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LAWRENCE'S NOVELS - THEMES AND PRECEDENTS

A Thesis submitted for the Degree of

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ABSTRACT

Aims: To analyse the essential themes of *Women in Love*: i.e. three successive phases in a breakdown of moral health and three aspects of its recovery. To trace their development in Lawrence's other novels. To examine the position of *Women in Love* in this development and especially its relationship with *The Rainbow*. To present some illuminating affinities between his treatment of the themes and the treatment of similar themes in the novels he read or that formed a major part of the influences at work on him in his cultural environment.

CHAPTER I. *Idealism and the first Phase of the Breakdown*. Lawrence's portrayal of a condition of mind which, after the collapse of normal moral responsiveness, governs and values experience according to a prescription of principles. The chapter discusses this portrayal through the older generation in *Women in Love*, chiefly represented by Thomas Crich, and compares it with earlier studies in the same field in *Sons and Lovers* (Mrs. Morel) and *The Rainbow* (Will Brangwen). It then deals with the presentation of the theme mutated in the second generation in *Women in Love*, chiefly represented by Hermione Roddice, and compares it with its earlier appearances in *Sons and Lovers* (Miriam) and *The Rainbow* (Skrebensky). Next it considers idealism in the later novels: the dismissal of Christian and liberal ideals and the move towards substitute dogmas in *Kangaroo* and *The Plumed Serpent*. The final part of the chapter discusses themes in the work of preceding

novelists that have affinities with Lawrence's.

CHAPTER II. Gerald Crich and the Central Phase of the Breakdown.
This chapter deals with Lawrence's portrayal in Women in Love, chiefly through Gerald Crich, of a condition in which the disruption of give-and-take responsiveness produces a reaction against the old ideals; in their place are evolved manias, and behind these lie insecurity and a craving for self-vindication or self-obliteration. The chapter studies how Gerald's condition derives from that of his parents; how the specific tragedy of that family is linked with the social and industrial developments; how the total degenerative momentum is related to Lawrence's conception of the natural laws of dissolution and decay; and how Gerald's struggle with what he feels to be inevitable makes his story a moving tragedy. A brief comparison with some aspects of the theme as they appear in Lawrence's other novels - notably The Trespasser - establishes the unique stature of Gerald's tragedy in Lawrence's work. Finally there is a discussion of some major affinities with this theme.

CHAPTER III. Self-encasement - the final Phase.
Lawrence's portrayal of a moral collapse in which the total failure of belief or sense of commitment results in despair, cynicism and dreamworld compensations. The chapter considers the portrayal of the theme in Women in Love through Gudrun, Loerke and some minor characters. It deals with its more naive appearances in earlier novels, chiefly The White Peacock (Annable and Lettie) and The Trespasser (Helena); then with its development in the later novels: Michaelis and Clifford in Lady Chatterley's Lover, and the

intellectuals, bourgeois and masses in other novels. Finally, similar themes in preceding novels are explored.

CHAPTER IV. The Recovery of the Individual.

The linking concept running through each phase of the breakdown is that of a loss of a natural balance in which spontaneity and integrity, towards the self and others, can operate as one. This chapter considers Lawrence's exposition of the pre-requisites to attaining or recovering this balance. It argues that it is unrewarding to examine Birkin's ideas and responses as keys to the meaning and purpose of the novel. It studies in Women in Love how in Birkin's development he is kept responsive and able to develop largely because of his militant alertness, his challenging of ideologies, his search for a clearway between consciousness and its sources, and his faith in the creative mystery. Ursula's development through The Rainbow and Women in Love parallels and amplifies his. Their individual achievement is put into a historical perspective by the portrayal of the members of the Brangwen family in The Rainbow. Certain features of this theme are foreshadowed in the portrayal of Cyril Beardsall in The White Peacock and Paul Morel in Sons and Lovers. A discussion follows on how the basic conclusions arrived at in Women in Love are reiterated in the three novels that came after it. The final period is one of definition and over-definition, where the effort is directed towards selling the convictions that have evolved from these conclusions: The Plumed Serpent and Lady Chatterley's Lover.

CHAPTER V. Recovery and Marriage.

It is the combination of Birkin and Ursula that contains the promise of recovery in Women in Love. This chapter discusses the development of their relationship into marriage, through which they achieve an equilibrium and a sense of the future. It argues the success of

the portrayal. It then considers the earlier and simpler presentation of the theme in The Rainbow (Tom and Lydia Brangwen). In the later novels it notes how certain ideas from this theme in Women in Love become distorted by obsession. Finally it discusses the fable-like treatment of the theme in Lady Chatterley's Lover.

CHAPTER VI. Regeneration and Society.

This chapter studies Lawrence's portrayal of what the healthy individual owes to other people - family, friends and acquaintances - and what he receives back from them, both from the personal relationships and indirectly from the institutions, duties and ideologies created by society. It discusses the nature and development of Birkin's sense of social commitment in Women in Love (expressed chiefly in the context of his relationship with Gerald). Then it considers the way in which the historical perspective established in The Rainbow is carried into Women in Love through Ursula. It goes on to discuss how in the later novels some of the conclusions arrived at in Women in Love about the adjustment of the individual to society are applied to the whole of society: social and political regeneration in Kangaroo, social and religious regeneration in The Plumed Serpent.

CHAPTER VII. Themes of Regeneration in Previous Novels.

This chapter explores in the work of preceding novelists themes similar to those discovered in Lawrence's novels in the last three chapters. It deals first with the influence of near-contemporaries. It goes on to consider in connection with this theme George Eliot and Tolstoy. Finally it discusses affinities with Hawthorne, Dickens, Dostoevsky

and Conrad in the elucidation and balancing of themes of regeneration and destruction.

Conclusions: That Lawrence was essentially a thematic novelist; that is to say, a number of recurrent themes were being explored, analysed and propounded throughout his work. That concerns which were incipient in the earliest novels matured in definition and complexity in The Rainbow and Women in Love - which form the central and culminating achievement in their development - and in the later novels were arrested by over-simplification. That in the development of these themes The Rainbow and Women in Love have to be considered as 'an organic artistic whole'. That in the traditions of fiction Lawrence's achievement, at least in the portrayal of these themes, places him with three major predecessors, Dickens, Dostoevsky and Conrad - novelists who were preoccupied like him with themes that pressed for expression continually throughout their work.

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Contents

Introduction

The primary aim of this study is to analyse the essential themes of Women in Love and discuss their inter-relatedness: beyond this, to emphasize that the final evaluation of these themes lies in the dramatic presentation, and because of this that it is unrewarding to examine Birkin's ideas and responses as keys to the meaning and purpose of the novel.

A secondary aim is to establish the indivisibility of Women in Love and its partner, The Rainbow, substantiating Lawrence's claim that they have to be considered as 'an organic artistic whole'. (Lawrence to Secker, 16 January, 1920, Letters, i, 615.)

In the study of the other novels we shall see just how far the similarities with Women in Love will take us: that is, how far Lawrence was a thematic novelist, one preoccupied with themes that pressed for expression continually throughout his work.

At the end of the chapters dealing with these subjects is some discussion of affinities between Lawrence's treatment of these themes and the treatment of similar ones in the novels he read or that formed a major part of the influence at work on him in his cultural environment. This part of the study is of affinities rather than influences because - quite apart from the chanciness of establishing what books Lawrence actually read - direct influences often relate chiefly to the immature or minor portions of a major author's work. To discuss the relationship between the mature Lawrence and his equals shed some light on Lawrence through the difference as much as through the similarity of the handling of certain themes and ideas. I have, however, selected affinities only from those novelists Lawrence was particularly interested in, so as

to indicate some of the traditions that guided him in his development; and this at the same time emphasizes the reactions specific and original to himself. This has meant, for instance, omitting Jane Austen and Henry James - in whom Lawrence showed little interest - as well as contemporary novelists such as Gide, Joyce, Proust and Kafka.

The notes at the end of some of the chapters aim, with the utmost brevity, at relating the main points of the study to current critical controversies, to some of Lawrence's other writings, and to some of the other literature he read.

The bibliography contains details of books which are referred to in the text of the study by short titles only.

CHAPTER I

Idealism and the First Phase of the Breakdown

Principles are over-simple precepts for action; in order to be implemented, one attitude must be singled out, like a thread of a certain colour, from a bundle of entangled motives, needs and conflicting assessments of a situation. As abstracts they are essentially unworkable, for any living context in which they might be applied is necessarily too complex to be resolved adequately by simple rules. They must be challenged by the entire context of each situation in order to escape becoming weapons for a predatory egoism or shields for those whose more natural sympathetic responsiveness has been maimed.

This is the danger of idealism, if we may use the word as Lawrence did in some of his essays, to indicate a condition of mind which governs and values experience according to a prescription of principles:

> the inclination to set up some fixed centre in the mind, and make the whole soul turn upon this centre. This we call idealism. Instead of the will fixing upon some sensational activity, it fixes upon some aspirational activity, and pivots this activity upon an idea or ideal. The whole soul streams in the energy of aspiration and turns automatically, like a machine, upon the ideal.
>
> (Lawrence, 'Democracy', Phoenix, i, 714-15.)

Through the characters to be considered in this chapter Lawrence attempted to diagnose the part played by the mind in a

general breakdown of assurances, and to reappraise the traditions that shaped and gave strength to that 'great dynamo of super-mechanical force.' (Lawrence, Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious, ch. vi.)

Lawrence, through his presentation of Thomas Crich in Women in Love, was out to challenge the denial of spontaneous moral response inherent in both humanitarian idealism and the idealism of romantic love. He sought to condemn the altruistic principle in excess, that is, when it arrogates to itself absolute rule, seeking to reign over conduct as the sole good, and subjugating an individuality whose self-assertive resistance has broken down. This, in Lawrence's view, could only in the end madden the suppressed self, make it destructive:

> I shall hate myself to madness the more I persist in adhering to my achieved self of brotherly love. Still I shall persist in representing a whole loving humanity, until the unfulfilled passion for singleness drives me into action. Then I shall hate my neighbour as I hate myself ....in the name of brotherly love we rush into stupendous blind activities of brotherly hate. We are made mad by the split, the duality in ourselves.
>
> (Lawrence, 'Love', Phoenix, i, 155.)

Needless to say, it is only a shadow of the thought in the novel itself. For it presents, through Thomas, an agony of conflict and confusion between love that denies the self and love that asserts it; and how the over-riding stress on the former disturbs the balance between giving and demanding in all relationships, so that every part of life is spoilt. Both his marriage and his work are battlegrounds. But before coming to this crux of the

matter, one has to consider how the issue, as it relates both to social relationships and to personal ones, comes up for discussion elsewhere in the novel; for this consideration throws light on the course of the action.

Thomas Crich's benevolence is the issue of a tired tradition which goes back to the time when metaphysical scruples divorced the love of God from the love of man. The altruism of the nineteenth century was the more emphatic because it directed at mankind what formerly, in the Christian tradition, had belonged to God. Towards the end of the century, the enthusiasm for democracy, philanthropy and the brotherhood of man began to suffer from satiety and lack of opposition. Those features of industrialism it had been opposing - the gross avarice and brutal individualism of the industrialist pioneers - were curbed more and more by the interaction of workers' and employers' associations, and the growth of the mediating state. Ideals which had stood for human dignity now propped up organisations whose growth provided an unforeseen threat, the menace of that social machine which so terrified Kafka. The final stages of this humanitarian tradition are intimated to the reader of Women in Love through the conversations, early in the novel, at Shortlands and at Breadalby. These discussions suggest the cultural background not only of Thomas Crich but of the generation which follows him and challenges his assumptions. They show how riddled with contradictions this kind of social idealism has become for their generation.

The humanitarian spirit as such still survives, but

Lawrence points clearly to the lack of conviction in those who hold it. At Breadalby Hermione joins the elderly Sir Joshua Mattheson in a vague aspiration towards democratic equality. It is opposed by the cold logic of Gerald's functionalism, for Gerald (one discovers later) has lived through the contradictions of this brand of altruism in his father. Birkin, at odds with both sides of the dispute, only snipes at it while it is going on; but afterwards, left alone with Hermione, he denounces her claim that 'we are all one, all equal in the spirit', by arguing the materialistic basis of equality - which is why it does not convince - and asserting his own antithetical ideal:

> "Your democracy is an absolute lie - your brotherhood of man is a pure falsity, if you apply it further than the mathematical abstraction. We all drank milk first, we all eat bread and meat, we all want to ride in motor-cars - therein lies the beginning and the end of the brotherhood of man. But no equality.
>
> "But I, myself, who am myself, what have I to do with equality with any other man or woman? In the spirit, I am as separate as one star is from another, as different in quality and quantity. Establish a state on <u>that</u>. One man isn't any better than another, not because they are equal, but because they are intrinsically <u>other</u>, that there is no term of comparison."

The novel pursues the analysis of 'the equality of man', relentlessly, in chapter xvii, where it reveals its pseudo-religious origin, its inherent materialism, and its totalitarian destiny:

> The idea flew through them: "All men are equal on earth," and they would carry the idea to its material fulfilment. After all, is it not the teaching of Christ? And what is an idea, if not the germ of action in the material world. "All men are equal in spirit, they are all sons of God. Whence then this obvious <u>disquality</u>?" It was a religious creed pushed to its material conclusions .... How disentangle the passion for equality from the passion of cupidity, when begins the fight for equality of

> possessions? But the God was the machine. Each man claimed equality in the Godhead of the great productive machine. Every man equally was part of this Godhead.

The novel later enacts this prophetic insight in Gerald's enslavement of the miners, when he introduces the machinery that turns them into factory hands: 'the joy went out of their lives,' and they grumbled but 'they were exalted by belonging to this great and superhuman system which was beyond feeling or reason, something really god-like.' (Ch.xvii.) This, in the novel, is what becomes of the social idealism that begins in Christian humanity: it distils into the worship of the sterile abstraction of mechanical efficiency.

Thomas Crich is trapped. In his relations with his workmen his feelings move from fervour to disillusion. In the early flush of his philanthropy he has almost deified his dependants:

> 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 idol, his God made manifest. In them he worshipped the highest, the great, sympathetic, mindless Godhead of humanity. (Ch. xvii.)

It is a sympathetic analysis of a seemingly respectable kind of late-Victorian benevolence. Thomas reacts against his father's preoccupation with accumulating wealth; his philanthropy grows

antiquated as the class-war intensifies. From fear of anarchy, and to preserve the economic system, he has to side with the owners against his men:

> It was this recognition of the state of war which really broke his heart. He wanted his industry to be run on love. Oh, he wanted love to be the directing power even of the mines. And now, from under the cloak of love, the sword was cynically drawn, the sword of mechanical necessity. (Ch. xvii.)

Lawrence worked out very clearly the parallel between Crich's individual life and his social commitments. In his relations with his wife, as in his relations with his workmen, there is the same grinding dissonance between conscious, idealised intentions and the basic bond of use and misuse.

His compulsion to adore Christiana has been nourished in the nineteenth century conventions of romantic love. There was, basically, the same motive here as in the social ideals of the age: a search for substitutes for a lost religious faith. To people who felt they might have lost the love of God, the worship of 'love' itself, as a union of souls, offered a mystique round which to centre their lives. Wagner's liebestod is the final extremity of this cult. Its expression in literature - which amounts to a kind of inspired lying - is at its most naive in poets like Shelley and Browning, and at its most sickly-sophisticated in Tennyson, who, at least in 'Tithonus', began to detect, like Baudelaire, beyond the love-longing a longing for death, as the final release from self. It is the residue of this tradition, and its outcome, on which Birkin pours scorn:

> "It's a lie to say that love is the greatest. You might as well say that hate is the greatest, since the opposite of everything balances. What people want is hate - hate

and nothing but hate. And in the name of righteousness and love, they get it. They distil themselves with nitro-glycerine, all the lot of them, out of very love. It's the lie that kills." (Ch. xi.)

Lawrence himself was more sorely tempted by the neurotic variant of the cult which one sees in men like Rossetti and Swinburne - the deification of the Female, and the compulsion to worship her, and to desecrate her. This tendency rules in Thomas Crich's adoration of his wife. Its operations are most fully exposed in Gerald's dependence on Gudrun. It is of the essence of Birkin's love affair with Hermione, and is incipient, as a temptation, in his relations with Ursula. His attacks on it, or rather his attempt to exorcise it from himself, inspires the episode where he stones the moon-image of Cybele, the mother-goddess - in which the white, fiery images of polyp and flower recreate the ruthless, consuming, inviolable power he confronts; while his own relentless tenacity, and the explosions of darkness upon light, represent brilliantly the almost equal potency of his repudiation. It is a violent combat of opposed compulsions that acts as a parallel to his attack on Hermione in chapter iii. The meaning of the episode for Birkin and Ursula must wait until later in this study. Its application to the general issue is explicit in Birkin's sick-bed meditations in an earlier chapter. Their hysterical intensity illuminates this sickness which many of the main characters share:

> It filled him with almost insane fury, this calm assumption of the Magna Mater, that all was hers because she had borne it. Man was hers because she had borne him. A Mater Dolorosa, she had borne him, a Magna Mater, she now claimed him again, soul and body, sex, meaning and all. He had a horror of the Magna Mater, she was detestable ...
>
> It was intolerable, this possession at the hands of woman. Always a man must be considered as the broken-

> off fragment of a woman, and the sex was the still aching scar of the laceration. Man must be added on to a woman, before he had any real place or wholeness. (Ch. xvi.)

The novel challenges, however, not merely a cult of love but a convention of marriage, or at least the impact of the one upon the other. In the nineteenth century the contradictions and futilities inherent in romantic love grew more glaring as marriage itself became more and more a love-choice, and less the result of property, or common sense, or mere accident. Throughout the century, the old peasant or patriarchal family, its rigid authoritarianism based on the simple imperative of subsistence and upheld by religious precept, was gradually falling apart, because the basic necessity for it was relaxing, and the religious sanction was losing its bite, while the economic system demanded more and more mobility and change, and humanitarians like Dickens registered their horror of paternal tyranny. As Lawrence demonstrated in his history of the Brangwens, the family unit itself diminished to the couple and their children, and as it did so the pressures within it of possessive love and rivalry began to grow. The tensions themselves were born of the disappearance of the wider family contacts and of the standards based on them. Birkin, in chapter xvi of Women in Love, exposes this stifling of both individual and communal needs:

> The old way of love seemed a dreadful bondage, a sort of conscription. What it was in him he did not know, but the thought of love, marriage, and children, and a life lived together, in the horrible privacy of domestic and connubial satisfaction, was repulsive. He wanted something clearer, more open, cooler, as it were. The hot narrow intimacy between man and wife was abhorrent. The way they shut their doors, these married people, and shut themselves in to their own exclusive alliance with each other, even in love, disgusted him. It was a whole

> community of mistrustful couples insulated in private houses or private rooms, always in couples, and no further life, no further immediate, no disinterested relationship admitted: a kaleidoscope of couples, disjoined, separatist, meaningless entities of married couples.

The chapter that follows presents a corroboration of some of Birkin's fears, in the 'relation of utter interdestruction' between Thomas and Christiana Chrich. Thomas's marital relation mirrors the inner discord between his conscious motivation and his repudiated self: it is a battleground in which he is the nominal victor, while his wife, whose natural pride and emotional need are baulked and humiliated, sullenly rages. The fight consumes his strength. The somewhat Dickensian portrait of Christiana at her daughter's wedding celebration in the second chapter prepares the reader for the central diagnosis of the seventeenth, as F. R. Leavis has pointed out. (See D. H. Lawrence, Novelist, pp. 159-61.) This brilliantly explicit chapter traces the development of the marriage, from Thomas's initial violating worship of Christiana's purity -

> And he thought of her as pure, chaste; the white flame which was known to him alone, the flame of her sex, was a white flower of snow to his mind. She was a wonderful white snow-flower, which he had desired infinitely

- to his eventual terror at her fierceness, as her suppressed vitality (and his own) grow more vengeful:

> And all the while, his wife had opposed him like one of the great demons of hell. Strange, like a bird of prey, with the fascinating beauty and abstraction of a hawk, she had beat against the bars of his philanthropy, and like a hawk in a cage, she had sunk into silence. By force of circumstance, because all the world combined to make the cage unbreakable, he had been too strong for her, he had kept her prisoner. And because she was his prisoner, his passion for her had always remained keen as death. He had always loved her, loved her with intensity. Within the cage, she was denied nothing, she was given all licence.

The imagery embodies the psychological penetration, and links the

situation with the experience of the entire novel, presaging as it does, in the snow-flower, the moon-stoning and the final catastrophe, and recalling, in the caged hawk, both Gerald's subjugation of the mare and Birkin's thoughts in the previous chapter about the marital gaol. The deadlock between the pair is clinched by Thomas's final identification of his wife with the pain that tears him in his death-throes.

The war between the husband and wife has pursued its course through their family, as one hears from Gerald's old nurse in the seventeenth chapter:

> "But she wouldn't have them corrected - no-o, wouldn't hear of it. I can remember the rows she had with Mr. Crich, my word. When he'd got worked up, properly worked up till he could stand no more, he'd lock the study door and whip them. But 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.' "

The mother, in this conflict, wants to make up to the children for her essential lack of interest. The nurse says, ' "for she wasn't going to be bothered with them herself." ' She is absorbed in her own battle for freedom, the fight to claim her rightful position in her husband's love and respect; and the children become pawns in this contest. The father takes over the correction of the children simply out of a sense of duty and the need to relieve his feelings - ' "I believe he was frightened of her; he had to be driven mad before he'd lift a finger." '. He protects and insulates himself. His domestic affections are dissipated by his 'Christian' ideals and practices. He doesn't form a close, demanding attachment within the family until Winifred, the youngest, much later in his life, claims it; by then his charitableness is being proved,

even to him, insufficient, impossible, and even destructive. His 'universal' love has been an evasion of personal love and personal responsibility. As his wife declares at his death-bed:

> "Blame me, blame me if you like, that he lies there like a lad in his teens, with his first beard on his face. Blame me if you like. But you none of you know." She was silent in intense silence. Then there came, in a low, tense voice: "If I thought that the children I bore would lie looking like that in death, I'd strangle them when they were infants". (Ch. xxiv.)

Thomas Crich and his world draw slowly towards their end. His relations with his workmen drift towards the anarchy that Gerald later recognises and re-organises. Thomas's own life gutters towards a dissolution which reveals its ultimate futility; though its full significance is not disclosed until the death of his son. In the death-bed scene of this novel, as in that of Sons and Lovers, there is an understanding of doom in the presence of death which is intensified to horror by the patient's stoical perversity:

> And now he was dying with all his ideas and interpretations intact. They would collapse only when the breath left his body. Till then they would be pure truths for him. Only death would show the perfect completeness of the lie. (Ch. xxiv.)

Thomas Crich has protected himself, with the very ideals that became the agents of destruction, from ever recognising the destructiveness of his life. He has reacted against what he has seen as destructive in his father's preoccupation with accumulating wealth, and this reaction has itself become a crippling obsession, and made him as ill-equipped for living as his own son is to be in his turn. In the portrait of Thomas Crich the balance is finely drawn between sympathy for his sufferings and horror at the chaos he brings about. (See note 1.)

The Older Generation of Idealists in the Earlier Novels

Thomas Crich is not the only apostle of idealism in Women in Love. I have already indicated how related to this theme are some of Birkin's arguments with Hermione, and how Gerald pushes ahead ruthlessly with his own replacement of his father's ideals. The practical, mechanical ideal of productivity is opposed to his father's impracticable one. But before we go on to consider further the repercussions in the next generation of Women in Love, we must examine two characters in the earlier novels whose condition resembles Thomas Crich's and who belong to the same historical setting: they are Mrs. Morel in Sons and Lovers and Will Brangwen in The Rainbow.

The reader of Sons and Lovers follows Gertrude Morel's development from her girlhood to her death and participates intensely in the major crises of her life. She is not seen and judged like Thomas Crich.

The vivid immediacy of the portrayal of Mrs. Morel and of the whole action of the book would make it appear that here the purpose and attitudes underlying it are other than those underlying Women in Love. However, the course of this earlier novel is a thwarted struggle towards understanding and assessing the general significance of the relationship between the groups of characters - between the Morels, between Paul and his mother and between Paul and Miriam. As H. M. Daleski has pointed out, 'the pernicious effect

of self-sacrifice is an insistent theme in the novel'. (The Forked Flame, p. 59.) This concern is very much the business of the later book also. It is a thwarted struggle in Sons and Lovers because the author's attempt to discover the facts of the relationships as they are embedded in the narrative is impeded by his prejudice for and against the participants. If we want to discover this underlying theme in the portrayal of Mrs. Morel, we must attend to the basic facts of her case, sometimes overlooking the significance ascribed to them in the narrative, and attend to the way these are linked with the whole.

Daughter of a minister, jilted by a minister-to-be, she marries a collier on the rebound. She has expected to live by middle-class standards of propriety and property. The stronger partner in the marriage, she humiliates and degrades her husband when he fails to observe these standards. Disappointed in him, she transfers her demands to her sons, persuading them to take part on her side in the marital battle. The effect on them is potentially disastrous. The eldest, William,

> gives his sex to a fribble and his mother holds his soul. But the split kills him. (Lawrence to Garnett, 14 November 1912, Letters, i, 160.)

Another leaves home to join the Army. The youngest, Paul, after struggling painfully through the neurotic dissensions of his youth, is left after her death with a faint chance of recovery.

In the case as stated are the basic similarities: a failure of affectionate response, a vengeful egoism arming itself

with principles, and a family turned into a battleground, with the children as victims. On the other hand, Mrs. Morel's affections, though thwarted and dangerous, are stronger than Thomas Crich's, and the effect on the children is not as wholly destructive. Her portrait is more complex.

What turns complexity into discrepancy or confusion is the author's implicit endorsement of Mrs. Morel, no matter what she does.

At the very beginning the narrative glosses over Gertrude's decision to marry Walter Morel. Her motives are unchallenged. After a brief, charming and persuasive description of their meeting at a dance, the narrative moves on to the year following: 'The next Christmas they were married'. (Ch. i.) The grounds of her choice are stated: she loves the 'dusky golden softness of this man's sensuous flame of life,' that is not 'baffled and gripped into incandescence by thought and spirit, as her life was.' (Ch.i.) But almost immediately and without warning, this, the grounds of their original attraction, is offered again as the explanation of their conflict. The reader is presented with the fact of their incompatibility: 'She was too much his opposite.' (Ch. i.) There is no self-sufficing reason for them to be destroyed by what originally brought them together. There follows a series of episodes which, though astonishingly immediate in their impact on the reader, reveal little of the inner compulsions of the antagonists. The very repetitiveness of the scenes between the Morels amounts to a tacit recognition on the part of the author of failure to get the matter in focus. Uncertain, feeling the general assessment not

quite just or clear, he goes on repeating the scenes of battle with different circumstances and almost identical content. It is a stalemate between an ill-balanced and inconclusive judgement and an imaginative raw material with an energetic life of its own. The scenes are not progressive, one gets no closer to a real understanding of the estrangement between the pair, but the repetition hammers home the fact. It is as if Lawrence hoped that each scene presented the problem in a fresh light; but it only succeeds in stating it afresh.

It is not just, as H. M. Daleski has maintained, that 'Lawrence's interpretative commentary on the relationship of the Morels fails'. (The Forked Flame, p.46.) When the author is conscientious in apportioning the responsibility for the failure between husband and wife, and even in laying the blame heavily on her as the stronger partner - 'So in seeking to make him nobler than he could be, she destroyed him. She injured and hurt and scarred herself' (ch. i.) - the narrative will make amends by underplaying the narrowness of her possession of her husband, the narrowness of her concern with moral and social formulas, the presumptuous egoism in her sense of outrage. An older Lawrence, the Lawrence of Women in Love, would have ruthlessly dissected that suffering, disillusion and self-denial. The criteria Lawrence relied on in the writing of these early scenes of Sons and Lovers were essentially unquestioned: his mother's view in retrospect and his own childish recollections - that is, virtually his mother's view again. As a result there is a stagnancy about these chapters, in spite of their immediacy. For all their lively dramatic presentation, the effect is of watching the same scene. Besides, there are countless scenes throughout the

book recalling intimacies between Paul and his mother, with little point to them, after the first few, other than the novelist's pleasure in recollecting them.

Because of the fidelity to the details of recollection there are tantalizing glimpses of a Walter Morel richer, warmer and more complex than his wife's view of him will allow for: when he is toasting his bacon in the morning, for instance, or singing over his mending jobs, or washing himself on Friday nights. But at every turn in the narrative the reader is faced with a categorical insistence on the deepening degradation and brutality which puts Morel beyond the pale of sympathy. His jovial qualities don't effectively qualify his 'beast-like', they are forgotten in the moments of crisis - in his fights with his sons, for instance; 'Morel crouched at the knees and showed his fist in an ugly, almost beast-like fashion ' (ch. iv) - while William is nobly 'white with rage'. In the eighth chapter, when Morel comes from the pantry with Paul's pork-pie 'in his fist', and they quarrel, 'he dared not, even though so close, really touch the young man'. His efforts the next day to conciliate his sone are dismissed as 'a great humiliation' to Paul. There is no intimation that his reluctance to hit his son has anything to do with his affection and sense of responsibility for him, which is often proved in the course of the story. In both these scenes the reader's insight must inevitably work independently from the narrator's. One applauds the old man's asides. In the first scene, his remark,

"You've put 'em up to your own tricks and nasty ways"

is almost the only comment in the novel on the treachery by which the mother gets her children on her side as allies in her quarrel

with her husband. Morel's 'venomous' comment in the other scene when he comes upon his wife and Paul kissing -

"At your mischief again?"

- is equally telling.

Even Morel's proneness to accidents at work prompts the comment, 'a heedless man'. (Ch. v.) Prejudice does not impede the author from understanding a similar characteristic in Paul later on:

> A man's revenge on his woman. He feels he is not valued, so he will risk destroying himself to deprive her altogether. (Ch. viii.)

In contrast with her husband, Mrs. Morel is idealised throughout. Her virtues are magnified and her failings treated with exaggerated respect. 'Mrs. Morel was one of those naturally exquisite people who can walk in mud without dirtying their shoes.' (Ch. vi.) Everywhere is the insistence on her 'character and refinement' (Lawrence to Garnett, 14 November, 1912, Letters, i, 160.) Even her aggression towards her son, which threatens the free development of his life, is minimised by his sentiment of devotion. The filial feeling moves towards adulation as the mother's death draws near. At her death the basic situation recalls the death of Thomas Crich. Thomas dies 'with all his ideas and interpretations intact' (Women in Love, ch. xxiv) relying to the last on a stoical self-will supported by make-belief. So does Mrs. Morel:

> Then she pretended to be better, chattered to him gaily, made a great fuss over some scraps of news. For they had both come to the condition when they had to make much of the trifles, lest they should give in to the big thing, and their human independence would go smash. They were afraid, so they made light of things and were gay.

> Sometimes as she lay he knew she was thinking of the past. Her mouth gradually shut hard in a line. She was holding herself rigid, so that she might die without ever uttering the great cry that was tearing from her. (Ch. xiv.)

The observation of detail here sounds faithful to an actual experience, but the evaluation of it is inadequate for the novel. Certainly there is a painful, horror-choked pathos in these last scenes. The sentimental eulogy of the mother's beauty and the readiness to accept at face value her evasions of past and present are poignant in so far as they reflect the son's frightened tenderness. But Thomas Crich's death reveals 'the perfect completeness of the lie' (ch. xxiv) upon which he has built his life. In Mrs. Morel's death, on the other hand, the real horror behind it is hardly hinted at - the guilt of her self-destroying will, which has been largely responsible for the inadequacy of her own existence, the failure of her marriage, and the possible wastage of her son's life. She dies as she has lived, 'holding herself rigid' against the recognition of her own and others needs and her own responsibilities. (See note 2.)

Will Brangwen belongs to the same generation in Women in Love as Thomas Crich. In the organic whole which is formed by the pair of novels, The Rainbow and Women in Love, the portrait of Will is a companion piece to that of Thomas. The effect he has on his family is not so destructive and the analysis of the set-up not so sharp. In him the same general issues are developed in a different way. He goes through a comparable spiritual development and bears a similar responsibility for the dissensions in his marriage and the difficulties of his children. Fortunately for the children, he does

not wield the same authority at home as Crich and Mrs. Morel.

He is a richer character than either. Unlike the other two, his animal vitality is the first thing presented and that Anna notices about him: his head is 'black as jet, with hair like sleek, thin fur ... of some animal, some mysterious animal that lived in the darkness.' (The Rainbow, ch. iv.) Throughout his development the novel stresses the power of this sensual-spiritual vitality. He has a capacity for growth:

> One day, he was a bachelor, living with the world. The next day, he was with her, as remote from the world as if the two of them were buried like a seed in darkness. Suddenly, like a chestnut falling out of a burr, he was shed naked and glistening on to a soft, fecund earth, leaving behind the hard rind of worldly knowledge and experience. (Ch. vi.)

And he has a capacity for stimulating life in others: to Ursula as a child,

> everything her father did was magic ... She seemed to run in the shadow of some dark, potent secret. (Ch. x.)

Nevertheless, as with Crich, there is an inadequacy in his relations with others, a defensive block, compensated for and partially disguised by his religious and artistic interests. The degree of neurotic insulation in him is understood by his wife, and attacked. Her attack meets with more success than Christiana's attack on Thomas, where her power is undermined by her greater subscription to her husband's beliefs, and where the animal vitality of the husband is not emphasized as a factor on the side of growth and development.

Will is 'ridden by the awful sense of his own limitation.' (The sense of limitation and insufficiency in relation to

idealism and the will is explored in greater detail in Women in Love in the portrait of Hermione.) It is this 'sense of his own limitation' (ch. vi), that is expressed in Will's relationship with Anna and in aspiration after a number of artistic, social and religious ideals.

Lawrence drew the parallel between his various activities almost as carefully as with Thomas Crich. In each Will is driven to escape from his sense of insufficiency in some form of prostration towards the absolute. In each this conflicts both with Anna's demands and with other of his own needs.

The last stages of Anna's first pregnancy bring about the crisis between them that most illuminates Will's neurotic dependence upon her.

> Why, if Anna left him even for a week did he seem to be clinging like a madman to the edge of reality, and slipping surely, surely into the flood of unreality that would drown him? (Ch. vi.)

Anna assesses his power over her and her need to fight it in terms that foreshadow the more detailed study of this factor in the marriage of Thomas and Christiana Crich.

> Gradually she realised that her life, her freedom, was sinking under the silent grip of his physical will. He wanted her in his power. He wanted to devour her at leisure, to have her .... Then she turned fiercely on him, and fought him. He was not to do this to her, it was monstrous. What horrible hold did he want to have over her body? Why did he want to drag her down, and kill her spirit? Why did he deny her spirituality, hold her for body only? (Ch. vi.)

The theme of neurotic dependence is picked up again in Women in Love and worked out in the relationship between Gerald and Gudrun. The following paragraph on Will might have been written of Gerald:

> He did not sleep, save for the white sleep when a thin veil is drawn over the mind. It was not sleep. He was awake, and he was not awake. He could not be alone. He needed to be able to put his arms round her. He could not bear the empty space against his breast, where she used to be. He could not bear it. He felt as if he were suspended in space, held there by the grip of his will. If he relaxed his will he would fall, fall through endless space, into the bottomless pit, always falling, will-less, helpless, non-existent, just dropping to extinction, falling till the fire of friction had burned out, like a falling star, then nothing, nothing, complete nothing. (Ch. vi.)

Anna fights back to break through the self-insulation in Will that relegates her to the role of satisfying a neurotic need - fights to break through the hold of the abstracts which are supporting the insulation and are instrumental to restraining her freedom of spirit. She fights all Will's abstracts and symbols, whether they are stained-glass lambs, or cathedrals, or his particular practice of his art, or his view of herself as a cipher.

Like Thomas Crich, Will needs the sense of identity with God, or with an absolute beyond the variables of self, that will not only harmonise the known with the unknown but act as a recurring theme to his life and as a source of shared passional response with others. His approach is different from Crich's. Will's vitality looks for a passional experience; his attempts are towards dissolving the individuality in a self-forgetful abstraction or ecstasy, whereas Crich attempts to impose an intellectual order on the self and correlate his life with his beliefs.

The novel treats Will's Christian mysticism sympathetically as a genuine appreciation of the mysteries of death and renewal. 'In church he wanted a dark, nameless emotion, the emotion of all the great mysteries of passion.' (Ch. vi.) The experience is

explored for the information it yields on Will, on the relationship between him and Anna, and on the processes of change and development in them both; but also for its relevance to a whole society.

The scene in Lincoln Cathedral in the seventh chapter, for instance, correlates the individual and the traditional features of Will's experience, revealing some of the strengths and weaknesses in both. It is based on a triple contrast between Will's vision of the wholeness of life, the vision offered by the Church in his time and the perspective created by the novel as a whole.

This is brought about partly by the imagery of the seed and of the arch (which recalls the rainbow). These are here given a Christian interpretation as well as relating to the basic symbols of the novel and to Will's personal experience of courtship and marriage - the difficulties inherent in the marriage acting as the springboard for this compensatory flight of the imagination. But primarily it is achieved in the juxtaposition of Anna and Will. From the beginning of the scene, wherever Will responds Anna is there to challenge and to relate what is going on both to their private lives and to the changing world:

> When he saw the cathedral in the distance, dark blue lifted watchful in the sky, his heart leapt. It was the sign in heaven, it was the Spirit hovering like a dove, like an eagle over the earth. He turned his glowing ecstatic face to her, his mouth opened with a strange, ecstatic grin.
>
> "There she is," he said.
>
> The "she" irritated her. Why "she"? It was "it". What was the cathedral, a big building, a thing of the past, obsolete, to excite him to such a pitch? She began to stir herself to readiness.

The exploration of their separate responses forms an appraisal of

the whole religious experience.

In parts of the cathedral scene the over-wrought lushness of the style used to describe Will's responses conveys the confusion of sensual and spiritual ecstasy in him. (It is the kind of confusion we shall find in the adolescent experience of Miriam Leivers and also in Will's daughter, Ursula.) Although a great deal of space is repeatedly given to a sympathetic expression of Will's religious enthusiasms, these are critically placed at every turn. The portrait is much more clearly focussed than that of Mrs. Morel. That Lawrence worked hard to objectify and evaluate Will's emotionalism in this scene is proved by one of the earlier versions of it, which Mark Kinkead-Weekes has described as 'gushing and repetitive.' (Imagined Worlds, p.387.)

Unlike Mrs. Morel or Thomas Crich, Will changes and matures. Anna's challenge is fruitful. Will does not think his way through to this increased maturity. His wife's attacks are countered, half-truth with half-truth. 'His mind he let sleep.' (Ch. vi.) He cannot hold out against Anna's scorn, partly because he so desperately needs her support and partly because his vitality acknowledges the truth of her objections:

> He listened to the thrushes in the gardens and heard a note which the cathedrals did not include: something free and careless and joyous. He crossed a field that was all yellow with dandelions, on his way to work, and the bath of yellow glowing was something at once so sumptuous and so fresh, that he was glad he was away from his shadowy cathedral. (Ch. vii.)

His artistic aspirations go the same way. His early wood-carving is done in the excitement and wonder of his discovery

of Anna: he gives her a butter-stamper carved with a phoenix, and begins a panel showing the Creation of Eve. The latter reveals in prototype both his worship of the female and fear of her. Obsessed with the idea of her, he is desperate to minimise it. Again Anna does not miss its significance:

> She jeered at the Eve, saying, "She is like a little marionette. Why is she so small? You've made Adam as big as God, and Eve like a doll."
>
> "It is impudence to say that Woman was born out of Man's body," she continued, "when every man is born out of woman. What impudence men have, what arrogance!"
> (Ch. vi.)

He burns the panel. His interest in art has already by this time grown more passive and more escapist, as one sees when on fleeing to Nottingham after a row with Anna he picks up a book of illustrations of carvings in Bamberg Cathedral:

> The book lay in his hands like a doorway. The world around was only an enclosure, a room. But he was going away. He lingered over the lovely statues of women. A marvellous, finely-wrought universe crystallised out around him as he looked again, at the crowns, the twining hair, the woman-faces. (Ch. vi.)

Towards the end of his development in The Rainbow - that is, at the end of chapter viii - Will's thwarted artistic aspirations join forces with new social ones. Until now he has been indifferent to public life, preoccupied with his own private and domestic problems. Now his domestic life takes a fresh turn. Back from some hasty petting with an anonymous Nottingham girl, he finds himself able to transfer to his wife the disregard he has had for the girl, able to treat her recklessly as an object for his gratification. Anna senses the lack of respect but welcomes it, glad like him to be released from the personal demands of their love. Now, as he worships 'the separate, several beauties of her body'

(for him it is yet another kind of prostration before the absolute) he is no longer so restive with awe and resentment, and she is freer to use him for her own pleasure. 'He was the sensual male, seeking his pleasure, she was the female ready to take hers: but in her own way.' It is a 'sensuality as violent and extreme as death' and it leads to 'shameful, unnatural acts.' There is something in their licence, as there is in Will's dependence and retaliation at its most neurotic, that reminds one of features of the relationship between Gerald and Gudrun in Women in Love. Between Will and Anna, however, where neurotic insulation is so much less, the violent lust appeases and does not separate them finally, so that they find 'the secret, shameful things ... most terribly beautiful'. As a result of their newfound pleasure in each other they become grateful and respect the inviolability of each other. This is what sets Will free for a new creative activity.

> He wanted to be unanimous with the whole of purposive mankind ... Brangwen embraced sincerely the idea of handwork in schools. For the first time, he began to take a real interest in public affairs. He had at length, from his profound sensual activity, developed a real purposive self.

