do with Birkin's misanthropy and pessimism. At some level, Ursula sympathises with Birkin's views, but she is put off by his extraordinary vehemence and more importantly, seems to feel that if he would admit his love for her and fully surrender himself to their relationship, he would be freed from his all consuming hatred of the world. She is carrying on with life, in spite of everything and eventually, she succeeds in drawing him back into life. The first meeting of Ursula and Birkin in the classroom in their professional capacities as teacher and school inspector. But Ursula's pupils fade into the background. Instead the focus shifts from the human interaction to the catkins and buds of hazel tree.

"She heard, but did not notice the click of the door. Suddenly she startled she saw the face of a man. It was seaming like fire, she thought she was going to faint...." Suddenly he lifted his face to her, and her heat quickened at the flicker of his voice, 'Give me some crayons, won't you? So that they can make the gynaecium flowers rod and the androgynous yellow'" (Lawrence: 1920, pp. 84-85)

Though the substance of Birkin's speech is progressing, we are made aware that their interest in each other goes beyond the classroom. Birkin uses his privileges to assert his authority as a male as well as a school inspector. His brutal intrusion into her world is both physical and mental, there is something predatory

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in his manner of stalking her and then enjoy her discomfiture. By turning on the electric lights, he sharply awakens her out of her reverie, the gesture has metaphorical significance as well, he awakens her emotionally, revealing her vulnerability, her tender light and this excites his interest. Ursula seems mesmerized by Birkin as he goes about his business, and both are caught up in a process of mutual attraction that has nothing to do with conscious decision or will. This is the beginning of their relationship, but as their relationship proceeds they have their difference of opinions, there is a conflict between their differing definitions of love.

“‘You want the paradisaal unknowing’, she said, ‘I know what that means, thank you’, you want me to be your thing, never to criticize you. Gradually, the stillness and peace come on them. She put her hand tentatively on his. Their hands clasped softly and silently in peace.” (Lawrence: 1920, p. 147)

This is a lover’s quarrel, an important out, turning point for Ursula and Birkin, for it is here, after she leaves him, he resolves to marry her. However, they have a conflict regarding their definitions of love and how they wish each other to be. Ursula thinks that Birkin wants her to be a passive object, the simple gratification of his desire. She finds him obsessively preoccupied with himself and his needs and as unable to respond to her simply and directly. He feels that her demands come from a nagging, fearful lack of self-sufficing. There is a sense in which they both see the justice in the other’s case, through Birkin is the one who acknowledges it. It is in the silence after the angry words that the reconciliation comes.

Birkin is a complex character, his loyalties are unusually torn and these conflicts over the definition of love remain largely unresolved. The love debate is conducted through a mixture of demonstration and arguments for example, in chapter 13, when Birkin’s Tom Cat asserts his authority over a female stray; Birkin uses the incident as a demonstration of his theories.

“I agree that the Wille Zur Macht is a base and petty thing, but with the Mino, it is a desire to bring this female cat into a pure,

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stable equilibrium, a transcendent and abiding rapport with the single male... 'Yes-yes' cried Ursula, pointing her finger at him, 'There you are a star in its orbit! A satellite - a satellite of Mars - that's what she is to be!' (Lawrence: 1920, p. 173)

The fundamental paradox here is that Birkin is preaching the need for autonomy in relationships in an extremely partisan, authoritarian way that reveal his need to dominate and control. His intellectual use of metaphor from physics to express the ideal relationship in terms of two masses exerting equal gravitational pull on each other, pure, stable equilibrium soon slips under Ursula's goading into a more traditional notion of the strong male, like a star, exerting his control over a satellite woman.

There is a need for Ursula and Birkin to get things out into the light to recognize conflict and paradox. Birkin has often been seen as Lawrence's own spokesman in the novel, he has an important role apart from his relationship with Ursula, and he provides a complex, sustained commentary on the state of modern civilization generally, an elaborate, philosophical analysis of some perceived crises that find its most acute expression in intimate personal relationships.

Early in the novel, Birkin declares that it would be much better if humanity were wiped out. Later in conversation with Ursula, he declares:

"Humanity is a huge aggregate lie and a huge lie is less than a small truth. Humanity is less, far less than the individual because the individual may sometimes be capable of truth and humanity is free of lies.... (Lawrence: 1920, p. 349)

The pleasant sincerity of his voice made Ursula pause to consider her own proposition. And it really was attractive, a clean, lovely, human less world. It was really desirable. Her heart hesitated, but still she was dissatisfied with him. Birkin's relationship with Ursula is not normative'.