The combination of success and failure that results from the combination of strength and weakness in both Will and Anna is subtly depicted. Their responses are related to custom and ideology so that the limitations of Will's religious experience and the inadequacies of his social relationships, resulting as they do from his personal preoccupations, still reflect the degeneration of the Christian faith on the one hand and the degeneration of a centred community into a suburb on the other. These are qualities that challenge comparison with the portrayal of Thomas Crich. However,

although the presentation of Brangwen is richer and fuller in its detail than that of Crich, the whole hasn't the same clarity of definition. (See note 3.)

The Younger Generation of Idealists

All three novels looked at so far contain, as well as studies of the idealistic mentality in Mrs. Morel, Will Brangwen and Thomas Crich, studies of the theme in a mutated form in the second generation. Here again there is the same progression: the theme is broached in Sons and Lovers, explored more thoroughly in The Rainbow and reaches an especially lucid definition in Women in Love.

We are not concerned yet with those in the next generation who react against the ideals of their elders; but with those who cling to them. They are decidedly less ardent and less robust in their belief.

Hermione, like most of her generation in Women in Love, has essentially lost faith. Nevertheless, she clings to the 'universals' of the old tradition. (Ch. xxii.) She tries to conform to a slavish belief in ideals of humanitarianism, of love, and generally in the beneficial control of the mind. However, it is this latter alone that she really believes in. This, only lightly tramelled by the old ideals, is the source of strength for her and the measure of achievement.

> "If only we could learn how to use our will," said Hermione, "we could do anything. The will can cure anything, and put anything right. That I am convinced

of - if only we use the will properly, intelligibly ....

> "Yes. And in so many things, I have made myself well. I was a very queer and nervous girl. And by learning to use my will, I made myself right." (Ch. xii.)

Birkin and Hermione are deeply committed to each other. She has been his mistress in an 'ideal love' (ch. xxii) which resembles that between the elder Criches: she and Birkin in turn idolise and desecrate each other. Lawrence's original intention in this matter is clear from the rejected Prologue. The prologue's baldly explicit analysis of the relationship reads like a commentary on the conflict between Paul and Miriam in Sons and Lovers, or a continuation of it:

> Like a priestess she kept his records, and his oracles, he was like a god who would be nothing if his worship were neglected ... She would do anything to give him what he wanted, that which he was raging for, this physical fulfilment he insisted on. She was wise; she thought for the best. She prepared herself like a perfect sacrifice to him. (Phoenix, ii, 94 and 100.)

In the novel itself, this love-affair is reduced to its last stages: Birkin's denunciations of Hermione, and the struggle, leading to the attempted murder, which puts an end to the relationship. About the past there are only the hints Hermione throws to Ursula:

> "You would have to be prepared to suffer - dreadfully. I can't tell you how much suffering it would take to make him happy. He lives an intensely spiritual life, at times - too, too wonderful. And then come the reactions. I can't speak of what I have been through with him." (Ch. xxii.)

Hermione is, therefore, segregated from the action of the novel, more than Thomas Crich, whose spiritual sickness has its continuing effect on his family and resolves itself in Gerald. It is Hermione's rôle to be spurned. She stands at bay. It is, as a result, the complexities of the character itself that fall under close scrutiny - that character through which, in violent battle,

Birkin learns to define what it is he most needs from life. Because of this, a deeper insight is given into some of the psychological conditions leading to a tenacious adherence to ideals and ideas than there is scope for in any of the other studies we have so far discussed. All attention is focussed on the battle of the individuals.

Hermione's status with Birkin requires her to be a powerful figure in the early part of the book - for Birkin makes it clear that he only just escapes with his life from her attempt to overwhelm him and live off him:

> He fought her off, he always fought her off. The more she strove to bring him to her the more he battled her back. (Ch. i.)

The violence of his destructive onslaught against her measures the power of her effect on him. She stands for and offers to Birkin what in the past he has respected and desired.

With her, as with Thomas Crich, the novel stresses the paralysis involved in attempting to conform to mental regulation. Hence the almost grotesque brilliance of her appearance, with its fixity and its 'sinister grace':

> She was impressive, in her lovely pale-yellow and brownish-rose, yet macabre, something repulsive. People were silent when she passed, impressed, roused, wanting to jeer, yet for some reason silenced. Her long, pale face, that she carried lifted up, somewhat in the Rossetti fashion, seemed almost drugged, as if a strange mass of thoughts coiled in the darkness within her, and she was never allowed to escape. (Ch. i.)

In Hermione there is competence above chaos. The awareness of this brings, even to the most casual observer, a sense of danger that prevents her being jeered at. She walks a tightrope:

> 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 failed her. Her voice was always dispassionate and tense, and perfectly confident. Yet she shuddered with a sense of nausea, a sort of sea-sickness that always threatened to overwhelm her mind. (Ch. xii.)

On her introduction in the first chapter, we are told that 'she always felt vulnerable ... any common maid-servant of positive robust temper could fling her down this bottomless pit of insufficiency.' We see her suffering as she has to pass the wedding-crowd outside the church, hear of her chaos when Birkin is not there as expected - 'a terrible storm came over her, as if she were drowning. She was possessed by a devastating hopelessness .... It was beyond death, so utterly null, desert.' - and we begin to understand her. The surface self-assurance shown so clearly at Breadalby, where she queens it over her guests and dependants, staging scenes and pressing her attentions insolently upon them, is worm-eaten with that craving for intimacy which unnerves Ursula: 'she seemed to hinder one's workings.' (Ch. viii.) Bewailing her loss of spontaneous, 'unknowable' life, as she does in the classroom in chapter iii she nevertheless holds hard, out of fear and obstinate egotism, to what she's got. From Birkin's rounding on her in this scene - ' "You, the most deliberate thing that ever walked or crawled! You'd be verily deliberately spontaneous - that's you." ' - is developed his line of attack. He makes the final, cruel and dangerous challenge at Breadalby where, in her bedroom, he is sketching the Chinese print of the geese. At first he resists her incessant prying into his experience:

> For some time he was silent, hating to answer her. Then, compelled, he began: "I know what centres they live from - what they perceive and feel - the hot stinging centrality of a goose in the flux of cold water and mud -

> the curious bitter stinging heat of a goose's blood, entering their own blood like an innoculation of corruptive fire - "

Torturing her with her inability to live and understand with spontaneous response, he drives her to the near madness that causes her to try to kill him.

Here we are not so much concerned with laying the blame, as involved in the predicament. Birkin is fighting for his life; Hermione has enough interest in life to save her own, through him, if she can. Whereas the potential suicide, Gerald, attaches himself to the destructive Gudrun, Hermione has attached herself to the vigorous, struggling life in Birkin. Birkin recognises that, however dangerous the demand is to himself, however ugly the attempt she is making, she is, nonetheless, in the position of asking for help.

> He looked at her in mingled hate and contempt, also in pain because she suffered, and in shame because he knew he tortured her. He had an impulse to kneel and plead for forgiveness. (Ch. iii.)

He has been held by her will-ridden intellectuality and idealism, the desire to 'know' that he shared with her. In attempting to destroy the source of her power over him, he threatens to destroy the very keystone of her sanity: 'but he would never, never dare to break her will and let loose the maelstrom of her sub-consciousness, and see her in her ultimate madness.' (Ch. xii.) In the knowledge and shame of what he is doing to her he almost invites reprisal. Towards the end of chapter viii he goes back to her boudoir, feeling 'he wanted to recompense her.' Turning his back on her, he begins to read. This is her chance, and she takes it.

Hermione's attack on Birkin balances her account as far as the action of the novel is concerned. It concludes the relationship, as does Gerald's attack on Gudrun at the end. It puts a full stop to her development and gives Birkin the push he needs. Afterwards she is virtually defunct, summoned in the later chapters mainly to define what Birkin and Ursula are rejecting, and to precipitate the climax of their story. (See note 4.)

The obvious feminine antecedent for Hermione, as we have already noted, is Miriam in Sons and Lovers:

> She seemed to need things kindling in her imagination or in her soul before she felt she had them. And she was cut off from ordinary life by her religious intensity which made the world for her either a nunnery garden or a paradise where sin and knowledge were not, or else an ugly, cruel thing. (Ch. vii.)

Constraint, vivid life suppressed or redirected, betrays itself in her appearance and manner - a foreshadowing of the description of Hermione, but without the threat of insane imbalance:

> 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. She was not clumsy, and yet none of her movements seemed quite the movement. Often, when wiping the dishes, she would stand in bewilderment and chagrin because she had pulled in two halves a cup or a tumbler. It was as if, in her fear and self-mistrust, she put too much strength into the effort. There was no looseness or abandon about her. Everything was gripped stiff with intensity, and her effort, overcharged, closed in on itself. (Ch. vii.)

Paul accuses her of holding her essential self back-'She had fought to keep herself free of him in the last issue' (ch. xi) - and at the same time of offering herself as a sacrifice. After Paul's 'test' on her:

> She would obey him in his trifling commands. But once he was obeyed, then she had him in her power, she knew, to lead him where she would. She was sure of herself. (Ch. xi.)

Here we come up against one of the dozens of uncertain judgements and falsified issues in Sons and Lovers. Miriam is at this point 'sure of herself' - earlier full of 'fear and self-mistrust'. It is not clearly seen, as with Hermione, as a superficial assurance and an underlying lack of it, but as assurance and diffidence veering; and the veering is dictated by the onus the author wishes to put upon her at any one stage of the story.

Elsewhere in the novel Miriam is shown in this way:

> He saw her peering forward at the page, her red lips parted piteously, the black hair springing in fine strands across her tawny, ruddy cheek. She was coloured like a pomegranate for richness. His breath came short as he watched her. Suddenly she looked up at him. Her dark eyes were naked with their love, afraid, and yearning. (Ch. viii.)

The kind of contradictions that go together in Hermione to make up a complex and inherent picture are not put together very convincingly in Miriam.

There is a similar indecisiveness in the author's very obvious attempt to apportion responsibility for failure in Miriam's relationship with Paul. Here again there are contradictions rather than complexities. It is certainly clear, as H. M. Daleski has said, that 'the lovers are too much like one another'. (The Forked Flame, p. 67.) Like Birkin and Hermione, they are avid for the same kind of romance, the same kind of learning. In the end, when she has become a discarded factor in his spiritual development, he is compelled to repudiate the very sameness that first attracted him; because her spirituality abets his own, and impedes his

progress towards a balance.

This straightforward course of development is clouded in two ways: by the prominence and reiteration of the scenes that thrust forward the would-be-explanatory neurotic impediment of Paul's attachment to his mother; and by the reiteration of anguish and guilt in the long-drawn-out scenes between the lovers themselves. As Mark Schorer has put it, 'The central action of the novel is shot through with alternate statements as to the source of the difficulty.' (The World We Imagine, p. 13) The series of vivid scenes, increasing in intensity as the strife between the lovers mounts, repeats the issues - the misunderstandings, the recriminations, the guilt, the discrepancies between conscious intention and unconscious prompting - without clarifying them. And they are not given perspective by any convincing complementary or contrasting action in the novel. The realistic detail of the scenes is sometimes a nuisance rather than a virtue. It is an obscuring obsession that betrays a worrying uncertainty on the author's part. The characters' sense of bewilderment and defeat is shared to some extent by the author. (See note 5.)

One of the reasons why Lawrence reduced the portrayal of the early passionate sexual relationship between Hermione and Birkin to a matter of hints and recriminations might well have been that he had already in The Rainbow depicted in detail the course of a love of this kind, in which there develops a need in one of the partners to fight free of the other.

Anton Skrebensky, like Hermione, believes in the importance

of principles and holds on to them in a kind of desperation. They shore up uncertainty and form a useful replacement for fresh thinking and response. He is much less articulate and much more conventional in his assertions about patriotism and democracy, but these assertions strike the reader, like hers, as sad attempts to secure a picture of himself in relation to society and to establish the security of a reliable code of behaviour. He is quite unlike Hermione, however, in the total passivity with which the principles are accepted, and this leads Ursula to say of him,

> "It seems to me ... as if you weren't anybody - as if there weren't anybody there, where you are. Are you anybody, really? You seem like nothing to me." (Ch. xi.)

The treatment of Anton in the novel is comparatively sketchy. There are a few inconclusive arguments with Ursula, accompanied as we have just seen by her catagorical repudiation of what he stands for. Occasionally the author too chips in, making more obvious still the dismissive handling of the character: 'He could not see, it was not born in him to see, that the highest good of the community as it stands is no longer the highest good of even the average individual.' (Ch. xi.) Skrebensky as a character has a thin existence. He is, as S. L. Goldberg has insisted, 'little more than an illustrative collection of attitudes.' (D. H. Lawrence, ed. Clarke, p. 129.) There is therefore little to stop Lawrence gaining momentum on more than one theme in course of presenting him. We have echoes in Skrebensky of the kind of reaction to diseased idealism that we see later worked out fully and personally in Gerald, and echoes of the kind of threat that the reaction constitutes:

> Duty is very plain - keep in mind the material, the immediate welfare of every man, that's all.
>
> So there came over Skrebensky a sort of nullity, which more and more terrified Ursula. She felt there was something hopeless which she had to submit to.

> She felt a great sense of disaster impending. Day after day was made inert with a sense of disaster. (Ch. xi.)

Skrebensky feels his insufficiency by comparison with the bargeman whom he and Ursula meet in chapter xi. He feels unable to match that man's 'worship of the woman in Ursula, a worship of body and soul together:'

> Why could not he himself desire a woman so? Why did he never really want a woman, not with the whole of him: never loved, never worshipped, only just physically wanted her.

At moments of challenge and crisis he feels a 'ghastly sense of helplessness' (Ch. xv.) To feel purposive and important he must give himself up to social aspirations or to a machine like the army, or to someone with more vitality than himself, like Ursula.

Ursula's consciousness dominates the second half of the novel and Skrebensky is seen chiefly in terms of her needs and responses. This accounts to some extent for the partiality of the portrait and for the rather categorical insistence on his shortcomings. It certainly accounts for the detailed attention to his sexual behaviour and for the shifting bias in its portrayal.

What is enough for her at sixteen is insufficient at nineteen and a menace later. His love quickly becomes an obsession with him, a neurotic craving for self-obliteration - another factor that is explored and sympathetically understood in the study of Gerald: 'Even, in his frenzy, he sought for her mouth with his mouth, though it was like putting his face into some awful death.' (Ch. xi.) As early as this in their affair his dependence on her is a humiliation to himself and a source of bewilderment to her. Later, on his return from South Africa, the brief honeymoon illusion

of contact and communion - 'He seemed like the living darkness upon her, she was in the embrace of the strong darkness' (ch. xv.) - is followed by her increasing sense of oppression and dissatisfaction:

> He seemed made up of a set of habitual and decisions. The vulnerable, variable quick of the man was inaccessible. She knew nothing of it. She could only feel the dark, heavy fixity of his animal desire. (Ch. xv.)

Their love quickly becomes a fight for mastery, and his claim on her, like Hermione's on Birkin, a threat to the free development of her life. One sees what is hinted at between Birkin and Hermione, destructive powers roused to their full pitch and given sexual expression.

Their quarrels grow more dangerous:

> "What do you feel yourself?" he said. "Aren't you righteous in your own mind?"
>
> "Yes, I am, because I'm against you, and all your old dead things," she cried.
>
> She seemed, with the last words, uttered in hard knowledge, to strike down the flag that he kept flying. He felt cut off at the knees, a figure made worthless. A horrible sickness gripped him, as if his legs were really cut away, and he could not move, but remained a crippled trunk, dependent, worthless. The ghastly sense of helplessness, as if he were a mere figure that did not exist vitally, made him mad, beside himself. (Ch. xv.)

His fear of being made nothing by her turns into vengeful hatred. Here is the outline of Hermione's responses - from feeling unable to match the bargeman in living response (Hermione is able to be dashed by the robust temper of a serving-maid) to feeling his very sanity threatened by Ursula: 'He felt he would kill her.' (Ch. xv.)

The characters discussed here are by no means the only portraits of this kind in Lawrence's novels, or even in the two major ones. (In The Rainbow, for instance, the sketch of Lensky, Lydia's first husband, follows the same lines.)

Lawrence's absorption with the problems of idealism achieves its clearest and most complex expression in Women in Love. In the later novels we shall consider only the two major pursuits of the theme, in Kangaroo and The Plumed Serpent. In these two novels Lawrence finally dismisses Christian and liberal idealism and moves towards substitute dogmas.

Ben Cooley, the Australian lawyer, is nicknamed Kangaroo and presents himself to his political following as a fatherly saviour of his country. He professes Love as his motive and offers it as the sole 'inspirational force' in existence. (Ch. vii.) His words come very close to some of Lawrence's own professions of belief at about this time, especially when he insists that love should acknowledge the separateness of the beloved:

> Man has loved the beloved for the sake of love, so far, but rarely has He consciously known that he could only love her for her own separate, strange self: forever strange and a joyful mystery to him. (Ch. vii.)

- or when he equates love with universal generative powers:

> Love makes the trees flower and shed their seed, love makes the animals mate and birds put on their best feather, and sing their best songs. (Ch. vii.)

Somers, listening to him, is half-convinced. He also finds his personality - his heavy, clownish kindliness - attractive:

> He had such an innocent charm, an extraordinary winsomeness, that it was much more delicious than wit. His presence was so warm. You felt you were cuddled cosily, like a child, on his breast, in the soft glow of his heart, and that your feet were nestling on his ample, beautiful 'tummy'. (Ch. vi.)

He resists both the man and his ideas, however, because he distrusts the overbearing benevolence. It is too unctuously or pretentiously one-sided. He wants a principle of life that will allow free play to many varieties of valuable response:

> Who sets a limit to what a man is? Man is also a fierce and fish-cold devil, in his hour, filled with cold fury of desire to get away from the cloy of human life altogether, not into death, but into that icily self-sufficient vigour of a fish. (Ch. vi.)

The effect intended in these scenes is surely similar to that achieved in the classroom scene between Hermione and Birkin in Women in Love. Kangaroo offers Somers a lopsided version of his own doctrine, and Somers' revulsion from it enables him to define more clearly what he needs to believe in. Unfortunately, Kangaroo is not a character one can take seriously. The general presentation of him degenerates at times into a portentous pantomime:

> "Oh, you have, you have." There was a calm, easy tone in the voice, slightly fat, very agreeable. Somers thrilled to it as he had never thrilled.
>
> "Why, the man is like a god, I love him," he said to his astonished self. And Kangaroo was hanging forward his face and smiling heavily and ambiguously to himself, knowing that Somers was with him.
>
> "Tiger, tiger, burning bright
> In the forests of the night"
>
> he quoted in a queer, sonorous voice, like a priest. "The lion of your might would be a tiger, wouldn't it. The tiger and the unicorn were fighting for the crown. How about me for a unicorn? - if I tied a bayonet on my nose? He rubbed his nose with a heavy playfulness.
>
> "Is the tiger your principle of evil?"
>
> "The tiger? Oh dear, no. The jackal, the hyena, and dear, deadly humanity. No, no. The tiger stands on one side of the shield, and the unicorn on the other, and they don't fight for the crown at all. They keep it up between

> them. The pillars of the world! The tiger and the kangaroo!" he boomed this out in a mock heroic voice, strutting with heavy playfulness. Then he laughed, looking winsomely at Somers. Heaven, what a beauty he had! (Ch. vi.)

Neither the man nor his ideology receives the destructive analysis it deserves.

The ideas are to some extent tested in action, for during the riot in chapter xvi Kangaroo's Party shows the brutality hidden behind its benevolence. And this reflects back on a situation developed in a previous chapter, where the English in wartime, acting in the name of the highest principles, force everyone into a degrading conformity. In each case the high-mindedness is fearful of and inimical to individual response. These scenes of violence and of pathetic degradation are compelling. Nevertheless, the action is separate from the relationship between the two main characters, and remains corroborative merely of the accuracy of the direction Somers' thoughts are taking. Strictly, the action of the novel is an elaborate vehicle for Somers' thought; this is proved by the fact that there is no dynamic relationship between Cooley and Somers - no development, that is, evolving from the close relationship of two individuals; merely from the close proximity of two streams of ideas that at points converge.

Willie Struthers, the other idealist in Kangaroo, is even more than Cooley a mere mouthpiece. He stands for the Socialist principle of 'solidarity' (ch. xi.) among the working people. Somers finds this 'bond of real brotherhood' (ch. xi.) more attractive than Kangaroo's ideal. At least it doesn't lay claim to any pretentious universality, it merely stresses a relationship that, Somers agrees, is neglected. He mistrusts it, however, because it too prescribes

a recipe for a human relationship that inhibits its freedom. He sees behind it 'the vengeful mob also.' (ch. xiii.)

Kangaroo is full of glib argument set up and knocked down with extraordinary complacency. In one of his many monologues Somers composes a series of impudent footnotes to the Sermon on the Mount; he also conducts a skirmish with his wife's notions of romantic marital love. All this shows the pull that theory was exercising over the tired Lawrence in the ninteeen-twenties. The flirtation Somers indulges in with Cooley's authoritarianism and Struthers' socialism shows a craving to have things made easy to find a simple prescription for social reformation. This is acknowledged by Somers:

> Yet the human heart must have an absolute ....(Ch. xi.)
>
> Man must have an idea of himself. He must live hard, hard, up to this idea of himself. (Ch. xiii.)

Somers' insistence on a religious rather than a political absolute is the starting point for The Plumed Serpent.

In The Plumed Serpent Christianity and the one-sided mentality that Lawrence associated with it is subsumed in the Quetzalcoatl religion. In the symbolism of the new religion the bird, representing spiritual power and communion, is combined with the snake, which stands for sensual potency. The latter, in reaction against the supplanted Christian mentality, needs a boost. This makes the new devotees - and the author in sympathising with this cause - minimise the value and power of the old beliefs. Ramón gives vent violently against liberalism:

> "If I must serve, I will not serve an idea, which cracks and leaks like an old wine-skin. I will serve the God that gives me my manhood. There is no liberty for a man, apart from the God of his manhood. Free Mexico is a bully, and the old, colonial, ecclesiastical Mexico was another sort of bully. When man has nothing but his <u>will</u> to assert - even his good-will - it is always bullying. Bolshevism is one sort of bullying, capitalism another: and liberty is a change of chains." (Ch. iv.)

And against Christianity the narrator joins in:

> The Church, instead of helping men to this, pushes them more and more into a soft, emotional helplessness, with the unpleasant sensuous gratification of feeling themselves victims, victimized, victimized, but at the same time with the lurking sardonic consciousness that in the end a victim is stronger than the victimizer. In the end, the victims pull down their victimizer, like a pack of hyenas on an unwary lion. They know it. Cursed are the falsely meek for they are inheriting the earth. (Ch. xviii.)

The only major character in the novel who speaks up for the old principle of Christian love is Ramón's wife, Carlota. Their early marriage has been based on a passionate possessiveness - 'either ravishing or being ravished'. (Ch. xviii.) They have never recognised each other's individuality. Hence, the changes in Ramon's beliefs take place in disregard of Carlota and in complete denial of the value of their love. And Carlota cannot appreciate the potential of her husband's new beliefs because they repudiate her from the start. The marriage is an acknowledged failure, in which Ramón just about acknowledges his share of responsibility: 'With Carlota he failed absolutely.' (Ch. xvii.) There is, however, no penetrating retrospective analysis, as there is in <u>Women in Love</u> with the Criches, no analysis of how the failure has come about. Ramón's verdict is that her love, like her acts of charity, has grown formal through being forced, so that now its only genuine motive is a mere will to possess and have power. The narrative at times endorses this:

> Life had done its work on one more human being, quenched

> the spontaneous life and left only the will. Killed the god in the woman, or the goddess, and left only charity, with a will. (Ch. xiv.)

Even Kate, supposedly sympathetic to Carlota, adopts the party line on her: 'Kate knew at once that Doña Carlota loved him, but with a love that was now nearly all will' (ch. x.) - although she also notices 'something cruel in Don Ramon's passive, masked poise. An impassive male cruelty.' (Ch. x.)

Unfortunately, one gets little convincing verification of Carlota's inward condition. She is depicted in tearful or frenzied opposition to her husband, a pathetically bewildered victim of a situation she cannot understand. She is unable to challenge him in any effective way. Rarely elsewhere in Lawrence's fiction is a character who suffers so obviously dealt with in such a summary and unsympathetic way. In spite of the obvious difference between them (hers is a reversal of Christiana's mental situation) she is in some ways like Christiana Crich. Her bewildered distraction recalls Christiana:

> But Doña Carlota was rocking in a sort of semi-consciousness. Then she seemed to pull herself together.
>
> "I must talk to somebody, I must!" she said, suddenly straightening herself in her chair, her face creamy and creased, her soft, brown hair sagging over her ears, her brown eyes oddly desperate. "May I talk to you?" (Ch. x.)

This idealist is given all the obtuse and dismissive treatment by her partner and by the author that was handed out to Walter Morel at the other end of Lawrence's ideological pilgrimage; and, like Morel, she can offer surprisingly telling comments on the partner's failings - in this case on the pretentious vanity of Ramón's self-apotheosis:

"Tell me what you think he really wants," said Kate.

"Power! Just power! Just foolish, wicked power ... He wants to be worshipped. To be worshipped! A God! He, whom I've held, I've held in my arms! He is a child, as all men are children." (Ch. x.)

In these last novels one sees Lawrence intent on the advantages of a new faith and laying up as many sacrifices for it as the old did. (See note 6.)

The wheel has come full circle in the development of this theme. In following its broad outline we have seen how Lawrence started by endorsing an idealistic mentality associated with nineteenth century Christianity and Liberalism; how he came in The Rainbow, and more clearly in Women in Love, to define its deficiencies; and how, having finally dismissed its outworn theoretical trappings, he came to harness it to theories of his own.

We have not considered, of course, all the varieties and details of Lawrence's treatment of this kind of high-mindedness, even in his novels. The confused beginnings in the two earliest novels are not dealt with. Emily Saxton, for instance, in The White Peacock, could be considered a fore-runner of Miriam, and the mony ecstasies of the lovers in The Trespasser bear a vague relation to the love of Hermione and Birkin. But we have discussed the major phases of a major theme.

What Lawrence's novels at their best condemn is the way the half-truths of liberalism and Christianity - and what doctrines are more than half-truths? - when linked with a psychological

disability become substitutes for thought and responsiveness.

No-one looking at the development of the theme as a whole can doubt the centrality and supremacy of its portrayal in Women in Love. There exists the clearest definition of the link between personal and ideological tenacity; there is the most vivid working out of its consequences in terms of personal relationships between partners or between generations; there is the most careful 'trembling balance' between sympathetic participation in the predicament and a judgement of it; and there we find the fullest integration of the theme with other major themes which illuminate it by parallels or contrasts.

Precedents

If we look at how some of Lawrence's predecessors dealt with the kind of idealism discussed in this chapter, we can find illuminating affinities and influences. Some comparatively minor novelists from Lawrence's early reading proposed similar themes in a way that may have helped him along the lines he took, even when their own treatment of the theme failed to provide any complex understanding of it. Those of Lawrence's great predecessors who treated the theme as a thread in a much larger tapestry still left him the theme to analyse as a separate factor. But there are those who dealt with similar themes in a similar way, or a way that can illuminate not only the matter but the manner which Lawrence adopted.

From those who appealed to Lawrence as a youth I should

like to mention Charlotte Brontë , Mark Rutherford, H. G. Wells and Thomas Hardy.

Charlotte Brontë presented in Jane Eyre an array of high-minded religious idealists. (And this was one of Lawrence's 'favourite English books' in his early twenties - Lawrence to Jennings, 4 November 1908, Letters, i,34.) Charlotte's intention was critical of 'narrow human doctrines, that tend to elate and magnify a few'. (Preface to Jane Eyre.) There is an effort of assessment like Lawrence's in the presentation of St John Rivers, the minister who offers to marry Jane but who is rejected in favour of Mr. Rochester. With him, as with Helen Burns, Jane feels an 'inexpressible sadness' (ch. xxx.) but with him the sadness is related to 'the strange bitterness' she identifies in him. He confesses to a conflict of 'propensities and principles' which makes him 'almost rave in (his) restlessness'. (Ch. xxx.) His sister says:

> "He will sacrifice all to his long-framed resolves ...
> It is right, noble, Christian; yet it breaks my heart!"
> (Ch. xxx.)

He himself admits he is 'a cold, hard, ambitious man ... Reason, and not feeling, is my guide.' (Ch. xxxii.) Jane senses a murderous ruthlessness: 'I felt how, if I were his wife, this good man, pure as the deep sinless source, could kill me.' (Ch. xxxv.)

Mark Rutherford, another early favourite of Lawrence's (see Chambers, A Personal Record, p. 110) advocated in his autobiography a 'perpetual undying faith in principles'. (Appendix to Deliverance.) He is nevertheless an author in whose novels one can find both endorsement and criticism of these. He offered in Zachariah, the artisan hero of his best-known novel, The Revolution

in Tanner's Lane, a largely uncritical portrait of a man whose unsatisfactory marriage makes him all the more noble a lover of humanity and justice. 'He was by nature a poet; essentially so, for he loved everything which lifted him above the commonplace'. (Ch. i.) But in Cardew, the zealous, idealistic minister in Catharine Furze who neglects his well-meaning, unimaginative wife, Rutherford shows how close high-mindedness can come to blindness:

> If his wife was defective at one point, there were in her whole regions of unexplored excellence, of faculties never encouraged, and an affection to which he offered no response .... (Ch. vii.)

> He fell in love with himself, married himself, and soon after discovered that he did not know who his wife was. (Ch. x.)

He is saved from further folly in his highly romantic attachment to Catharine Furze - 'It was a love of the soul, of that which was immortal, of God in her' (ch. viii) - by that heroine's noble self-renunciation.

A mixture like this, of honest analysis and delusive enthusiasms, is evident in H. G. Wells's treatment of the theme - though in Wells's case the delusions are more damaging as they develop in his later novels. Let us take for example The New Machiavelli which came at about the mid-point in his career. There the hero's background and first marriage are handled in a way that faintly and coincidentally recalls Sons and Lovers. The situation between Remington's parents resembles that between Paul's: the father

> was indeed the most lovable of weak spasmodic men. But my mother had been trained in a hard and narrow system that made evil out of kindness or charity. All their estrangement followed from that. (Book I, ch.iii.)

Wells attempted to expose for what they are worth the conventional ideals of behaviour that ordinary people live up to. Remington's first wife, Margaret, is a little like Miriam in her pathetic desire for self-sacrifice: ' "all I want in the world is to give my life to you." ' (Book IV, ch. ii.) There are several characters like this in Wells's fiction (Ethel in Love and Mr. Lewisham and Marion in Tono Bungay - creatures with few responses besides those sanctioned by their middle-class training) and they all tend, like Margaret Remington, to be cheapened into shallow caricatures and to carry much of the blame for what goes wrong in their marriage to the heroes of these novels.

When it comes to high-minded idealism, however, Wells falls foul of it himself. Remington, the great statesman in The New Machiavelli, is the arch-idealist of them all - no less conventional than those others, although his conventions may be different. For him, 'life was a various and splendid disorder of forces that the spirit of man sets itself to tame.' (Book I, ch. iv.) In politics his principle is; 'The more of love and fine thinking the better for man.... the less, the worse.' (Book III, ch. i.) Somewhat like Ben Cooley in Kangaroo, he declares that people must recognise leaders, such as himself. He regards the mind as the 'hinterland .... in human affairs generally, the permanent reality'. (Book III, ch. i.) All this is endorsed by the author who subscribes to Remington's beliefs. The didacticism is perfectly confident and straightforward. Since Remington believes this, it is not surprising that his personal relationships are a tissue of whimsical and romantic self-deceptions - some recognised by the author as such, others shared by him. Lawrence in his review of The World of William Clissold found in the

later Wells 'a peevish,ashy indifference to everything except himself, himself as centre of the universe'. (Phoenix, i, 349.)

Hardy's influence on the youthful Lawrence was of course stronger than any of these, and probably especially strong in the working out of this theme. Thinking about Hardy's portraits of Sue Bridehead and of Jude, Clym Yeobright and Angel Clare must have helped Lawrence formulate some of the crucial judgments that operate in the portrayal of Miriam Leivers, Hermione Roddice and Will Brangwen. This is clear from the discussion of these characters in Lawrence's 'Study of Thomas Hardy' (written in 1914 before the completion of The Rainbow.) Frequently the analysis offered fits Lawrence's characters as closely as, and sometimes more closely than, Hardy's.

Of Sue Bridehead Lawrence wrote, as he had written of Miriam 'She asked for what he (Jude) could not give - what perhaps no man can give: passionate love without physical desire.' (Phoenix, i, 509.) - and as he was to write about Hermione:

> She was like a flower broken off from the tree, that lives a while in water, and even puts forth .... this tragedy is the result of over-development of one principle of human life at the expense of the other. (Phoenix, i, 503 and 509.)

About the scene in part V, chapter v of Jude the Obscure where Jude and Sue admire the roses at the Agricultural Show, he offered a comment which also fits (and fits better) the comparable scene in chapter vii of Sons and Lovers where Paul and Miriam admire the wild rose bush:

> They had their own form of happiness, nevertheless, this trembling on the verge of ecstasy when, the senses strongly roused to the service of the consciousness, the things

they contemplated took flaming being. (Phoenix, i, 506.)

The form of the ideal that Sue's inhibitions take sometimes resembles Miriam's - as when she claims that her 'liking' for Jude

> "is a delight in being with [him] of a supremely delicate kind" (IV, v.)

-as Phillotson explains:

> "to share each other's emotions, and fancies, and dreams ... Shelleyan" (V, iv.)

and only later, to secure him, does she sacrifice her body to his desire.

In Jude Fawley, Clymn Yeobright and Angel Clare there is a conflict between spirituality and sexuality that Lawrence was particularly interested in, as his interpretative comments show.

The portrait of Jude lies shadowily behind that of Will Brangwen. Jude also craves for the medieval in religion and in art; he is as fond as Will is of repairing churches, even after (like Will) he has lost his faith under the onslaught of his wife's rationalism. The conflict brings them both under the sway of their women, mentally and physically.

There are qualities in Angel Clare, in Tess of the d'Urbervilles, suggestive of Thomas Crich. He is a minister's son with 'fixed abstract eyes' (Phase III, ch. xviii.) He owns 'the will to subdue the grosser to the subtler emotion, the substance to the conception, the flesh to the spirit'. (Phase V, ch. xxxvi.) His love for Tess is 'ethereal to a fault' (V, xxxvi.) - he sees in her 'a visionary essence of woman'. (III, xx.) As Lawrence put it, 'he must see her only as the Female Principle'. (Phoenix,i,484.)

Hardy used Angel and Jude as opportunities for blaming 'society' and 'convention' for events that are basically attributable to the deficiencies of his characters. Lawrence discussed the mishandling of characters like Alec d'Urberville and Arabella, and in each case, in stressing that Hardy was a bad artist' (Phoenix, i, 488) and revealing his inability to handle the themes he proposed, underlined the direction of his own thought towards a clearer and more inclusive integration.

I should like just to mention two writers from the middle category outlined in the opening paragraph to this section.

In George Eliot's Middlemarch there are two portraits that are especially interesting in this context. They are those of Casaubon and Bulstrode. Casaubon, convincing himself that he is justifying his Christian belief, devotes himself to the justification of his 'small, hungry, shivering self' (ch. xxix) and enlists the aid of a wife who at first endorses and abets his ideal aims and then establishes a separate life, as she finds the experience suppressive and comes to realise that the whole process is to shore up the ego of deficient vitality. In Bulstrode there is a dynamic conflict between his ruling desires for money and power and his religious beliefs. Sometimes they are in alliance, so that he plays 'Bishop and Banker' with that unconscious hypocrisy 'which shows itself occasionally in us all'. (Ch. lxi.) But at times of crisis the desires overpower the beliefs, although the latter afterwards retaliate. A conclusion is drawn that 'There is no general doctrine which is not capable of eating out our morality

if unchecked by the deep-seated habit of direct fellow-feeling with individual fellow-men'. (Ch. lxi.)

In both portraits the idealism is an important feature but not the central or preoccupying one. George Eliot's aim, like Tolstoy's was to involve her readers in an individual predicament so that they 'should be better able to imagine and to feel the pains and joys of those who differ from themselves in everything but the broad fact of being struggling, erring human creatures'. (George Eliot to Bray, 5 July 1859, Letters, iii,111)

In Tolstoy's Anna Karenin there are two minor portraits, of Varenka and Koznishev, which are handled in a way that comes close to Lawrence's approach. In them individual failure is related directly to the ideology which supports it and encourages them to persist in it. Sergei Koznishev has a categorical style of thinking which often wins him, with the help of careful dodging of the main issue, the arguments with his half-brother Levin. The novel brings up for discussion in these arguments many of the liberal questions raised in Women in Love - nationalism, democracy, education, productivity - and on every one it offers a similarly critical view of abstractions divorced from first-hand experience and of their alliance with the self-importance of their advocates.

Varenka is the high-minded young lady whom Kitty, in her revulsion against life after being jilted by Vronsky, comes to adore at Carlsbad. After Varenka's own early disappointment in love she suppresses her feelings and attains an altruistic nobility which the reader has to admire, while gradually discerning in it a

way of dodging life and embracing failure - like Sonia Rostov in War and Peace.

The potentially anti-idealistic thought that underlies the presentation of these two characters comes out clearly when towards the end of the novel after Levin's marriage, Koznishev almost proposes to Varenka.

> "Mademoiselle Varenka, when I was very young I formed for myself my ideal of the woman I should love and whom I should be happy to call my wife. Many years have gone by and now for the first time I have met what I sought - in you. I love you, and offer you my hand"
>
> Koznishev was saying this to himself until he came within ten paces of Varenka. (Part VI, ch. v)

He never says it to her, and it is clear that finally she does not want him to. The misfire - the way they both dally with the issue, funk it, and relapse into their separateness - comments upon their beliefs and upon them without damaging or sentimentalising their stature as individuals.

Among the major characters, idealism and conscientiousness as seen in, say, Alexei Karenin or in old Prince Bolkonsky (War and Peace) and his son and daughter (who both suffer from their father's influence) finds a much wider and deeper context. Karenin, for instance, who may be accused at one time by Anna in this way -

> "Nothing but ambition, nothing but the desire to get on - that is all there is in his soul ....and as for those lofty ideals of his, his passion for culture, religion, they are so many tools for advancement." (Part II, ch. xxviii.)

- is never 'placed' by the partial accuracy of the judgment, nor by the sympathy Anna is able to enlist.

> When Anna had informed him, on their way back from the races, of her relations with Vronsky, and immediately afterwards had burst into tears, holding her face in her

> hands, Karenin, for all the fury roused in him against her was aware at the same time of that emotional turmoil always produced in him by tears. Conscious of it, and conscious that any expression of his feelings at that moment would be ill-adapted to the situation, he endeavoured to suppress every manifestation of life in himself, and so neither stirred nor looked at her. This was what had caused that strange expression of death-like appearance which had so struck Anna. (Part III, ch. xiii.)

The reader's attention is not on the process of withdrawal itself as a phenomenon that commands the centre of interest and which the character may exemplify, but on the individual in whom it is taking place, or rather on the two individuals involved here - individuals whose history and relationship exemplify so many other things besides.

A preoccupation with the process - of this or any other human condition - an intent working out of recurrent themes within the lives of the characters of a novel - these qualities in Lawrence find their closest relation to the work of Dickens, Dostoevsky and Conrad, and to a lesser degree, to that of Stendhal and Hawthorne. For instance, in their novels one can find a treatment that is remarkably similar to Lawrence's of particular instances and degrees of the idealistic mentality, which has its place, as in his novels, in a network of exploratory analyses that include more general social, economic, political or religious topics. The final significance of any one theme in the total pattern of these other novels depends (as with Lawrence's) upon the degree to which it is qualified and placed by a complex presentation of the other themes and by the strictly personal and, to that degree unique, experience of the characters giving expression to it. With each novel this is different and so, for obvious reasons, no attempt is made here to

compare the ways in which the themes are handled by the various novelists.

Stendhal's Le rouge et le noir impressed Lawrence strongly when he was composing the first draft of Sons and Lovers. (See Lawrence to Garnett, 21 January 1912, Letters, i, 94.) It shares with Sons and Lovers the theme of spontaneous life thwarted and perverted by conscious preconceptions.

Mathilde in Stendhal's novel is constantly posturing in the mirror of her own self-regard and measuring her simulated responses against the ideals of nobility which she derives from the medieval phase of her family's history. 'This young girl of high society only lets her heart be moved when she has proved to herself by very good reasons that it ought to feel emotion.' (Part II, ch. xxx.) Like Hermione Roddice (as we see in the Brendalby chapter) she is obsessed with what is due to her on account of this consciousness of noble ideals; obsessed, that is, with the will 'to dominate everyone around her.' (Part II, ch. xi.)

Julien Sorel is a match for her in this respect. In both of them pride responds to what is expected and forces the body to feed on the husks of a fake affection:

> There was not a trace of tenderness in his feelings at this first moment of love. It was the keen happiness of gratified ambition ... To tell the truth, their transports were somewhat forced. Passionate love was still rather more of a model they were imitating than the real thing. Mademoiselle de la Môle believed that she was fulfilling a duty towards both herself and her lover. (Part II, ch. xvi.)

The body has its revenge by making them undergo a sensual dependence which they find humiliating. A see-saw of pride and lust sways within Mathilde, and between her and Julien, who is alternately adored as her master - 'He is worthy to be my master, since he was just about to kill me' (II, xviii) - and disdained as her

servant: 'Mathilde, sure of being loved, felt utter contempt for him.' (Part II, ch. xviii.) When his pride is most murderous she is most his 'slave'. Her erotic imagination needs the constant stimulation of histrionics or art.

The novel scornfully depicts the conventions of that romantic love 'which originates in the head'. (Stendhal's phrase, not Lawrence's: 'l'amour de tête' - II, xix.) Julien eventually masters Mathilde by reducing her (as the author already has) to a formula: by realising she is a puppet and pulling the strings accordingly.

Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter offers a treatment of the theme which is closer to Lawrence's in its earnestness. Lawrence saw in the novel what he portrayed through Thomas Crich: the Puritan ideal defeated by what it excludes. The Puritan minister Dimmesdale hides, for the sake of his calling, the secret of his love affair with Hester Prynne, while she is publicly dishonoured for it. Dimmesdale, as Lawrence explained,

> is divided against himself. Openly he stands for the upper, spiritual, reasoned being. Secretly he lusts in the sensual imagination. (The Symbolic Meaning, p. 141.)

Hawthorne makes Dimmesdale's guilt his killer:

> And thus, while standing on the scaffold, in this vain show of expiation, Mr. Dimmesdale was overcome with a great horror of mind, as if the universe were gazing at a scarlet token on his naked breast, right over his heart. On that spot, in very truth, there was, and there had long been, the gnawing and poisonous tooth of bodily pain.
> (The Scarlet Letter, ch. xii.)

(As Thomas Crich dies, we may remember, 'All his thoughts and understandings became blurred and fused, and now his wife and the consuming pain were the same dark secret power against him, that he never faced.') Dimmesdale

is too ravaged to respond to Hester's desire that he start a new life with her in another country. He ends his public confession by 'dodging into death'. (Lawrence, Classic American Literature, ch. vii.)

Dickens's influence came at an earlier stage in Lawrence's development - in his late teens. Jessie Chambers has described the reading of his novels as, for Lawrence, 'the entering into possession of a new world, a widening and enlargement of life'. (A Personal Record, p. 96.) It is difficult to over-estimate its influence.

There is throughout Dickens's later novels an insistence on the evil consequences of fixed, irresponsive attitudes, ideological and otherwise. There are far too many examples to mention here, but I should like to refer to one of the novels as especially interesting from the point of view of this chapter.

In Hard Times Thomas Gradgrind is presented as living almost exclusively by certain ideological principles:

> The speaker's obstinate carriage, square coat, square legs, square shoulders - nay, his very neckcloth, trained to take him by the throat with an unaccommodating grasp, like a stubborn fact, as it was - all helped the emphasis.
>
> "In this life, we want nothing but Facts, sir - nothing but Facts!" (Ch. i.)

He is an 'affectionate father, after his manner', but one who would describe himself as an 'eminently practical man'. (Ch. iii.) The suppression he goes in for, in himself and all the others he has command over, is finally shown to him through his children's moral collapse.

As in Lawrence's treatment of Thomas Crich, the moral consequences of Gradgrind's way of thought are worked out in all his family relationships. Mrs. Gradgrind is reduced under his influence to a 'badly done transparency with not enough light behind it.' (Dickens's note, cit. Butt and Tillotson, Dickens at Work,

p. 206.) The children's needs are baulked and outraged by an upbringing that lacks imagination and affection. Tom turns cynical and vengeful; his only saving grace is his love for his sister, Louisa, who benefits a little from the residue of her father's humanity - being his favourite - but who is finally reduced to despair:

> "How could you give me life, and take from me all the inappreciable things that raise it from the state of conscious death? Where are the graces of my soul? Where are the sentiments of my heart? What have you done, O father, what have you done, with the garden that should have bloomed once, in this great wilderness here!"
> She struck herself with both hands upon her bosom.
> (Ch. xxviii.)

Hard Times, like Women in Love, also places the ideology in its more general, social context. Gradgrind's utilitarianism, in its insistence on facts, allies itself to the brutal materialism of Bounderby (Gradgrind's friend) and to the industrial system itself, with its menace of squalor and uniformity: 'Fact, fact, fact everywhere in the material aspect of the town; fact, fact, fact everywhere in the immaterial'. (Ch. v.) At the same time, Gradgrind's philosophy, in its denial of the instinctive imaginative faculty is hardly distinguishable, in its effect, from the cynical amoralism of the decadent aristocrat, Harthouse: as Dickens wrote in his notes for the novel, 'the two heartless things come to the same in the end.' (Cit. Butt and Tillotson, Dickens at Work, p. 215.)

Dostoevsky, himself a disciple of Dickens, made his impact on Lawrence much later, when Lawrence was on the threshold of working out his ideas at their fullest in Women in Love and so was ready to absorb and to repudiate the influence simultaneously. The impact is measured by the violence of his responses both for and against Dostoevsky.

There are several characters throughout Dostoevsky's novels

who have their natural outgoing responses dammed up and altered by a passionate adherence to ideologically evolved standards of behaviour, and in whom the resulting chaos is so great as to be dangerous. In The Devils, for instance, Varvara Stavrogin and Stepan Verkhovensky form a pair of carefully related studies in the vanity behind idealism. Their idealism glorifies them. Stepan is a pretentious liberal humanist and a failure as a man. Varvara is his possessive patroness, with idées fixes - 'it was characteristic of her to attach herself doggedly and passionately to any dream that fascinated her, any new design, any idea that struck her as noble' (part I, ch. ii, section 7.) - and exaggerated protestations:

"There's no greater happiness than self-sacrifice."
(I,ii,6.)

Not only the vanity is disclosed but their dangerous failure as parents. Their ideologically supported insulation or inflexibility is responsible to a large extent for the rootlessness and lack of faith of their sons, Peter Verkhovensky and Stavrogin.

However, perhaps Katerina in The Brothers Karamazov is the most interesting here in her likeness to Hermione Roddice.

As Ronald Hingley has said of her, she has a 'violent wish to dominate and be dominated'; she 'repeatedly says she wants to save him [Dmitry], an emotion which alternates with a desire to ruin him.' (The Undiscovered Dostoevsky, p. 199.) The desire to control, to have the measure of others and to use them thereby, in her incidentally self-glorifying and self-promoting schemes, is shown in her attempts to seduce Grushenka (who is also her rival) to obedience to her will through flattery and close, oppressive attentions - just as Hermione does to Ursula, and with the same underlying motives. In this scene Alyosha is an embarrassed witness of Katerina's raptures over the beauty and essential innocence of Grunshanka. Katerina

attempts to whitewash Grushenka's behaviour and show implicit trust in the future nobility and generosity of her actions, in order to direct her in the way she wishes her to go. Grushenka calls her bluff.

Dmitry's love-hate response to Katerina reminds one of Birkin's early responses to Hermione, for similar reasons. Dmitry says of Katerina:

> "She loves her own virtue, not me." (Book I, ch. v.)

The battle that ensues between them brings out the same destructive, even murderous instincts, once the unbalanced idealist has been pushed, insulted and hurt too far. Dmitry says:

> "For hers is an infernal nature too and she's a woman of great wrath." (IX, viii.)

- which she proves at Dmitry's trial when she reads the letter in which he has expressed anxiety and guilt at his father's murder (which he did not commit). It is the turning-point in the trial and brings about his ruin.

Finally, in Conrad, Lawrence found a treatment of idealism in a social context nearer his own. Conrad was, like Lawrence, more respectful in his earlier work than later towards the failure he associated with idealism. He portrayed old scions of patriotism and benevolence, like Stein in Lord Jim and Viola Gambetta in Nostromo with a lenience that stressed their innocence and harmlessness. Later he saw the process in a harsher light. Victor

Haldin, the assassin in Under Western Eyes is little better than the tyrants he opposes or the layabouts he affects to sympathise with; as intoxicated with ideas as they are with power or liquor.

In the balanced portrait of Charles Gould (Nostromo) one sees a strong resemblance to the portrait of Thomas Crich. Like him he is a capitalist who dreams of becoming a great benefactor. He owns the San Tomé silver mine in a Central American province that has always been torn apart by revolutions and exploited by opportunists. He wants not only to make good his father's political and financial failure but to use his wealth to bring order and justice to the province, by attracting other 'material interests' which need order for their operation. He is both intensely idealistic and intensely practical; but he invests his practical, materialistic schemes with the long-term values of his ideals. He is in danger therefore, as the cynical Martin Decond points out, of trying to turn his activities into 'a moral romance derived from the tradition of a pretty fairy tale'. (Part II, ch. vi.) When he succeeds materially, the success mocks the original aspiration. He certainly brings order to Costaguana, but hardly justice.

Nostromo, like Women in Love, stresses the sentimental falsity of the idealism by associating it with more obviously vicious or corrupt agencies. Charles is forced to co-operate with other material interests to achieve his noble ends. As F. R. Leavis has pointed out,

> Gould's faith is parodied by his backer, the American financier Holroyd, whose interest in a "pure form of Christianity" and whose rhetorical faith in the manifest

> destiny of the United States cannot without irony be said to give ideal significance to his love of power. (The Great Tradition, p. 192)

Charles's use of and dependence on a cynical opportunist like Decond and on that other arch-idealist, Nostromo, with his vain-glorious code of honour, also underlines the flaws, the impure mixture of the original conceptions,

> The Gould Concession had insidiously corrupted his judgment .... He was prepared, if need be, to blow up the whole San Tomé mountain sky high out of the territory of the Republic. This resolution expressed the tenacity of his character, the remorse of that subtle conjugal infidelity through which his wife was no longer the sole mistress of his thoughts, something of his father's imaginative weakness, and something, too, of the spirit of a buccaneer throwing a lighted match into the magazine rather than surrender his ship. (Part III, ch. iv.)

The consequences are seen in Charles himself as his natural reticence hardens into a blank, impassive immobility of countenance and behaviour. They are seen in his wife, Emilia, once worshipped but now neglected, reduced to a barren, clear-sighted despair:

> With a prophetic vision she saw herself surviving alone the degradation of her young ideal of life, of love, of work - all alone in the Treasure House of the World. The profound, blind, suffering expression of a painful dream settled on her face with its closed eyes. (Part III, ch. xi.)

And they are seen, through Emilia, among the people of Sulaco:

> She saw the San Tomé mountain hanging over the Campo, over the whole land, feared, hated, wealthy; more soulless than any tyrant, more pitiless and autocratic than the worst Government; ready to crush innumerable loves in the expansion of its greatness. (Part III, ch. xi.)

The machine Gould builds has, like Gerald Crich's, absorbed the individuality of masters and men alike. (See notes 7 and 8.)

Notes

1. On Thomas Crich.

There are portraits in two of Lawrence's best tales which are comparable with Thomas Crich. In Daughters of the Vicar Lawrence portrayed the fossilized rationalism of the Reverend Massy - his mechanical obedience to principle, without warmth or sponteneity of response, except for a crude obsession with his children as mere extensions of his ego. In The Virgin and the Gypsy the Rector's self-protective love of principle is presented less respectfully, with a farcical and Dickensian sense of comedy. Both portraits tend to degenerate into crude caricature, through a failure of sympathy. On the other hand, the portrait of Massy's wife Mary in the earlier tale is done with more care and justice. Her principles are a disguise for a cowardly materialism which makes a degrading misery of a life spent in subserviance to her husband.

2. On Mrs. Morel.

An indecisiveness similar to that in the portrayal of Mrs. Morel shows in the portraits of comparable characters in Lawrence's plays written about this time: in Mrs. Lambert of A Collier's Friday Night, in Mrs. Holroyd, and in Mrs. Gascoigne of The Daughter-in-Law. The portrait of another such character, Mrs. Bates, was sentimentalised in the earlier version of the tale Odour of Chrysanthemums (in The English Review, June 1911) but was made more critical in its revision. (See J. C. F. Littlewood, The Cambridge Quarterly, i, 119-24.)

The characters in the later tales that resemble Mrs. Morel in general significance - such as Mrs. Witt in St. Mawr and Mrs.

Bodoin in Mother and Daughter - are treated with an unrelenting, almost savagely satirical scorn. Lawrence is reported to have said, 'I would write a different Sons and Lovers now; my mother was wrong, and I thought she was right.' (Nehls, A Composite Biography, i, 182.) These later portraits redress the balance with a vengeance. So also does the chapter on 'Parent Love' in Fantasia of the Unconscious.

3. On Will Brangwen.

The critic whose appreciation of Will Brangwen's development comes closest to the one offered here is H. M. Daleski. He has discussed the cathedral scene in a way that I find illuminating; he has stressed 'the smothering totality of (Will's) unmanly dependence' on Anna (The Forked Flame, p. 92) and exonerated her from the full weight of F. R. Leavis's imputation of aggression in the relationship. Some critics, such as Colin Clarke and George Ford, have objected about the final step in Will's development - the new social purpose evolving from the new sensuality - that it is unlikely or unconvincing. Colin Clarke has called it 'mere assertion'. (River of Dissolution, p. 52.) On this question one can only point out that it is a narrative fact and not commentary that establishes the change in Will. It is the next stage in his life - he does become a handwork teacher at the grammar school and stays there. There is no more reason to be unconvinced as to the validity of the move in terms of what has already been shown of this character than to suspect the validity of his taking any of the previous steps in his career.

No characters similar to Will Brangwen appear in Lawrence's tales, but there are poems in Look! We have come through! such as 'Humiliation' and 'Song of a man who is not loved', which express

a devotion as abject and whole-hearted as Will's. And some passages in Twilight in Italy, added during its revision in 1915, are as obsessed as Will is with a conflict between the pagan 'transfiguration through ecstasy in the flesh' and the Christian truth that 'in realising the Not-me I am consummated, I become infinite'. ('The Lemon Gardens'.) Such close correspondences between Lawrence's attitudes and Will's suggest the difficulty Lawrence found in releasing himself from a self-identification that threatened the objectivity of the portrait.

4. On Hermione.

Since F. R. Leavis's admirable but incomplete portrait of Hermione (it deals only with certain scenes at Breadalby - see D. H. Lawrence, Novelist, pp. 191-200) there has been little critical appreciation of her portrayal. Colin Clarke has written perceptively about some of her responses. His discussion of the scene in which Birkin sketches the Chinese geese justly concludes with: 'Hermione battles to maintain her false integrity and pays for it with a squalid subjection to dissolution and corruption'. (River of Dissolution, p. 99.) But piecemeal analysis, unless guided by an understanding of her total development, can lead towards generalisations such as this, from the same page: 'The achievement of integrity, in short, is a matter of rendering justice to the corruptive agencies of nature as well as the paradisal.' Hermione's failure, as I have tried to show, is much too complex and too human to be reduced in this way.

Lawrence portrayed an idealistic devotion, comparable with that existing between Hermione and Birkin, in two of his tales of this period. In The Captain's Doll both Hepburn and his wife devote themselves to an ideal of love which produces in him a sense of

ignominy and in her a feeling that in having his worship she has nothing and that the process is a cheat. She commits suicide. The imagery of moon and ice in the story stresses the sterility of the convention the pair obey. In The Ladybird Basil Aspley asks his wife to submit to an 'adoration-lust'.

5. On Miriam.

Opinion in recent years, when it has not been preoccupied with biographical rather than critical issues, has generally stressed, in the portrait of Miriam, the hazy or intermittent focus. Only H. M. Daleski has discussed her at length without adverse criticism - drawing his evidence for Lawrence's objectivity from two scenes only, and reducing Miriam's case to a neurosis more incurable than Paul's own: she is 'masochistically self-destructive in her self-sacrifice'. (The Forked Flame, p. 70.) In this he concurs with Mark Spilka: 'Miriam's frigidity is rooted in her own nature'. (The Love Ethic of D. H. Lawrence, p. 66) She has been defended against such accusations by Louis Martz. He has called her 'an innocent Persephone who needs only to be carried away by the power that Paul might possess if he were a whole man'. (Imagined Worlds, p. 363.) The novel does in fact supply plenty of evidence for both contradictory points of view: this only goes to show the failure of objectivity in the portrait as a whole. The comparison offered in this study between Miriam and Hermione supports the prevailing adverse judgment by invoking Lawrence's own highest standards. By most others, however, the portrait of Miriam is masterly.

Some features of Miriam appear in Muriel of the early unrevised tale, A Modern Lover, and (less obviously) in Hilda of The Shades of Spring; in Maggie Pearson of the early play, A

Collier's Friday Night; and in some of the poems of this period, notably 'Lightning'. The uneasy indecisiveness characteristic of the portrait in Sons and Lovers shows again in these. In a slightly later poem, called 'Last Words to Miriam', the poet takes on himself almost the entire blame for the failure of the love relationship.

6. On the Theme of Idealism during the Period of the Later Novels.

Other manifestations of the theme in Lawrence's later novels are comparatively minor. They include the portrait of Miss Frost in The Lost Girl and Lilly's vituperations in Aaron's Rod, backed by what might be called concrete examples such as Angus Guest. Clifford Chatterley's flirtation with Platonism may seem to have a place in this chapter, but it is really, as we shall see in chapter iii, an aspect of a more final insulation and irresponsiveness than we are dealing with at this stage.

Some of the best products (apart from the novels) of Lawrence's dismissiveness towards idealism in the last phase of his career are those illuminated with dry humour, such as the short story, Things, and several of the Pansies. The dismissiveness towards Christianity continued to the end of his life - witness those passages in The Man who Died which offer reflections on Jesus's mission, and the dogmatic assertions of Apocalypse: 'The Christian doctrine of love even at its best was an evasion'. (Ch. iii.) This contrasts strongly with the attitude he had during the composition of Women in Love: 'I realise that the greatest thing the world has seen is Christianity, and one must be endlessly thankful for it.' (Lawrence to Carswell, 16 July 1916, Letters, i, 466.) The negative dogmatism of the final period is corrected to a certain extent in Apropos of Lady Chatterley's Lover, which sanely

insists on the centrality of the Church's attitude to marriage.

7. On Idealism in Previous Novels.

Several other novelists of the nineteenth century, besides those selected, are interesting in their treatment of idealism. Turgenev, for instance, could be considered together with Rutherford for his pathos-laden portrayal of liberals like Rudin (whose death while waving a red flag on the Paris barricades is virtually a suicide from the sense of the ineffectuality of his life) and of ladies like Liza in Home of the Gentry - who, after falling in love with someone else's husband renounces him and retires to a nunnery. Some of the items in 'the "Virgin" conception of woman, the passionless, passive conception, progressing from Fielding's Amelia to Dickens's Agnes and on to Hardy's Sue' (Lawrence, Phoenix, i, 493.) have been traced by R. P. Utter and G. B. Needham in their Pamela's Daughters. Over-spiritualised love of the kind presented in Sons and Lovers was portrayed by James Barrie in his novel Tommy and Grizel, where the Peter-Pan-like hero is capable only of brotherly love: ' "I don't want to marry anyone. And yet I am sure I could die for you, Grizel." ' (Ch. xxiii.) Poe also 'had experienced the ecstasies of extreme spiritual love. And he wanted those ecstasies and nothing but those ecstasies.' (Lawrence, Classic American Literature, ch. vi.) The heroine of Ligeia is enslaved in an inhibited (non-sensual) love, and dies. Between the brother and sister of The Fall of the House of Usher exists 'this process of unison in nerve-vibration, resulting in more and more extreme exaltation and a sort of consciousness and a gradual breakdown into death'. (Classic American Literature, ch.vi.)

Behind the more macabre aspects of Poe's stories lie the conventions of the Gothic novel and that kind of perversity

typified by the Marquis de Sade. This was the other side of the coin of the moralism of the eighteenth century, the moralism behind the idea of the 'good man': 'The last phase of the bluff is to pretend that we do all have nice feelings about everything, if we are nice people. It is the last grin of the huge grinning sentimentalism which the Rousseau-ists invented.' (Lawrence, Phoenix, i, 751.) It is such a sententious and sentimental worship of a benevolent Nature one finds a story like Bernardin de St. Pierre's Paul et Virginie, with its effusions about pure 'natural' relationships in 'natural' surroundings - when it is plain that both the relationships and the surroundings are sterilized in a thoroughly unnatural way. One finds it also in Rousseau's La nouvelle Héloise, where 'l'homme natural' is a puppet worked by the same strings of moral feeling as the more conventional homme de bien and the God worshipped in beautiful scenery is a pious image of benevolence. It provides the starting-point of the whole humanitarian tradition that Lawrence criticised.

8. On Other Literary Precedents.

Apart from the novelists, and apart from the impact of the Gospels backed by a chapel upbringing - (often the starting-point for his reactions against spirituality) - one of the strongest literary influences on Lawrence's treatment of idealism might well have been Ibsen. Ibsen , as much a thematic writer as Lawrence, had the theme of destructive idealism as one of his major preoccupations - in Brand, for instance, in The Wild Duck (Gregers) and in The Masterbuilder and in Rosmersholm. Equally direct in its relevance to Lawrence's concern is Blake's interest in 'the mind-forged manacles' and in how abstract thinking paves the way to crippling repressions ('He who binds to himself a joy', 'The Garden

of Love' and 'The Poison Tree')

The challenging of time-honoured formulas that went on throughout the nineteenth century was not just a matter of history for Lawrence. He went through the gamut himself. He was influenced away from his childhood adherence to Christian theology by Darwinism and such thinkers as T. H. Huxley and Spencer. Into the vacuum rushed an enthusiasm for humanitarian love and democracy, engendered by Shelley and Whitman and made into a programme of ennoblement by Ruskin and Morris. Finally, partly through the influence of certain anti-Platonist thinkers - Nietzsche who stressed fear or aggression beneath charity, Marx who stressed economic motives beneath political ideals, Freud with his emphasis on sex and Bergson with his interest in instinct - Lawrence found confirmation of his later views. He read also Shestov and Rozanov, both attacking belief in ideas, and Trigant Burrows, who questioned the idea of living up to images of the self. Some of these influences are expounded and discussed in two doctoral dissertations, one by R. K. Sinha, 'Literary Influences in the Novels and Poems of D. H. Lawrence' (Oxford, 1950) and the other by R. L. Drain, 'Formative Influences on the Work of D. H. Lawrence' (Cambridge, 1962).

CHAPTER II

Gerald Crich and the Central Phase of the Breakdown

We come now to that failure of belief or sense of commitment which follows logically from the breakdown discussed in the previous chapter. The basic result is the same - a disruption of give-and-take responsiveness - but the symptoms are different. Gerald is a man who no longer clings, like such of his contemporaries as Hermione and Skrebensky, to the threadbare ideals of his father's generation. His disillusion invents a mutation of the old ideals. In him ideals are transformed and become manias. The liberal ideal of equality, for example, changes to the idea of an equality in submission to a rational system. The ideal of romantic love, whereby one could lose the self in adoration of another, turns into an addictive craving for self-obliterative sensation. This kind of science and sensationalism does not revalue or renew the tradition it replaces but brings it to its death.

The scientific or mechanical principles at work in this case seal off individual thought and response as effectively as the older idealism. There is the same slavish quest of fixed, transcendent abstractions that are stationed beyond the variables of living response, the same assumption of having attained knowledge of some absolute truth.

In the unbalanced sexual passion involved here the slavery and abuse is more destructive in its effects, in that the struggle between the partners, stripped of all reference to a wider social

context (expectations of behaviour that were based on the more social functions of marriage) is confined to the naked egoistic and sensual demands of the lovers.

The course of Gerald's destruction is the central one in Women in Love. In consequence this chapter will explore in some detail how Gerald's condition derives from that of his parents; how the specific tragedy of that family is linked with the social and industrial developments; how the total degenerative momentum is related to Lawrence's conception of the natural laws of dissolution and decay; and how Gerald's struggle with what he feels to be inevitable makes his story a moving tragedy. Some emphasis on this latter point I felt to be necessary, since there is a general critical tendency to undervalue the specifically personal - and as such tragically representative - aspects of the story.

Gerald is trapped in the debris of his parents' lives. His conscious attitude is one of repudiation of all that his father stands for; but the reaction itself enchains him. The novel works this out with subtle thoroughness. It analyses Gerald's relation to his background - that particular amalgam of ideas, social conditions and personal compulsions which makes up the old order in the novel. He begins in revolt against this culture, but ends in developing its destructive potential. In Gerald, Lawrence identified more clearly than anywhere else the 'mind-forged manacles'. In him the forces that affect them all are most clearly defined.

The novel's indications of Gerald's personal relations within the family are brief, but unerringly accurate in their implications. The battle between the parents has been the reality of

his life - the 'harmony' (ch. xvii) and security of purpose a later dream. His own act of violation in killing his brother follows from the parents' violation of themselves and him. The bewilderment and guilt produce a paralysis, an inertness, that underlies the overt superficial evidence of initiative. What he evolves in his reorganisation of the mines is the protection of a mechanically sure, monotonous activity - 'a slumber of constant repetition,' as Gudrun finally sums it up, 'satisfied as a wheelbarrow that goes backwards and forwards along a plank all day' (ch. xxx) - a using up of himself in a way that leaves all basic conflict unbroached, all basic needs unsatisfied. It leaves the 'fatal halfness' (ch. xvi) that Birkin comments on and the weakness and dependence that Gerald's women identify in him. His mother is scathing about it: ' "You're as weak as a cat, really, - always were." ' (Ch. xxiv.) And Gudrun reflects, 'Gerald! Could he fold her in his arms and sheath her in sleep? Ha! He needed putting to sleep himself - poor Gerald.' (Ch. xxx.) The novel clearly defines the specific weakness in Gerald, deriving from his experience of life as a child and his own act of homicide, that prevents him from free, open response and that makes him a natural victim of the particular brand of industrial mania that he develops. His activities form an unintentional revenge upon life. To bring about a semblance of 'harmony' and keep himself in a position of control, it becomes inevitable that he violate others in the name of mechanical efficiency, as his father had done before him in the name of humanitarianism.

We see the kind of will required for this and the symbol of what is sacrificed in the scene where he subjugates the mare. Gerald's will responds to the mechanical imperative of the

locomotive engine, and co-operates with it in reducing the quivering vitality of the mare to subjection.

The leaning towards violence and destructiveness he shares, from the beginning, with his brothers and sisters. As Mrs. Kirk, the nurse, says:

> "If you wouldn't let them smash their pots on the table, if you wouldn't let them drag the kitten about with a string round its neck, if you wouldn't give them whatever they asked for, every mortal thing - then there was a shine on, and their mother coming in asking - 'What's the matter with him? What have you done to him? What is it, darling?' And then she'd turn on you as if she'd trample you under her feet." (Ch. xvii.)

There is a sense of catastrophe shared with his family that prompts Gerald's remark, after his sister Diana's death at the water party:

> "There's one thing about our family, you know," he continued. "Once anything goes wrong, it can never be put right again - not with us. I've noticed all my life - you can't put a thing right, once it has gone wrong."

Diana's death itself - she falls from the cabin roof and drowns in Willey Water - gives a foretaste of Gerald's tragedy, for there is something suicidal in the bravado that causes it. Lawrence sustained the awareness of a family doom and its course, throughout the history of the Criches. The mother voices it in her outcry over the dead father:

> "Pray!"she said strongly. "Pray for yourselves to God, for there's no help for you from your parents." (Ch. xxiv.)

The novel does not work up this aspect of Gerald's fate into anything grandiose; and it is all the more telling for its restraint. Nowhere is the idea of his doom more moving than during the protracted agony of Thomas Crich's death. Gerald feels a terrible and unwilling participation in it -

> 'He somehow <u>wanted</u> this death, even forced it. It was as if he himself were dealing the death even when he most recoiled in horror'. (Ch. xxiv.)

As he watches his father die, he feels he is 'inheriting his own destruction.' And the reader doesn't merely pity the son's predicament, as he does in the death-scenes of Sons and Lovers: he shares the suffering more unreservedly, for it is free of those elements which, in the earlier novel, make it part of a special neurosis. Gerald, in committing his father's failure to death, is left vividly aware that his own life of mechanical efficiency and the supremacy of his will, being based on recoil, loses the impetus from which it has been born. The experience of isolation and nonentity that follows this is not only moving and explicit in its information about Gerald but, from the way it echoes throughout the novel in such characters as Gudrun and Loerke, about the whole process of dissociation.

> But when Gerald was really left alone, he could not bear it. One day passed by, and another. And all the time he was like a man hung in chains over the edge of an abyss. Struggle as he might, he could not turn himself to the solid earth, he could not get footing. He was suspended on the edge of a void, writhing. Whatever he thought of, was the abyss - whether it were friends or strangers, or work or play, it all showed him only the same bottomless void, in which his heart swung perishing. There was no escape, there was nothing to grasp hold of. He must writhe on the edge of the chasm, suspended in chains of invisible physical life. (Ch. xxiv.)

Gerald's despair here recapitulates and deepens the horror and hysteria that was engendered by the earlier disillusion that followed his 'success' with the mines. Then he looked at his face in a mirror and dared not touch it, 'for fear it should prove a composition mask', and his mind felt 'like a bubble floating in the darkness.' Now, after the death, left alone, his despair is absolute. It drives him helplessly from his father's grave into Gudrun's arms.

Gerald's insecurity, his terror of the hollowness in him and the emptiness about him, is the basis of his actions in

the novel. He has the kind of armed impotence one associates with Coriolanus. It is a quality he shares with a whole gallery of Lawrence's characters - with the Prussian officer in the early tale, whose conscious will lords it over himself and others, in a brutal sadism; with Egbert, of England, my England; with Rico, of St. Mawr, whose 'anger was wound tight at the bottom of him, like a steel spring that kept his works going'; with Cathcart, of The Man who loved Islands, whose sterility seeks its complement, like Gerald's at the end, in the oblivion of snow; and, finally, with Clifford Chatterley, whose spiritual impotence is expressed as a physical one. Gerald's case is treated more fully, and with more penetrating sympathy, than any of these. The main source of one's sympathy lies in the realisation that fundamentally he is afraid - afraid of the spontaneous and unpredictable which he has spent all his life suppressing - so that, ultimately, he is vulnerable.

Two things stress his vulnerability and draw the reader into his plight. One, already considered, is the way he is doomed by his background; the other, to be considered in a while, is his desperate attachment to Gudrun.

Before we can fully understand Gerald's part in the novel, we ought to appreciate the extra dimension given to it. Throughout the novel the course of Gerald's fate is tied in with Lawrence's conception of the natural laws of dissolution and decay.

Some readers, in an attempt to simplify their sense of the tragedy, have been drawn to some of Birkin's general pronouncements, such as the near-platitude he offers in chapter nineteen where he tries to think out Gerald's destiny in terms of 'the destructive frost mystery', or to such of his pompous remarks to

Ursula as those before the disaster at the water-party about 'that dark river of dissolution.' Such reflections are bred of Birkin's own similar struggle, which will be discussed in a later chapter. They are the responses of a developing, struggling character whose every thought is set firmly within the total context of his story and judged by it. An attempt to use them as authorial dicta may confuse the reader's understanding of what is in the novel itself a delicate and subtle intuition: the alignment of the tragic action with the destructive phases of the natural life-cycle and of the elements - or, as Lawrence puts it, in praise of Shakespeare and Sophocles: 'setting behind the small action of his protagonists the terrific action of unfathomed nature.' ('Study of Hardy', Phoenix, i, 419.) This sense of alliance belongs to the novel's world and the reader is not pressed to take it beyond its confines.

Bradley noticed in Macbeth that the two main characters are 'never detached in imagination from the atmosphere which surrounds them and adds to their grandeur and terror. It is, as it were, continued into their souls.' And he defined this 'atmosphere' by reference to 'vaster powers without, which support them and assure the effect of their exertion.' So, in Women in Love, Gerald's destiny 'all hung together, in the deepest sense.' (Ch. ii.)

In much of Lawrence's writings, water stands, as it does in Genesis, for the submerging and dissolving of all bonds, the dissolving of the life we know. In a letter to Waldo Frank, 27 July 1917, Lawrence commented that he gave The Rainbow its title partly with reference to the Flood. (See Letters, i, 519.) At one time he thought of calling its sequel Noah's Ark instead of Women in Love. In Women in Love the ailing and doomed characters are associated with it.

Thomas Crich's last words are about the leaking of water into one of the mines. Gudrun envies, in chapter four, Gerald's exultant immunity in Willey Water, and later identifies his body, 'stretching and surging like the marsh-fire', with the succulent water plants that grow in its mud's 'festering chill'. At the water-party, when Gerald has dived in an attempt to rescue Diana, Gudrun

> saw the movement of his swimming, like a water-rat .... She saw him - he looked like a seal. He looked like a seal as he took hold of the side of the boat. His fair hair was washed down on his round head, his face seemed to glisten suavely. She could hear him panting.

The ordeal of diving after the drowning couple in the lake, undergone by Gerald, watched by Gudrun, is associated, as their love later is, with the magnetism of death:

> the beauty of the subjection of his loins, white and dimly luminous as he climbed over the side of the boat, made her want to die. The beauty of his dim and luminous loins as he climbed into the boat, his back rounded and soft - ah, this was too much for her, too final a vision. She knew it, and it was fatal. The terrible hopelessness of fate, and of beauty, such beauty!

'She saw him press the water out of his face, and look at the bandage on his hand' (which he has hurt in some machinery.) Gerald says of this experience:

> "If you once die, then when it's over, it's finished. Why come to life again? There's room under that water for thousands ... a whole universe under there." (Ch. xiv.)

When the scene changes to the Alps in winter, the transformation of water into ice reflects the narrowing concern of the novel at this point in Gerald's story towards sterility, that idea of death, without its promise of renewal, which is expressed in the finality and abstraction of ice and snow. The imagery is fused with the action involving Gerald and Gudrun, between whom and for whom there is no growth, and it intensifies it. Gudrun's

sense of partial identity with the snow is a stage in her secession from Gerald and from all effort towards renewal of hope and life in herself.

A further perspective is given to the background of Gerald's story in the novel's delineation of the social atmosphere surrounding the action.

The modernisation of the Crich mines is an enterprise typical of the era that includes the First World War, a time when, according to Georges Friedmann, industrialists 'thought they could impose an almost mathematical order upon the chaos of their times ... a mystical period of faith in technology.' (Industrial Society, pp. 32-3.) It was a process whereby working relationships lost the sense of immediacy and human involvement that came with smaller working groups. Direct personal contact between owners and workmen was gradually eliminated.

The ninth chapter outlines the social climate. There, Gudrun's boy-friend, Palmer, is a kind of miniature model of Gerald, with 'the fineness of an elegant piece of machinery', and the colliers have, as Gudrun moves among them, 'their strange, distorted dignity, a certain beauty and unnatural stillness in their bearing, a look of abstraction and half-resignation in their pale, often gaunt faces.'

In details such as these -

> They were passing between blocks of miners' dwellings. In the back yards of several dwellings, a miner could be seen washing himself in the open on this hot evening, naked down to the loins, his great trousers of moleskin slipping almost away. Miners already cleaned were sitting on their heels, with their backs near the walls, talking and silent in pure physical well-being, tired, and taking physical rest.

- a sense of the colliers' natural warmth and humanity provides a dimension by which their own endorsement of what Gerald is doing shows up in all its ugliness.

This chapter illuminates certain features of the main action: it outlines a period of change and confusion that enables Gerald's destructive mania to take the form it does. It suggests the extent to which the miners share a similar sense of chaos, that 'rottenness of will' which allows them to try to escape from the challenge of immediate relationships, whose old assurances are changing, into the compulsions of a social machine. Gerald

> had all his life been tortured by a furious and destructive demon which possessed him sometimes like an insanity. This temper now entered like a virus into the firm. (Ch. xvii.)

The miners accept Gerald's reorganisation of the mines, his introduction of electrical machinery, his rationalisation of labour both in the pit and in the office, for it is the inevitable next step, and:

> The miners were overreached. While they were still in the toils of the divine equality of man, Gerald had passed on, granted essentially their case, and proceeded in his quality of human being to fulfil the will of mankind as a whole. He merely represented the miners in a higher sense when he perceived that the only way to fulfil perfectly the will of man was to establish the perfect, inhuman machine. But he represented them very essentially, they were far behind, out of date, squabbling for their material equality. The desire had already transmitted into this new and greater desire, for a perfect intervening mechanism between man and Matter, the desire to translate the Godhead into pure mechanism. (Ch. xvii.)

Gerald's feat of organisation represents the culmination in the novel of one phase of history and the beginning of another; this social development stands, separate but related, behind the phases of his personal development. In chapter seventeen one follows his reaction to the social as well as to the personal conflict, step by step, as that wilfulness generated by his outraged feelings

as a boy moves from a boyish idea of 'savage freedom', through his interest in war and travel, into the 'real adventure' of reorganising his father's mines. 'What mattered was the great, social productive machine' - the putting of life into a bondage and reducing thereby the danger and uncertainty associated with it. He retains a conscious vestige of his father's benevolence, in his notions about productivity; but these, as Birkin sees, are the merest veil for the more sinister compulsion: 'He saw the perfect good-humoured callousness, even strange, glistening malice, in Gerald, glistening through the plausible ethics of productivity.' (Ch. v.) All Gerald's conscious thought at this stage yields or ministers to this compulsion.

> It was this inhuman principle in the mechanism he wanted to construct that inspired Gerald with an almost religious exaltation. He, the man, could interpose a perfect, changeless, godlike medium between himself and the Matter he had to subjugate. There were two opposites, his will and the resistent Matter of the earth. And between these he could establish the very expression of his will, the incarnation of his power, a great and perfect machine, a system, an activity of pure order, pure mechanical repetition, repetition ad infinitum, hence eternal and infinite. (Ch. xvii.)

As soon as the reorganisation is over, he suffers an unendurable ennui: 'He would have to go in some direction, shortly, to find relief.' He moves towards Gudrun.

The story of Gerald and Gudrun is not an interpretation of the nature of love, nor primarily concerned with their love. Through their love Lawrence dramatises the conditions of war that prevail in them.

The deadlock in Gerald's love, as in his other relationships, derives from the deadlock between his parents. He is, as

we have seen, a casualty in their battle. The son, in instinctive revulsion against what ensnared and betrayed his mother, will have none of his father's attitude of adoration. Moreover, the will to subdue and to use is as active here as in his dealings with his miners.

His initial response to his women, as to his workmen, is a seemingly relentless mania for self-assertion. It is an act of suppression and of self-repression, as with the miners, a necessity with an automatic logic of its own which is made clear to the reader in his sadistic mastering of the rabbit, and of the mare:

> But he held on to her unrelaxed, with an almost mechanical relentlessness, keen as a sword pressing into her. Both man and horse were sweating with violence. Yet he seemed calm as a ray of cold sunshine. (Ch. ix.)

He is drawn to a certain slavishness in a woman. This accounts almost wholly for his affair with Minette in the sixth and seventh chapters. His crude responses here reduce Minette to a figment of his erotic fantasy. The prurience to be found in these scenes comes from the way Lawrence combined an insistence on Gerald's urge to violate, with a glib and unanalysed portrayal of his narcissism. The view of his responses is therefore weighted towards the sensational. His responses become predictably melodramatic: 'Her inchoate look of a violated slave, whose fulfilment lies in her further and further violation, made his nerves quiver with acutely desirable sensation.' (Ch. vii.)

There is in Gudrun also - in spite of her will - a servility that is seen at its clearest in the scene that takes place in the bedroom of the Alpine hostel, where she almost succumbs in dread to his need for her as an instrument of his gratification:

> She held her head aside and brushed and brushed her hair madly. For her life, she would not turn round and face

him. For her life, she could not. And the knowledge made her almost sink to the ground in a faint, helpless, spent. She was aware of his frightening, impending figure standing close behind her, and she was aware of his hard, strong, unyielding chest, close upon her back. And she felt she could not bear it any more, in a few minutes she would fall down at his feet, grovelling at his feet, and letting him destroy her. (Ch. xxix.)

Gudrun's nature, however, not only offers satisfaction to Gerald's will to destroy, but, through its own acts of violation, sharpens it. Her real challenge to him lies in her resistance. This is clear even in the scene with the mare: in spite of her partial identification with the subject creature - 'It made Gudrun faint with poignant dizziness, which seemed to penetrate to her heart '-she exults in the act. She screams out her challenge to Gerald as he passes on: ' "I should think you're proud." ' Her self-assertion in fact matches his, and the battle puts a keen edge on a sexuality that is desperately determined on its own satisfaction.

The intensity of their excitement depends on their separateness. It is an intensified self-consciousness: they define themselves in assertion against each other, polarized in a way that is antithetical to Birkin's ideal of love. They are 'like opposite poles of one fierce energy'. (Ch. xxix.) Gerald wants to be his own god, with Gudrun administered unto him:

> "This is worth everything," he said, in a strange penetrating voice.
>
> So she relaxed, and seemed to melt, to flow into him, as if she were some infinitely warm and precious suffusion filling into his veins, like an intoxicant. Her arms were round his neck, he kissed her and held her perfectly suspended, she was all slack and flowing into him, and he was the firm, strong cup that receives the wine of her life. (Ch. xxiv.)

Gudrun, a more timorous and secret predator, wants to satisfy her curiosity and test her power:

> Her fingers went over the mould of his face, over his features. How perfect and foreign he was - ah how

> dangerous! Her soul thrilled with complete knowledge. This was the glistening, forbidden apple, this face of a man. She kissed him, putting her fingers over his face, his eyes, his nostrils, over his brows and his ears, to his neck, to know him, to gether him in by touch. He was so firm, and shapely, with such satisfying, inconceivable shapeliness, strange, yet unutterably clear. He was such an unutterable enemy, yet glistening with uncanny white fire. She wanted to touch him and touch him and touch him, till she had him all in her hands, till she had strained him into her knowledge. (Ch. xxiv.)

The two are imprisoned in themselves: there are no conditions for growth, only collision.

The inevitable come-back of Gerald's abuse, his impersonal abuse, of the miners has been the desperate boredom and inertia he felt when he thought the job was completed. But at close quarters with another human being, the abuse produces a more devastating return. In his affair with Gudrun he is more thoroughly the victim of his own misuse of another. Gudrun has the strength of pliancy. She is the stronger because the more resignedly despairing of the two. She is not at war with the factors that destroy her, she is sodden with them.