Birkin does engage in deviant and implicitly homosexual practices. The word 'normative' refers only to the ends they seek, not to their relationship.

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“So they wrestled swiftly, rapturously, intent and mindless at last, two essential white figures working into a tighter closer oneness of struggle, with a strange, octopus - like knotting and flashing of limbs in the subdued light of the room; a tense white knot of flesh gripped in silence between the walls of old brown books. Now and again came a sharp gasp of breath, or a sound like a sigh, then the rapid thudding of movement on the thickly - carpeted floor, then the strange sound of flash escaping under flash... the physical junction of two bodies clinched into oneness”. (Eliseo: 1963, p. 266)

The very factors that condition Birkin's pursuit of star equilibrium with Ursula involve his ambiguous admission of homosexuality. Birkin's association with the bohemian set of the 'Cafe Pompadour', his appearance in Halliday's apartment while Halliday and Libidnikov stand naked before the fire, his admission to Ursula that his relationship with Hermione was perverse and morally depraved, the nature of his sexual explorations with Ursula and above all the symbolic significance of his wrestling bout with Gerald - all points towards Birkin's awareness of his own defense, i.e. homosexuality. Lawrence asserts that a healthy self can emerge from an unhealthy one and that Birkin's desire for star polarity is not an abnormal expression of his dissociated sensibility.

The reference to 'poles' and 'positivity' are part of Lawrence's development of his basic notion of duality into an elaborate theory of 'polarity'. This involves a somewhat odd physiology in which 'sympathetic' centres and 'voluntary' or assertive centres existing at higher and lower levels in the human body known as 'sensual' and 'spiritual' planes. Circuits are set up between these centres and upon the proper, natural development of the centres and the circuits between them depends the health of the individual Psyche. The true goal of education is 'full and harmonious development of the four primary modes of consciousness.

To sum up the theory, the wholeness of being depends not on a compromise or a co-operation between head and heart, but on a dynamic opposition and vivid electric flow of energy between the poles within one human

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being or between the individual himself and other individuals concerned in his living. Birkin notes a conflict and possible contradictions between his quest for star equilibrium and his own Psychological nature.

The next day, however he felt wistful and yearning. He thought he had been wrong to go to Ursula with an idea of what he wanted. Was it star equilibrium, really only an idea or was it the interpretation of a profound yearning? If the latter, how was it he was always talking about sensual fulfilment. The two did not agree very well. (Lawrence: 1920, p. 278)

This explicit statement relates to Birkin's self division and suggests a possible contradiction between what he knows to be true to himself and what he would like to be true. Thus, Birkin's problem as a character involves his will to accept the facts about himself and his simultaneous attempt to transcend the facts. He clearly realises that two unreconciled selves exist in him and in the process of the novel he reasons out his response to the problem through the doctrine of star polarity.

Lawrence endeavours to show the human validity of Birkin's marriage with Ursula and the sterility of Gerald's bondage to Gudrun. The contrasting relationships illustrate the necessity for the new norm (star polarity) that Birkin advocates. Lawrence shows that Birkin's view of the man-woman relationship is conditioned by an existing oedipal problem concealed in the doctrine of star polarity.

Birkin is confronted with the challenge of becoming something else through his relation to Ursula, a self-transformation. A study of the symbolism that describes star polarity reveals that Birkin will never achieve the transformation, he desires because it is impossible to separate his two selves psychologically.

Gerald Crich is an Industrialist, he is optimistic and progressive, and he manages his father's business in a modern way. He possesses the capacity of organization of his business but not his life, his relationship with Gudrun is very stormy and has a disastrous end.

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Gudrun sees Gerald for the first time at the Crich wedding, and she is magnetized at first glance by something northern about him. There is a 'Sinister Stillness' in his bearing, the lurking danger of his unsubdued temper. His maleness is that of a predator, the wolf and Gudrun have a strange sense of being 'Singled Out' for him. They are destined to be partners in a cold, destructive battle of power and perverted sex, in which she eventually destroys him. The theme of 'Coldness' in their relationship occurs symbolically throughout the novel.