It is not only Gerald's violence that indicates the struggle in him, but also his friendship with Birkin. Birkin feeds Gerald's urge to see beyond himself and his own misfortune - to make an effort, however abortive, at adjustment. Birkin senses, in Gerald's curiosity and the way Gerald is 'warmed' and stimulated by his talk, a desire for revivifying contacts; on this intuition he bases his obstinate insistence on Gerald's freedom to choose a creative outcome for his life. The reader begins to see this potential in Gerald, a possibility of his escape from defeat, at the water-party, when he and Gudrun are sitting balancing each other in the canoe:

> His mind was almost submerged, he was almost transfused,

> lapsed out for the first time in his life, into the things about him. For he always kept such a keen attentiveness, concentrated and unyielding in himself. Now he had let go, imperceptibly he was melting into oneness with the whole. It was like pure, perfect sleep, his first great sleep of life. He had been so insistent, so guarded all his life. But here was sleep, and peace, and perfect lapsing out.

Here the wrongness from within the family asserts itself again in the death of Diana, who is 'persisting in dancing on the cabin roof of the launch.'

Even after his father's death, when his downward course seems set, the novel insists on an alternative. Here, as in the interlude with Gudrun in the canoe, one is aware of his impulse to be saved:

> At first he was quiet, he kept still, expecting the extremity to pass away, expecting to find himself released into the world of the living, after this extremity of penance. But it did not pass, and a crisis gained on him.
>
> As the evening of the third day came on, his heart rang with fear. He could not bear another night. Another night was coming on, for another night he was to be suspended in chains of physical life, over the bottomless pit of nothingness. And he could not bear it. He was frightened deeply, and coldly, frightened in his soul. He did not believe in his own strength any more. He could not fall into this infinite void and rise again. If he fell, he would be gone forever. He must withdraw, he must seek reinforcements. He did not believe in his own single self any further than this. (Ch. xxiv.)

At this point one sees how the impulse to be saved turns into a craving to be destroyed. Gerald makes his choice with all his personal experience and personal insufficiency dictating it. One is not allowed to feel that any one of the factors from his background more than another tips the balance. Neither the society he lives in, nor his parental background, nor his own early sense of guilt and suppression are singly responsible. They all three have a part in the decision; but the operative factor is the damaged self - his inability to repair as Birkin does. Gerald is at first impelled

towards Birkin for 'reinforcement':

> He went through the wood, stumbling and feeling his way to the Mill. Birkin was away. Good - he was half glad.

The half-gladness that Birkin is not there indicates that his choice is more than half-made.

> But he must take a direction now. Nothing would be resolved by merely walking, walking away. He had to take a direction.

He goes then from his father's grave, revolted and stimulated by the immediate contact with death, direct to Gudrun. The episode has the intense narrative vividness of nightmare, because the realistic details - the meeting with the drunken collier, the moment-by-moment account of how Gerald 'burgles' the Brangwens' home - are governed by his bewilderment and passion. He is swept along into the act of violation that makes him Gudrun's dependant. Pity and horror are mixed in one's appreciation of his suffering.

One remembers Gerald's conversation with Birkin at Breadalby:

> "And part of me wants something else," said Gerald, in a queer, quiet, real voice.
>
> "What?" said Birkin, rather surprised.
>
> "That's what I hoped you could tell me," said Gerald.

But Birkin has to struggle for himself with his entire energy, and the sub-plot gives the history and outcome of it. When Gerald is most able to receive help (before his father's death and his desperate involvement with Gudrun) Birkin is unable to give what he needs. The best he can offer Gerald is a Blutbrüderschaft, something that Gerald cannot agree to or understand, because it requires that very faith and trust in another that Gerald's life has made so difficult for him to venture. He mistrusts all. 'Gerald! The denier!' (Ch. xxxi.) Yet one knows, with Birkin,

that such a commitment would be a first step to accepting the challenge of life, the first mark of a willingness to engage in the business of living.

> "He should have loved me," he (Birkin) said. "I offered him .... "
> "What difference would it have made!"
> "It would!" he said. "It would." (Ch. xxxi.

We can see the final balance being struck in the novel's presentation of Gerald if we consider the description of Gerald's death:

> The snow was firm and simple. He went along. There was something standing out of the snow. He approached, with dimmest curiosity.
>
> It was a half-buried Crucidix, a little Christ under a little sloping hood, at the top of a pole. He sheered away. Somebody was going to murder him. He had a great dread of being murdered. But it was a dread which stood outside him, like his own ghost.
>
> Yet why be afraid? It was bound to happen. To be murdered! He looked round in terror at the snow, the rocking, pale, shadowy slopes of the upper world. He was bound to be murdered, he could see it. This was the moment when the death was uplifted, and there was no escape.
>
> Lord Jesus, was it then bound to be - Lord Jesus! He could feel the blow descending, he knew he was murdered. Vaguely wandering forward, his hands lifted as if to feel what would happen, he was waiting for the moment when he would stop, when it would cease. It was not over yet.
>
> He had come to the hollow basin of snow, surrounded by sheer slopes and precipices, out of which rose a track that brought one to the top of the mountain. But he wandered unconsciously, till he slipped and fell down, and as he fell something broke in his soul, and immediately he went to sleep.

The figure of Christ refers the tragedy back again to the general. Gerald, the transgressor, has violated what in the past would have been called a divine law. His 'dread of being murdered' is mainly a fear of retribution. From the outset he has denied life. He has killed his brother, enslaved the miners, nullified Gudrun. But the

word 'murder' suggests also the victim's sense of the agency of the factors that have helped to make him what he is. He 'sheers away' from the figure of the crucifix, the reminder of his personal guilt; but the barrenness of snow lies around the figure of Christ as well as himself. (See note 1.)

The Earlier Novels

We have had, for the sake of economy, to consider Gudrun in this part of the study only in her personal relationship with Gerald. The features that both she and Loeke share with Gerald, and more particularly with each other, will be taken up in the next chapter. It will be interesting at this point to look at the earlier appearances of this particular theme.

We noticed in the previous chapter those features of Skrebensky's development that foreshadowed Gerald. In The Rainbow also, Ursula's uncle Tom, a pit manager with 'something marshy about him' (ch. xii) inflicts on his miners an industrial system which reduces them to robots. He marries Winifred, who is, like Gudrun, limited to the self and cynical - 'clayey, inert', like 'the great prehistoric lizards'. (Ch. xii.) Together they worship 'the impure abstraction, the mechanisms of matter'. (Ch. xii.) However, Tom's sneering dislike of life and the latent homosexuality he has in common with Winifred ally him with Loerke rather than Gerald. The sketch of this pair occurs in that part of The Rainbow which shows Lawrence's mind on the move towards the structure and imagery of its sequel. Finally, in that novel there is Harby, Ursula's headmaster at Brinsley Street School, whose nature is

cramped by the educational system he inflicts on the pupils.

In Sons and Lovers Paul Morel's erotic dependence upon Clara Dawes and his essential disregard of her expresses a feature of Gerald's relations with Gudrun. In the scene where Paul creeps down the stairs and into her kitchen to find her, there is a resemblance to Gerald's burgling of the Brangwen house in Women in Love that lies in the details of the description, the kind of eroticism involved, and the time at which it occurs in the novel (after the impasse reached with Miriam and his mother). Paul's adoration of Clara, like Gerald's of Gudrun, while it thrills her - 'It healed her hurt pride' (ch. xii.) - places her in a motherly, consoling position - 'And she pressed him to her breast, rocked him and soothed him like a child' (ch. xii.) - which leaves her unsatisfied. 'He kept her because he never satisfied her.' (Ch. xiii.) She eventually comes to dread his love:

> She was afraid of the man who was not there with her, whom she could feel behind this make-belief lover; somebody sinister, that filled her with horror. She began to have a kind of horror of him. It was almost as if he were a criminal. He wanted her - he had her - and it made her feel as if death itself had her in its grip. (Ch. xiii.)

The association established in Sons and Lovers between the destructiveness of Paul's possession of Clara and the despair he feels at the death of his mother foreshadows the situation in the chapter of Women in Love called 'Death and Love'. In the 'lapse towards death' Paul has suicidal feelings like Gerald's. He feels 'unsubstantial, shadowy' and 'as if his life were being destroyed, piece by piece, within him.' (Ch. xiv.) He has a terror of 'the void in which he found himself' (ch. xiv.) and is on the verge of madness. He resists and turns his face towards life again.

In the earlier novels there is only one character whose

fate in its general line of development offers a comparison with Gerald's. This is Siegmund in The Trespasser. However, this novel is so vague and flimsy as to make a mockery of the theme.

His Wagnerian name indicates his Tristan-like destiny. He is 'thirty-eight years old and disconsolate as a child'. (Ch. ii.) Married unsatisfactorily, he goes away for a week with his mistress. On this holiday, after at first feeling released, he is dogged by a sense of doom. He has searched and is searching fruitlessly for 'faith' but is helpless with misgivings.

The intoxication of his love offers an escape. He wants obliteration and comfort. Helena is regarded as 'mother and substance of all life' (Gerald on Gudrun in Women in Love, ch. xxiv):

"Hawwa - Eve - Mother!" (The Trespasser, ch. xi.)

Like Gerald he has chosen a maimed partner: for Helena, like Gudrun, is burdened with a fear of her own responses. She never really responds to Siegmund's passion, and fights her subjection to it. The two lovers are always essentially apart, thinking their own thoughts, obsessed with their own emotions. Siegmund feels more and more estranged, oppressed by a 'sense of humiliation ... a physical sense of defeat' (ch. xix) which he cannot account for. Their love is associated with the fierce, consuming sun and with the sea, which one day nearly drowns them.

With a 'sense of despair, a preference for death' (ch. xvi) he returns home to be treated as an outcast there. He cannot face any future he can imagine. Sick with sunstroke, he sees death as the final release and comfort:

> Siegmund sat thinking of the after-death, which to him seemed so wonderfully comforting, full of rest, and reassurance, and renewal. He experienced no mystical ecstasies. He was sure of a wonderful kindness in death, a kindness which really reached right through life,

though here he could not avail himself of it. (Ch. xxvii.)

He hangs himself.

In this novel the sequence is not thought out and not critically related. The root causes of Siegmund's insecurity and dissatisfaction are never established - we are even offered absurdly inadequate simplifications like Hampson's on his being a 'concentre' (Ch. xii.) Moreover, whatever its causes, Siegmund's malaise produces inert self-pity that inhibits the reader's sympathies. The collapse of his marriage is excused rather than explained, on the most superficial grounds, and little attempt is made to understand the unsatisfactoriness of the experience with Helena, except in terms of the inadequacies of her response. (See note 2.)

In the later novels there are very few appearances of the themes connected with Gerald. In these novels Lawrence seems to have been chiefly preoccupied with developing those ideas that are in Women in Love associated with Birkin. One can only spot likenesses incidentally in the failed relationships that crop up during the working out of ideas on the theme of regeneration.

A tired re-working of some aspects of the Gerald theme occurs, for instance, in Aaron's Rod, where the casual relationship between Jim Bricknell and Clariss Browning in the sixth chapter recalls Gerald's with Minette, while the argument between Bricknell and Lilly in the eighth chapter echoes some of the conversations between Gerald and Birkin. In Lady Chatterley's Lover Clifford's dealings with the mines are presented in a stale and perfunctory way - a recapitulation of what has already been said, in the author's mind, once and for all. This will be referred to again

in the next chapter.

Precedents

When we look for affinities with the handling of Gerald's tragedy we come to the same major novelists as in the previous chapter - Dickens, Dostoevsky and Conrad - with the addition of Melville's Moby Dick, which Lawrence read (together with three of Dostoevsky's major novels) during the period of the composition of Women in Love.

Affinities could be argued in Tolstoy's novels. There is a phase, for instance, in Andrew Bolkonsky's development in War and Peace when, after the collapse of his engagement to Natasha Rostov, the vacuum is filled by mechanical, will-driven military activity, and this, combined with a despairing indifference to life, results in his fatal hesitation on the battleground of Borodino - a moment of suicide - when a shell lands near him and he fails to take cover. In Anna Karenin the insentience in Vronsky's love for Anna is the corollary of his living very much by the code of the young officer. (He is a man whose shallowness is covered and sanctioned to some degree by it.) The insentience is symbolised in the steeplechase where he breaks his mare's back. The resemblance to Gerald Crich is emphasized by the episode with his mare in Women in Love, and the two episodes have drawn comparisons from at least three critics. (Joyce Cary, Art and Reality, Raymond Williams, Modern Tragedy and Barbara Hardy, The Appropriate Form.) Nevertheless, these aspects, which are given prominence in Gerald's story, are only components in much more

complex developments in Tolstoy's novels.

In Melville's we come much closer. In Melville's Moby Dick Ahab characterises obsession and desperation. He spends his life with normal human responses suppressed. In the first two thirds of the book one sees him sternly repudiating his human inclinations - he even throws his pipe overboard as a gesture of self-defiance - and only after the idiot boy, Pip, has awakened his sympathies does he reveal his misgivings, which in turn reveal in his past life a young wife, abandoned the day after her wedding, and a boy Ahab hardly knows. He admits that 'the madness' has made him 'more a demon than a man'. (Ch. cxxxi.) The conflict within him provokes nightmares, visions of hell, and then

> with glaring eyes Ahab would burst from his stateroom, as though escaping from a bed that was on fire ... [for] the eternal living principle or soul in him ... in sleep, being for the time dissociated from the characterising mind, which at other times employed it for its outer vehicle or agent ... spontaneously sought escape from the scorching contiguity of the frantic thing.... God help thee, old man, thy thoughts have created a creature in thee; and he whose intense thinking thus makes him a Prometheus; a vulture feeds upon that heart for ever; that vulture the very creature he creates. (Ch. xliii.)

To him the whale-hunt is a witch-hunt; the book in this matter depicts, as does The Scarlet Letter, a morbid Puritanism turning against natural response. Ahab's perverse crusade is in revenge not merely for losing his leg but for the inner torment he has created for himself. He projects his own destructive impulses on the white whale, which becomes 'the monomaniac incarnation of all those malicious agencies which some deep men feel eating in them'. (Ch. xlv.) Out of his fear and loathing he becomes a martyr in the devil's cause. His purpose, as Starbuck sees, is 'heaven-insulting'. (Ch. xxvii.)

In association with Ahab's mentality, 'whiteness' in the

novel becomes representative (as it does at Gerald's death) of

> the heartless voids and immensities of the universe ....
> There is such a dumb blankness, full of meaning, in a wide
> landscape of snows - a colourless all-colour of atheism
> from which we shrink. (Ch. xli.)

Ahab's power over his crew is achieved partly through arrogance and partly through a kind of mesmerism whereby he seeks to turn them into the instruments of his will; but the mesmerism is successful only in his drawing upon and utilising that experience of life in them which is similar to his own: 'my one cogged circle fits into all their wheels, and they revolve .... The path to my fixed purpose is laid with iron rails'. (Ch. xxxvi.) They acquiesce, and the ship,

> freighted with savages, and laden with fire, and burning
> a corpse, and plunging into that blackness of darkness,
> seemed the material counterpart of her monomaniac
> commander's soul. (Ch. xcv.)

In Dickens's novels, however, we come closer still to Lawrence. Monomania is a recurrent theme, appearing sometimes solely as a private neurosis (in characters like Miss Havisham and Bradley Headstone) but often, as in Lawrence's novels, as something in which the implication of society is brought to the fore. Perhaps the most illuminating example for the study of Gerald is Mr. Dombey.

Dombey has a background of parental obsession with the idea of self-advancement, of 'Dombey and Son'. By implication, something of what he inflicts during his life has been inflicted upon him. Relatives and employees alike want material advancement, and in so far as Dombey can be the source of this to them they respect and co-operate with his single-mindedness. Even such a representative of common sense and compassion as Mr. Morfin honours him for his efficiency in this respect. He has the effective single-mindedness that generally they themselves have not. He has

both the personal power and the motives to apply ruthlessly the ideology that has formed him.

Dombey's obsession is nonetheless the expression of a personal neurosis. His basic dissociation from the business activity as anything other than an expression of will and a way of canalising life is proved by the way in which the detailed running of his firm is allowed to slip entirely into the hands of the manager, Carker.

Dombey behaves like an automaton (often said of Gerald) acknowledging only the fixed idea, inhibiting all contact with people.

> Towards his first wife, Mr. Dombey, in his cold and lofty arrogance, had borne himself like the removed Being he almost conceived himself to be .... He had kept his distant seat of state on the top of his throne, and she her humble station on its lowest step; and much good it had done him, so to live in solitary bondage to his one idea! (Ch. xl.)

It is the idea of 'Dombey and Son' that permits and promotes his one affection, for Paul. In losing his son he loses that element that has seemed to justify and give thrust to his monomania. (Reaction against his father gives impetus to Gerald's.) In both cases the death causes them to seek support and a furtherance of the experience they know, in a woman whose life has developed in a similar direction, and to turn suicidally away from the sources of challenge and help offered through Florence and Birkin. Gerald chooses Gudrun, self-enclosed and with a taste for miniaturising and looking 'through the wrong end of the telescope'. Dombey chooses Edith, who has been bred to respect and need the same things as he does himself and in whom pride and will are just as evident as the only motives left for action. With both Gerald and Dombey the reasons for which their partners seem especially attractive are the ones that make them the most dangerous to them personally. They are

all four dead to almost everything but the dictates of their own wills. Dombey

> had imagined that the proud character of his second wife would have been added to his own - would have merged into it, and exalted his greatness. He had pictured himself haughtier than ever, with Edith's haughtiness subservient to his. (Ch. xl.)

Such a woman as Gudrun to Gerald or Edith to Dombey is not only one of his own kind, but as such, and as a powerful force in his life, she becomes a further challenge to his monomania. Victory over her becomes a necessity. Both women see the men solely as antagonists in this respect; no other understanding comes through their own preoccupations, and so the fight is carried to the limits.

Before we look at another major novelist on this theme (Dostoevsky) we ought to glance at a figure in one of Turgenev's novels that Lawrence read in his early twenties. Bazarov in Fathers and Sons is a man who has been brought up with the idea that he is excellent and therefore will excel. His intermittent enthusiasms for scientific study are succeeded by 'dreary boredom or vague restlessness'. (Ch. xxvii.) With no greater avidity for life or constructive curiosity than average, he has, as a result of the pressure exerted by the idea of his potential, become a greater than average sceptic and mistruster of human ideas, institutions and emotions - most of all the latter. His strongest feelings are for destruction. His personal necessity to smash is associated with the current political movement of Nihilism. For ' "a man who has the courage to believe in nothing" ' - as Anna Odinstov calls Bazarov (ch. xiv.) - the only social programme is repudiation.

Bazarov gives himself the experience of falling in love, for the first and last time, with a woman incapable of escaping from a neurotic dependence on routine and on mechanically regular and

easy living:

> "I love what you call comfort and at the same time I have little desire to live." (Ch. xvii.)

The whole energy of this woman Anna goes in keeping her balance safe; she is insulated from any shock that might upset it. Bazarov is 'fated' to love her just as he is 'fated' to cut himself while doing a post-mortem on a typhus patient. The logic that underlies these events is the same as that which underlies Bazarov's general cynicism and nihilism, and it leads straight to his despairing, self-deprecating death:

> "And now all the problem for this giant is to die decently, though that makes no difference to anyone." (Ch. xxvii.)

In Dostoevsky's The Devils Stepan Verkhovensky exclaims:

> "I don't understand Turgenev. That Bazarov of his is a fictitious figure, it does not exist anywhere." (Part II, ch. i, section 2.)

Stavrogin in that novel shows so close an affinity to Bazarov that he might be called Dostoevsky's attempt to do Turgenev's job better - especially as the novel also presents a satirical caricature of Turgenev himself, in the figure of Karmazinov. Like Bazarov, Stavrogin is a spoilt only child, regarded by his mother, his tutor and his friends as a great man, a 'Prince Hal'. Like Bazarov he associates with nihilists and conducts a duel with a member of the local Establishment; and again like him he engages in a fruitless love-affair with a self-contained young lady (Lisa Tushin). His sympathies are atrophied - a 'crippled creature', as Lisa calls him. (Part III, ch. iii, section 1.) With Stavrogin all these features (except the erotic) are more richly developed, and all are presented without Turgenev's glamourising pathos. The basically deathward trend in Stavrogin's development is underlined by his final suicide:

"I know I ought to kill myself, to brush myself off the earth like a nasty insect." (Part II, ch. viii.)

It is as if Dostoevsky were revising the conception of the great nihilist with Turgenev's own admission in mind: 'I conceived the fellow too heroically, too ideally'. (Turgenev to Pietsch, cir. 1867, cit. Yarmolinsky, Turgenev, p. 196.)

There are other enriching features in Dostoevsky's character still more suggestive of the complex portrait of Gerald: the boredom and poverty, the wanton aggression, and the craving for sensation and excitement. There is throughout his development - though suppressed, as in Gerald Crich - an inner conflict which he acknowledges at the end.

Rogozhin in The Idiot, with his devouring love for Nastasya, which, as Myshkin points out, ' "cannot be distinguished from hate". ' (part II, ch. iii.) and which ends with his knifing her in bed, is another study in a similar vein. So is Raskolnikov in Crime and Punishment, 'a monomaniac who dwells too much on a single idea'. (Part I, ch. ii.) His nature runs to obsession (in this case with the idea of murdering a viperous old woman for her money) and the obsession is endorsed by the doctrine he holds, of the ordinary, who are bound by convention, and the elect, who are their own moral judges. The murderous violence is followed by an agony of solitude and self-disgust.

But it is in Ivan, in The Brothers Karamazov, that we see the fullest and closest resemblance to Gerald. Ivan is presented from the beginning as gravitating towards death, hollowed out in the course of extending a mental empire, the need for which is stimulated partly by recoil from his father's living for the flesh and partly by the desire to have a semblance of personal control.

Moreover, towards all except Alyosha it enables him to sustain an insulating social prestige. He is presented at the outset as the mental magnate. The underlying destructiveness of his concepts comes home to roost in him at the end when Smerdyakov forces him to face the fact that he is responsible for his father's murder, in that Smerdyakov, who did the deed, believed it to be both desired by Ivan and ideologically sanctioned by the argument put forward by him earlier that if there was no God then everything was lawful.

Ivan uses his intellect to justify and sustain his negative view of life, just as Gerald uses the industrial system. In his fable of the Grand Inquisitor, Ivan assesses life totally without trust in it. Throughout the story a bitter expression is given to the idea of the validity of authority, the validity of the urge to reduce, to control, to use and at the same time to be oneself used. This urge in his fable is raised to the semblance of compassion. The Inquisitor argues that people cannot accept responsibility for themselves; moreover they want, beyond everything, material well-being and are happiest when subject to those who effectively devote themselves to that end. It is an argument for an equality in submission to the lowest common factor of mankind that is entirely similar to Gerald's idea of an equality in submission to a rational system. Both express fear of life. A growing dissociation is behind the actions of Gerald and the words of Ivan. Ivan denies even the sense of commitment expressed by the very fact of his writing the fable:

> "Why! it's all nonsense, Alyosha. It's only a senseless poem by a senseless student, who could never write two lines of verse. Why do you take it so seriously? Surely you don't suppose I am going straight off to the Jesuits, to join the men who are correcting His work? Good Lord, it's no business of mine. I told you, all I want is to live on to thirty, and then ... dash the cup to the ground!"
>
> (Book V, ch. v.)

(See note 3.)

In his conversations with Alyosha - where he comes closest to self-betrayal - he reveals compassion for defeat; but it is essentially the defeat only of a mental concept of what life is. He appraises the victimisation of humanity with no sense of awe at its adaptability, strength and urge to grow.

> "What comfort is it to me that there are none guilty and that cause follows effect simply and directly, and that I know it? I must have justice, or I will destroy myself." (Book V, ch. iv.)

It is the impediment of the ego. Life must satisfy his concept of what it should be. It is not humanity that interests him:

> "For anyone to love a man, he must be hidden, for as soon as he shows his face love is gone." (Book V, ch. iv.)

Ivan, never able to lapse out towards others and towards life in general - ' "Another can never know how much I suffer, because he is another and not I" ' (V, iv) - feels only the insularity of each individual, and this is the basis of his final insanity. It is a similar sense of emptiness and isolation that produces Gerald's downward rush to suicide. Ivan keeps at bay (as Gerald does with Birkin) the possibility of help and change that he is made aware of through his affection for Alyosha.

Like Gerald, he wills his father's death. In each case the father represents the living proof of the mess created by a dedicated self-indulgence. In Thomas Crich's case the mess is caused by attempts to defeat the flesh and its preoccupation with selfish acquisition, in order to promote that sense of harmony to be gained from working beyond the self and towards a general good. In Fyodor's case it is caused by the attempt to defy in himself and in others the urge towards a working harmony because he feels it has cheated the flesh. After the death of the fathers, in both

Gerald and Ivan there is a speedier degeneration. Some of the driving power of their activity is removed and they both feel themselves vicarious murderers. In Ivan's hallucinations at the end (those of the devil visiting him and plaguing him) he has the devil say, ' "Before time was, by some decree which I could never make out, I was predestined to deny." ' (Book XI, ch. ix.)

Ivan's destructive, vengeful feelings against life, controlled as they generally are, come out not only in the vicarious murder of his father but in small acts of sudden repudiation, as when he strikes Maximov in the chest as he takes his place in the carriage with his father after the fiasco of the family visit to the Elder Zossima; or when, near the end, on his way to meet Smedyakov for the last time, totally preoccupied with fear, guilt and disgust, he meets a drunken peasant:

> Ivan felt an intense hatred for him before he had thought about him at all. Suddenly he realised his presence and felt an irresistible impulse to knock him down. At that moment they met, and the peasant with a violent lurch fell full tilt against Ivan, who pushed him back furiously. The peasant went flying backwards and fell like a log on the frozen ground. He uttered one plaintive "O-oh!" and then was silent. Ivan stepped up to him. He was lying on his back, without movement or consciousness. "He will be frozen," thought Ivan, and he went on his way to Smerdyakov's. (Book XI, ch. viii.)

The scenes with the mare and the rabbit are similar acts of violence in Gerald's story.

Again like Gerald, Ivan falls in love with a woman, Katerina, who is, like himself, dried up and tortured with ideals of life and behaviour, but who acts them out one after another, desperately trying to drain from each thus falsified situation an emotional reality. Katerina, like Ivan, does not really venture her sensibilities, but regards them and measures them up against a mental prototype. 'He loved her madly, though at times he hated

her so that he might have murdered her.' (Book XI, ch. vi.) 'They were like two enemies in love with one another.' (Book XI, ch. vii.)

Throughout Conrad's work too there are studies of a similar nature, though of a less complex kind. The defeat of Axel Heyst's affectionate impulses in Victory is laid largely at the door of his father's disappointed idealism, which has had such an enervating effect on the son:

> "Woe to the man whose heart has not learned while young to hope to love - and to put its trust in life!"
> (Part IV, ch. xiv.)

In the portrayal of Martin Decoud in Nostromo, there is an emphasis on the negativity which eventually causes his death. Left alone exhausted on an island, awaiting rescue, he is overcome by the desolation within him, which matches the desolation around him.

> The solitude appeared like a great void, and the silence of the gulf like a tense, thin cord to which he hung suspended by both hands, without fear, without surprise, without any sort of emotion whatever. (Part III, ch. x.)

He commits suicide, 'swallowed up in the immense indifference of things.'

Less ironic, more tragic and closer to Lawrence is Conrad's treatment of Razumov in Under Western Eyes (which Lawrence read in 1912.) Razumov has been brought up in an institution, the bastard son of a prince, unacknowledged except financially. His background is referred to as one of 'moral solitude'. (Part I, ch. ii.) 'He was as lonely in the world as a man swimming in the deep sea'. (Part I, ch. i.) He craves the safety of a secure social position. The need for this is sufficiently intensive to make his responses to any challenge in this field dangerous. When this security is in fact challenged (an anarchist fellow-student

called Haldin - a casual acquaintance only - seeks refuge with him from the police after an assassination) the personal obligation takes second place. As a result he is employed by the police as a spy while accepted as a friend by the anarchists (who do not know who betrayed Haldin).

Razumov finds himself as a result of the betrayal imprisoned in a situation that intensifies almost to madness the moral isolation he has always felt, and during this ordeal he relies for survival upon the strength of his will. He finds the operations of the system for preserving social security as inimical as the chaos inherent in the aims and acts of the anarchists. Caught in this way,

> rest, work, solitude, and the frankness of intercourse with his kind were alike forbidden to him. Everything was gone. His existence was a great cold blank, something like the enormous plain of Russia levelled with snow and fading gradually on all sides into shadows and mists. (Part IV, ch. i.)

His sense of his betrayal besets him:

> He had a distinct sensation of his very existence being undermined in some mysterious manner, of his moral supports falling away from him one by one. (Part I, ch. iii.)

He eventually acknowledges the meaning of his repudiation of his fellow-feeling for Haldin - 'it was myself, after all, whom I have betrayed most basely' (IV, iv.) - but is unable to respond to the challenge that the knowledge constitutes. He confesses to the anarchists-virtually an invitation to death. After they have punished him he is run over by a tram and shortly afterwards dies.

(See note 4.)

Notes

1. On Gerald Crich

The portrayal of Gerald is universally admired nowadays; but it is rare to find full acknowledgement of it as a tragedy involving personal and social conflicts of the widest significance. Even F. R. Leavis (whose study of Gerald in D. H. Lawrence, Novelist I have found the most illuminating) tended to stress the social significance of the action at the expense of the personal. The following comment by David Gordon expresses a common view: 'The death of Gerald at the end of Women in Love does not interest us only or even primarily as an individual and social tragedy ... its interest lies primarily in its symbolic meaning.' (Lawrence as Literary Critic, p. 49.) Such a judgment reduces the novel to 'a succession of more or less discrete moments of intense relationship.' (Ibid, p. 48.) The study offered here is meant to relate all aspects of Gerald's development together; for only in its wholeness is its greatness apparent.

David Gordon, observing Lawrence's hostility to tragic art in the last decade of his life, has emphasized his 'quarrel with tragedy'. (See D. H. Lawrence as Literary Critic, ch. iv.) He tends to ignore the importance of the artistic achievement of the central period as opposed to the mere pedagogy of the last. In this central period Lawrence was preoccupied with the tragic, as he showed in his remarks on Shakespeare and the Greek tragedians in the 'Study of Thomas Hardy' and in his preface to his play, Touch and Go: 'Tragedy is a working out of some immediate passional problem within the soul of man.' (Phoenix, ii, 291.)

2. On THE TRESPASSER and Its Affinities

The basic motif of The Trespasser is close to that Lawrence confessed in a letter to Helen Corke in 1911: 'Really, the one beautiful adventure left seemed to be death.' (Letters, i, 74.) The morbidity of the novel is reflected also in Lawrence's 'Helen' poems and in others of the same period, such as 'Silence', 'Dissolute' and 'Ruination'.

(See Helen Corke, The Croydon Years.)

The Trespasser's strongest literary affinity is with D'Annunzio's Il Trionfo della Morte. (The Triumph of Death.) Lawrence himself pointed to it: 'Take even D'Annunzio and my Trespasser - how much cruder, stupider D'Annunzio really is.' (Lawrence to Carswell, 27 November 1916, Letters, i, 488.) In The Triumph of Death the hero's love affair begins as a dream of ideal union and becomes a mortal antagonism. The action takes place mainly on a seaside holiday. One finds Giorgio, like Siegmund, on the beach in the blazing sun, 'fainting under the rapture' of the kisses of his beloved, who is younger, stronger and more self-contained than he - a femme fatale 'whose love, rapacious and insatiable, sometimes became almost terrifying.' (Book IV, ch. ii.) An abject craving for sensual acstasy, a disenchantment with his dream, a sense of oppression, a longing for death - ' "Oh, if I could but lie down and never rise again." ' (IV, ii) - and a vengeful vindictiveness make up Giorgio's part in the affair, which ends in his suicide.

3. On 'The Grand Inquisitor'

In the nineteen-twenties Lawrence wrote an essay reapprais-

ing the Grand Inquisitor episode in The Brothers Karamazov. By this time (the last decade of his life) he had turned away from the comprehensive vision of Women in Love and was advocating in his didactic novels a social reformation not so unlike that envisaged by Ivan.

4. On Other Literary Precedents

A novel that Lawrence read in 1913 deserves a mention. That is Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks; for it contains a character, Thomas Buddenbrook, who, being insulated - 'The human being stares hopelessly through the barred windows of his personality at the high walls of outward circumstances' (part X, ch. v.) - dedicates himself to success in business and politics:

> He was empty within. There was no stimulus, no absorbing task into which he could throw himself. But his nervous activity, his inability to be quiet, which was something entirely different from his father's natural and permanent fondness for work, had not lessened but increased - it had indeed taken the upper hand and become his master.
> (Part X, ch. i.)

Lawrence may also have read E. M. Forster's The Longest Journey, where Rickie Elliott, devoted to abstractions, irresponsive to people, is a 'fair wreck' (ch. xxxi) who cannot accept his half-brother Stephen's offer of a saving comradeship - ' "Come with me as a man." ' (ch. xxxi.) - but dies on a railway track saving Stephen's life.

There has been intentionally no attempt here to trace the influence of literary tradition that extends back through poetic narrative and drama; or the influence of such later theorists as Carlyle, Ruskin and Bergson. Both of these would require separate studies. The aim has been to concentrate on the similarities in exposition of the theme among some of the novels closest in time and imaginative conception. But it may be worth mentioning that

Lawrence's admiration for ancient Greek tragedies and for Shakespeare almost certainly lay behind his setting the individual tragedy of Gerald not only within a particular social pattern but also (partly through the poetic imagery) within a universal one, 'the vast, uncomprehended and incomprehensible morality of nature itself, surpassing human consciousness'. (Phoenix, i, 419.) This is a feature of Women in Love which is not much parallelled in the novels we have considered in this chapter, except for Moby Dick, which was itself strongly influenced by Shakespeare. The two plays Lawrence especially admired were Macbeth and Sophocles' Oedipus: 'Oedipus, Hamlet, Macbeth set themselves up against, or find themselves up against, the unfathomed moral forces of nature and out of this unfathomed force comes their death.'

(Phoenix, i, 420.)

CHAPTER III

Self-encasement - the Final Phase

When traditional ideals seem dead, and the will towards some artificial, imposed coherence seems futile, and there is not enough energy left to power an obsession, what is left and what happens?

The last stage of the breakdown in Women in Love is characterised chiefly by Gudrun and Loerke.

Gudrun is the link, she takes the reader beyond the experience with Gerald and on to the next.

It is not only Gerald's urge to control, to manipulate himself into a position where he may be absorbed in a social pursuit on limited and simplified terms, nor the fact of his warm friendship with Birkin, that establishes the difference between himself and Gudrun, but it is also the small element of hopeful self-deception as to the meaning and value of his experience that is present even towards the very end. Before he sees clearly the futility and destructiveness of his relationship with Gudrun, Gerald tells himself:

> This wound, this disclosure, this unfolding of his own covering, leaving him incomplete, limited, unfinished, like an open flower under the sky, this was his cruelest joy. Why then should he forego it? Why should he close up and become impervious, immune like a partial thing in a sheath, when he had broken forth, like a seed that has germinated, to issue forth in being, embracing the unrealised heavens.
>
> (Ch. xxx.)

There are no parallels of this nature in the history of Gudrun. There is no warmth of affection for her sister. She never hopefully deceives herself as to the import of her actions and responses - rather, she works hard at the provision of a dreamworld which merely overlays her incapacity.

Nevertheless, we should be wary of exaggerating the contrast between her and Gerald. She too is the victim of insecurity and despair. It is more difficult to sympathise with her and so understand what is happening to her, because she is a 'closed thing'. Yet when, just after the description of the 'open flower' of Gerald's suffering, one reads, 'he tore at her privacy, at her very life, he would destroy her as an immature bud torn open is destroyed,' the personal suffering is clear - especially as it echoes Gudrun's confession to her sister in the first chapter:

"Everything withers in the bud."

Uncertainty and self-mistrust have prompted her to hold on tightly to herself in fearful isolation. The passage in the novel that balances the description of Gerald's 'cruelest joy' is one that reveals Gudrun's craving for the peace of total anaesthesia:

> She felt that there, over the strange, blind, terrible wall of rocky snow, there in the navel of the mystic world, among the final cluster of peaks, there, in the unfolded navel of it all, was her consummation. If she could but come there, alone, and pass into the infolded navel of eternal snow and of uprising, immortal peaks of snow and rock, she would be a oneness with all, she would be herself the eternal, infinite silence, the sleeping, timeless, frozen centre of the All. (Ch. xxix.)

There is an affinity between her and Hermione, and in the pattern of the novel she brings to fruition certain propensities

that are half-smothered in Hermione's confusion of being. But Hermione, in spite of what Birkin says of her, is more involved with others, she has grown dependent upon Birkin, and is sufficiently outgoing to commit murder out of her baulked desire of fulfilment. The effort to communicate, to grow, to join a mainstream of life - however predatory the attempt - is there. She is able to do violence out of thwarted life, and in that respect is like Gerald. Gudrun never commits herself so far, she is never that outgoing.

Her energies are taken up with the effort to minimise and insulate. Her contempt is her tool. Ursula brings this out in her comment on Gudrun to Hermione during their conversation in the classroom:

> "Isn't it queer that she always likes little things? - she must always work small things, that one can put between one's hands, birds and tiny animals. She likes to look through the wrong end of the opera glasses, and see the world that way - why is it, do you think?"

Ursula later comes to see Gudrun's way of pinning down fragments of her experience as 'irreverence':

> Gudrun finished off life so thoroughly, she made things so ugly and final. (Ch. xix.)

The reader is able to appreciate the nature of her art in the scene where Gudrun encourages Winifred to draw her pets. Winifred, delightedly producing her malicious portraits, acts in this scene as a kind of satirical miniature of Gudrun. Like Gudrun, she seeks to protect herself in her attachments through mockery and spite. The incident, for all its light comedy, portrays an act of denial and outrage of the object, that bears some comparison with Gerald's viciousness at the end of the same chapter, when he subdues the rabbit.

It is Gudrun's contempt of the Highland cattle that brings about her defiance of them at the water-party - in her wilful, 'shuddering irregular runs' at them. This is her equivalent to Gerald's subjugation of the mare, but given in terms of scornful dissociation, not attack.

Gudrun admires the power and enjoys the bravado of Gerald's recklessness. When she sees him swimming in Willey Water, she envies him,

> almost painfully. Even this momentary possession of pure isolation and fluidity seemed to her so terribly desirable that she felt herself as if damned, out there on the high-road.
>
> "God, what it is to be man!" she cried.
>
> "What?" exclaimed Ursula in surprise.
>
> "The freedom, the liberty, the mobility!" cried Gudrun, strangely flushed and brilliant. "You're a man, you want to do a thing, you do it. You haven't the thousand obstacles a woman has in front of her." (Ch. iv.)

She is the perfect catalyst to Gerald's downfall, responding readily to his violence, and by it helping him faster towards destruction. But she is never able to identify her own course of destruction with Gerald's. She does not find her true partner in moral suicide until she meets Loerke.

Gudrun is aware of the blight in her: 'Ah, this awful, inhuman distance which would always be interposed between her and the other being!' (Ch. xxiv.) Her going with Loerke is a measure of her despair, in as much as through it she renounces interest in or attachment to all struggling life. Gerald has appealed to her, as he has stood for the power of the will and has enacted a struggle, the struggle to do something, with ruthlessness, in the teeth of insecurity and disbelief. She has been excited and

stimulated by it, as by an enactment of a drama akin to her own, but in her insulation she is essentially dissociated from it and from him. 'She never really lived, she only watched.' (Ch. xxx.) Her last hope lies in the generation with Loerke of a fantasy world divorced from moral involvement.

Gudrun's background, the progression towards the final dissociation, is given in some detail. The pathos and irony in the handling of the character ensures that the reader understands the sufferings as well as the danger implicit in such isolation; a severence from reality so extreme that the will, triggered off by fantasy, is the only remaining source of action.

Gudrun fills her life with a succession of dreamy, shadowy pretences. Long in the past she has lived in reliance upon Ursula's superior sense of realities. The sketch of her in The Rainbow mentions this, together with her lethargy and her

> endless chain of fancies .... She floated along like a fish in the sea, perfect within the medium of her own difference and being. (The Rainbow, ch. x.)

Then, when she is a girl, this can be regarded as 'a natural proud indifference.' In Women in Love the trait is developed and shown as highly unnatural.

She has been the smart bohemian artist in London, relishing the 'réclame' and suffering the boredom. At Beldover she plays the local lass, sitting with her electrician boy-friend at the cinema, willing herself to be swamped with working-class conventionality, until she is overcome by the converse of disgust. She wants to be kissed under the railway bridge, like the colliers' lasses:

> Under this bridge, the colliers pressed their lovers to their breasts. And now, under the bridge, the master of them all pressed her to himself. (Ch. xxiv.)

There is the urge to be the same, the pride in the difference. As art tutor at the Criches' her gift for 'make-belief' becomes a pathetic necessity both for her pupil, Winifred, and for her dying employer, in his struggle to maintain his conscience unsullied and his will intact. She is fascinated, with a sick dread, by Crich's death, and admires his self-control in face of it. Her behaviour, for the three of them, provides distraction from the pressure of a sense of danger and inadequacy. Her acting a part provides insulation for them as well as for herself.

By conducting her activity in a dreamworld she reduces the terror of establishing a relationship sufficiently close and real for another person to take advantage of the weakness and confusion that lies underneath.

> For always, except in her moments of excitement, she felt a want within herself. She was unsure. (Ch. xvii.)

How frightened she is, is seen in the bedroom of the Alpine hostel, when she dreads letting Gerald see how completely a slave she might be to the stroke of strong desire in him. Her own will lacking direction, she is fearful she might give herself up to another's.

Finally she embarks on that career of charades with Loerke, in which, governing their other escapisms, is the dreamworld of 'Art for Art's sake,' and the using of art as a form of dissociation rather than integration. Gudrun travels from one world of shadows to the next, the further removed from life. (See note 1.)