In chapter 4, 'Diver':

"Gerald feels perfectly at ease in the cold, wet and remote world of Willey water, a muddy lake, all gray and visionary Gudrun envy him 'almost painfully' Otherworld" (Lawrence: 1920, p. 211)

The nature of their bond becomes clear in another scene by the side of the Willey water in chapter 10 'Sketch Book' while Gerald is rowing a boat together with Hermione, Gudrun is absorbed in sketching, drops her sketchbook into the water.

Gudrun reached out for the sketchbook, Gerald stretched from the boat to take it.... The exchange of feelings between them was strong and apart from their consciousness. And as if in a spell, Gudrun was aware of his body, stretching and surging like the marsh fire, stretching towards her.... And the exquisite pleasure of slowly arresting the boat, in the heavy soft water, was complete as a swoon. (Lawrence: 1920, p. 357)

The two potential lovers become sharply aware of each other. Gudrun is sketching some water plants, when Gerald rows Hermione towards her and Hermione asks to see the sketchbook. It records the impressions and sensation of the two as the sketchbook is exchanged. Obviously the tension in the passage is the exchange of feelings between Gerald and Gudrun that accompanies passing of the book. She responds to his glance, signaled full into his spirit, and in that book, a bond is established between them. Gudrun feels a perverted ecstasy of having power over him. Ursula was mesmerized by Birkin, here Gudrun seems to go a

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step further. She appears to have some kind of surrealist vision on intuition into Gerald's inner being that is both exciting and mesmerizing. Gerald and Gudrun 'Sleep Walk' their way into a relationship without examining it or exploring its likely consequences very clearly. Their whole affair is determined by the novelist, hedged around with images of doom and fate. Gudrun asks Gerald what he wants of this relationship and he replies: 'I came Because I must'. Gudrun's response is to feel lost and to give way to fate. This is characteristic of their relationship throughout.

There is other side of Gerald's nature that is cruel and sadistic. His sadistic being is revealed in his mingling with Minette, she appeals to Gerald strongly, and he feels an awful enjoyable power over her, an instinctive cherishing very near to cruelty. Another example is the one when Gerald relentlessly forces the Arab man to hold her head to the gate while sharp blasts of the approaching train make the horse rock with terror.

He forces his will upon the man with 'mechanical relentlessness' and she finally surrenders by pawing and trembling mechanically. Even Ursula, the most peaceable of the characters is frantic with opposition and hatred for Gerald. Gudrun looks at him with spell bound eyes and feels faint with dizziness. She feels as if numbed in her mind by sexual symbolism linked with violence. To her Gerald seems no longer human, but she cannot put her thoughts into words, in her unbearable psychological isolation, she is incapable of such communication. She remains the unresponsive 'onlooker'. She lacks the sense of identity of her sister Ursula, 'the Partaker', who is capable of listening to the other person and of forming her own-thoughts, at the same time strong enough to yield as if it was her own identity. Gerald attributes the qualities of 'Magna Male' to her, she is 'Mother and Substance of all life' and he himself is grateful as an infant is at its mother's breast. And like a mother, she feels tenderness for him, but with a dark under steering jealous hatred. She wants him to go, so that she can relax. In his appeal to her deepest, soften emotions Gerald has made a fatal mistake, he has confronted Gudrun with her life wrecking inability to give or take intimacy and inspire her with passion to get rid of him forever.

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Gerald is possessed by his exertions, predatory in action like a hawk, he gets a sadistic pleasure in bullying others, for example the Arab mare, his miners, Minette and finally attempts but fails to do so in his relationship with Gudrun. She, in turn, is both excited by Gerald's power, yearning for the victim's place, but also determined to conquer and experience the thrill of control.

It is not a mutually satisfying love. There seems to be a tension or struggle between Gerald's negative desperation that appears violent and aggressive and passive regenerative warmth provided by Gudrun. The act of love, a life giving one, is here reversed into an act of death. In a truly horrible image, it is seen as a poisoning which gives miraculous relief to the male. Gudrun is merely a vessel subject to Gerald's Will. The act is sadistic on his part and masochistic on hers. Their love making brings Gerald 'the sleep of complete exhaustion and restoration, but it leaves Gudrun tormented with violent wakefulness. This is not simply an indication of Gerald's failure as a lover, but beyond the limit of sheer physical appeal and the hard Will which he displays as an industrial master, he is fatally unsure of himself. It is this weakness which drives him into a desperate seeking of comfort from Gudrun and which in the end she exploits.