In Loerke we see a native of chaos. For him, every impulse is equally valid; there is no inner principle of order.

Anti-convention, mere expediency, the indulgence of sensation - whatever distracts himself and keeps involvement at bay - are the dictates of action.

His despair and rejection is something one is made to understand, almost as soon as one sees him, as the outcome of his disrupted childhood:

> "My father was a man who did not like work, and we had no mother. We lived in Austria, Polish Austria. How did we live? Ha! - somehow! Mostly in a room with three other families - one set in each corner - and the W.C. in the middle of the room - a pan with a plank on it - ha! I had two brothers and a sister - and there might be a woman with my father." (Ch. xxix.)

So that, when Birkin sees him as a sewer-rat and Gudrun as totally without illusion, he survives the falsity of both pictures, but is interpreted the more clearly in terms of them.

In spite of the temptation to abstraction and jargon that Lawrence succumbs to occasionally in the presentation of Loerke -

> There was only the inner, individual darkness, sensation within the ego, the obscene religious mystery of ultimate reduction, the mystic frictional activities of diabolic reducing down, disintegrating the vital organic body of life (ch. xxx.)

- Loerke himself emerges as a strikingly alive figure. In his physical and spiritual deformity he recalls the earlier character, Massy, in Daughters of the Vicar, but the presentation of Loerke is sharp, without the naiveté and caricature of the earlier study. The definition of his physical presence is as vivid and memorable as Hermione Roddice's. About Loerke, Gudrun notices

> the look of a little wastrel ... and an old man's look, that interested her, and then, beside this, an uncanny singleness, a quality of being by himself, not in contact with anybody else, that marked out an artist to her. He was a chatterer, a magpie, a maker of mischievous word-jokes, that were sometimes very clever, but which often were not. And she could see in his brown, gnome's eyes,

> the black look of inorganic misery, which lay behind all his small buffoonery. (Ch. xxix.)

Moreover, and this is rare in the novel, there is a quick summation, verging on humour, in his portrayal:

> Out of doors he wore a Westphalian cap, a close brown-velvet head with big brown velvet flaps down over his ears, so that he looked like a lop-eared rabbit, or a troll. (Ch. xxix.)

Lawrence has Loerke sketching in his own background and his views on art and life, and attracting Gudrun to him - so leaving Gerald isolated - within a few pages. It is all done with remarkable economy, and achieves a personality so complete that the logic of Loerke's responses is more readily understood than Gudrun's.

He is vehemently cynical about everything, except his art. Here he clings pathetically to delusions which he shares with Gudrun and which link them both with the heritage of decadent ideals identified in the novel as sanctioning the disintegration of their lives. In this part of the novel, criticism of that aesthetic creed which lies behind Gudrun's sculpture becomes explicitly satirical. Both Gudrun and Loerke trust in artistic Form, they trust in the act of representation itself to give the experience or observation within the work of art an immunity, a superiority and permanence. They fiercely deny the relevance of moral or 'living' criteria in the judgment of these works. At the Alpine hostel Loerke shows Gudrun and Ursul a photogravure reproduction of his statuette of a naked girl on a horse:

> "Why," said Ursula, "did you make the horse so stiff? It is as stiff as a block."
>
> "Stiff?" he repeated, in arms at once.
>
> "Yes. Look how stock and stupid and brutal it is. Horses are sensitive, quite delicate and sensitive, really." He raised his shoulders, spread his hands in a shrug of slow

indifference, as much as to inform her she was an amateur and an impertinent nobody.

"Wissen Sie," he said, with an insulting patience and condescension in his voice, "that horse is a certain form, part of a whole form. It is part of a work of art, a piece of form. It is not a picture of a friendly horse to which you give a lump of sugar, do you see - it is part of a work of art, it has no relation to anything outside that work of art." (Ch. xxix.)

The crudity of Ursula's assertions momentarily rouse the reader's sympathies for Loerke. However, they finally vindicate themselves:

"It isn't a word of it true, of all this harangue you have made me," she replied flatly. "The horse is a picture of your own stock, stupid brutality, and the girl was a girl you loved and tortured and then ignored."

Lawrence's treatment of the idea of 'Art for Art's sake' is more penetrating, more illuminating of the desperate sense of personal insuffiency that lies behind it, than that of any of his contemporaries, for people like Joyce and Mann found it painfully difficult to extricate themselves from the temptation to laugh at it and endorse it at the same time. Women in Love places this particular attempt to escape from normal, living standards of judgment within the wider context of the general malady of the lives of Gudrun and Loerke. It constitutes one of many expressions of their petty presumption, and is chief among the fantasies that solace their despair.

Loerke takes everything further than Gudrun, in love as well as art. He hates what he calls 'la religion de l'amour':

"I detest it in every language. Women and love, there is no greater tedium." (Ch. xxx.)

He vaunts a sensual and artistic preference for young girls, and a desire for 'companionship in intelligence.' (Ch. xxix.) He has presumably been exploring both sensual and intellectual potentialities in his friendship with his 'young love-companion',

Leitner. In place of love, he offers a mixture of indifference and lust. (See note 2.)

The Earlier Novels

In the novels before Women in Love two figures who may be said, in part, to foreshadow Loerke are Ursula's uncle Tom and Annable, the gamekeeper in The White Peacock. The study of Tom we have already discussed in the second chapter where we noted its undeveloped complexities.

Annable has been a curate, educated at Cambridge. His humiliating infatuation with Lady Christabel has cured him of the delusions that have gone with his cultured existence and in cynical disgust he has chosen to live as nearly like an animal as he can. He wearies and brutalises himself. His expressions of opinion are generally shrill or crude, especially on the subject of women - although he does acknowledge at one point that

"It wasn't all her [Christabel's] fault." (Part II, ch. ii.)

His declarations about being 'a good animal' cannot be taken as foreshadowing later developments of Lawrence's thought because they express chiefly a cynical vindictiveness on Annable's part. He is a weary renegade against a social system he regards as degenerate.

He covers his total irresponsibility with the affectation of a positive which exists outside morality: he declares, for instance, that his children

> "can be like birds, or weasels, or vipers, or squirrels, so long as they ain't human rot, that's what I say." (Part II, ch. i.)

The novel intermittently endorses his pessimism, in its gloomy presentation of the overgrown Hall gardens, the ruined church and graveyard, and the abandoned farms overrun with weeds and rabbits. George Saxton as well as Cyril Beardsall stand defeated before such decay and corruption; while Cyril not only shares the gamekeeper's defeatism but admires the cynicism that accompanies it.

Critics who have emphasized Annable's resemblance to Mellors in Lady Chatterley have been chiefly impressed by the externals and by the author's endorsement of the character in each case. Inwardly, except in their bitterness, the two gamekeepers are quite different. Annable's reaction to the society he cannot go along with is negative. He rejects it and is deadened and cut off by the act. He makes no constructive contacts and his energies are used up in defiance. Mellors is passionately given to the attempt to establish a positive alternative to insulation in his relationship with Connie. But quite apart from this, the character of Annable is so shallowly and confusedly portrayed as to make comparison with the later character unrewarding.

Lettie Beardsall in The White Peacock is a study in futile self-possession, though of a wistful rather than wilful kind. She holds herself wearily aloof from both of the men who court her. This inability to give herself helps bring about their failure or humiliation as well as her own unhappiness.

Her pity distinguishes her from Gudrón. She is potentially the most interesting and certainly the most complex character in The White Peacock, and because of this she is in many ways the most

disappointing. Her expressions of her own feelings are crippled by affectations that the author cannot present objectively because he shares them. Lawrence could not depict with any depth her indecision whether to prefer a conventional intelligence to a more spontaneous and natural vitality because at this stage he did not see clearly that the division did not lie between mind and animal vigour but between the uses and abuses of these faculties in any specific individual. He could not work out well how Lettie's apparently destructive possessiveness of George Saxton (keeping him dangling while she hesitates) is related to George's weakness. The pathos of failure in the novel is accepted with such unenquiring passivity that its causes are never explored and the pathos is never convincing. There is a tendency at times to blame Lettie out of hand and at others to exonerate and pity her with equal unreserve.

A juvenile unease about the dangerous powers of womankind pervades The White Peacock and confuses the development. It comes out explicitly in the gamekeeper's account of his youthful affair with Lady Christabel.

Helena in The Trespasser is a more serious study and shows the stronger resemblance to Gudrun. Her name suggests the destructive potential envisaged in her conception. 'She had a destructive force; anyone she embraced she injured.' (Ch. xv.) Like Gudrun she is destructive because she is essentially unresponsive; but she has none of Gudrun's vengefulness, nor even her determination to get some compensation for her disappointments. She languishes self-consciously in her illusions and disillusions:

> Life and hope were ash in her mouth. She shuddered with discord. Despair grated between her teeth. This dreariness was worse than any her dreary, lonely life had known. She felt she could bear it no longer. (Ch. xv.)

Her love for Siegmund is make-belief. 'Her dream of Siegmund was more to her than Siegmund himself.' (Ch. iv.) Her strongest response is fear of his sensual demand: 'The secret thud, thud of his heart, the very self of that animal in him she feared and hated, repulsed her.' (Ch. xv.) When she submits to it, it seems to her like death or a wish for death. On one occasion, in fact, they narrowly escape being trapped by the rising tide - which she associates with his erotic needs.

Between Helena and Siegmund the conflict is half-suppressed. Each struggles against his feelings in order to make-believe that what is felt is rapture and ecstasy.

Michaelis and Clifford

Only a pair of major characters in the later novels show interesting variants along these lines. They are Clifford Chatterley and Michaelis.

Behind the physical 'self-offering' (ch. v) of Michaelis, Connie's first lover in Lady Chatterley's Lover, lies an untouchable egoism which eventually asserts itself against Connie in the repudiation that frees him.

> The final fact being that at the very bottom of his soul he was an outsider, and anti-social, and he accepted the fact inwardly, no matter how Bond-Streety he was on the outside. His isolation was a necessity to him; just as the appearance of conformity and mixing-in with the smart people was also a necessity. (Ch. iii.)

Michaelis uses his literary success as a smack in the eye to 'the smart people' since he himself is a Dublin mongrel. At the same time it gives him a superficial gratification to have achieved it and to be accepted among them. Like Loerke, he conforms to and works at maintaining an illusion that enables him to snap his fingers at society and that,without touching the 'inorganic misery' (Loerke) distracts it.

There is 'something curiously childlike and defenceless about his naked body' (ch. iii) which is reminiscent of the small, defenceless appearance of Loerke. Images are used in his portrayal that are familiar in connection with this theme from Women in Love: 'the silent enduring beauty of an ivory Negro mask ... like rats in a dark river.' (Ch. iii.) And although 'beneath his pale, immobile, disillusioned face, his child's soul was sobbing with gratitude to the woman, and burning to come to her again,' yet, like Loerke, 'his outcast soul was knowing he would really keep clear of her.' (Ch. iii.)

> He was hopeless at the very core of him, and he wanted to be hopeless. He rather hated hope. "Une immense esperance a traversé la terre," he read somewhere, and his comment was: " - and it's darned-well drowned everything worth having.!!. (Ch. iii.)

> Mick couldn't keep anything up. It was part of his very being that he must break off any connection, and be loose, isolated, absolutely lone dog again. (Ch. iv.)

Michaelis is obviously a re-embodiment of the Loerke theme, done with a rather facile explicitness that lays everything on a plate before the reader. But there is a less obvious pursuit of the same theme in the same novel.

Clifford Chatterley, although he holds roughly Gerald's social position and some of his conventional opinions, and eventually commits himself to the same effort of industrial reorganisation, shows none of the dynamic conflict and suffering that makes Gerald vulnerable and a tragic figure. He has the reduced vitality and self-encasement that makes him akin to Loerke. His physical paralysis completes a psychic one. As Lawrence expressed it in the first version of the novel: 'He was always paralysed, in some part of him.' (The First Lady Chatterley, ch. vii.) From the beginning of the novel as finally composed, one hears of his unresponsiveness to affectionate appeal - 'there was no touch, no actual contact' (ch. ii) - and what is stressed throughout his development is his 'lack of sympathy in any direction.' (Ch. xvii.) The likeness is confirmed by his taste for the kind of art Duncan Forbes practises, as well as his talent for writing smart literature. Yet he arouses less sympathetic recognition of his driving motives than Loerke, in spite of the comparative insignificance of Loerke's stature in the earlier novel. One's sympathy for Clifford is inhibited by disgust.

In the first version of the novel there is pathos, derived from an appreciation of Clifford's predicament as an individual. He has a more natural responsiveness here, which engages one's sympathies:

> And Clifford knew that in her nature was a heavy, craving physical desire. He knew.
>
> He himself could not brood. The instinct of self-preservation was so strong in him, he could only contemplate the thrill and the pleasure of life or else fall into apathy. He would have days of apathy, which swallowed up what would else have been bitterness and anguish. Then the thrill of life returned. Then he could go in his motor chair into the woods and, if he remained silent, see the squirrels gathering nuts or a hedgehog nosing among dead leaves. Each time it seemed like something he had captured in the teeth of fate.
>
> (The First Lady Chatterley, ch. i.)

Mixed with his self-pity is a genuine affection for Connie, which prompts a pathetic desire to allow her some fulfilment in spite of his impotence. 'He loved her for her warm, still, physical womanhood.' (Ibid, ch. xii.) She in return admires him. These complications in the earlier version remain anomalous, not combined into a complex portrait; and they are overruled at times by explicit statements like this: 'In the vital sense, Clifford had no emotions.' (Ibid, ch. xvi.) But at least they promise complexity.

In the final version of the novel, however, they are almost entirely ironed out. Here, Lawrence preferred the simplification. Clifford has little or no normal fluctuations of feeling. He is always limited, always emotionally paralysed. The narrative never allows the reader to forget the deficiency, it is always on show. Lawrence, intent on underlining his general message, deliberately minimises the miseries of the individual. The clash of impulses within Clifford is almost invariably neutralised in generalities. The only pathos is that evoked by the general fact of his injury:

> And dimly she realised one of the great laws of the human soul: that when the emotional soul receives a wounding shock, which does not kill the body, the soul seems to recover as the body recovers. But this is only appearance. It is really only the mechanism of the resumed habit. Slowly, slowly the wound to the soul begins to make itself felt, like a bruise, which only slowly deepens its terrible ache, till it fills all the psyche. And when we think we have recovered and forgotten, it is then that the terrible after-effects have to be encountered at their worst. (Ch. v.)

As Barbara Hardy put it, 'Sir Clifford's character is so constructed as to make it a virtue for Connie to leave him.' (The Appropriate Form, p. 169.)

Clifford develops, of course, but the changes in him are like those of an actor going through a repertoire of object-lessons

in moral depravity, a series of tired performances which suffer by recalling features of Lawrence's greater novels and stories. First he is the aristocratic patron of a circle of intellectuals, their mental life flourishing with its 'roots in spite'. (Ch. iv.) Next he is the literary entrepreneur who can speak, like Proust, of preying 'upon the ghastly subaqueous life of our fellow-men .... then up, up again, out of the dense into the ethereal.' (Ch. xvii.) His writing is 'like gossip, all the more vicious because it is always on the side of the angels.' (Ch. ix.) Finally, he enters the power game proper:

> Clifford was drifting off to his other wierdness of industrial activity, becoming almost a creature, with a hard, efficient shell of an exterior and a pulpy interior, one of the amazing crabs and lobsters of the modern, industrial and financial world, invertebrates of the crustacean order, with shells of steel, like machines, and inner bodies of soft pulp. (Ch. x.)

- and again we are reminded of the beetle imagery associated with Loerke and the last stages of degenerate insulation. He is eventually written off as Mrs. Bolton's boy. (See note 3.)

Intellectuals, Bourgeois and Masses

The pursuit and definition of this theme is not confined to the characters we have just discussed.

The portrait of the young man in the twenty-sixth chapter of Women in Love - when Birkin and Ursula go into Beldover market to buy furniture - who has a 'furtive pride and slinking singleness ... somehow indomitable and separate, like a quick, vital rat', introduces the theme that is later developed in Loerke. The

The precision here, in this chapter, is the precision of caricature - it declares its own limitations - but its sharpness is telling. It recalls what Gudrun has responded to among the miners, who

> had a secret sense of power, and of inexpressible destructiveness, and of fatal half-heartedness, a sort of rottenness in the will. (Ch. ix.)

- scenes where through Gudrun Lawrence confirmed the presence of that 'dreadful callousness' which Ruskin noted among the 'vulgar' in his own generation and of the emotional anaesthesia Eliot diagnosed in The Waste Land.

The other characters associated in the end with Loerke are in the bohemian mob that congregates at the Pompadour Café and shows up at Halliday's flat. These scenes in the sixth and seventh chapters, in spite of some telling first impressions when Gerald arrives in the café, are the weakest in the novel, not only for the melodrama (the poor focus of Gerald's affair with Minette), but also for the shallow dismissiveness of the portrayal of Halliday and his friends. The connection between this milieu and Loerke is clearly established, partly through Gudrun, who has been part of it, but chiefly through a similarity in their taste in art. The beetle image, used to describe the primitive statuette in Halliday's flat, is properly elucidated in Loerke - 'that little insect,' as Gerald calls him (ch. xxix) - and Loerke's own statuette is a product of just such a finality of experience as Birkin detects in the African carving.

The force of these scenes lies in the way they are related to Loerke and Gudrun, and through Loerke and Gudrun to that pattern of breakdown and survival examined in Women in Love.

The minor characters from the later novels that give expression to this theme add little to the understanding of it. They give body to generalities, as often the leading figures themselves do in these books.

In Aaron's Rod one is given a leisured, journalistic presentation of what Lawrence observed on his travels into Italy. The portrayal of polite, moneyed, would-be-cultured society at the Franks' residence, and of the moral anaesthesia among the artists, dilettantes and intellectuals at Florence is glib, tongue-in-cheek, superior:

> She was a handsome young woman of the tall frail type. (Ch. xii.) ....
>
> Aaron ... looked up at the dark-blue, ingenuous, well-adapted eyes of our friend Francis (Ch. xiv.) ....
>
> So today, with its bowls of flowers and its pictures and books and old furniture, and Algy, very nicely dressed, fluttering and blinking and making really a charming host, it was all very delightful to the little mob of visitors. They were a curious lot, it is true: everybody rather exceptional. Which, though it may be startling, is so very much better fun than everybody all alike. (Ch. xvi.)

Intellectuals of this kind figure also in The Lost Girl. Albert Witham, for example, is a scientist who has insulated himself from responsibility. 'He did not think about what he was feeling, and he did not feel what he was thinking about.' (Ch. v.) There are a couple of middle-class explorations of the theme in this novel - James Houghton and Charlie May - in which the author's detachment pays off in terms of comedy. Houghton is a haberdasher, childishly yet criminally irresponsible. He neglects his daughter, inflicts illness on his wife (through 'nervous repressions' - ch. i) and parasitically depends on the support of a couple of spinsters.

He is an impractical businessman for whom business is geared to satisfy spirit rather than pocket, although in this case the spirit moves him no further than to 'fads and fancies'. (Ch. i.) In his last business venture he falls in with May, a showman on his last legs, but with a certain indomitable cockiness about him. May is as much in love with his own self-display as Houghton is, and is fond of intimacy in conversation, though always in full retreat at the threat of commitment.

> Curious the intimacy Mr. May established with Alvina at once. But it was all purely verbal, descriptive. He made no physical advances. On the contrary, he was like a dove-grey, disconsolate bird pecking the crumbs of Alvina's sympathy, and cocking his eye all the time to watch that she did not advance one step towards him. (Ch. vi.)

In the same novel, the poorer people of Woodhouse and Lumley are portrayed as a lethargic, undifferentiated mob, full of obstinate intolerance and longing for a mechanical daydream in the cinema to offset the mechanical degradation of the working day. (In the miners and even in the louts of Beldover in Women in Love, there is, by contrast, a vivid energy.) The picture is meant to illustrate the caption, 'the human social beast in its abjection and its degradation.' (Ch. iii.)

Similarly, the riot in Australia depicted in Kangaroo is used as an example substantiating Somers' idea that mob violence is a revenge upon the social and moral system for the way in which it has degraded, disfigured and betrayed the humanity of everyone who has been 'compelled into the service of a dead ideal.'

The Plumed Serpent offers a more appealing and vivid spectacle, of the despair of the Mexican people. The Mexicans, consistently exploited by their various conquerors throughout the centuries, have turned stubborn in 'malevolent resistance.' (Ch. i.)

Kate sees among the people a 'peculiar indifference to everything, even to one another' (ch. ix.) - 'a helplessness, a profound unbelief that was fatal and demonish'. (Ch. iii.) 'Never had she seen such faces of pure brutish evil, cold and insect-like, as in Mexico City'. (Ch. iv.)

In the opening scene of the novel, which takes place in the 'big concrete beetle-trap' of the stadium, the details of the bull-fight, with the sadistic overtones of sexual perversion and the answering hysteria both of the Mexican spectators and of the visiting American intellectuals, are controlled and inter-related in a way that may remind one of Women in Love. This coherence is not maintained, as H. M. Daleski, who noted it, has pointed out. (See The Forked Flame, pp. 214-15.) Unfortunately, where the background of The Plumed Serpent is realistic, it only serves to throw into relief the theatricality of the drama of the main characters.

In Lady Chatterley's Lover there is a final return to what is rigged and predictable in this aspect of the theme. The conversations between the intellectuals who gather at Wragby is adroitly staged so that a simplified general verdict on their insufficiencies can be put across by implication. Tommy Dukes sums up:

> "It's a curious thing that the mental life seems to flourish with its roots in spite." (Ch. iv.)

In dealing with the people of Tevershall and the surrounding area, even though much of the best observation is offered through Connie's eyes - and Connie has her own reasons for gloom - nevertheless at one time or another most of the characters join in what amounts to a wailing chorus on the degeneracy of modern times. Lawrence was

sufficiently in tune with this in the eleventh chapter to produce page upon page of what might have belonged more appropriately with those 'Assorted Articles' he wrote for The Evening News.

> This is history. One England blots out another. The mines had made the halls wealthy. Now they were blotting them out, as they had already blotted out the cottages. The industrial England blots out the agricultural England. One meaning blots out another. The new England blots out the old England. And the continuity is not organic, but mechanical.
>
> ... Incarnate ugliness, and alive! What would become of them all? Perhaps with the passing of the coal they would disappear again, off the face of the earth. They had appeared out of nowhere in their thousands, when the coal had called for them. Perhaps they were only weird fauna of the coal-seams. Creatures of another reality, they were elementals, serving the elements of coal, as the metal-workers were elementals, serving the element of iron. Men not men, but animals of coal and iron and clay. Fauna of the elements, carbon, iron, silicon: elementals. They had perhaps some of the weird, inhuman beauty of minerals, the lustre of coal, the weight and blueness and resistance of iron, the transparency of glass. Elemental creatures, weird and distorted, of the mineral world! They belonged to the coal, the iron, the clay, as fish belong to the sea and worms to dead wood. The anima of mineral disintegration!

Connie's response to Tevershall is not appraised in the same way as is Gudrun's response to Beldover in the first chapter of Women in Love:

> The two girls were soon walking swiftly down the main road of Beldover, a wide street, part shops, part dwelling-houses, utterly formless and sordid, without poverty. Gudrun, new from her life in Chelsea and Sussex, shrunk cruelly from this emorphous ugliness of a small colliery town in the Midlands. Yet forward she went, through the whole sordid gamut of pettiness, the long amorphous, gritty street. She was exposed to every stare, she passed on through a stretch of torment. It was strange that she should have chosen to come back and test the full effect of this shapeless, barren ugliness upon herself. Why had she wanted to submit herself to it, did she still want to submit herself to it, the insufferable torture of these ugly, meaningless people, this defaced countryside? She felt like a beetle toiling in the dust. She was filled with repulsion. (Women in Love, ch. i.)

Every detail in this paragraph is related to the design of the whole

novel. The stress on 'amorphous' and 'shapeless' is the germ of the sociological thought which Lawrence develops in the ninth and seventeenth chapters. The image of the beetle links Gudrun with a poetic complex that reaches through the novel. These elements are inseparable from the character. The paragraph's dramatic irony comes from the tension between narrator, character and situation. Gudrun's 'torture', reveals some truth about the town, but more about herself. The reader, through the narrator, partially corroborates and partially condemns her response. Ursula's comment later - "'they're all right"' - reinforces the irony against Gudrun. This delicate equilibrium of participation and detachment exists neither in Lady Chatterley's Lover nor in any other novel after Women in Love. (See note 4.)

Precedents

The enclosed ego, cynicism and despair are among the commonest themes in novels. We must therefore be highly selective if we are to illuminate Lawrence's treatment of it. Of those novelists whose likeness (and influence on the younger Lawrence) is

chiefly due to the fact that they are contemporary, the most important are Galsworthy, Wells and Forster: and their importance lies in their portrayal of middle-class philistinism.

Galsworthy, as Lawrence himself pointed out, began with a genuine satirical purpose, 'a real effort to show up the social being in all its weirdness'. ('Galsworthy', Phoenix, i, 542.) The portrayal of the Forsyte family was for Galsworthy 'the criticism of one half of myself by the other.' (Galsworthy to Garrett, cit. Barker, Man of Principle, p. 12.) The Forsytes are, with a few exceptions, a race whose emotions are dominated by greed and lust while their minds are preoccupied by convention. They are representative of many:

> "They are", repeated Young Jolyon, "half England and the better half, too, the safe half, the three per cent half, the half that counts." (The Man of Property, part II, ch. x.)

In the early portrayal of the family there are some effective Dickensian satirical touches:

> Aunt Ann shook her head. Over her square-chinned, acquiline old face a trembling passed; the spidery fingers of her hands pressed against each other and interlaced, as though she were subtly recharging her will ....

> Swithin Forsyte, tall, square, and broad, with a chest like a pouter pigeon's in its plumage of bright waistcoats, came strutting towards them....
> Of all forms of property their respective healths naturally concerned them most. (The Man of Property, part I, ch. i.)

But the portraits often amount to a complacent sneer at social morons. Moreover, the satire chiefly consists of posing the satirized convention against another that is endorsed by the novel but is equally phoney in a sentimental way. And so, as Lawrence put it, the honest effort

> fizzles out. Then, in the love affair of Irene and Bosinney, and in the sentimentalizing of old Jolyon Forsyte, the thing is fatally blemished. Galsworthy had not quite enough of the superb courage of his satire. He faltered, and gave in to the Forsytes. (Phoenix, i, 542-3.)

H. G. Wells's portrait of a businessman, Edward Ponderevo in Tono-Bungay, also has Dickensian touches (of the Pickwickian variety).

> He whisked out of his shop upon the pavement, a short figure in grey and wearing grey carpet slippers; one had a sense of a young fattish face behind gilt glasses, wiry hair that stuck up and forward over the forehead, an irregular nose that had its acquiline moments, and that the body betrayed an equatorial laxity, an incipient 'bow-window' as the image goes. (Book I, ch. ii, section 4.)

But in character Teddy Ponderevo is quite unlike the Forsytes - more like Lawrence's haberdasher, James Houghton of The Lost Girl, in his 'incurable, irresponsible childishness ... (his) imaginative silliness'. (I, iii, 3.) He is less a businessman than an enthusiast who gets addicted to fraud on a grand scale, making millions out of a worthless patent medicine by the inspired lies of his advertisements. The reader catches his progress from shop-keeper to millionaire to bankrupt in glimpses which present his increasing sense of direction in the world together with a dwindling inner directive, while his loving wife is left with less and less to love. Wells used him, puppet-like as

> the compactest image and sample of all that passes for Progress, of all the advertisement-inflated spending, the aimless building up and pulling down, the enterprise and promise of my age. (Book IV, ch. i, section 2.)

If Edward Ponderevo recalls James Houghton, the portrayal of the minor characters in Tono-Bungay may well recall the portrayal of the people of Woodhouse in The Lost Girl. There is a similar Dickensian particularity in the earlier part of the book, the same attempt to categorise the various social classes; and an overall gloom in the picture, which contributes to making 'our lives one vast dismal spectacle of witless waste.' (IV, i, 2.) The recurrent note of futility and gloom provokes visions of the muddle of ordinary lives -

> adrift in a limitless crowd of dingy people, wearing shabby second-hand clothes, living uncomfortably in shabby second-hand houses, going to and fro on pavements that had always a thin veneer of greasy, slippery mud. (I, iii, 7)

- and visions of London as a spreading cancer or a dead sea bordered by cemeteries; and visions of universal decay: 'I am haunted by a grotesque fancy of the ultimate eating away and dry-rotting and dispersal of all our world.' (III, iv, 5)

E. M. Forster, on this theme, was just as pessimistic, but offered in his treatment of it less grandiose generalisations and more complex characters. The Wilcoxes in Howard's End, like the Forsytes, represent current money-mindedness. To them, as Margaret Schlegel explains, ' "love means marriage settlements, death death duties." ' (Ch. iv.) They have within themselves 'nothing to fall back upon.' (Ch. iv.) Even Henry Wilcox, who, in as much as he admires and wants Margaret, tacitly recognises some deficiency in himself, merits her accusation -

> "Stupid, hypocritical, cruel - oh, contemptible!" (ch. xxxviii)

- though the condemnation is softened by her cherishing pity and by the conviction that the Wilcox mentality and activity is somehow necessary to the maintenance of society. It was this tempering of the satire, perhaps, that prompted Lawrence to reproach Forster for 'glorifying those business people in Howard's End'. (Lawrence to Forster, 20 September 1922, Letters, ii, 716.)

In his other novels Forster was certainly less hesitant about exposing for condemnation a preoccupation with self or class or property. There is the intellectual Cecil Vyse, for instance, in A Room with a View - of 'the sort who are all right so long as they keep to things - books, pictures - but kill when they come to people.' (Ch. xvi.) There are the English in Florence in the same novel - a study in affectation that compares, somewhat unfavourably, with Lawrence's in Aaron's Rod. There is the schoolmaster, Mr. Pembroke, in The Longest Journey - a character that seems derived in some respects from George Eliot's Casaubon. And in the same novel, the barrister, Mr. Elliott, with his 'fine command of cynical intonation' and his eyes of a 'pecular flatness, as if the soul looked through dirty window-panes.' (Ch. ii.)

> He passed for a cultured man because he knew how to select, and he passed for an unconventional man because he did not select quite like other people. In reality he never did or said or thought one single thing that had the slightest beauty or value. (Ch. ii.)

The treatment of the character is in some ways like Lawrence's treatment of Clifford Chatterley - a similarity that is curiously confirmed by the coincidence that Mrs. Elliott, like Connie, has a love affair (fully endorsed by the author) with a young farmer.

Forster in his novels posed classes and races against each other in order to emphasize particular moral qualities. In Where Angels Fear to Tread and A Room with a View the English are

set off against the Italians. In a more complex way, they are set off against the Indians in A Passage to India. In this novel, as Lawrence noticed, 'the repudiation of our white bunk is genuine, sincere, and pretty thorough'. (Lawrence to Murry, 3 October 1924, Letters, ii, 811.)

These three novelists, Galsworthy, Wells and Forster may have had an influence on Lawrence's handling of this theme at its most general level, but did not deal closely with the core of it, as seen through such characters as Gudrun and Loerke. I should like to consider two novelists who did, though in a way that was different from Lawrence's.

In l'Education sentimentale and Madame Bovary there is scarcely a bourgeois character who escapes Flaubert's contempt and disgust. In l'Education sentimentale every value - love, friendship, faithfulness, manliness, filial and parental feelings, political aspirations - is travestied and betrayed, either by Frédéric Moreau himself, or by his women, squabbling and jealous, or by his friends and acquaintances, greedy and resentful. In Madame Bovary Emma is surrounded by human stupidity, self-importance and greed which stand in the way of growth and seem to justify her retreat and manic self-concern. This almost universal contempt earned Flaubert Lawrence's reproof, that 'he stood away from life as from a leprosy.' (Phoenix, i, 312.)

In Emma there are many resemblances to Gudrun. Emma, who seems to stand apart from her neighbours, does so only because in her the same deficiencies have taken a more dangerous turn. The novel presents her and her environment for each to reflect and reveal the other,

mirror to mirror. For she is no more - if anything, less - than the people around her. She is less responsive even than they are to the needs and demands of others and to the existence of life outside her frustrated self - far less than her simple, stupid husband, less even than the town's chemist, Homais, who has a responsible if vain and cramping affection for his children. Emma's responses are for the images she can superimpose upon the inferior material of her lovers. Love becomes a desperate narcotic act. As the failure to make sympathetic contact with the reality of anyone, husband, child or lover, is repeatedly shown, accompanied by spates of nervous illness which are the result of this frustration of her own vitality and her inability to go out from herself, so the final obviousness and desirability of suicide is forced upon the reader as well as upon Emma.

Emma is treated with both regard and ridicule, the two either in combination or alternating. Flaubert attempted to achieve through her portrayal a precarious balance in the conflict that went on within himself between idealism and cynicism. In the writing of the novel he was 'sur un cheveu suspendu entre le double abîme du lyrisme et du vulgaire'. (Flaubert to Colet, 21 March 1852, Correspondence, ii, 372.) He wanted through Emma to express a succession of his own illusions and fantasies and at the same time to shed them by dissociative irony. The portrait of Emma is not set in a varied context; the context is in fact built both for the portrait and as a vehicle for Flaubert's disillusion; and so the view of her disability and the final placing of it is different from Lawrence's.

Rosamond Vincy in George Eliot's Middlemarch is a study of self-encasement that is assessed in a way closer to Lawrence's, but without the pathos. There is no suggestion of the tragic heroine

in the conception of her, as there is in Emma, trapped between a spurious dream and a sordid reality; nor is there any tendency on the other hand to reduce her to an object of satirical contempt. Rosamond is simply unable to respond to anything but the demands of her own ego and of the conventions that have helped shape it and sustain it. Throughout her story she unflinchingly seeks admiration, conformity to her class conventions, and comfort. Having been taught to play the part of a lady, she does so and feels safe within the stereotype. The predatory nature of her responses is concealed in this way; and for her the conventions cover and even seem to sanction her sealing out sympathetic contact with others.

Grandcourt in the same author's novel, Daniel Deronda, is a male counterpart of Rosamond - his surface conformity hiding in his case a past life of dissipation and a present reptilian indifference to everything but his comfort and convenience and the exercise of his will. He is 'neutral as an alligator' (ch. xv) while Rosamond has a 'torpedo contact'. (Middlemarch, ch. lxiv.)

Not until we consider Dickens, Dostoevsky and Conrad do we come upon a treatment of this kind of egoism that, like Lawrence's, is incorporated in a general interpretation of breakdown.

Dickens provided a range and variety of studies on this theme unequalled even by Dostoevsky. Here we shall glance chiefly at Dombey and Son and Bleak House (both favourite novels of Lawrence's, according to Jessie Chambers).

In Bleak House sanctioned greed and ideological pretension threaten to smother the spontaneity of life in the novel. Tulkinghorn, conspiring for power, operates a legal code which is a perversion

of the morality it ought to uphold. The aristocratic code of behaviour, shared by Sir Leicester Dedlock and his comic parody, Turveydrop, pampers vanity and puts blinkers on the nobility at the expense of the poor. The usurer Smallweed's economic creed accommodates a plentiful profit at the expense of the customer. Pastor Chadband's religious asseverations bolster a self-righteous insulation at the expense of his congregation. The humanitarianism of Mrs. Jellyby and Mrs. Pardiggle - the one with her 'telescopic philanthropy' and the other with her 'rapacious benevolence' - provide charity at the expense of their nearest and dearest. And finally, Skimpole's aesthetic pretensions guarantee his own idleness at the expense of anybody. The novel, as Edmund Wilson has pointed out, is 'an anatomy ... of a society where nature is .... mutilated and thwarted'.(The Wound and the Bow, p. 55.) The fog (and with it Chancery) symbolises the process of smothering, just as the Marshalsea in Little Dorrit stands for the motif of imprisonment and stultification that dominates that novel.

Like Lawrence, Dickens explored the degeneration of life into a mechanical routine: as with Mrs. Clennam in Little Dorrit, whose moral incapacity, like Clifford Chatterley's, is expressed as a physical one. She is confined to a wheelchair,

> in the same unvarying round of life. Morning, noon, and night, morning, noon,and night, each recurring with its accompanying monotony, always the same reluctant return of the same sequences of machinery, like a dragging piece of clockwork. (Book I, ch. xxix.)

(Gudrun's life in Women in Love is summed up in her eyes at the end of the novel as a piece of clockwork machinery.)

Among numbers of minor studies in Dombey and Son, it is here that we find two major ones that have much in common with Loerke and Gudrun. Carker and Edith in their different ways are the leading

representatives in this book of the enclosed ego.

Dombey's business manager, Carker, totally irresponsible towards people, works outside any code of morality or principle. He acquires and abandons both people and power as the urge arises. The repeated emphasis on Carker's teeth as the only informative feature of his grins, and the image of him as a cat, stress the impermeability of his self-interest and the dangerous predatoriness behind it. There is no underlying directive, no motivating force beyond the desire to gratify his wishes, which are keenest when vengefully conceived. The efficiency he shows in gradually gaining control of the firm of Dombey and Son is partly prompted by the urge to defy the social system in which he is labelled an inferior and to prove it to be inferior to him, in so far as it can be manipulated by him and he can achieve a position of control within it unattainable by those who are bothered by respect for the false ideology surrounding it. But it is also partly prompted by the instinct to be in a position of vantage. Cat-like he keeps alert to all the possibilities.

The lack of directive beyond these two factors is finally clear when he abandons all this effort, to run off with his employer's wife, Edith: she representing at that time both the opportunity to spite Dombey (and through him the system) and bring him down, and at the same time to enjoy a sensual retirement. It is the same quality of soullessness and moral anarchy, the idea that each acquisition or desire is of equal importance and value as it occurs (bearing with it always the additional element of vengefulness) that is to be seen in Loerke's art.

Loerke understands the emptiness and despair in Gudrun and seems to promise to help cheat awareness of it, from his long

and sophisticated experience of the ways in which this may be achieved. And although Edith despises Carker, she is from her first meeting with him both impressed and victimised by the feeling that he knows her as well or better than she does herself. Whereas Gudrun accepts the similarity she sees in Loerke, as she accepts what is in herself, Edith rejects both. Her elopement with Carker is an act of vengeance against Dombey, against public opinion and against herself. In both cases, however, the liaison is a final act of despair.

Dostoevsky in his treatment of this theme surpassed Lawrence as much as Dickens did, in the matter of organised diversity. As far as this aspect of the treatment is concerned, The Devils is the best example. This novel presents an extraordinary range of rogues and dupes, predators and their victims who are sometimes predators in their turn. The unity of the presentation is assured, as that in Bleak House is, by the basic similarity of the sickness these minor characters share, and also by the way they are thrown together as members of a small provincial town. The central villain, Peter Verkhovensky, with his everlasting grin, his mocking malevolence, his glibness, his latent sensuality, and the naglost (brazen impudence) of his impostures and contrivances is much like Dickens's Carker. He rushes around engineering humiliations, riots, arson and murder. His callous, vengeful immorality is to some extent accounted for by his father's shameful neglect of him as a child. Stepan Verkhovensky's kind of fake idealism (which has an affinity with that of the littérateur, Karmazinov) leads straight to Peter's nihilism. Peter runs a cell of five nihilists, each in his own way devoted to the cause of social disorder. But the leader's intrigues take him into every level of society, from the town governor to

Fedka the murderous convict, and everywhere are discovered, in various forms and degrees, passions and duplicities that Peter can turn to account because they are like his own. The suspense in the novel is maintained by the scandalmongering mysteries and surmises of the gossipy narrator. Dostoevsky, in presenting so many characters in quickly shifting situations, relied more than in his other novels on his flair for summary observations, caricature and farce. It makes The Devils the most Dickensian of his novels. In this book Verkhovensky, Stavrogin and the various minor anarchists are linked by the insect image. In most of Dostoevsky's novels, as R. E. Matlaw has shown (see Harvard Slavic Studies, iii, 201-225) the recurrence of this image of dehumanization indicates a preoccupation with the insulation of the self from others and the resultant crippling of outgoing sympathy.

In Crime and Punishment and The Idiot the major studies in this kind are more complex in conception.

Nastasya in The Idiot shows a reckless indifference to everything but her passions - chiefly for outrage and revenge. She chooses Rogozhin finally out of despair; she knows she is throwing herself away, punishes him for it, and gives herself to death at his hands. Rogozhin says:

> "Why, that's just why she is marrying me, because she expects to be murdered! ... She would have drowned herself long ago, if she had not had me; that's the truth. She doesn't do that because, perhaps, I am more dreadful than the river." (Part II, ch. iii.)

But she also has a craving for salvation that shows in her love for Myshkin. The conflict between the two sides of her nature produces the violence and oscillation of her responses, her freak, semi-insane perversity.

Svridrigailov in Crime and Punishment is in some ways like

Loerke, as George Panichas has pointed out in his Adventure in Consciousness. He is casual, bored and indifferent, roused to excitement by the lust to desecrate innocence. (He has a partiality, like Loerke, for young girls.) But in the nightmare at the end which leads to his suicide, he is horrified at his desecration of life.

It is in the portrait of Smerdyakov in The Brothers Karamazov that the idea of a maimed morality and understanding comes over most sharply and succinctly. He is, like Loerke, a minor but crucial figure in the action of the book. As with Loerke, the hardship of his growing up is etched in: he is the son of a mad beggar-woman and the lecher Fyodor Karamazov, and has been brought up by the Christian bigot, Grigory. By means of this background the reader is put sympathetically in touch with the processes of sealing off that have taken place in him. It is a rounded study (like Lawrence's) more than just the map of a psychology. In the spurious logic of Ivan - 'everything is lawful' - Smerdyakov finds expression of the anarchy he feels; and coming as it does from Ivan, the respected intellectual, it offers both refuge and an opportunity for vengeance. A similar position is taken by Loerke in his practice of and thoughts on art.

In Conrad's works we have villains of the early stories, like Gentleman Brown in Lord Jim, whose strength and dangerousness lies in his disillusion, his ability to use and destroy the idealists as well as his equals; militarists and opportunist politicians in Nostromo, ravaging under flimsy cover of a political creed; the tyrants and revolutionaries (equal in their destructiveness) in Under Western Eyes; and the trio of predators in Victory: the

enervated Mr. Jones, Ricardo with his ferocious grin, and their servant, the alligator-hunter - 'a spectre, a cat, an ape'. (Part II, ch. vii.) These last three represent, as Heyst observes,

> "evil intelligence, instinctive savagery, arm in arm.
> The brute force is at the back." (Part IV, ch. v.)

To Lena at one point Ricardo appears 'the embodied evil of the world.' (IV, ii.) They are studies in the destructive principle.

Let us consider The Secret Agent in more detail. This is the Conrad novel that, like Dickens's Bleak House or Dostoevsky's The Devils, is filled with destructively insulated characters. The anarchists here are presented as having their motivating principles born of their inability to live. Vitally maimed, they are outcasts, and turn fanatic over a political belief in so far as the belief gives licence to their aggressions. The theories they evolve give spiritual cover and support to their deepest incapacities. They are, like Loerke, Carker and Smerdyakov, the reducers down.

There is, for instance, Yundt, the ancient terrorist: 'An extraordinary expression of underhand malevolence survived in his extinguished eyes.' (Ch. iii.) There is Comrade Ossipon, robust ex-medical student, totally self-seeking and unreliable, with the corrupt sensuality that Conrad, like Lawrence, often associated with Africans: he has 'a flattened nose and prominent mouth cast in the rough mould of the Negro type.' (Ch. iii.) The most revealing study, apart from Verloc himself (whose case is more complicated) is the Professor. When he is introduced we see 'the lamentable inferiority of the whole physique ... made ludicrous by the supremely self-confident bearing.' (Ch. iv.) He devotes his 'genius' to making the perfect bomb - he will give experimental bombs to anyone who asks; and regards himself as invulnerable and unassailable because he always carries one big enough to blow up a

whole street - his finger is always on the fuse.

> "I depend on death, which knows no restraint and cannot be attacked. (Ch. iv.) ... Exterminate, Exterminate!" (Ch. xiii.)

He derives his self-righteousness from his preacher father and his indignation from the world's unwillingness to recognise his merit.

> The way of even the most justifiable revolutions is prepared by personal impulses disguised into creeds. The Professor's indignation found in itself a final cause that absolved him from the sin of turning to destruction as the agent of his ambition. To destroy public faith in legality was the imperfect formula of his pedantic fanaticism; but the subconscious conviction that the framework of an established social order cannot be effectually shattered except by some form of collective or individual violence was precise and correct. He was a moral agent - that was settled in his mind. By exercising his agency with ruthless defiance he procured for himself the appearances of power and personal prestige. (Ch. v.)

In The Secret Agent Conrad offers these brilliantly animated character-puppets, punctiliously described, backgrounded and articulated, related to each other with superb economy, and in each the current of feeling under the surface behaviour vividly illuminated. It is achieved out of a purity of disgust.

Kurtz in Heart of Darkness is a companion study, and one that may well have influenced Lawrence, who referred with admiration to Conrad's earlier tales - 'the stories are so good.' (Lawrence to Garnett, 30 October 1912, Letters, i, 152.) Kurtz begins his trading work in the African jungle as an 'emissary of pity and science and progress' (ch. i) but ends it with the frantic cry,

> "Exterminate the brutes!" (Ch. ii.)

The physical and moral privations of his life in the wilds - a life, as the narrator insists, that demands you must 'fall back upon your own innate strength, your own capacity for faithfulness' (ch. ii) - in Kurtz provoke 'the awakening of brutal instincts' and 'a conquering darkness'. (Ch. iii.) He sets himself up as the Africans'

idol, has them indulge in 'unspeakable rites' on his behalf. His personal moral collapse at the same time passes a comment on the moral quality of the whole colonial exploitation business which is so emphatically exposed in the first half of the story. It is moreover associated, loosely and portentously, with a universal destructive force which is symbolised in the river and in the jungle of Africa.

Similar in essentials to Kurtz's collapse is that of Gustav Aschenbach in Thomas Mann's Der Tod in Venedig (Death in Venice) which Lawrence read in 1913. Aschenbach is a writer in his fifties, much lauded in the world of letters for his promulgation of a style of heroism said to be typical of his age, a sustained posture of nobility and self-sacrifice. This is the moral counterpart to his art, which is conducted like a service to Aestheticism:

> He began his day with a cold shower over chest and back; then, setting a pair of tall wax candles in silver holders at the head of his manuscript, he sacrificed to art, in two or three hours of almost religious fervour, the powers he had assembled in sleep.

His art requires not merely the suppression of instinctual life for higher purposes but the exploitation and sublimation of his passions on its behalf. It preys on the passional life, courts it, betrays it and perverts it. The story tells how his thus corrupted sensuality takes its revenge. Under the influence of an aesthetic admiration for the ideal beauty of a boy seen on the beach, a homosexual passion takes root and masters him, turning him into a neurotic who prefers to die in a plague-stricken city rather than lose sight of his beloved. Venice, with its stifling sirocco, the 'labyrinth' of its 'huddled heart', its foul-smelling lagoon, its canals with their 'evil exhalations' of the plague, shows him a picture of himself; its ancient artistic traditions are yoked with a 'predatory commercial

spirit' in the same way as his artistic vocation is yoked with his sterile vanity.

Notes

1. On the Gudrun Theme

Lawrence makes more ventures in this field in the later tales: for instance, Banford, in The Fox; the Princess, with her yearning for 'warmth, protection ... to be taken away from herself' which is opposed by her compulsion to keep herself intact; the potential suicide in The Woman who Rode away; and the heroine of None of That.

2. On the Loerke Theme

Loerke is unique in Lawrence's work. There are, however, many characters in the later tales who resemble him in the one essential of irresponsiveness. There is, for instance, Egbert in England my England, whose liberal principles, like Loerke's artistic ones, are part of his self-insurance policy: if other people ought to be free in their lives, he ought to be free of responsibility towards them; this process eventually allies itself with death - in the form of war. Or there is Cathcart in The Man who loved Islands, who systematically eliminates human contact until he eliminates himself; and Major Eastwood, in The Virgin and the Gipsy, with his dry, defeated stoicism.

A distinct variant that crops up in the later tales is the would-be artist or intellectual dabbler in the arts: Bertie Reid, for instance, the 'mollusc' of The Blind Man; or the man like him in Jimmy and the Desperate Woman; or the popular writer in Two Bluebirds;

or the handsome, spiteful Rico of St. Mawr. Lawrence's treatment of them has something in common with Dickens's portrayal of Henry Gowan in Little Dorrit - the aristocrat turned painter, for whom, as for these characters of Lawrence's, art is a means of covering an emotional impotence, asserting the self or depreciating others.

3. On Clifford Chatterley

There have always been differences of opinion about the portrayal of Clifford Chatterley. Julian Moynahan's judgment has been one of the most adverse: 'As a portrait of the modern businessman, Clifford is surely no better than a monstrous caricature ... only half human.' (The Deed of Life, p. 155.) His opinion has been opposed by H. M. Daleski and others. However, there is general agreement that Lawrence's art here is less than its best. Even H. M. Daleski has granted that 'the characterisation of Clifford may not be complex.' (The Forked Flame, p. 270.) And Lawrence himself admitted the overriding didactic consideration behind it: 'the lameness of Clifford was symbolic of the paralysis, the deeper emotional or passional paralysis, of most men of his sort and class today.' (Apropos of LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER, in Phoenix, ii, 514.)

4. On the Industrial Scene

Lawrence's portrayal of moral degeneracy among the poor is confined to the later novels. The only evidence of it elsewhere is in the collier of Jimmy and the Desperate Woman and the compassionate laments of the last poems, such as 'The People', in Nettles.

Lawrence's emphasis in Lady Chatterley's Lover on the degradation and automatism associated with industrialisation has affinities with similar passages in Dickens's Hard Times, as F. R. Leavis has pointed out. (See The Great Tradition, p. 232.)

5. On Other Literary Precedents

Malignant egoism is so universally portrayed in narrative fiction either satirically or appraisingly, that possible parallels are endless. Even for affinities with Lawrence's particular treatment of it, ingenuity could take the search back to Gulliver's Voyage to Leputa, to Bunyan's Vanity Fair, and even to Petronius and to the Teutonic outlaw god Loki, with his mocking trickery and his abnormal sexuality. I have already chosen Galsworthy, Wells and Forster as the most immediate minor affinities which are also influences. All one can do besides is suggest, within each of several narrative traditions, a few writers who offer interesting points of comparison.

Among the novelists of the eighteenth century there are none who suggest a rewarding comparison. It may seem tempting to compare Gudrun and Loerke with the pair of cold-hearted sensualists in Laclos' Les Liaisons Dangereuses, but even there the differences - especially the author's intention to shock and flout convention - overwhelm the similarities.

In the nineteenth century tradition of horror and self-indulgence that leads through Poe to Wilde and D'Annunzio, only Poe roused Lawrence's mature interest, and then only in pitying aversion for the sadism and perversity, the sensationalism and the aestheticism which made him a kind of Loerke figure. (An immature respect for the rapturous self-indulgence and the femmes fatales of D'Annunzio may be perhaps detected in The Trespasser.)

Of the nineteenth-century French novelists other than Flaubert, the one whose work has most affinities with this particular theme at its most general level is Zola, in the pessimism of his portrayal of the degradation of the poor. Lawrence in his youth admired the same sort of thing in the work of Zola's followers such

as Gorky and Arnold Bennett. But in his maturity he preferred Giovanni Verga, who satirized with such bitterness the mob hysteria of the revolutionaries in his tale, 'Liberty'.

Finally, from the nineteenth century English novelists other than Dickens and George Eliot, one might single out Emily Brontë as a possible influence, for her portrayal in Wuthering Heights of the 'marred child', Catharine Earnshaw, whose wilfulness and hesitation over whether to prefer gentility or rough passion make her resemble Lettie Beardsall. Henry James explored the theme of dissociation in The Beast in the Jungle, where the hero discovers too late his inability to give himself in any relationship, and the more malignant manifestations of the same disability in Osmond of The Portrait of a Lady - he is an American aesthete who preys on and possesses both people and works of art. There is no evidence that Lawrence read James, but he was undeniably a powerful influence in the cultural background immediately preceding Lawrence.

There were, of course, many other influences besides those of novelists. Apart from Shakespeare, whose influence was universal and operated through all the novelists, a strong influence may have been Ibsen, with such portrayals as that of the cynic Brack in Hedda Gabler or of the mob in An Enemy of the People. The cultivation in poetry of sensationalism, of the cult of beauty (especially in art) and of love conceived as a fatal and glamorous slavery - these first aroused approval and even enthusiasm in Lawrence, but came eventually to be regarded with aversion or as subjects for diagnosis. Propounded at the start of the century by Keats, with his characteristically sane recognition of their inherent escapism, these cults were explored piecemeal by Bandelaire and worked to death by Rossetti, Swinburne, Morris and the young Yeats.

Other influences on Lawrence's conception of the degeneracy of modern times came through the historians and prophets of decadence. They included Carlyle, fulminating against the 'mechanical' and against Atheism and Materialism; Nietzsche, prophesying the imminent disintegration of civilization; Ruskin warning against 'vulgarity' (by which he meant a lack of ennobling sympathetic responsiveness); and Morris blaming the competitive system for a decline in the love of art and beauty. Finally, the Italian Futurists deserve a mention here, for they formulated a programme of rebellion against rationality and convention that involved a worship of sensations and of machinery. Lawrence's reaction to them is shown not only in his letters about them in June 1914 but also in his portrait of Loerke. (See Mary Freeman, 'Lawrence and Futurism' in her book, D. H. Lawrence: a Basic Study of his Ideas.)

CHAPTER IV

The Recovery of the Individual

We have traced throughout Lawrence's novels his interest in the breakdown of a way of life, and seen that this interest is focussed most clearly and portrayed most complexly in Women in Love. The linking concept running through each phase of the breakdown is that of the loss of a natural balance in which spontaneity and integrity, within the self and towards others, can operate together and as one. The breakdown is caused by the denial of spontaneity instead of the incorporation of it. The elder Crich denies in the name of Christian idealism, Gerald under the name of efficiency, and Loerke and Gudrun out of mistrust, disbelief and despair. Through them we have seen how Women in Love grapples with the cultural and ideological as well as the personal factors that strain the stability of the characters; how the ailing characters are driven to know and to associate themselves with the degenerative features of their society, and how this process is associated with the destructive phases of the natural life cycle.

But the action that centres on Gerald is balanced by the action that centres on Birkin. The story of Birkin and Ursula presents life continuing, struggling free from adverse conditions and going on. Like Levin's in Anna Karenin , it establishes the positive, in carrying the key to the future, and to growth. In Birkin, we do not have the simple establishment of the positive. The central action of the sub-plot is the struggle towards it. The factors

involved in the breakdown are highlighted in the main plot. The factors involved in recovery are highlighted in this. Birkin concentrates on the struggle to break free, on the need to assess what is happening, come to an understanding of it, and by this to set himself a course by which he can live.

Lawrence's portrayal of what leads to breakdown would not be so telling were it not defined (so well in Women in Love) against what leads to recovery. The most convincingly triumphant of those characters in his novels who achieve a balance are those who win it through a hazardous development. In the final achievement the individual is valued no higher than his capacity for generous, fruitful relationships; though this capacity in turn is determined by the strength with which he can maintain his separate judgment and identity.

A number of readers appear to anticipate what is not in fact being offered in the sub-plot and are disappointed with the novel's achievement on that account. An instance is provided by M. W. Robson, who has maintained that Birkin is 'a sick and tortured man who does not (except at a few ideal moments which give rise to some of the worst writing in the book) achieve with Ursula and the kind of fulfilment which he has made his raison d'être.' (Pelican Guide to English Literature, vii, 299.)

The kind of fulfilment Birkin has made his raison d'être is not, however, the standard by which either his growth as a character or the constructive forces in the novel are to be judged. Birkin's dicta are not the novel. The novel itself assesses his growth as an individual and as one able to sustain and contribute to a creative relationship with another. In the course of the action 'the kind of fulfilment he has made his raison d'être' is challenged, placed and

changed - by the mutually exacting courtship of Birkin and Ursula. What has been valid in his aspiration remains after the changes. What has been dictated by fear and desperation is attacked and altered by Ursula. This particular feature of their relationship will be considered more fully in the next chapter. In this we shall concentrate on Lawrence's presentation of the pre-requisites to recovery and balance.

Birkin struggles to break free from a life 'artificially held together by the social mechanism' and from 'the old ideals ... dead as nails'. (Ch. v.) He challenges current assumptions and attempts critically to understand his own experience. He is the most articulate member of the group depicted in the novel, and so the reader's attention is most readily geared to what he says; but it is a mistake commonly made to extract from some of Birkin's pronouncements a formal message. In this novel there is, finally, no formal message. What Birkin says is only part of the means by which the novel moves the reader to an understanding of his recovery. What he says and thinks has its validity only in relation to his experience and is qualified both by his experience and his personality. Women in Love presents something more moving and more constructive. One observes the struggle and success of a man almost as maimed by his moral environment as the characters involved in the tragic main plot, a man who achieves the basis of a constructive relationship with another individual and through this the basis of a balanced and fruitful life.

From the outset the damage done him has been made clear. He is a character fraught with conflict, as his gaunt, ailing body testifies. He is sick or convalescent for most of the first two-thirds of the novel, and is under no delusions as to the root cause of

his ill-health;

> "One is ill because one doesn't live properly - can't. It's the failure to live that makes one ill, and humiliates one." (Ch. xi.)

The maladies of the other characters can all be found in him. As Hermione's lover he has participated in the outrage of her kind of 'ideal love', swinging, as she confides to Ursula, in

> "a violent oscillation ... between animalism and spiritual truth." (Ch. xxii.)

In this there is also a kinship with the elder Crich, a kinship confirmed by Birkin's occasional effacement into a 'Salvator Mundi' (ch. xi) which Ursula finds so distasteful. Birkin knows, as well as Gerald or his father, the urge to idolise or desecrate his woman; and his fear of self-obliteration within the relationship presupposes an inclination towards it. Moreover, he recognises as 'imminent in himself' (ch. xix) a taste for the kind of 'sensuality' typified in the primitive statuette at Halliday's flat. Ursula is revolted by it. She screams at him in their bitter argument just before their final coming together:

> "What you are is a foul, deathly thing, obscene, that's what you are, obscene and perverse. You, and love! You may well say, you don't want love. No, you want <u>yourself</u>, and dirt and death - that's what you want. You are so <u>perverse</u>, so death-eating." (Ch. xxiii.)

The changeable spontaneity of his responses gives him his common ground with Ursula - she calls it 'his wonderful, desirable life-rapidity'. (Ch. xi.) It is what shows up the bondage, the paralysis, of Hermione; and it is a challenge to Gerald, who sees 'this amazing, attractive goodliness' in him. (Ch. xvi.) The effort to clear the ground for this to operate freely causes the strain. But the resultant illnesses have their retarding effects. Ursula identifies his illness as one of the causes of his recoil from

her, and of his desire to maintain a 'cooler' relationship. It is under the stress of sickness that he recoils from people, and this produces those passages of intense aversion and disgust such as when he leaves Breadalby after Hermione's attempt on his life. It produces his most violent opposition and fear of Ursula, of all humanity: 'He lay sick and unmoved, in pure opposition to everything.' (Ch. xvi.)

Birkin is a character in whom the effort must be made and the strains (occasioned by the vital need to face and not sidetrack or seal out the challenges in his life) endured. The sort of man he is, his experience, his dicta and aspirations work together in the novel to throw the struggle into prominence. Finally, in marrying Ursula he comes to the point at which a balance may be achieved. The novel ends with no pipedream fulfilment but with the promise of further challenge and battle, but now with a mate with whom he can essentially join forces. The ending is in fact the portrayal of an achievement in the only realistic and honest interpretation of the word: Birkin has formed an enduring and growing relationship and seeks to extend his relationships.

We follow the course of his development to this point. We see him struggling to free himself from the past with Hermione, putting aside the kind of life offered by Halliday and his friends, and striking out for 'freedom together' (ch. xiii) with Ursula, and with Gerald. During the course of this he evolves ideas about life that are bred of the difficulty he personally experiences and are calculated to isolate a particle of truth against which he might define a need or a course of action. In consequence, the beliefs he holds to, especially those about love, vary considerably according to the situation he is coping with when he utters them. They betray their

personal origin and their immediate purpose clearly enough, and are nonetheless valid as comments on his experience. His pronouncements in the eleventh chapter about the futility of 'love' -

"I don't believe in love at all"

- flatly contradict what he has said to Gerald during the train journey in the fifth chapter:

"I want the finality of love."

The later statement registers the impact of his experience with Hermione and is prompted by the desire to burn out from Ursula what he feels may be like Hermione in her and inimical to him.

Similarly, the evolutionary fantasies at the opening of the sixteenth chapter, about love as 'the singling away into purity and clear being of things that were mixed', are sick-bed obsessions, an attempt to gather himself in the effort to define a central singleness upon which to rely; and they console his sense of being worsted by Ursula's possessive passion after the water-party. They are in their turn contradicted by his enthusiasm for 'oneness' on the eve of his wedding.

In general, too much has been made of Birkin's theories by too many critics. Every character in a novel, in one form or another, gives expression to the author's understanding. The articulate Birkin works on his experience through words and in this way communicates directly with the reader as well as from within the structure of the novel. Words are one of the means by which he brings about a sufficient clarity of understanding to be able to change and adapt:

> Whichever way one moved, if one were to move forward, one must break a way through. And to know, to give utterance, was to break a way through the walls of the prison as the infant in labour strives through the walls of the womb.
>
> (Ch. xiv.)

But the structure of the novel is so carefully and critically designed as to make unrewarding any appraisal of Birkin's notions as reliable guides to the attitudes the novel might be putting forward.

The validity of the speculations, for instance, about the 'African way' has been discussed on the assumption that here Birkin is a mouthpiece for the author's theory. In fact the speculation is balanced critically in its immediate context and later by further developments in the novel. Birkin reflects on the African statuette after an attack of the illness which has dogged him since Hermione's assault on him. Under its influence he has wanted a cooler relationship with Ursula - that they should accept the fact that they love each other and be ' "glad and sure and indifferent." ' The speculations follow the next day when he is alone. In them an offshoot of the anxiety shown in the moon-stoning in the previous scene is given expression. He enlarges his fear of the possession and self-assertion involved in love by fearing what is 'imminent in himself' that might co-operate in bringing about the kind of passion he wants to avoid since his experience with Hermione. The sense of what might be lost - 'the goodness, the holiness, the desire for creation and productive happiness' - runs alongside his desire for sensual fulfilment. He frightens himself further by thinking of the Arctic (Gerald's) way of breaking off 'from the happy creative being.'

Both before and after the speculations he questions his attitudes and the stances he takes. He has admitted his uncertainty as to the validity of his general ideas:

> Perhaps he had been wrong to go to her with an idea of what he wanted. Was it really only an idea, or was it the interpretation of a profound yearning?

Even earlier in this chapter he has commented to Ursula:

> "While ever either of us insists to the other, we are all wrong."

Compared with the understanding of the novel as a whole, Birkin's thoughts on the subject of what is happening to such characters as Gerald and Loerke are not very illuminating. Moreover, they are sufficiently trivial off-shoots of Birkin's own preoccupations as to be immediately set aside in his own case: 'he could not attend to these mysteries any more.' When his anxiety has lapsed, the vital and positive urge returns:

> There was another way, the way of freedom ... There was the other way, the remaining way. And he must run to follow it.

The firm placing of the speculations within the context is not the only means by which the factors of Birkin's character and the extent to which the experience is unique to him is emphasized. Later there is a balancing retrospective parody (in the twenty-eighth chapter) which particularly recalls these reflections because it is made by Halliday, the man at whose flat the statuette was originally seen by Birkin. Halliday is one of the bohemians who are in those early scenes exploring a world of experience similar to that of which the statuette is a product. In this parody Halliday intones one of Birkin's letters in such a way as to highlight the pomposity, the banality, the grandiloquent or hysterical repetitiveness of Birkin's style of thought at its worst. The parody, in coming from this man, nevertheless justifies the fundamental intention on Birkin's part, for its earnestness offers a telling contrast to Halliday's own corrupt moral indifference. This is corroborated by the effect the reading has on Gudrun, who takes the letter's message sufficiently to heart to appropriate it.

The very late revision of the last part of the 'Excurse' chapter, about which there has been much discussion of a similar kind (involving complaints that it is rigged to fulfil Lawrence's fantasies about love) is in fact equally tied at all points to the scene in which it occurs and is critically assessed by the novel at a later stage. The episode follows a fierce and exhausting quarrel between Ursula and Birkin, which reduces them both to an uncluttered awareness of their need for each other and of the knowledge that their love survives the clashes. Birkin feels, immediately after the row is over, 'a darkness over his mind. The terrible knot of consciousness that had persisted there like an obsession was gone.' Ursula feels, by the time she reaches the inn:

> This was no actual world, it was the dreamworld of one's childhood - a great circumscribed reminiscence. The world had become unreal. She herself was a strange, transcendent reality.

Towards the end of the episode:

> He threw a rug on to the bracken, and they sat in stillness and mindless silence. There were faint sounds from the wood, but no disturbance, no possible disturbance, the world was under a strange ban, a new mystery had supervened.

The episode is held suspended in this way as an experience produced as well as achieved by the elation that the two lovers feel as a result of the exhaustion and relief suffered after their row. The elation follows on the new confidence. They feel they have discovered the permanence of the ultimately unassailable in their love. For Birkin, the way the experience seems to answer his past aspiration helps to push him to the assurance, ' "We shall never go apart again".'

The novel offers its own comment upon all this. The romantic simplification engendered between Birkin and Ursula in these scenes, and Ursula's grateful and worshipping vision of Birkin -

'He stood there in his strange, whole body, that had its marvellous fountains, like the bodies of the sons of God who were in the beginning' - these are both placed and assessed for what they are by such a later scene as this, where Birkin's sensuality is humiliating to Ursula:

> When they were alone in the darkness, she felt the strange licentiousness of him hovering upon her. She was troubled and repelled. Why should he turn like this.
>
> "What is it?" she asked in dread.
>
> But his face only glistened on her, unknown, horrible. And yet she was fascinated. Her impulse was to repel him violently, break from this spell of mocking brutishness. But she was too fascinated, she wanted to submit, she wanted to know. What would he do to her?
>
> He was so attractive, and so repulsive at once. The sardonic suggestivity that flickered over his face and looked from his narrowed eyes, made her want to hide, to hide herself away from him and watch him from somewhere unseen.
>
> "Why are you like this?" she demanded again, rousing against him with sudden force and animosity.
>
> The flickering fires in his eyes concentrated as he looked into her eyes. Then the lids drooped with a faint motion of satiric contempt. Then they rose again to the same remorseless suggestivity. And she gave way, he might do as he would. His licentiousness was repulsively attractive. (Ch. xxix.)

It is the shamed and insolent sensuality of a man defiant of his own fear. The fear was present even in the 'Excurse' scene:

> Yet something was tight and unfree in him. He did not like this crouching, this radiance - not altogether. (Ch. xxiii.)

The earlier simplification was valid only in so far as it related to the immediate context in which it occurred. Here in the later scene we have a return of the imbalance of the specific kind that besets Birkin. At all times the novel sees that nothing is finally won and that the struggle is life itself.

In the case of each of these late interpolations the worst one can say about them is that they stretch the reader's patience with Birkin and are, for the most part, badly written. They never, in fact, break through the critical complex of the book. The theories

are all the product of one ailing character whose fear of life has almost equalled his love of it. The fear of passion, and its self-assertion and limitation; the fear of obsession expressed in the moon-stoning, the stoning of the Cybele; the fear of the very corrective he employs in himself - that is, the mind - these in turn give rise to the theories he evolves.

Let us look now briefly at the stages in Birkin's development, how he turns his disabilities to account and what he himself sees as valid in his experience.

In his quest for balance he is a seeker after knowledge. The scene of his first meeting with Ursula in the classroom establishes this, and the argument that follows between him and Hermione differentiates the source and objectives of his search from Hermione's:

> "Isn't the mind -" she said, with the convulsed movement of her body, "isn't it our death? Doesn't it destroy all our spontaneity, all our instincts? Are not the young people growing up today, really dead before they have a chance to live?"
>
> "Not because they have too much mind, but too little," he said brutally.
>
> "Are you sure?" she cried. "It seems to me the reverse. They are over-conscious, burdened to death with consciousness."
>
> "Imprisoned within a limited, false set of concepts," he cried.

For Birkin, the more he finds out about life and its processes the more he can critically apply his knowledge to his own development. Finally the knowledge is to enable him to attain a sense of pattern and of oneness with life, and on the basis of this to achieve a balance within everyday experience. Hermione, enclosed in herself, is able to attain only the shadow of knowledge, the fact of it - a process that separates each factor and disintegrates.

At the same time Birkin craves sensual fulfilment -

> "the great dark knowledge you can't have in your head - the dark involuntary being. It is death to oneself - but it is

the coming into being of another." (Ch. iii.)

Later, when recalling his impressions of Halliday's statuette, he sees a danger in overstressing this. It is not an abandonment of thought and knowledge that he wants, but a renewal and enlargement of them. He realise, with Hermione at Breadalby, when Birkin is shown copying a Chinese picture of geese, that to him knowing is 'man in his wholeness wholly attending'. (Lawrence's phrase in his poem; 'Thought'.) It is his knowledge that saves him, for it involves a knowledge of what is fatal and crucial for life. Ideas must be for him the agents of change, not the dictators of conformity:

> He turned in confusion. There was always confusion in speech. Yet it must be spoken. Whichever way one moved, if one were to move forwards, one must break a way through. And to know, to give utterance, was to break a way through the walls of the prison as the infant in labour strives through the walls of the womb. There is no new movement now, without the breaking through of the old body, deliberately, in knowledge, in the struggle to get out. (Ch. xiv.)

The violence with which Birkin attacks the old is a measure of his capacity for new life. This Ursula detects from the beginning and is stimulated by:

> She began to cry, bitterly, bitterly weeping: but whether for misery or joy she never knew. (Ch. iii.)

Birkin cannot satisfy himself with Thomas Crich's humanistic delusions, of finding his godhead in people, and his religion in love of mankind. That has led, in Birkin's experience, into the cul-de-sac of his relationship with Hermione, and to the onslaught of her hatred. Immediately after her attempt to murder him he leaves her house, physically ill, and sick with loathing; 'barely conscious', he moves across the park, 'in a sort of darkness':

> Yet he wanted something. He was happy in the wet hill-side, that was overgrown and obscure with bushes

and flowers. He wanted to touch them all, to saturate himself with the touch of them all. He took off his clothes, and sat down naked among the primroses, moving his feet softly among the primroses, his legs, his knees, his arms right up to the arm-pits, lying down and letting them touch his belly, his breasts. It was such a fine, cool, subtle touch all over him, he seemed to saturate himself with their contact.

But they were too soft. He went through the long grass to a clump of young fir-trees, that were no higher than a man. The soft sharp boughs beat upon him, as he moved in keen pangs against them, threw little cold showers of drops on his belly, and beat his loins with their clusters of soft-sharp needles. There was a thistle which pricked him vividly, but not too much, because all his movements were too discriminate and soft. To lie down and roll in the sticky, cool young hyacinths, to lie on one's belly and cover one's back with handfuls of fine wet grass, soft as a breath, soft and more delicate and more beautiful than the touch of any woman; and then to sting one's thigh against the living dark bristles of the fir-boughs; and then to feel the light whip of the hazel on one's shoulders, stinging, and then to clasp the silvery birch-trunk against one's breast, its smoothness, its hardness, its vital knots and ridges - this was good, this was all very good, very satisfying. Nothing else would do, nothing else would satisfy, except this coolness and subtlety of vegetation travelling into one's blood. How fortunate he was, that there was this lovely, subtle, responsive vegetation waiting for him, as he waited for it; how fulfilled he was, how happy. (Ch. viii.)

Lawrence conveys the scene, and Birkin's sensations, with extraordinary directness, vivid and unselfconscious. He allows the validity of the experience - the way it answers Birkin's craving for 'sensual reality' - to establish itself as separate from the escapism or eccentricity which attach themselves to Birkin as a character, in his feverish state. A delicate irony ensures this distinction, an irony which becomes more insistent towards the end of the episode, in Birkin's exaggeration and assertion:

> Really, what a mistake he had made, thinking he wanted people, thinking he wanted a woman. He did not want a woman - not in the least ... This was his place, his marriage place. The world was extraneous.

Later, when Birkin has almost recovered from the illness following Hermione's attack, the experience that has served the immediate restorative purpose of putting him in touch with life

uncomplicated by people, has become rarefied, worked on, leant upon, during the period of his withdrawal from activity. It becomes the sick and sentimental notion he puts forward to Ursula, when he next meets her:

> "You yourself, don't you find it a beautiful clean thought, a world empty of people, just uninterrupted grass, and a hare sitting up?" (Ch. xi.)

- a consoling vision that reveals Birkin's lapse into a child-like self-protectiveness and simple-mindedness, whereby he can temporarily enjoy the illusion that the world without life in it could possibly be without problems. Ursula is fascinated, for the frustrations of her past experiences have led her to a sympathy with the vision. However, it is not taken seriously. She sees that behind it all is a 'final tolerance', and she concentrates her attention on his need to say these things, and on breaking through the 'Salvator Mundi' attitude that goes with it.

The validity of these scenes as restorative experiences and as progressive stages in Birkin's development is tested at the end by the impact of the main action. Birkin's despair at Gerald's death -

> Again he touched the sharp, almost glittering fair hair of the frozen body. It was icy-cold, hair icy-cold, almost venemous. Birkin's heart began to freeze. He had loved Gerald. (Ch. xxxi.)

- brings out this counterbalance:

> It was very consoling to Birkin to think this. If humanity ran into a cul-de-sac, and expended itself, the timeless creative mystery would bring forth some other being, finer, more wonderful, some new, more lovely race, to carry on the embodiment of creation. The game was never up. The mystery of creation was fathomless, infallible, inexhaustible, for ever. Races came and went, species passed away, but ever new species arose, more lovely, or equally lovely, always surpassing wonder. The fountain-head was incorruptible and unsearchable. It had no limits. It could bring forth miracles, create utterly new races and new species in its own hour, new forms of consciousness, new forms of body, new units of being. To be man was nothing compared to the possibilities of the creative mystery. To

> To have one's pulse beating direct from the mystery, this was perfection, unutterable satisfaction. Human or inhuman mattered nothing. The perfect pulse throbbed with indescribable being, miraculous unborn species.

One's understanding of the tragedy and Birkin's own narrow escape ensures sympathy for this response. One's understanding also includes, at this point, Birkin's permanent union with Ursula and his yearning for some connection beyond it.

The emphasis throughout the sub-plot is on adaptation. Each stance Birkin adopts is temporary, dictated by the exigencies of the situation and controlled, over all, by his desire for balance and a fuller understanding.

In Birkin Lawrence presented more thoroughly, sensitively and critically than anywhere else his understanding of the pre-requisites of fulfilment. (See note 1.)

Moreover, this is only half the picture. Balance and regeneration are achieved not alone but in contact with another. Ursula is as essential as Birkin to one's understanding of growth in Women in Love.

Unlike Birkin, Ursula has a full individual history - more detailed indeed than that of any other character in Lawrence's novels - extending back halfway into Rainbow. Before considering how she complements Birkin in Women in Love, it is worth looking at her total development in some detail. (There are differences of stress between the two novels' portrayal of her which will be discussed later.)

In Women in Love Ursula represents the nearest to a norm of achieved balance that the novel offers. This does not mean that

she is not presented as a developing character in that novel, for the sub-plot is entirely concerned with the growth together of Birkin and Ursula. But here the portrayal of her struggle towards self-understanding is minimised, since it has already been given at great length in the earlier novel.

Like Birkin she is informed by her experience in a positive way; not driven defensively away from contact but finally always more surely towards it. Her experience, like Birkin's, provides her with increasing self-awareness.

In early adolescence her struggle towards self-definition and fulfilment is depicted with tender irony:

> It was a magnificent self-assertion on the part of both of them, he asserted himselfbefore her, he felt himself infinitely male and infinitely irresistible, she asserted herself before him, she knew herself infinitely desirable, and hence infinitely strong. And after all, what could either of them get from such a passion but a sense of his or of her own maximum self, in contradistinction to all the rest of life? Wherein was something finite and sad, for the human soul at its maximum wants a sense of the infinite. (Gh. xi.)

As she develops, the novel becomes seriously preoccupied with the successive stages and the means by which she matures. With her increasing sense of her own and life's potential comes an increasing rebellion against restraint. Whether she is exploring religion, education or love, her criterion is constant: she dismisses those ideas and assumptions that she is able to understand might cramp or distort her growth:

> In philosophy she was brought to the conclusion that the human desire is the criterion of all truth and all good. Truth does not lie beyond humanity, but is one of the products of the human mind and feeling. There is really nothing to fear. The motive of fear in religion is base, and must be left to the ancient worshippers of power, worship of Moloch. We do not worship power, in our enlightened souls. Power is degenerated to money and Napoleonic stupidity.
>
> Ursula could not help dreaming of Moloch. Her God was not mild and gentle, neither Lamb nor Dove. He was

> the lion and the eagle. Not because the lion and the eagle had power, but because they were proud and strong; they were themselves, they were not passive subjects of some shepherd, or pets of some loving woman, or sacrifices of some priest. She was weary to death of mild, passive lambs and monotonous doves. (Ch. xii.)

The interest in the second half of The Rainbow is focussed entirely on Ursula. The portrayal of her relationship with Skrebensky, for instance, is given over to her criteria. He is a character dismissed, not explored - finally whittled down until he is merely the instrument of her disappointment, the disappointment that pushes her onward.

> He served her. She took him, she clasped him, clenched him close, but her eyes were open looking at the stars, it was as if the stars were lying with her and entering the unfathomable darkness of her womb, fathoming her at last. It was not him. (Ch. xv.)

> The salt, bitter passion of the sea, its indifference to the earth, its swinging, definite motion, its strength, its attack, and its salt burning, seemed to provoke her to a pitch of madness, tantalizing her with vast suggestions of fulfilment. And then, for personification, would come Skrebensky, Skrebensky, whom she knew, whom she was fond of, who was attractive, but whose soul could not contain her in its waves of strength, nor his breast compel her in burning, salty passion. (Ch. xv.)

The presentation of her other experiences, in school, college and elsewhere, is limited in the same way.

The limitation has provoked complaints like those of S. L. Goldberg, that Lawrence tended to 'give her [Ursula's] feelings far more authority than they warrant' and tended to 'present an asserted disillusion in the character for an evident falsity in society'. (D. H. Lawrence, ed. Clarke, pp. 129,131.) But Ursula's responses are given authority because it is her spiritual pilgrimage that is being depicted here, and nothing else. No one grows by total passivity. In any society there will be features unacceptable to the growing individual. The strength, determination and widespread

nature of Ursula's rejections take the measure of her vitality. In this section of The Rainbow she is defining her needs: the indictment of society is no more or less than what is implicit in the dismissal of certain ideas and beliefs by any one individual passionate for a full life and single-mindedly in pursuit of it.

Ursula goes through experiences of the kind that give her a common background with Birkin. Some irony is occasioned throughout her development by the enthusiasms and confusions of her youthfulness and by the changes and contradictions in the experiences themselves. The novel does not handle these experiences with the complexity to be found in Women in Love in the presentation of Birkin's. Nevertheless, from the wreck of every experiment she gains a little more self-understanding, a little more definition of an objective. The later episodes leave no doubts that it is Ursula, and what she is about, that we are to concentrate on, and not her apparent indictments. Here she slowly begins to understand what more there is for her to be than the challenger and asserter:

> Suddenly in her mind the world gleamed strangely, with an intense light, like the nucleus of the creature under the microscope. Suddenly she had passed away into an intensely-gleaming light of knowledge. She could not understand what it all was. She only knew that it was not limited mechanical energy, nor mere purpose of self-preservation and self-assertion. It was a consummation, a being infinite. Self was a oneness with the infinite. To be oneself was a supreme, gleaming triumph of infinity. (Ch. xv.)

In the illness that follows her encounter with the horses (in which the unpredictable and mentally unmanageable in life and in her own life energy becomes real to her) she begins to see in some detail what has been happening to her:

> Repeatedly, in an ache of utter weariness she repeated: "I have no father nor mother nor lover, I have no allocated place in the world of things, I do not belong to Beldover nor to Nottingham nor to England nor to this world, they none of them exist, I am tramelled and entangled in them,

> but they are all unreal. I must break out of it, like a nut from its shell which is an unreality."
>
> And again, to her feverish brain, came the vivid reality of acorns in February lying on the floor of a wood with their shells burst and discarded and the kernel issued naked to put itself forth. She was the naked, clear kernel thrusting forth the clear, powerful shoot, and the world was a bygone winter, discarded, her mother and father and Anton, and college and all her friends, all cast off like a year that has gone by. (Ch. xvi.)

Here is the final gathering of herself, the coming to the core of her strength. But in the very imagery is the suggestion that what she has been attempting to break free from has been a necessity to her. The shell has to exist in order that the kernel can grow undamaged; and to be cracked in order that the kernel can strike root. The fight has been so that the protective might not become a death-trap.

But Ursula is ready to recognise more than this. About Skrebensky she feels now:

> He was as he was. It was good that he was as he was. Who was she to have a man according to her own desire? It was not for her to create, but to recognise a man created by God. The man should come from the Infinite and she should hail him. She was glad she could not create her man. She was glad she had nothing to do with his creation. She was glad that this lay within the scope of that vaster power in which she rested at last. The man would come out of Eternity to which she herself belonged. (Ch. xvi.)

Her greater self-understanding has brought about the change from intolerance and self-assertiveness to patience and wonder. She shows what has always been apparent in the vigour with which she has struggled, that 'mysterious naive assurance' that Lawrence later claimed was the core of any 'true human individual'. ('Galsworthy', Phoenix, i, 540-41.) This faith confidently superimposes itself on the world around her.

This is where The Rainbow leaves her and this is the starting-point for her development in Women in Love. It is a simplified portrayal of the triumph of the individual compared with

the presentation of Birkin in the later novel. (See note 2.)

In Women in Love Ursula is no longer important on her own. She is, of course, recognisably the same person. She is still receptive and spontaneous, and still defiant. Her passion for life has been partially thwarted before she meets Birkin; and she is seen at first as 'having always that strange brightness of an essential flame that is caught, meshed, contravened.' (Ch. i.) But what was understood by her at the end of The Rainbow is still with her. She has a look of 'sensitive expectancy'. In this story, what is going to happen between her and Birkin is of the first importance. Birkin has formulated a creed, of salvation through marriage. Ursula - whose 'active living was suspended, but underneath, in the darkness, something was coming to pass' - offers his chance of fulfilment. In Women in Love we see her almost entirely in relation to Birkin. Even on the occasions when she is tête à tête with her sister - towards whom she is vaguely, wearily protective (as in the mime of Ruth and Naomi) - the conversation almost always turns on marriage, love and her relations with Birkin. And this is even more true of her conversations with Hermione. In Ursula, in this novel, one is moved and interested less by the clearly defined individual of The Rainbow than by the intelligent, sensitive normality of response that she has achieved. It is this that enlists the reader's sympathies more readily for her than for any other character in the novel. It is this achievement that makes her a match for Birkin. Like him she has fought and is still fighting for a fulfilled life. In her arguments with him, her greater assurance, her informed and penetrating criticisms of him, and her readiness to begin a new life are her strength.