Gudrun's role is to demonstrate the catastrophic effects of industrialisation and self-division upon Gerald's sexual nature.

Though Gudrun, like Birkin, ultimately rejects society as constituted, her rejection is only a manifestation of the next phase of social dissolution represented by Loerke, with whom she departs at the end. Gerald dies because he has failed to separate himself from Gudrun, whose departure with Loerke introduces a new industry norm, the mechanisation of sexual impulse as a desired condition of existence. Gerald's assimilation to Gudrun, his reduction to the womb, describes the ultimate effect of this process upon him and Lawrence's evaluation of the social order, he represents is expressed in sexual degradation Gerald is forced to undergo.

Gerald obviously fails to separate himself from Gudrun because of his rejection of brotherhood with Birkin, which would have guaranteed his individual identity. The womb imagery defines and clarifies the problem of sexual

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individuation and accounts for Gerald's and free characters' difficulties physically rather than socially. This symbolism is counterpointed against the light imagery, is likewise the product of the psychological dissociation and describes the effects of mechanical mind upon the individual's sexual life. It is used either to indicate the character's sexual reduction through the deliberate assimilation of his inner life or to suggest his release from bondage and to subsequent growth.

Gerald's Regression: A Manifestation of Oedipus complex:

Gerald is destroyed and his failure with Gudrun documents Birkin's success with Ursula. As Birkin's counterpart, Gerald suffers from the same sexual dilemma and is the product of the same psychic discontinuity. He had found his most satisfactory relief in women. According to Lawrence, the displacement of Gerald's natural feelings by mental sensationalism constitutes the process of his reduction in the struggle with Gudrun. The gradual stages of his reduction are implicitly related to the underlying womb imagery through the colour 'White' and the theme is immediately struck with Gudrun's initial description of him, "Gudrun lighted on him at once. There was something northern about him that magnetised her. In his clear northern flesh and his fair hair was a glisten like sunshine refracted through crystals of ice.

The end of the novel is anticipated in the reference to ice and the arctic North at the beginning and Gudrun polar relation to Gerald made possible by his own undeveloped and thwarted inner life, is implied. Gerald's hair like sunshine refracted through crystals of ice shows his readiness to be assimilated, a process typical of Lawrence's passive male.

Gerald's failure with Gudrun is related to Birkin's success with Ursula. Gerald's regression, his enclosure in the womb, is a manifestation of the Oedipus complex that involves his complete emotional dependence upon the mother surrogate, Gudrun. But the Lawrence view of the Oedipus complex is conditioned by a one-sided view of experience that leads him to misinterpret the intra-psychic processes upon which his view depends. In 'Women in Love' Gerald's reduction and Birkin's release from the womb serve two distinct purposes, both related to the author's theory of consciousness. The womb imagery explains society and the

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known self must be rejected on behalf of the vital self and the vital self can only be attained through star equilibrium.

Both Gerald and Gudrun are fundamentally destructive individuals, but of the two, Gudrun represents destruction in its purest form. Gerald destroys in order to transform and he believes himself to be an agent of history and social reform. With Gudrun, there is no such self-justification. Of course, ultimately Gerald's transformation of matter is perfectly destructive and so one can plausibly claim that in a sense Gudrun is the more honest of the two, though she is not self-aware in her destructiveness.

Gudrun represents the inner truth of Gerald's prometheanism laid bare. Gudrun's presence is felt throughout the entire book, but by the last few chapters, the story becomes focused very much on her. And it is in the last few chapters that the pure nihilism of her character is brought to the fore. At the same time, Gerald, who had earlier been a relatively strong figure is reduced to inefficiency and becomes almost a shadowy presence. His physical death comes, in a way, as merely an outward expression of an internal death that had already taken place in his soul.

Birkin and Ursula's expected release from the womb forms the symbolic counterpoint to Gerald's imprisonment within it and their success in breaking through will be due to the emergence of the vital self.