It is the combination of Birkin and Ursula that contains

the promise of recovery in Women in Love. We shall discuss in the next chapter the development of their personal relationship into marriage. Through their love, as we shall see, they reach an equilibrium and a sense of the future that is otherwise denied them.

(See note 3.)

The Brangwens

The achievement of Birkin and Ursula is put into perspective by the presence of the two earlier Brangwen generations in The Rainbow. The Rainbow, in this and every other respect, is essential to a full understanding of Women in Love (Lawrence actually conceived the Brangwen episodes after the Women in Love plot, in order to give background to Ursula's story.)

In the chapters of The Rainbow that give the history of Lydia Lensky (Ursula's grandmother) Lydia appears as a figure in a Persephone fable. They give a vivid portrayal of an awakening from the numb despair that has followed her first marriage and that husband's death, and of the renewal of life achieved through her second. In the first marriage Lydia's nature is thwarted and eclipsed; for her first husband, fraught with problems and ideals similar to those of Thomas Crich, enslaves her to them in a similar way - though in her case she is a willing and co-operative victim. She

> walked always in a shadow, silenced, with a strange, deep terror having hold of her, her desire was to seek satisfaction in dread, to enter a nunnery, to satisfy the instincts of dread in her, through service of a dark religion. But she could not. ... When her husband died, she was relieved.
> (Ch. ii.)

The achievement of her second marriage to Tom Brangwen is built on Lydia's previous history, just as Birkin's and Ursula's is on theirs.

Her past is present in the new marriage, and although it creates a 'twilight' indistinctness about her, it provides that maturity, patience and self-understanding upon which her husband Tom relies. As a grandmother, her reminiscences of her early life act as an incitement to Ursula to participate in the world of knowledge and ideas.

The post-mortem sketch of Lydia's first husband and the effects of that marriage that remain through the second are not the only ways by which Lawrence draws out clearly the negative side of this generation. It is shown again in the portrait of Tom Brangwen's brother, Alfred, the factory draughtsman who becomes 'a silent inscrutable follower of forbidden pleasure' (ch. i) and who is Will Brangwen's father. Tom Brangwen's development too has its hazards, with the threat of dissoluteness after his mother's death.

His balance is achieved through his marriage with Lydia. This sustains his characteristic equanimity, that 'plentiful stream of life and humour, a sense of sufficiency and exuberance'. (Ch. i.) But he remains continuously alert and exposed to life:

> He was man of forty-five. Forty-five! In five more years fifty. Then sixty - then seventy - then it was finished. My God - and one still was so unestablished!
>
> How did one grow old - how could one become confident? He wished he felt older. Why, what difference was there, as far as he felt matured or completed, between him now and him at his own wedding. He might be getting married over again - he and his wife. He felt himself tiny, a little, upright figure on a plain circled round with the immense, roaring sky: he and his wife, two little, upright figures walking across this plain, whilst the heavens shimmered and roared about them. When did it come to an end? In which direction was it finished? There was no end, no finish, only this roaring vast space. Did one never get old, never die? That was the clue. He exulted strangely, with torture. He would go on with his wife, he and she like two children camping in the plains. What was sure but the endless sky? But that was so sure, so boundless.

Throughout this novel the covenant of the rainbow is extended to each of the studied individuals in turn. It is always

the achievement of the individual that counts in the teeth of all else. The covenant is seen not to come about through ideologies, religion, duty or simple physical fulfilment but through the struggle of each individual towards the understanding and fulfilment of his real needs; and it is seen that there is no achievement alone.

The changing social situation yet the sameness of the basic conditions for a fulfilled life are emphasised through the second generation of Brangwens. The social changes produce changes in the obstacles to fulfilment. The agricultural community has lost its self-sufficiency. Will Brangwen works in the town like his father, and Cossethay is his suburban home. The family unit is no longer the peasant patriarchy, involving several generations with interlocking material interests, but the pair with their children in their cottage, bound together with intense personal affections and rivalries. We have already seen how the novels depicts in Will that degree of self-protective insulation from people and reliance on absolutes which Anna attacks.

Anna Brangwen's growth too is inhibited. Her childhood at Marsh Farm and her relationship with her step-father, Tom Brangwen, builds up in her that centrality, with its bright, robust, adventurous spirit which attracts Will Brangwen's love. And this she achieves in spite of her history before the farm, the effects of which are vividly conveyed in the picture of her anxious neurosis concerning her mother when Tom first knows them. However, her earlier childhood has left its scar. Whenever the 'anguished childish desolation' which she feels then recurs in her maturity (the result of any threat to her stability or independence) she retreats into a wilful and obstinate self-containment and self-assertion. 'She clung fiercely to her known self'. (Ch. vi.) Her anxious defensive

rationalism, activated by the crises with her husband, becomes the source of her limitation and self-defeat. And so her marriage, in spite of its sensual and maternal gratifications, confines her. She feels 'not quite fulfilled'. (Ch. vi.) She reconciles herself to being a producer of life.

> If she were not the wayfarer to the unknown, if she were arrived now, settled in her builded house, a rich woman, still her doors opened under the arch of the rainbow, her threshold reflected the passing of the sun and moon, the great travellers, her house was full of the echo of journeying.
>
> She was a door and a threshold, she herself. Through her another soul was coming, to stand upon her as upon the threshold, looking out, shading its eyes for the direction to take. (Ch. vi.)

It is Ursula who again takes up the challenge.

The Earlier Novels

In the other novels one finds characters who have made an attempt to free themselves from the destructive aspects of their lives and to establish an understanding of their own deepest needs. For the most part they either work towards or reiterate the convictions about the individual and the sources of his growth that we have found in the complex of Women in Love and The Rainbow.

Two characters in the early novels resemble Birkin; and, as with Birkin, the personality of the author is to some extent reflected in them.

Cyril Beardsall in The White Peacock, in his physical frailty and generally in the way he combines sensitivity - a liability in his case to be damaged and depressed - with a responsiveness to hope and promise, is the earlier of these. Self-conscious to his fingertips, he is constantly terrifying himself

with his own sensitivity to the pangs of life. Platitudes and stabs of melodrama are offered in support. While watching some pigs being fed he observes:

> They gave uneasy, gasping grunts in their haste. The unhappy eleventh rushed from point to point trying to push in his snout, but for his pains he got rough squeezing, and sharp grabs on his ears. Then he lifted up his face and screamed screams of grief and wrath into the evening sky ... I expected to see the ten fall upon him and devour him, but they did not; they rushed upon the empty trough, and rubbed the wood still drier, shrieking with misery.
>
> "How like life," I laughed.
>
> "Fine litter," said George; "there were fourteen, only that damned she-devil, Circe, went and ate three of 'em before we got at her."
>
> The great ugly sow came leering up as he spoke.
>
> "Why don't you fatten her up, and devour her, the old gargoyle? She's an offence to the universe."
>
> "Nay - she's a fine sow."
>
> I snorted, and he laughed, and the old sow grunted with contempt, and her little eyes twisted towards us with a demoniac leer as she rolled past. (Part II, ch. vi.)

But elsewhere in the novel there is evidence of fresh resources: in Cyril's response to Spring, coming as a reaction to the gamekeeper's funeral; and his behaviour after his visit to the ruined, decaying Hall and churchyard - he refreshes himself, like Birkin at Breadalby, by touching the tufts of leaves on the trees:

> I turned with swift, sudden friendliness to the net of elm-boughs spread over my head, dotted with soft clusters winsomely. I jumped up and pulled the cool soft tufts against my face for company; and as I passed, still I reached upward for the touch of this budded gentleness on the trees. The wood breathed fragrantly, with a subtle sympathy. The firs softened their touch to me, and the larches woke from the barren winter-sleep, and put out velvet fingers to caress me as I passed. (Part II, ch. ii.)

In Lawrence's first two novels it is the incidental descriptive detail, when it is not over-written - of clouds, trees, flowers and birds in The White Peacock, and of warm sea and sunlight

in The Trespasser - that expresses, in spite of the accompanying literary affectation, the presence of a constructive energy. It provides a sense of power and resources even when as a whole these novels are concerned to depict and in some ways endorse failure.

Sons and Lovers was Lawrence's first attempt to build a central character whose development leads towards a creative outcome. Paul Morel's fight for balance is authentic in a way that resembles Birkin's.

Each phase of his development reveals further obstacles and personal deficiencies. One sees how the mother's possessive love forms the biggest obstacle to his growth and how the qualities she has fostered - his ambition, reserve and idealism - are at war with his keen hunger for life. One sees how the conflicts promote his instability, and how they threaten to destroy him.

> He had the poignant carelessness about himself, his own suffering, his own life, which is a form of slow suicide. (Ch. x.)

Nevertheless, if we look back over his career we can see, if not a pattern of self-liberation, at least the presence of constructive energy and intelligent purpose that compares in some measure with Birkin's before he marries Ursula.

While he is caught between his mother and Miriam, it is the struggle to survive the confusion and resolve it that is uppermost. His resolution is neither despairing nor making do. He holds out for a real marriage, a permanent union of body and soul - 'marriage was for life'. (Ch. xi.) In his arguments with Miriam (however unfairly prejudiced) he always drives towards an understanding. There is no real temptation to ignore the situation and become the victim of his ignorance, as in the case of his brother William.

This is true throughout his development, in spite of the holiday he takes from his problems with Clara - which is dreamworld stuff for the most part. Much of his affair with her consists of theatrical tableaux:

> He sunk his mouth on her throat, where he felt her heavy pulse beat under his lips. Everything was perfectly still. There was nothing in the afternoon but themselves.
>
> When she arose, he, looking on the ground all the time, saw suddenly sprinkled on the black wet beech-roots many scarlet carnation petals, like splashed drops of blood; and red, small splashes fell from her bosom, streaming down her dress to her feet. (Ch. xii.)

But there is movement behind it. Paul announces here what has been apparent earlier, in his relations with the Leivers family and especially in his excursions (as well as arguments) with Miriam - his 'belief in life':

> If so great a magnificent power could overwhelm them, identify them altogether with itself, so that they knew they were only grains in the tremendous heave that lifted every grass blade its little height, and every tree, and living thing, then why fret about themselves. (Ch. xiii.)

Finally, one has to offset his despair at his mother's death by the implications of how he hastens it. The mercy-killing of Mrs. Morel and the outburst of joyful relief that immediately follows it emphasise, as several critics have suggested, the upward motion of the whole of Paul's development. The chapter in which she dies is after all called 'The Release'.

Unfortunately, although all the evidence for the potential balance is there in the novel, it is loosely tied and poorly focussed. The various features of Paul's behaviour - Paul with his mother, Paul at the factory, Paul with Miriam, Paul with Clara and with Baxter Davies - are not well integrated, balanced and placed; for all the vivid presentation of externals, Lawrence was taken, sentimentally or nostalgically, with each phase in turn. To the extent that each in turn is indulged and glamourised, each in turn

appears unlikely quite as presented, or else a feat of justification.

(See note 4.)

The Novels of the Middle Period

In the novels immediately after Women in Love, up to The Plumed Serpent, Lawrence was making ever narrowing conclusions on the experience of Birkin and Ursula.

The portraits of Alvina Houghton in The Lost Girl and Aaron Sisson in Aaron's Rod both show a continuing preoccupation with the factors that determine the growth of Ursula and Birkin; but in both we see a flagging of integrative and critical energy.

Alvina and Ursula have similar backgrounds - daughters of dream-remote fathers in a provincial town - and while Alvina is not as high-powered as Ursula, she is presented as an exceptional individual - 'We protest that Alvina is not ordinary' (ch. vi) - who struggles towards a full and fruitful life. In her as in Ursula a struggle grows against the bondage of her upbringing.

> Miss Frost would feel that never, never had she known anything so utterly alien and incomprehensible and unsympathetic as her own beloved Vina. For twenty years the strong, protective governess reared and tended her lamb, her dove, only to see the lamb open a wolf's mouth, to hear the dove utter the wild cackle of a daw or a magpie, a strange sound of derision. (Ch. ii.)

The struggle is sustained throughout her development, although the author relies a lot on statement to remind the reader of the basic issues:

> She went right back on high-mindedness ....
> If we turn over the head of the penny and look at the tail, we don't thereby deny or betray the head ... Her own inscrutable nature was her fate: sore against her will
> (Ch. iii.)

Unlike Ursula, whose self-realisation steadily unfolds, Alvina spends her twenties in uneasy subservience to a narrow, inhibiting consciousness. From this she is released by her marriage to the Italian, Cicio, who appeals strongly to the buried desire in her for a wider, freer experience and one initiated through the release of the senses. She eventually comes alive in a way that enables her to respond vividly to the beauty of Spring in the Appennines:

> It was a great joy to wander looking for flowers. She came upon a bankside all wide with lavender crocuses. The sun was on them for the moment, and they were opened flat, great five-pointed lilac stars, with burning centres, burning with a strange lavender flame, as she had seen some metal burn lilac-flamed in the laboratory of the hospital at Islington. All down the oak-dry bankside they burned their great exposed stars. And she felt like going down on her knees and bending her forehead to the earth in an oriental submission, they were so royal, so lovely, so supreme. She came again to them in the morning, when the sky was grey, and they were closed, sharp clubs, wonderfully fragile on their stems of sap, among leaves and old grass and wild periwinkle. They had wonderful dark stripes running up their cheeks, the crocuses, like the clear proud stripes on a badger's face, or on some proud cat. She took a handful of the sappy, shut, striped flames. In her room they opened into a grand bowl of lilac fire. (Ch. xvi.)

Much of Alvina's early life is sketched with clarity, although sometimes there is a cheerful journalistic casualness in the handling:

> Surely enough books have been written about heroines in similar circumstances. There is no need to go into the details of Alvina's six months in Islington. (Ch. iii.)

The major events in her future development are, however, only lightly prepared for. These events are both predictable and surprising: predictable because the author makes no secret of his general intention to turn his heroine topsy-turvy, and surprising in the way the events issue suddenly from depths the reader is not continuously in touch with even though he is aware (in so far as Alvina represents a living person) that they must be there. The sexual experience

which is so crucial to her development is no exception. (See chapter v, note 2.) It is as if Lawrence were denying to Alvina the effort of understanding he extended so unfailingly to Ursula.

Aaron's development is portrayed, like Birkin's, from the time of the collapse of his 'ideal' love. In Aaron's case, this is for his wife, Lottie. Without Birkin's intellectual powers - though not uneducated - Aaron relies on a dogged, surefooted common sense to see him through his difficulties.

His hurt withdrawal from any challenging relationship after the failure of his marriage he recognises as a 'malady'. (Ch. ii.) But he cannot cure it on his own. During an illness in London he nearly dies in despair - ' "like an animal dying of the sulks",' as the doctor says. (Ch. ix.)

He is nursed out of this by Lilly. Aaron and Lilly are 'like brothers': 'Each might have been born into the other's circumstance'. (Ch. x.) Stimulated by his conversations with Lilly, he makes some progress towards a spiritual recovery also.

He fails, however, to get beyond a vague understanding of 'the responsibility of a new self in himself' (ch. xiii) and a sense of promise; and these occur like mere echoes of Ursula's in The Rainbow:

> Having in some curious manner tumbled from the tree of modern knowledge, and cracked and rolled out from the shell of pre-conceived idea of himself like some dark, night-lustrous chestnut from the green ostensibility of the burr, he lay as it were exposed but invisible on the floor, knowing, but making no conceptions: knowing, but having no idea. (Ch. xiii.)

Later he falls back, partly as a result of his affair with the Marchesa (when he feels worsted by female possessiveness) towards an extreme defensiveness:

> Never expose yourself again. Never again absolute trust. (Ch. xvi.)
> ... I want the world to hate me, because I can't bear the thought that it might love me. (Ch. xviii.)

At the end he is still struggling but open.

His development is not, perhaps, intrinsically unconvincing - there is little enough of it to demand sympathetic assent - but it is portrayed loosely and perfunctorily. There is some vivid presentation of experience - especially in the domestic scenes near the beginning of the novel - and some challenging interpretations of it. But interpretation of events is never left to the reader, who is not given sufficiently complex data for this to be possible, and who is sometimes treated by the author with an impatience and even contempt that is characteristic of the novels of these years when both The Rainbow and Women in Love were refused publication. For instance, after the circumstantial detail of Aaron's return home in the eleventh chapter, one is offered a series of superimposed interpretations of the scene, and then this:

> If I, as a word-user, must translate his deep conscious vibrations into finite words, that is my own business. I do but make a translation of the man. He would speak in music. I speak with words.
>
> The inaudible music of his conscious soul conveyed his meaning in him quite as clearly as I convey it in words: probably much more clearly. But in his own mode only: and it was in his own mode only he realised what I must put into words. These words are my own affair. His mind was music.
>
> Don't grumble at me then, gentle reader, and swear at me that this damned fellow wasn't half clever enough to think all these smart things, and realise all these fine-drawn-out subtleties. You are quite right, he wasn't, yet it all resolved itself in him as I say, and it is for you to prove that it didn't. (Ch. xiii.)

It was, perhaps, partly the disappointment experienced at the rejection of the effort towards an honest and complex understanding that prompted the stiffening reliance on conclusions evolved by the author himself.

Later in the novel Lilly takes over the interpretative function, and the relation between them is like the divided self Aaron dreams of in chapter twenty-one: a dialogue between a tangible being, Aaron, and a watchful, admonitory consciousness. Eventually Aaron becomes entirely subsidiary to Lilly, as F. R. Leavis has observed. (See D. H. Lawrence, Novelist, p. 44.) Throughout the novel such arbitrary divisions make impossible what goes on in Birkin, the immediate, dramatic testing and shaping of thought against action.

In Aaron's Rod and again in Kangaroo, we find pairs reminiscent of Birkin and Ursula. The female partners, Tanny and Harriet, hardly exist as individuals: they are complements of the men, sometimes challenging them but without independent status.

Of the two male characters, Rawdon Lilly of Aaron's Rod is the less convincing. He does manage to restate some of Birkin's fundamental convictions effectively; and they are challenged by other characters in a way that sometimes recalls Ursula's challenges of Birkin; but the contexts from which they emerge are discussions of love, friendship, war and revolution. Individual predicaments and even particular actions, such as the 'punch in the wind' that Lilly gets when he argues with Jim Bricknell, serve only as illustrations for the discussions. Without the illuminative reference to a varied and thereby more impartial dramatic context, Lilly's statements about individual integrity remain mere notions.

Richard Lovat Somers in Kangaroo has the same physical and temperamental attributes as Lilly and roughly the same married set-up. Most of his time is taken up, as we shall see in a later chapter, with the problems of social commitment.

These problems are, however, related in his mind to 'religious' issues, so that his eventual rejection of political activities in Australia is in fact balanced against an affirmation of one of Birkin's beliefs. It is put out in wordy and grandiose terms:

> Alone in the darkness of the cavern of himself, listening to the soundlessness of inflowing fate .... Alone with God, with the dark God. (Ch. xiv.)

He wants to lapse into a restorative darkness, 'individually in contact with the great life-urge we call God' (ch. xvi) - a God 'who is many gods to many men' (ch. xiii); who, he insists, must remain undefined, 'unknown' (ch. xiv); a power whose dangerous, unpredictable spontaneity is contrasted with the fixity of ideas and ideals. Here too he associates the regenerative power he needs with non-human forces, in the Australian bush and in the sea:

> The light on the waves was like liquid radium swinging and slipping. Like radium, the mystic virtue of vivid decomposition, liquid-gushing lucidity.
>
> The sea too was very full. It was nearly high tide, the waves were rolling very tall, with light like a menace on the nape of their necks as they bent, so brilliant. Then, when they fell, the fore-flush in a great soft swing with incredible speed up the shore, on the darkness soft-lighted with moon, like a rush of white serpents, then slipping back with a hiss that fell into silence for a second, leaving the sand of granulated silver.
>
> It was the huge rocking of this flat, hollow-foreflush moon - dim in its hollow, that was the night to Richard. 'This is the night and the moon,' he said to himself. Incredibly swift and far the flat rush flew at him, with foam like the hissing, open mouths of snakes. In the nearness a wave broke white and high. Then, ugh! across the intervening gulf the great lurch and swish, as the snakes rushed forward, in a hollow frost hissing at his boots. Then failed to bite, fell back hissing softly, leaving the belly of the sands granulated silver.
>
> A huge but a cold passion swinging back and forth. Great waves of radium swooping with a down-curve and rushing up the shore. Then calling themselves back again, retreating to the mass. Then rushing with venomous radium-burning speed into the body of the land. Then recoiling with a low swish, leaving the flushed sand naked.
>
> That was the night. Rocking with cold, radium-burning passion, swinging and flinging itself with venomous desire.

> ... Richard rocking with the radium-urgent passion of the night: the huge, desirous swing, the call clamour, the low hiss of retreat. The call, call! And the answerer. Where was his answerer? There was no living answerer. No dark-bodied, warm-bodied answerer. He knew that when he had spoken a word to the night-half-hidden ponies with their fluffy legs. No animate answer this time. The radium-rocking, wave-knocking night his call and his answer both. This God without feet or knees or face. This sluicing, knocking, urging night, heaving like a woman with unspeakable desire, but no woman, no thighs or breasts, no body. The moon, the concave mother-of-pearl of night, the great radium-swinging, and his little self. The call and the answer, without intermediary. Non-human gods, non-human human being. (Ch. xvii.)

There is in the description something of the hysteria and uneasy melodrama of the earliest novels, The White Peacock and The Trespasser. However, whereas these novels endorsed failure, and the promise of growth was to be found in the response to nature, Kangaroo endorses a form of success - a breaking through on the basis of faith - and yet in Somers' responses to nature, in spite of the reverence for the power it represents, a sense of failure and isolation comes across.

Lawrence's own sense of failure, or at least of being up against difficult odds, is perhaps intimated in such a remark as this on Somers:

> He tried to write, that being his job. But usually, nowadays, when he tapped his unconscious, he found himself in a seethe of steady fury, general rage. (Ch. vii.)

(See note 5.)

The Plumed Serpent and Lady Chatterley's Lover belong to a new phase in the development of the themes that we have seen more and more obsessively worked on throughout the novels. This is the final period of definition or over-definition. The author's findings are snatched from the context of life to become the context against which life as we normally understand it is to be judged or defined. Fables take the place of novels. These last two books show a re-awakening of passion and struggle after the stalemate or the impatient discursiveness of the previous three; but the passion and the struggle is now to sell the convictions, and not towards the alertness and fullness of response that was the objective before.

It is not that the complexity and difficulty is no longer perceived. In The Plumed Serpent Don Ramón admits:

> "I am no longer a young man, who can afford to make mistakes. I am forty-two years old, and I am making my last - and perhaps in truth, my first great effort as a man. It is very easy for me to make a mistake. Very easy, on the one hand, for me to become arrogant and a ravisher. And very easy, on the other hand, for me to deny myself, and make a sort of sacrifice of my life. Which is being ravished." (Ch. xviii.)

But for him the struggle to live has become the struggle to live up to:

> "But you know, Señora, Quetzalcoatl is to me only the symbol of the best a man may be, in the next days. The universe is a nest of dragons, with a perfectly unfathomable life-mystery at the centre of it. If I call the mystery the Morning Star, surely it doesn't matter! A man's blood can't beat in the abstract. And man is a creature who wins his own creation inch by inch from the nest of the cosmic dragons." (Ch. xviii.)

The creed behind the fable contains the same faith in life as ever in Lawrence's novels, the same awareness of the limits of personal achievement:

> "Life makes, and moulds, and changes the problem. The problem will always be there, and will always be different. So nothing can be solved, even by life and living, for life dissolves and resolves, solving it leaves alone.
>
> "Therefore we turn to life; and from the clock to the sun and from metal to membrane.
>
> "This way we hope the problem will dissolve, since it can never be solved ...
>
> "But when we are deep in a bog, it is no use attempting to gallop. We can only wade out with toil. And in our haste to have a child, it is no good tearing the babe from the womb.
>
> "Seek life, and life will bring the change."
>
> (Ch. xxii.)

It contains the same complete belief in the value and necessity of the individual commitment to others (to a mate first and to the rest of society).

> It takes a man and a woman together to make a soul. The soul is the Morning Star, emerging from the two. ....
> The individual, like the perfect being, does not and cannot exist, in the vivid world. We are all fragments. And at the best, halves. The only whole thing is the Morning Star. Which can only rise between two: or between many.
>
> (Ch. xxiv.)

The failure of the fable is partially due to the length and detail of it - the attempt to work out the form and even the discipline of the new religion. In it the energies of the universe are centred on Quetzalcoatl. The name combines bird and snake. In the symbol that represents him they are clasped together roughly like an encircled cross. The bird stands for that spiritual power which has been so greatly emphasized in the Christian religion which Quetzalcoatl is supplanting. It is associated in the novel with daylight and the sky and in general with the mentality cultivated by the white races. The snake stands for the power of the body and the senses, for fellow-feeling and belonging, not only to people but to

the earth, to the animate and inanimate. It is associated with the dark bodies of the dark races, as well as with the night and the dark waters and the earth generally. The circle in the novel symbolises the wholeness which metaphysically transcends this duality.

The aim of the religion is to waken the sensual energies of the people - for these have been suppressed and thwarted by many of the ideals of Christianity, liberalism-and then to bring about a discipline whereby the two great sources of growth, sensual and spiritual, may be brought together to work harmoniously. The morning or evening star, hung between earth and sky, between night and day, stands for the equilibrium that is possible between instinctual and conscious knowledge and between the self and others. It represents a 'meeting-ground' for relationships in which no faculty and no party is worsted.

Because of the thoroughness with which the symbolism is worked into the story, it takes on too ponderously the appearance of a seriously proffered alternative religion, when in fact it is a passionately rejuvenated Mexican myth that Lawrence found would carry his interpretations and would express therefore the final, purely didactic phase of his commitment to life and society. (See note 6.)

Lawrence did take pains to avoid in this novel the male portrait which had brought such preponderance of applied argument into Kangaroo. Instead, The Plumed Serpent offers a female protagonist who suffers conflicts and searches for a way of life that will reconcile them. Kate is a character with a well-defined development, whose experiences are portrayed with a sensuous reality that is not entirely skimmed for its ideological usefulness. At the age of forty, after two husbands and some children have disappeared into the past, she finds herself wearied to disgust with 'mere personal contact'. (Ch. xviii.)

She wants to lose her limited conscious self. Lawrence made an effort, successful to some extent in the early scenes, to give her and the characters she meets a depth independent of the driving convictions of the novel.

However, in coming under the influence of the new religion she relinquishes her individuality. When she feels, 'in her vague, woman's way' her need to renew contact with the creative mystery, her reactions are indistinguishable at times from the author's direct commentary, which in turn is indistinguishable from Ramón's thoughts. The author occasionally apologises for this melting of identities - 'She was surprised at herself, using this language' (ch. vii) - but the ardour that causes it only increases, until the point is reached where Kate and the other main characters become divinities, thereby finally shedding their human reality altogether along with their human responsibilities. Kate has later only occasional reactions against the 'high-flown bunk' (as she calls it on one occasion in chapter xxii) of her co-religionists.

As the novel progresses, the generalities romp away, the style - especially in the hymns - becoming more and more unctuous or dogmatic, the scenes more glamorous or more violent. A comparison between Ramón's self-induced, grandiose ritual of regeneration and Birkin's experience in the woods at Breadalby shows up not only the fake nature of Ramon's religiosity but the complete absence of any dramatic or ironic objectivity.

Ramón is not only a fake prophet but a fake personality. He is 'horribly handsome' (ch. xii) with a 'pure' - that is masculine - sensuality. He has an air of 'calm kingly command'. (Ch. ix.) His behaviour is decidedly showy and dressy, but only Carlota his wife seems to notice this. And only occasionally does Kate notice

what must strike the reader forcibly, particularly in the light of Lawrence's previous writings, the cruelty of Ramón's insistent will. Generally his masculine self-will is idealised as much as Mrs. Morel's feminine self-will in Sons and Lovers, and he is exonerated far more than she is from the moral consequences of his actions. While his wife breaks down in the frenzy that leads to her death, he shows a deadly acquiescence to it, and the narrative, through Kate, supports him:

> Not a muscle of his face moved. And Kate could see that his heart had died in its connection with Carlota, his heart was quite, quite dead in him; out of the deathly vacancy he watched his wife. Only his brows frowned a little, from his smooth, male forehead. His old connections were broken. She could hear him say: There is no star between me and Carlota - And how terribly true it was! (Ch. xxi.)

After The Plumed Serpent Lawrence rejected messianism in any form. This didn't however inhibit didacticism. Lady Chatterley's Lover is divided quite neatly into two: the mental way of life, represented by the crippled aristocrat in his motorised wheel-chair, together with the social, intellectual and industrial systems he administers; and the sensual or phallic consciousness - carrying with it a genuine and deep commitment to another, and through this to life itself - which is finally represented by Mellors. These are the 'two ways of knowing' that Lawrence defined in Apropos of 'Lady Chatterley's Lover': 'knowing in terms of apartness, which is mental, rational, scientific, and knowing in terms of togetherness, which is religious and poetic'. (Phoenix, ii, 512.)

Mellors bears an instructive resemblance to Aaron. Both are educated men who (like Annable in The White Peacock) have deliberately repudiated their education and taken up manual work.

Both have been worsted in love, and have left their wives. The failure of their marriages is treated mostly in retrospect and most of the blame for it is thrown either on the wives or on the ideals of love they held then. Anyway, it belongs to the past, and these characters face the future. They have recoiled into a wary or arrogant reserve. Aaron says: "I only want to be left alone." (Aaron's Rod, ch. vii.) Mellors echoes him:

'All he wanted on earth was to be alone.' (ch. viii.)

For Aaron his music is partly a refuge, partly a means of satisfying a spontaneous vitality; and for Mellors the wood he patrols offers both. There is a conflict in both between unwillingness to suffer any more and the vitality that impels them to risk themselves again.

Aaron risks himself in his love affair with the Marchesa del Torre, but suffers disillusion and withdraws again into isolation. Mellors, closer to Birkin in this respect (as also in his frailty and sensitivity) both seeks and finds his salvation in marriage. Moreover, Lawrence did not repeat the flippancy of foisting deliberate and obtrusive interpretative commentary on an inarticulate character. Where Mellors does not speak, the course of the plot speaks for him; for it is planned tightly as a fable, and is fully coherent as such.

Connie Chatterley's development complements Mellors' in a way that harks back to Ursula's. A stultifying moral environment (at Wragby) a self-defeating love affair with a weak and self-enclosed lover (Michaelis) and a conflict between despair and hunger for life lead her to a point where she is ready to respond to Mellors, ready to discover the clue to her fulfilment: 'She was gone, she was not, and she was born: a woman.' (Ch. xii.) Her development is more sentimentally appealing than that of any of Lawrence's heroines

since Ursula - with such stages marked as those describing her response to Spring, to playing with Mrs. Flint's baby and watching the pheasant chicks. But the regeneration has a fairy-tale quality, for it is finally brought about (as we shall see in the next chapter) not so much by individual effort as by the magic wand of the phallus. The fable is not so much engaged with the triumph of the individual as with the triumph of sexuality.

Notes

1. On Birkin

In the rejected prologue to Women in Love Lawrence had developed with insistent explicitness that divorce between the senses and the affections in Birkin which is vaguely hinted at by Hermione in the novel itself: 'He would not sacrifice the sensual to the spiritual half of himself, and he could not sacrifice the spiritual to the sensual half. Neither could he obtain fulfilment in both, the two halves always reacted from each other.' (Phoenix, ii, 102.) The violence of this conflict, the painful effort at reconciliation and the near-impossibility of success make the prologue moving to read as the portrait of a man who knows what he wants from life, 'integrity of being' and whose fears enlarge his difficulties towards the insuperable. The Birkin of the novel is less crippled by his dissensions.

Lawrence's revision of certain passages in Birkin's development has been examined by Mark Kinkead-Weekes (see Imagined Worlds, ed. Mack and Gregor) and in V. W. Kramer's doctoral dissertation on The Rainbow and Women in Love.

2. On Lawrence's Attitude to the Mind

In the ten years after writing Women in Love Lawrence was more concerned with questioning than with approving the operations and products of the mind. During this period (1917-26) he insisted in his discursive writings on down-grading it to the rôle of recorder or switchboard. Its products were the potential enemies of life. Hence the attempt in Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious to locate psychological responses in various parts of the body - an attempt which, as Mary Freeman has noted (see A Study of Lawrence's Basic Ideas, pp. 135-6) spoils the subtlety with which that book differentiates between sensual and spiritual responses and between those that devote the self and those that assert it. Lawrence by this contrivance segregated mind and body when it might have suited his purpose better to have further dissolved the distinction. It was during the same period (and here, perhaps, lies the cause of his protest) that Lawrence's own mentality got a stranglehold over the spontaneity of his art - at least in the novels. Not until the late nineteen-twenties in 'An Introduction to these Paintings' did Lawrence give again a full acknowledgment of the kind of intelligence so triumphantly operative in his own life and in his best work:

> Any creative act occupies the whole consciousness of a man .... The truly great discoveries of science and real works of art are made by the whole consciousness of man working together in unison and oneness: instinct, intuition, mind, intellect all fused into one complete consciousness.
> (Phoenix, i, 573-4)

For a discussion of this essay, see John Remsbury in The Cambridge Quarterly, ii, 117-147.

3. On Ursula

On Ursula's development critical controversy has mainly concentrated on the conclusion of The Rainbow (which will be discussed in the sixth chapter) and especially on the symbolism there.

The scene with the horses has provoked much disagreement. H. M. Daleski for example has suggested an interpretation that traces in the progressive details of the scene references back to stages in Ursula's life hitherto: it is a 'symbolic retrospect of crucial stages along her soul's journey'. (The Forked Flame, p. 123.) Both Mark Kinkead-Weekes and Keith Aldritt, on a similar track, have found different meanings (See Imagined Worlds, pp. 407-10 and Visual Imagination of Lawrence, p. 113) It seems that the vividness of the details of the scene impels some readers to accumulate significances in order to account for the degree to which they have been moved. Surely the details of the scene cannot bear such weight. This is symbolism, not allegory. As Lawrence remarked, 'You can't give a great symbol a "meaning" any more than you can give a cat a "meaning".' (Phoenix, i, 295) If we need a handy, simplified definition of the significance of the horses here, why not use one of Lawrence's own? - such as 'the symbol of surging potency and power of movement, of action'. (Apocalypse, ch. x.)

There are no characters in Lawrence's tales and plays that resemble Ursula in any great detail. There are two early portraits with a faint outline of resemblance: Barbara, in the play, The Fight for Barbara, and Paula Moest in the story, New Eve and old Adam (though perhaps Paula is more like Anna Brangwen in her self-sufficiency and demands for recognition and co-operation). Two of the best feminine portraits in the tales - Louisa Lindley of Daughters of the Vicar and Yvette of The Virgin and the Gipsy - while remaining quite distinct as characters yet resemble Ursula in their uncompromising youthful eagerness for life which drives them into revolt against their upbringing (both are vicars' daughters) and into the arms of men who are alien to that upbringing or who cut through it

and establish a new and predominantly physical basis for their lives.

4. On the Theme in the Early Period

The earliest and most naive expressions of Lawrence's belief in 'life' occur in 'Art and the Individual' - 'we are ourselves almost unconscious agents in a great inscrutable purpose' (Phoenix, ii, 223) - and in the early letters: 'When we die, like raindrops falling back again into the sea, we fall back into the big shimmering sea of unorganised life which we call God'. (Lawrence to Clarke, 9 April 1911, Letters, i, 76.)

Various features of Paul Morel are reflected in characters in Lawrence's early stories and plays: Ernest Lambert, for instance, in A Collier's Friday Night, communing with his girlfriend and burning his mother's cakes in much the same way as Paul does; or Severn in The Old Adam conducting an affair with Mrs. Thomas that recalls aspects of Paul's relationship with Clara.

5. On the Theme in the Middle Period

During the 1917-26 period, Lawrence's portrayal of sensual vitality is in many ways more convincing in his tales than in his novels. The Indians of The Woman who Rode Away, for instance, are portrayed with a more complex combination of respect and pathos than the Indians and Mexicans of The Plumed Serpent. Romero in The Princess and Cuesta the bullfighter in None of That are examples of individuals carefully and sympathetically observed and not pressed into the service of a thesis. Pervin in The Blind Man, Henry in The Fox, Harry Goodall in Fanny and Annie, Hepburn in The Captain's Doll, the husband in Samson and Delilah, and even Hadrian in You Touched Me are characters with a male power or cockiness that wins the sometimes grudging admiration of the women they influence; while their female counterparts in the tales of this period show an equal determination

to have what they need in life.

6. On Lawrence and Primitive Religion

The religion of The Plumed Serpent, as L. D. Clark has recently demonstrated, was partly the outcome of Lawrence's researches into ancient Mexican history and mythology. A strong immediate stimulus was his observation of more primitive Indian life: 'I had no permanent feeling of religion till I came to New Mexico and penetrated into the old human race-experience there.' ('New Mexico', Phoenix, i, 144.) To the Indians 'everything was alive, not supernaturally but naturally alive.' (Ibid, 146.) Lawrence admired without reservations their ability to 'come immediately into felt contact ... without an intermediary or mediator' with the non-human universe: 'It is the religion which precedes the god-religion.' (Ibid, 147.) Later he was to rediscover among the Etruscans the same ability to 'live by the mystery of the elemental powers in the Universe, the complex vitalities of what we feebly call Nature'. (Etruscan Places, ch. ii.)

In spite of his admiration for the sense of belonging expressed in the religious experience mentioned here, Lawrence was free from sentimentality towards it. 'There is no going back.' (Phoenix, i, 99.) He insisted on the progressiveness of civilisation: 'However false and foul our forms and systems are now, still, through the many centuries since Egypt, we have been living and struggling forwards, along some road that is no road, and yet is a great life-development.' (Classic American Literature, ch. x.)

CHAPTER V

Recovery and Marriage

In considering marriage in Lawrence's novels we are embarking on the most thoroughly discussed feature of his fiction. The content of this chapter will be limited for this reason to a study of the marriage of Birkin and Ursula and then to looking at one earlier and two later marriages for the light they shed on the development of Lawrence's interest here.

First let us review the stages of the courtship and marriage in Women in Love in order to see how the novel establishes that the means to individual growth and fulfilment are available only to the pair.

Both Birkin and Ursula have suffered bitterly in the past, in their search for a mate. They are, therefore, guarded and 'contravened', and their courtship is fraught with desperate demands and fears, before they find the confidence to make the self-surrender of marriage.

Birkin is afraid of the destructiveness and egotism of the passion which he has been through before, is afraid to commit himself to anything resembling it again, even as a first step with Ursula, as we saw earlier. He wants a union, he says, without the meeting and mingling:

> "There is .... a final me which is stark and impersonal and beyond responsibility. So there is a final you. And it is there I would want to meet you ... " (Ch. xiii.)

Similarly, at the end of The Rainbow we see Ursula recovering from an illness as much induced by her experience and inner conflicts as any of Birkin's, and reaching the stage at which she realises that assertion and the attempt to define her own needs were not enough. She comes to the point at which faith in life and her own vitality leave her in a state of anticipation and readiness.

The stages of the courtship with Birkin mark his progress towards something similar: an anticipation not so open or confident, but strong enough to make him feel he can begin anew:

> But the passion of gratitude with which he received her into his soul, the extreme, unthinkable gladness of knowing himself living and fit to unite with her, he, who was so nearly dead, who was so near to being gone with the rest of his race down the slope of mechanical death, could never be understood by her. He worshipped her as age worships youth, he glorified in her because, in his one grain of faith, he was young as she, he was her proper mate. This marriage with her was his resurrection and his life. (Ch. xxvii.)

The fact that Ursula has already reached the stage of recognising the limitations of her own fears and assertions makes her the more robust and optimistic of the two - but of course does not prevent her from having set-backs of despairing self-pity. She is not as bowed by past experience as he is. She has taken less fright at it. She recognises in Birkin a man who, like herself, will not make do - he is keen to live. However, she expects a passionate attachment, and Birkin's ideas on the 'stark and impersonal' seem to her suspicious. She herself feels a normal 'passion' in the first stages of her love. She expresses it to herself in terms that betray a loneliness, and the aggressiveness of a self that has not been admitted by her lovers:

> She believed that love was <u>everything</u>. Man must render himself up to her. He must be quaffed to the dregs by her. Let him be <u>her man</u> utterly, and she in return would be his humble slave - whether he wanted it or not. (Ch. xix.)

So at first, she does not go along with, and partly misunderstands, Birkin's fears of the self-assertive stages of love. She sees his fears as a weakness - as they are - but sees them as a weakness towards her, a failure towards herself.

In the course of Ursula's defensive campaign against Birkin's ideas on love, and her attempts to prevent him from avoiding the complexities of the relationship, she aligns herself to some degree with what Birkin is attacking. Birkin carries her with him much of the way because of the parity of her own past experience, but her fears for her own chances of survival in the earlier stages of the relationship always make her round on him and bring him to face her, as at the end of the thirteenth chapter, when she enforces a confession of love. In following the battle between them on this issue, and understanding Ursula's personal experience, her personal reasons for attacking here, the reader is better able to understand the fears, mistrusts and needs that lie behind the distorted ideology of romantic love.