Conclusion:

Women in Love can be praised on several grounds for structural simplicity and toughness, for psychological penetration and for the ambitious presentation of men and women in relation to the forces of modern industrialism. In some sense 'Love' is the subject of 'Women in Love' as the title suggests, but in the novel 'Love' is not a simple romantic concept. It is a double love story involving two sisters, one ends badly, the other more or less well, but neither confirms to the orthodoxies of conventional love affairs as depicted in popular romantic fiction. The plot of the romantic love story is distorted out of all recognition by Lawrence's extensive

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analysis of individual Psychology and his examination of modern industrial society.

The novel shows the struggle of the characters as well as their mental inner conflict for individual identity. It throws light on Lawrence's philosophy of sex and marriage. About marriage, he says that it is only a conventional necessity; the marriage is at an end when couples cease to love. He dislikes sex when it becomes a limitation, it divides the man and woman into two broken halves of a whole, neither complete in itself. To summarise, we have found that the Gerald and Gudrun relationship is closed and determined, given over to sensation and self-extinction and that Birkin and Ursula's to open and negotiable. If the tendency of the first is towards death and destruction, and a neat tragic pattern of fatal love, the tendency of the second is to reach out for life in all its bewildering inconsistency. Moreover, in their drift towards a death struggle for life, these relationships illustrate two opposing tendencies within society as a whole and all intimate relationships.

Man, woman relationship is the major theme of the novel. In various relationships in the novel, Lawrence seeks to distinguish between truly creative conflicts and those conflicts which leave scars and damage like war. The various relationships depicted in the novel are Ursula and Birkin, Gudrun and Gerald, Hermione and Birkin and to some extent Gudrun and Loerke. The relationship that converges is that of Ursula and Birkin, the one that diverges is that of Gudrun and Gerald. In the very first stage of the novel, the tone of relationships is set for the rest of the novel.

The novel is full of symbolism and has social and philosophical influence of the period on the characters. There are many parallels drawn between love and death. As the love affairs of these four characters play out, filled with complications, disagreements about the meaning of love, questions about love's relation to power and dominance and the role of sexuality, Lawrence projects the tumult of post-war England.

All characters in *Women in Love* suffer from acute dissociation of sensibility, it becomes clear that psychological reintegration is no longer possible for them

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and complete divorce between reason and emotion, mind and body is imminent. As a result, the characters become mental or physical in basic nature and are symbolically presented accordingly.

The split evident in Hermione's emotional and mental processes, for example, is also present in the remaining characters. There always seemed an interval, a strange split between what she seemed to feel and experience and what she actually said and thought.

With the exception of Ursula, all characters are dissociated, they are inevitable, victimised by their own consciousness and are reduced to observing their own animal functions. They are continually preyed upon by the Will to destroy or be destroyed. This is the context in which Birkin and Ursula are labelled 'normative'. They alone try to overcome their society and the human automatons, it produces to arrive at mutual understanding and tolerance and to transform themselves. They try to overcome psychological dissociation and the perfect circuit between man and woman in star equilibrium is made possible.

The emotional relationships thus established are given further depth and tension by an intense psychological and physical attraction between Gerald and Birkin. Birkin endeavours to overcome his homosexual tendencies after having initially yielded to them. On the one hand, the idea of sexuality in relation to psychic processes that governs the novel and the conception of Birkin's character suggest that certain aspects of his problem go beyond the manifestation, he realises. On the other hand, Lawrence's use of the light imagery clearly establishes his artistic purpose of freeing Birkin from Gerald. However, Birkin and Gerald are technically straight and acquire an amorous relationship with Ursula and Gudrun respectively. The women are independent minded artist, who, despite their strong personalities wrestle with the idea of marriage and the subordination that goes along with it. The broader theme of the book includes gender roles, love, desire, one's country, social, economic standing, etc. All four characters suffer the peril of their own stagnation, trying to transgress any boundary they can.

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Lawrence uses Birkin as a link between the private lives of individuals and the public world of the novel, in particular, the strained relationship between the individual and society in general.

The blending of philosophical concepts with literary innovations in the novel performs the kind of fluid representation that Lawrence sought to recuperate from the discourse of philosophy. He saw philosophy as a fertile ground from which to structure his literary representations of the quintessentially modern problems of the individuals' relationship to others and to a world of violent industrial force. The novel ranges over the whole of British society before the time of the First World War and eventually ends high up in the snows of the Tyrolean Alps.

* * *

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