In the next chapter, at the end of the water-party, they both let themselves go in order to obliterate the memory and balance the horror of what they have witnessed. Because the act is desperate, this passionate encounter reawakens all Birkin's fears, so that his desire 'seemed inevitable as death.' (Ch. xiv.) From it Birkin recoils, relapsing, in sickness and its accompanying despair, into a dread of sexual contact, a terror of female possessiveness, both Hermione's and Ursula's, and the compensatory dreams of immunity: 'He hated sex, it was such a limitation ...' (Ch. xvi.) Yet the possessiveness that Ursula shows in her love for Birkin is not really the kind that he fears - and he knows it, in spite of his constant misgivings. What he has to rely on in her is her deep need to give

herself to life:

> He sat very still, watching her as she talked. And he seemed to listen with reverence. Her face was beautiful and full of baffled light as she told him all the things that had hurt her or perplexed her so deeply. He seemed to warm and comfort his soul at the beautiful light of her nature. (Ch. xiii.)

It is not until later that Ursula understands clearly the cause of Birkin's hesitancy and sees the strength of the bondage Hermione has kept him in:

> After all, the tiresome thing was, he did not want an odalisk, he did not want a slave. Hermione would have been his slave - there was in her a horrible desire to prostrate herself before a man - a man who worshipped her, however, and admitted her as the supreme thing. He did not want an odalisk. He wanted a woman to take something from him, to give herself up so much that she could take the last realities of him, the last facts, the last physical facts, physical and unbearable.
>
> And if she did, would he acknowledge her? Would he be able to acknowledge her through everything, or would he use her just as his instrument, use her for his own private satisfaction, not admitting her? That was what the other men had done. They had wanted their own show, and they would not admit her, they turned all she was into nothingness. Just as Hermione now betrayed herself as a woman. Hermione was like a man, she believed only in men's things. She betrayed the woman in herself. And Birkin, would he acknowledge, or would he deny her? (Ch. xxii.)

She begins to appreciate the genuine need behind Birkin's demands, and the value of them. She applies them, cautiously, to their relationship; it gives her hope, and leads to a further challenge. She grows enraged at what remains of his bondage, and at the strain that his struggle with it puts on their relationship. Her anger bursts out at the beginning of the next chapter. It is her equivalent of his moon-stoning. She hurls at him all the ammunition she has gathered from Hermione, guessing shrewdly at what she does not know for certain, with all the emotional strength at her command.

The shock of this releases him from the tightening knot of self-conscious demands and repudiations. It allows him to be at peace again with his need of her:

There was a darkness over his mind. The terrible knot of consciousness that had persisted there like an obsession was broken, gone, his life was dissolved in darkness over his limbs and his body. But there was a point of anxiety in his heart now. He wanted her to come back. He breathed lightly and regularly like an infant, that breathes innocently, beyond the touch of responsibility.

She was coming back. He saw her drifting desultorily under the high hedge, advancing towards him slowly. He did not move, he did not look again. He was as if asleep, at peace, slumbering and utterly relaxed. (Ch. xxiii.)

Birkin's experience has led him to a ruthless assertion of what he believes to be the 'growing' principles of life; and in the assertion of them, they have become over-defined and bound by the limitation of a conscious attitude. At this stage of her life Ursula's less conscious, more spontaneous and diffuse responses to the creative sources of life help bring Birkin's constantly in touch with living variability. Birkin's assertions, his attempted honesty, his assurance that he (and they) want something different, and his determination to achieve it - these are the things she most needs of him. For Birkin, there is finally in their love

> the wonder of existing not as oneself, but in a consummation of my being and of her being in a new one, a new, paradisal unit regained from the duality. (Ch. xxvii.)

Ursula's fulfilment we see in terms of the hope and happiness she feels now that her own vigorous life has direction. When Gerald has been questioning her briefly about her happiness with Birkin, he becomes 'very quiet, as if it were something not to be talked about by him,' as he submits to the 'strange, open, dazzled expression of her face.' (Ch. xxvii.)

After their marriage, the tragedy of Gerald and Gudrun overshadows these two. We have just intermittent glimpses of enduring tensions and fresh potentialities:

> She abandoned herself to <u>him</u>, or she took hold of him and gathered her joy of him. And she enjoyed him fully. But they were never <u>quite</u> 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. (Ch. xix.)

For Birkin, the novel stresses 'darkness', 'stillness' and 'sleep' as the remedial quality in their love so necessary for him. For Ursula the stress is on 'light' and 'openness' and 'warmth':

> Her heart was full of the most wonderful light, golden like honey of darkness, sweet like the warmth of day, a light which was not shed on the world, only on the unknown paradise towards which she was going, a sweetness of habitation, a delight of living quite unknown, but hers infallibly. (Ch. xxix.)

For her is the optimism, 'the ecstasy of bliss in fore-knowledge'. (Ch. xxix.) When the two are huddled together on the bows of the ship taking them to the continent:

> They seemed to fall away into the profound darkness. There was no sky, no earth, only one unbroken darkness, into which, with a soft, sleeping motion, they seemed to fall like one closed seed of life falling through dark, fathomless space.
>
> They had forgotten where they were, forgotten all that was and all that had been, conscious only in their heart, and there conscious only of this pure trajectory through the surpassing darkness. The ship's prow cleaved on, with a faint noise of cleavage, into the complete night, without knowing, without seeing, only surging on. (Ch. xxix.)

The image of the seed, recurring now as it has recurred throughout The Rainbow, reminds us of all that is preserved in their union. This is not transcendence but renewal. In a seed death and birth meet, it transforms death into life. In their love are all the conditions for growth and the experience of death. Here again is the continuity of development between the generations of The Rainbow and Women in Love. (See note 1.)

Tom and Lydia Brangwen

Critics have generally agreed on the conventionally

satisfying portrayal of this marriage of Tom and Lydia in The Rainbow. It states at the beginning of the two volumes covering the history of the Brangwens what is achievable by a successful marriage - 'almost entirely by more orthodox methods of presentation', (Graham Hough, The Dark Sun, p. 61.) It understates the difficulties inherent in that marriage. All the emphasis lies here:

> 'The strange inviolable completeness of the two of them made him [Tom] feel as sure and as stable as God'. (Ch. i.)

However, those same themes that are to be developed later in detail, showing up the complex processes by which a full marriage is attained, are dormant here. Lydia's past, with its self-conscious and idealistic love and its morbid after-effects is a little like Birkin's, while Tom's easy flow of sympathy and warmth foreshadows some aspects of Ursula's nature. It is because of what Lydia has learnt from her past experience and because she has won through to a new life that she (like Birkin) gives the impression of both certainty of what she needs and defensiveness:

> She waited for him to meet her, not to bow before her and serve her. She wanted his active participation, not his submission. She put her fingers on him. And it was torture to him, that he must give himself to her actively, participate in her, that he must meet and embrace and know her, who was other than himself. There was that in him which shrank from yielding to her, resisted the relaxing towards her, opposed the mingling with her, even while he most desired it. He was afraid, he wanted to save himself. (Ch. iii.)

The theme of renewal is stated in similar terms as for Ursula and Birkin: 'He returned ... newly created, as after a gestation, a new birth, in the womb of darkness.' (Ch. i.) And so is the necessary challenge that each makes to the other:

> Suddenly, in a flash, he saw she might be lonely, isolated, unsure. She had seemed to him the utterly certain, satisfied, absolute, excluding him. Could she need anything? 'Why aren't you satisfied with me? - I'm not satisfied

with you. Paul used to come to me and take me like a man does. You only leave me alone or take me like your cattle, quickly, to forget me again - so that you can forget me again."

"What am I to remember about you?" said Brangwen.

"I want you to know there is somebody there besides yourself."

"Well, don't I know it?"

"You come to me as if it was for nothing, as if I was nothing there. When Paul came to me, I was something to him - a woman, I was. To you I am nothing - it is like cattle - or nothing - ".

"You make me feel as if I was nothing," he said.

They were silent. She sat watching him. He could not move, his soul was seething and chaotic. She turned to her sewing again. But the sight of her bent before him held him and would not let him be. She was a strange, hostile, dominant thing. Yet not quite hostile. As she sat he felt his limbs were strong and hard, he sat in strength.

(Ch. iii.)

But in the presentation of this marriage one is asked to hold in mind, beyond everything else, the achievement of it, the achievement of balance and a sensitive alertness to life. The emphasis on this is maintained from the earliest stages of the marriage:

A new, calm relationship showed to him in the things he saw, in the cattle he used, the young wheat as it eddied in a wind.

(Ch. ii.)

He would go on with his wife, he and she like two children camping in the plains. What was sure but the endless sky? But that was so sure, so boundless.

Still the royal blue colour burned and blazed and sported itself in the web of darkness before him, unwearingly rich and splendid. How rich and splendid his own life was, red and burning and blazing and sporting itself in the dark meshes of his body; and his wife, how she glowed and burned dark within her meshes! Always it was so unfinished and unformed! (Ch. v.)

With this achievement as a reference the rest of this novel and the whole of the next explore in detail the conditions and hazards of getting to that point.

Moreover, the story of Tom and Lydia serves the extra purpose of driving the reader to feel the need for a closer look at those hazards; for even in the fine scene of the proposal one is uneasy at the marvellous appropriateness (from the point of view of

Tom's needs) of Lydia's reactions. The understanding, the acquiescence, the fullness and directness of her responses make them almost like a wish-fulfilment for Tom, because they present no extra obstacle to his effort of self-liberation. One sympathises with what happens to Tom because one knows his conflicts, but one accepts Lydia's passiveness at this stage as the narrative's answer to Tom's need. The relationship is already accomplished before we are allowed to see the complex individual Lydia potentially is. The difficulties inherent at this crucial point are by-passed in this way. In fact we never know Lydia very fully, even though the vivid fable of her resurrection from corpse-like indifference in the next chapter awakens in us a strong interest in a more detailed study of her development. After the wedding she does not become more of a character, but remains a background figure.

Tom's responses during the marriage are generalised because there is so little dramatic realisation of Lydia. The fullest scenes later are between father and step-daughter, not husband and wife, until the quarrel at the end of the third chapter, and even this consists of a very brief exchange of recriminations. The relegation of Lydia to the background enables Tom's responses to reveal the pattern of an achieved balance.

The Later Novels

By the time we reach The Plumed Serpent complexity has again been sacrificed, but this time to dogma. Between Cipriano and Kate what realistic detail there is is lost in such rapturous visions, granted to Kate and endorsed by the author, as this, of

Cipriano:

> towering like a dark whirlwind column ... this huge erection ... "My demon lover!" ...
> The Master, The everlasting Pan. (Ch. xx.)

And to this power there is only one response possible: 'Submission absolute, like the earth under the sky.' (Ch. xx.) In the cause of this submission Kate even relinquishes her orgasm:

> She had loved Joachim for this, that again, and again, and again he could give her this orgiastic 'satisfaction', in spasms that made her cry aloud. ...
> And she, as she lay, would realize the worthlessness of this foam-effervescence, its strange externality to her. It seemed to come upon her from without, not from within. And succeeding the first moment of disappointment, when this sort of 'satisfaction' was denied her, came the knowledge that she did not really want it, that it was really nauseous to her. (Ch. xxvi.)

She welcomes the necessity to abase herself, just as she welcomes the lack of conscious intimacy between them, because it grants her peace:

> He made her go all vague and quiet, as if she sank away heavy and still, away from the surface of life, and lay deep in the under-life.
> The strange, heavy, positive passivity. For the first time in her life she felt absolutely at rest. (Ch. xxvi.)

Her craving for rest in itself is understandable in terms of her history, and rouses one's sympathy. But the means by which she attains it are unpromising to say the least!

Her common sense does struggle against the dream, for she is not quite the mere stereotype that Ramón's wife Teresa is. From the beginning of their relationship she fears the tyranny of Cipriano's will. What Cipriano offers as marriage conflicts violently with what Kate has known in the past as love. She is tempted even at the end of the novel to return to her old way of life. Fear of becoming 'a horrible, elderly female' decides her final submission:

> After all, when Cipriano touched her caressively, all her body flowered. That was the greater sex, that could fill all the world with lustre, and which she dared not think about, its power was so much greater than her own will. But on the other hand when she spread the wings of her own ego, and sent forth her own spirit, the world could look very wonderful to her, when she was alone. But after a while, the wonder faded, and a sort of jealous emptiness set in.
>
> "I must have both," she said to herself. "I must not recoil against Cipriano and Ramón, they make my blood blossom in my body. I say they are limited. But then one must be limited. If one tries to be unlimited, one becomes horrible. Without Cipriano to touch me and limit me and submerge my will, I shall become a horrible, elderly female. I ought to want to be limited. I ought to be glad if a man will limit me with a strong will and a warm touch. Because what I call my greatness, and the vastness of the Lord behind me, lets me fall through a hollow floor of nothingness, once there is no man's hand there, to hold me warm and limited. Ah yes! Rather than become elderly and a bit grisly, I will make my submission; as far as I need, and no further." (Ch. xxvii.)

It may be possible see hope for her in the phrases: 'as far as I need and no further.' But the indecisions and decisions are fights with shadows. Nothing is convincingly dramatised. Cipriano in his relations with Kate, whether he is powerful or tender, is never remotely convincing as a representative of humanity. As a result Kate's responses are necessarily rigged. (See note 2.)

Much of the imbalance in The Plumed Serpent is redressed in Lady Chatterley's Lover. Mellors' tenderness, for example, is stressed even more than his power. The detailed portrayal in this novel of the physical does attest the closeness of the contact between Connie and Mellors as well as laying down its own definition of how this should be achieved. It is this definition, however, that relates the experience back to The Plumed Serpent.

The mating of Connie and Mellors is not, in spite of the releasing 'night of sensual passion', generally the co-operative adventure which is intimated between Birkin and Ursula: 'They might

do as they liked'. (Women in Love, ch. xxix.) It is essentially a solemn act of submission of the female to the male desire. Connie does not forgo her 'satisfaction', like Kate in The Plumed Serpent, but she does, like her, welcome the discovery that to be happy her sexual pleasure must be entirely dependent on Mellors' pleasure as his mounts directly towards orgasm. There is no detail, to counterbalance the detailed expression of Connie's pleasure in submission, of the progressive assurance and contentment in Mellors, resulting from his making sure that Connie is in fact sexually satisfied. As a result, the mutual nature of the psychological benefits is played down. One may rely upon the evidence of Mellors' tenderness, perhaps, and his need of her fulfilment -

> "I could never get my pleasure and satisfaction of her unless she got hers of me at the same time". (Ch. xiv.)

- but there is never expressed any responsibility on his part to ensure this. The detail actually given is weighted dramatically in favour of the sanctity of the male urge, as if all the needs of both of them will be satisfied if that is not thwarted or challenged.

Some readers have professed themselves content with the perfection of the fable in Lady Chatterley's Lover - with how the pair of figures, in superb disregard of probabilities and moral complexities move towards a challenging generalisation. But because the pilgrimage of the central figures is placed in a novel where the surrounding detail is literally representative of normal human life, and not symbolically representative as in the classic fable, then factors that conflict with the simplicity of the general idea are bound to evolve. Such factors as the dismissal of Richard Chatterley as unworthy of being considered a really central problem, along with the first Mrs. Mellors and Mellors' own daughter - in fact, the

dismissal of most responses to (let alone claims from) any relationship outside the specifically sexual one generated between Connie and Mellors - detrimentally affects one's regard of the novel's achievement; for a novel, in its complex naturalistic presentation, it remains.

Moreover, the central theme is uneasy. Details are supplied about Mellors' past which cast doubt upon the validity of the sexual relationship between the lovers as it is presented. One gets only Mellors' own version of his past, but there is enough in the bare facts of his relations with his wife Bertha to make his malice against her suspicious. Bertha has achieved her own sexual satisfaction after he has completed his, in spite of his willingness to 'hold back', and he has felt victimised. Isn't this essentially the same situation as that between Michaelis and Connie in the early chapters of the novel? There Michaelis is portrayed as a man whose weakness and lack of outgoing concern compels the woman to insist on her own pleasure by her own efforts. The critical judgment which is applied convincingly to Michaelis simply doesn't operate in Mellors' case, and Bertha is written off as insensitive and destructive. The reader is expected to accept uncritically Mellors' version of his marriage after the early dramatically convincing exposition of Connie's affair. One must treat Mellors in his relations with Connie as fully exonerated and essentially a different individual. Tensions are suggested, however, as when he curbs his longing for Connie - 'She must come to him: it was no use trailing after her' (ch. x) - or in his mistrust of kisses on the mouth. One's pleasure in the projected permanent union and that union's future has to be aided by 'a willing suspension of disbelief'. (See note 3.)

Notes

1. On Birkin and Ursula

Critics who have found 'the norm [of marriage] Birkin proposes ... neither clear nor cogent' (Daleski, The Forked Flame, p. 174) have generally directed their attention to the ideas and the attitudes and missed their relativity to the basic step-by-step movement of the two as individuals towards marriage and through marriage towards an increased ability to respond positively. Or else they have paid closest attention not to the constructive and forward-looking attitudes of Birkin but to the defensive or aberrant. Hence the discussion of Birkin's possible anal-eroticism, which has led to farcical speculation about what really happens in the parlour of the Saracen's Head. Birkin's special interest in 'the fountain of mystic corruption' (ch. xxiii) and in 'bestial' acts (ch. xxix) go with his shamed sensuality - they are features of a damaged individual seeking to escape from his inhibitions. They are seen in perspective in relation to Birkin's more normally healthy attitudes. Ursula accepts them, as the reader is expected to, as aspects of the whole man. She also welcomes through them another opportunity for her own self-liberation: 'There would be no shameful thing she had not experienced'. (Ch. xxix.)

2. On Alvina and Cicio

The relationship between Kate and Cipriano is in some ways foreshadowed by that between Alvina and Cicio in The Lost Girl. The portrait of Cicio, like that of Cipriano, is composed of some telling external observation of a particular national type - in Cicio's case an Italian peasant whose traditional refinement is overlaid with modern vulgarity - together with intimations of inward developments

of a vague and glamorous nature. Alvina's responses to him (which produce the glamour) are hardly more specific and convincing. The sketchiness of the portrayal is such that his enjoyment of her looks at times like self-gratification and her submission to it like self-immolation: 'White, and mute and motionless, she let be. She let herself go down the unknown dark flood of his will, borne from her old footing forever.' (Ch. x.) Cicio, like Cipriano, presents to the English woman the challenge of an alien culture. Like Kate, Alvina suffers from the sense of subjection to a remote individual who excludes her from much of his life, and also from the sense of being cut off from her past. Unlike Kate, however, she manages, through asserting her independence, to achieve a union in which his need for her moral strength, her independence of social demands, is as important as her need for his sensual vitality.

3. On Connie and Mellors

Now that the old controversies over obscenity in Lady Chatterley's Lover are dead, the chief critical dispute is over the significance of the 'night of sensual passion'. Some very heavy weather has been made of it. One may agree with H. M. Daleski that the significance of the episode is partly 'the aggrandisement of the male' (The Forked Flame, p. 306) but this is surely almost as true of nearly all the other love scenes. Spurious issues have been made out of a straightforward didactic demonstration by Lawrence that if Mellors has unusual sexual desires, their expression will be liberating not only for him but also for his partner, in so far as the freedom from sexual tensions of any kind in either one of them must beneficially affect the total relationship. It leads them to this: 'There was nothing left to disguise or be ashamed of. She shared her ultimate nakedness with a man, another being.' (Ch. xvi.)

CHAPTER VI

Regeneration and Society

In this chapter we shall look not at Lawrence's view of what the healthy individual owes to himself or owes to his mate, but what he owes to other people - family, friends and acquaintances - and what he receives back from them, both through personal relationships and indirectly through the institutions, duties and ideologies created by society.

When Birkin is struggling to disengage what is valuable in his experience from the deadening mass of generalities and mass-produced morality that Hermione and those like her have heaped upon him, he naturally stresses what is purely individual in himself. His individualism is largely corrective, therefore. This is clear at the end of the second chapter, in the exchange with Gerald in which Birkin praises 'the purely individual thing' and points to the mixture of panic and vindictiveness behind Gerald's preference for the 'collective thing.' When Birkin resigns his job -

> "We'd better get out of our responsibilities as quick as we can." (ch. xxiii)

- the extravagance of the gesture, like that of refusing to set up home, is typical of him. The extent to which he has suffered in the past from giving himself up uncritically and almost suicidally to some of the current standards of behaviour dictates now the extravagance of so many of his attempts to be free of them. Necessary

emphasis is made on escaping mentally, as far as possible, from obsessions, including those of jobs and property, in order to establish in firm and (in the case of Birkin) protected ground the new roots of the relationship with Ursula. The gesture of temporary removal from a society to which he wholly belongs is seen by Birkin at the time to be the mere gesture that it is:

> "But where can one go?" she [Ursula] asked anxiously: "After all, there is only the world, and none of it is very distant."
> "Still," he said, "I should like to go with you - nowhere. It would be rather wandering just to nowhere. That's the place to get to - nowhere. One wants to wander away from the world's somewheres, into our own nowhere.'
> (Ch. xxiii.)

His meaning is clearer still when he expresses, a moment or two later, his desire to build further upon the new foundations they have acquired: in an attempt to explain the symbolic nature of his desire to be 'free in a free place, with a few other people,' he tells her:

> "It isn't really a locality, though," he said. "It's a perfected relation between you and me, and others - the perfect relation so that we are free together.'

During Gudrun's last conversation with Ursula, in reply to her sister's rather simplified version of her husband's views, she asserts:

> "Anyhow, you can't suddenly fly off on to a new planet, because you think you can see the end of this."

Ursula, however, establishes the validity of the gesture they are making:

> "I don't know a bit what is going to happen," she said. "I only know we are going somewhere."
> Gudrun waited.
> "And you are glad?" she asked.
> Ursula meditated for a moment
> "I believe I am very glad," she replied.
> But Gudrun read the unconscious brightness on her sister's face, rather than the uncertain tones of her speech.
> (Ch. xxix.)

There is no implied rejection of the whole of contemporary society, and no attempt to provide a recipe for its salvation; and this is a mark of the novel's distinction compared with many that followed it. Where Birkin himself is tempted towards the first, it is out of the hysterical force of his revulsion against those factors in himself that have been influenced by similar factors in society and have nearly deprived him of his chances of life. His sickness, which he understands is 'the failure to live', produces the rant of the eleventh chapter -

"I abhor humanity. I wish it was swept away."

- and leads to the pontification of the twenty-third:

> He was not very much interested any more in personalities and people ... They acted and reacted involuntarily according to a few great laws, and once the laws, the great principles, were known, people were no longer mystically interesting.

Birkin's full commitment to the social life around him lies in his friendship for Gerald, which to some extent dramatises the relationship between the novel's two major themes. Throughout the early phase of their friendship - the watchful sparring at Shortlands and on the train-journey; the London scenes, where Birkin is detached from Gerald's bohemian slumming; and in their conversations at Breadalby - the reader is made aware of the fundamental antipathy between the two men, as well as the fluctuating attraction. Gradually Birkin sees Gerald's condition as a challenge; he realises that he needs to be reclaimed from a similar degenerative process as is in himself. He sets about the reclamation futilely by insisting that Gerald needs to repudiate the conventions he hides behind and be 'free and extraordinary, in an extraordinary world of liberty.' (Ch. xvi.) Gerald resists. At this point, when nothing is firmly established between the two, Birkin is suddenly inspired by a vision

of Blutbrüderschaft, and impulsively makes his first halting proposition of a pledge between them:

> "We will swear to each other, one day, shall we?" pleaded Birkin. "We will swear to stand by each other - be true to each other - ultimately - infallibly - given to each other, organically - without possibility of taking back."
>
> Birkin sought hard to express himself, but Gerald hardly listened. His face shone with a certain luminous pleasure. He was pleased. But he kept his reserve. He held himself back.

The next chapter, entitled 'The Industrial Magnate', makes one overwhelmingly aware of the forces contributing to Gerald's resistance.

In the scene in which Birkin wrestles with Gerald, Lawrence has deliberately and successfully expunged all abnormality from the relationship. What Lawrence wanted was to distil, from a situation that might have been fraught with personal idiosyncrasy, the pattern of a permanent human need. Whatever sexual aberration may have been envisaged in the abandoned Prologue is absent from this novel. Whatever hinted of it was cut out in revision. The wrestling occurs out of Gerald's need for 'something to hit'. Birkin, too, has just been refused by Ursula, and the wrestling match gives reassurance and contact with life. There is nothing in this scene, or anywhere else throughout the description of the friendship, that bears comparison with like situations in the immature The White Peacock, or the religiose The Plumed Serpent. (See note.) The discipline of Lawrence's objectivity has made the scene one in which, out of an exceptional occasion in an impermanent relationship, there is envisaged (in a dramatic symbolism much like that in the episode between Gerald and the mare), a 'oneness of struggle' which reveals the closeness of the two in kind, their inclusion and rejection of each other; it is a struggle between the hopeful and the despairing.

Birkin is refreshed and exhausted from the fight and from the intimacy and understanding, the interflow, with what he knows he himself is part of and loves, and whose deathward career he rejects. After the wrestling they go their separate ways.

The death of Gerald, to whom he has offered help, leaves Birkin with an unsatisfied yearning for a connection beyond the unit of himself and Ursula. A close understanding with a man, with a male world, establishes for him a sense of belonging, of connection with the larger society. He grieves that Gerald did not have faith in him:

> "He should have loved me," he said, "I offered him."
> She, [Ursula] afraid, white, with mute lips, answered:
> "What difference would it have made!"
> "It would!" he said. "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. (Ch. xxxi.)

As we have seen, what happens to Gerald is the result of a personal incapacity which reacts to and co-operates with destructive influences in his environment. He doesn't merely succumb to the latter. He always has a choice, as Birkin insists. What makes Gerald a promoter of the anti-human industrial aspects of the social changes that take place in the novel is the co-incidence of the inner and the outer compulsion. The interaction of such personal and social factors is already explored in The Rainbow. There one sees the varied and historically wider view of society's influence upon the individual. Three generations are seen developing their own suitable relationship to the rest of their society with varying degrees of success. With Will Brangwen this relationship (as we have

seen) is worked out in some detail. But Women in Love is the novel in which analysis is focussed most closely on the struggle of the individual to mature within his society. The analysis takes its characters as far as the threshold of commitment to that society - the desire to put back into it by contacts outside those directly related to self-survival some of the energy and interest that is being released by a life that is now on the path of fulfilment. Birkin needs this to complete his life. So the end of the book is a new beginning, the statement of a further challenge. The novel brings its characters to the threshold of a full marriage and to conscious recognition of a need for others. The survey of the achievements and failures from previous generations in The Rainbow makes certain of the reader's consciousness that no one era of history is necessarily more damaging or dangerous than another, and this consciousness is guaranteed by the presence of Ursula as a main character in Women in Love.

At the end of Women in Love Ursula looks back:

> She thought of the Marsh, the old, intimate farm life at Cossethay. My God, how far was she projected from her childhood, how far was she still to go! In one lifetime one travelled through aeons. The great chasm of memory from her childhood in the intimate country surroundings of Cossethay and the Marsh Farm - she remembered the servant Tilly, who used to give her bread and butter sprinkled with brown sugar in the old living-room where the grandfather clock had two pink roses in a basket painted above the figures on the face - and now when she was travelling into the unknown with Birkin, an utter stranger - was so great, that it seemed she had no identity, that the child she had been, playing in Cossethay churchyard, was a little creature of history, not really herself. (Ch. xxix.)

Here as always in the novel, the emphasis is on the distance she herself has had to travel through experience so intensely felt that it distances the past, but the intensity of which is necessary to

push her on. In spite of this emphasis, the passage effectively recalls her past at a point where she is ready to start her mature life - a point where the pattern that has been established in The Rainbow becomes relevant to the future of Birkin and Ursula.

Throughout Ursula's development in The Rainbow one is forced to awareness of a pattern repeating itself:

> Hesitating, they continued to walk on, quivering like shadows under the ash trees of the hill, where her grandfather had walked with his daffodils to make his proposal, and where her mother had gone with her young husband, walking close upon him as Ursula was now walking upon Skrebensky. (Ch. xi.)

It is stressed in the recurrent imagery of the novel - not only in the seed imagery but in the rainbow itself, which stands as a pledge, a sign of the renewal of life and of hope through the achievement of the individual. This is implied in the 'arch' that is created by the achievement of Tom and Lydia, by which Anna is protected and freed:

> 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. (Ch. iii.)

It is held as a vision or prospect by Anna for her children:

> Dawn and sunset were the feet of the rainbow that spanned the day, and she saw the hope, the promise. Why should she travel any further?
>
> ... If she were not the wayfarer to the unknown, if she were arrived now, settled in her builded house, a rich woman, still her doors opened under the arch of the rainbow, her threshold reflected the passing of the sun and moon, the great travellers, her house was full of the echo of journeying.
>
> She was a door and a threshold, she herself. Through her another soul was coming, to stand upon her as upon the threshold, looking out, shading its eyes for the direction to take. (Ch. vi.)

With Ursula, Anna's daughter, Lawrence began his close examination of the development of a character who will again, like

Tom and Lydia, achieve maturity in marriage within her own changing society, a character whose own life will fulfil the promise and the challenge of the rainbow that she sees at the end of the early novel. How this might be done was not closely examined in the story of Tom and Lydia. Since the terms of the achievement are the same for any individual in any society, so the stress is maintained on the pattern and the repetition of the effort. It is important to see that her achievement is as much because of as in spite of her history, and is not the result merely of a felicitously indomitable vitality.

Ursula's development is fed by the traditions that her family has for generations creatively challenged and renewed. Both novels insist that capacity for growth, for making an effort towards self-understanding and self-liberation, is not the prerogative of the elect. To call her 'the chosen vessel of "vitality"', as S. L. Goldberg has done (D. H. Lawrence, ed. Clarke, p. 128) is to ignore the main thesis of the two novels, which is that the achievement cannot be made alone but can only come about in co-operation with another individual seeking the same fulfilment. The elect have to become elect. The potential for 'election' is in anyone.

The purpose of concentrating on two such vigorous fighters as Ursula and Birkin in such a study is obvious. In following these two, their more complex personal and social involvements will approach nearer to a dramatic appraisal of the difficulties of achieving a really full life and the amount of effort required to do so.

The statement of faith to be found in the two novels is based upon balanced awareness of the degree to which personal choice and effort are effective in personal fulfilment and the degree to which the individual is powerless in the grip of the conditions and circumstances that help to form him. Where the forces of society (as forces)

are depicted strongly, as in Women in Love, the individuals who are doing battle with them are shown as having an equal ruthless strength to survive and overcome. The pattern or the terms of personal development are highlighted in this way.

But the two novels make it clear that it is not only in co-operation with other individuals that the growth of each comes about, but also through co-operation, in the same way as with people, with the ideologies, conventions and institutions of society, which in fact are the stored and applied knowledge of other generations. They are to be challenged and accepted, fought and appropriated according to the development and changing needs of an individual. The danger of accepting the abstracts uncritically as guiding dicta is the same as the danger of enslaving oneself to another individual; without challenge there is no change, without change there is no growth. The whole enterprise is a co-operative one.

Ursula in The Rainbow grows in maturity because the personal, ideological and institutional influences are not all encouraging and beneficial. In her relationship with her parents, for example, she has had to take sides in the conflict between them, and her sensitivity to the difficulty of life is increased by having emotional demands made upon her by her father (prompted by the exigencies of his own marriage) which she cannot and which he does not finally want her to fulfil. Her parents become for her both an example and a warning. To her, the idea of their vigour and their potential contrasts with the achievement of their lives - for she sees them baulked. She is driven to achieve a greater fulfilment in life and marriage. Later it is only through the disappointment and despair caused by her unsuccessful love affair with Skrebensky that she herself changes enough to be ready for marriage. Ursula's

progress with ideas and conventions follows the same pattern: she embraces and rejects, and what is left with her of the contact pushes her on to an ever increasing personal understanding.

Since the second half of The Rainbow exemplifies, to the exclusion of everything else, the processes by which the individual comes to understand his own needs as defined within and against the pressures of society, it seems strange that so many critics should have been upset by the optimism of the final scene of it. This optimism, an expression of Ursula's own defiance and hope, of her desire and her power to develop, is completely valid as such.

Ursula at this point is in the process of understanding both the failure and the success of her assertions and rejections. At this point she has a sense of the danger implicit in the very vigour of her urge towards fulfilment and is aware that she cannot at any time be totally conscious of her own needs to the point where it would be possible to fulfil them solely by determination. She has come to some appreciation of how far they may be achieved by her own efforts and how far by patient alertness and the effort of others. It is at this point (as we have seen in the fourth chapter) that a certain submissiveness and hope take the place of assertion. She has come to just such an understanding as others have come to before her, are coming to with her, and will come to after her. The whole perspective of this novel, and the repetition of the symbol of the rainbow yet again, ensures that her vision will not be understood as unique to her alone. Coming to terms with society, and with oneself in it, has been seen to be equally difficult at any time.

When Ursula feels this optimism and faith she naturally superimposes it: she reads others, the colliers, by the same light. There is every reason why she should at this stage, for she has

acquired a certain humility through her recent experience and implicitly understands, in identifying her own potential with theirs, not only that she is not unique but that for her fulfilment she must wait upon similar potential in others. The superimposing process is made very obvious:

> In the still, silenced forms of the colliers she saw a sort of suspense, a waiting in pain for the new liberation; she saw the same in the false hard confidence of the women. The confidence of the women was brittle. It would break quickly to reveal the strength and patient effort of the new germination.
>
> In everything she saw she grasped and groped to find the creation of the living God, instead of the old, hard barren form of bygone living.

To make it clearer still, no sooner does she see the colliers in this light of confidence than she falls prey to doubt and self-mistrust, and loses touch again:

> Sometimes great terror possessed her. Sometimes she lost touch, she lost her feeling, she could only know the old horror of the husk which bound in her and all mankind. They were all in prison, they were all going mad.

As Lawrence saw and showed so clearly through Birkin in Women in Love, this confidence, this sense of being in touch, is something that must be renewed again and again. That The Rainbow ought to end in this way both the previous histories and the next novel prove. The study in depth of two representative combattants continues in Women in Love. But from Ursula's presence it is guaranteed the reader will be conscious that they are indeed representative.

The total picture then, both in Women in Love and The Rainbow, is of a balance of constructive and destructive potential in the upbringing of every individual. The balance is different in every case, but however weighted general environment and personal circumstances may be against anyone, he can abet the sources of growth that are in himself, in the people around him and in the next generation. Women in Love gives dramatic testimony of this. It stops at the point where concern can and must again be directed outside the self and the pair. This direction of interest makes up much of the subject-matter of the succeeding novels.

As we have already seen, these novels deal in generalities. Some of the things that have been discovered in the course of studying the development of the individual are now applied, no longer with the suggestion of flexibility and the difference of each specific case, to the whole of society. It is an imaginative process, an imaginative leap. Such an enterprise has to be. One cannot effectually speak on behalf of a society (since that implies an ironing out of difference, the merging of individuals into 'society') but only on behalf of the individuals in it. As the earnest imaginative conception takes stronger hold, so the novels become more zealous than honest. There is nothing in these novels to compare with the complete and realistic portrayal of the constructive relationship of individuals within their society that we have in the The Rainbow and Women in Love. The process of analysis has run away with the author. What is more, it is simpler than keeping up the enormous effort of balance achieved in Women in Love - and Lawrence's exhaustion is obvious in the novel, Aaron's Rod that follows, which is, as we have seen, full of fears and stances and superficial or specious substantiation.

Kangaroo is hardly a more promising effort. There the idea of friendship as constituting a constructive relationship with society, which is stated at the end of Women in Love and reiterated fruitlessly in Aaron's Rod, is recalled and finally abandoned; and in its place is a groping towards the authority of abstracts:

> All his life he [Somers] had cherished a beloved ideal of friendship - David and Jonathan. And now, when true and good friends offered, he found he simply could not commit himself, even to simple friendship. The whole trend of this affection, this mingling, this intimacy, this truly beautiful love, he found his soul just set against it. He couldn't go along with it. He didn't want a friend, he didn't want loving affection, he didn't want comradeship. No, his soul trembled when he tried to drive it along the way, trembled and stood still, like Balaam's Ass. It did not want friendship or comradeship, great or small, deep or shallow.
>
> It took Lovat Somers some time before he would really admit and accept this new fact. Not till he had striven hard with his soul did he come to see the angel in the way; not till his soul, like Balaam's Ass, had spoken more than once. And then, when forced to admit, it was a revolution in his mind. He had all his life had this craving for an absolute friend, a David to his Jonathan, Pylades to his Orestes: a blood-brother. All his life he had secretly grieved over his friendlessness. And now at last, when it really offered - and it had offered twice before, since he had left Europe - he didn't want it, and he realised that in his innermost soul he had never wanted it.
>
> Yet he wanted some living fellowship with other men; as it was he was just isolated. Maybe a living fellowship! - but not affection, not love, not comradeship. Not mates and equality and mingling. Not blood-brotherhood. None of that.
>
> What else? He didn't know. He only knew he was never destined to be mate or comrade or even friend with any man. Some other living relationship. But what? He did not know. Perhaps the thing that the dark races know: that one can still feel in India: the mystery of lordship. That which white men have struggled so long against, and which is the clue to the life of the Hindu. The mystery of lordship. The mystery of innate, natural, sacred priority. The other mystic relationship between men, which democracy and equality try to deny and obliterate. Not any arbitrary caste or birth aristocracy. But the mystic recognition of difference and innate priority, the joy of obedience and the sacred responsibility of authority. (Ch. vi.)

Instead of the insistence upon a commitment of one to another - the failure of which is one of the contributory factors in Gerald's

tragedy - there is a mistrust of the variables involved in personal commitment and the growing need to find unvarying, factitious, impersonal ones. The main concern in this novel is not the maintenance of an alertness to life but a search for a suitable absolute and its attendant discipline upon which to rely.

> This individuality which each of us has got and which makes him a wayward, wilful, dangerous, untrustworthy quantity to every other individual, because every individuality is bound to react at some time against every other individuality, without exception - or else lose its own integrity; because of the inevitable necessity of each individual to react away from any other individual, at certain times, human love is a truly relative thing, not an absolute. It cannot be absolute.
>
> Yet the human heart must have an absolute. It is one of the conditions of being human. (Ch. xi.)

In the teeth of his wife's opposition and his own scepticism, Somers begins to ally himself with the organisation set up by Ben Cooley, who manages to inspire 'love' in Somers and who believes in fatherly authority:

> "Man needs a quiet, gentle father who uses his authority in the name of living life, and who is absolutely against anti-life." (Ch. vi.)

Finally, however, after Cooley's Party has shown its Hyde side at the riot in chapter xvi, Somers rejects him too; and although he adheres to the principle of authority (rather than love) he considers it must be based on religious motives: 'Once go down before the God-passion and human passions take their right rhythm.' (Ch. xi.)

The need for a specifically religious and authoritarian reconstruction of contemporary society is expressed in The Plumed Serpent. The novel is preoccupied with religious rather than political revival, and Ramón is determined that his movement shall have no political taint. But it is an organisation of men, and within that organisation it is clear enough that fanaticism translates itself into regimentation. Cipriano's dumb reliance on his

Master is emphasised in the ritual of initiation he undergoes.

"To me, Ramón is more than life." (Ch. xx.)

In turn he exacts from his men a militaristic discipline and treats his enemies with a brutally complacent mockery of justice:

> "The Lords of Life are Masters of Death," he said in a loud, clear voice.
> And swift as lightening he stabbed the blindfolded man to the heart, with three swift, heavy stabs. Then he lifted the red dagger and threw it down. (Ch. xxiii.)

There is no irony here.

Such extremism is corrected in Lady Chatterley's Lover, which returns to the study of individuals rather than ideas. Mellors' pessimism about contemporary society is balanced by the sanity of Connie's insistence on having her child, building her family and providing for it. But in this last novel it is a tired reaffirmation of only part of the experience explored through The Rainbow and Women in Love.

Note on Lawrence and Homosexuality

The homosexual complication in Birkin's development, which was expunged from Women in Love, is presented forcibly in the abandoned Prologue: 'although he [Birkin] was always drawn to women, feeling more at home with a woman than with a man, yet it was for men that he felt the hot, flushing, roused attraction' (Phoenix, ii, 103.) Lawrence, unlike Gide, stood aside from it. 'I believe,' he wrote, 'a man projects his own image on another man, like a mirror. But from a woman he wants himself reborn, reconstructed. One is kept by all tradition and instinct from loving men or a man - for it means just extinction of all the purposive influences.'

(Lawrence to Savage, 2 December, 1913, Letters, i, 251.)

He clung however to the belief in male comradeship: 'a full relationship where there can be also physical and passional meeting, as there used to be in the old dances and rituals.' (Lawrence to Gardiner, 11 October 1926, Letters, ii, 941.) Only in Women in Love however - and among the Indians in The Woman who Rode Away - did Lawrence portray a scene of physical intimacy between men without overtones of glamour or embarrassment.

CHAPTER VII

Themes of Regeneration in Previous Novels

As in previous chapters, let us consider the possibility of a few immediate or contemporary influences on Lawrence's treatment of regeneration before discussing any major ones.

E. M. Forster's novels may at first seem to offer the closest parallels. They place an emphasis on the value of individuality, passion and instinct, in the context of tradition. Italian spontaneity and warmth, Indian warmth and flexibility are contrasted with a strait-jacketed egoism among the English; pagan and Hindu religions are contrasted with Protestantism. Gino Carella in Where Angels Fear to Tread is comparable in character and function with Cicio in The Lost Girl. In one novel after another, female characters like Mrs. Elliott, Mrs. Wilcox and Mrs. Moore stand for traditional life-values, for 'instinctive wisdom'. (Howard's End, ch. iii.) Margaret Schlegel in Howard's End wants to build

> 'the rainbow bridge that should connect the prose with the passion ... Live in fragments no longer. Only connect, and the beast and the monk, robbed of the isolation that is life to either, will die. (Ch. xxii.)

She dreams of forging a link between the past that she associates with Howards End and the future that she sees in her sister's child. Emerson in A Room with a View has a rôle similar to such of Lawrence's spokesmen as Lilly and sometimes speaks similar lines:

> "I believed in a return to Nature once .... Today, I believe that we must discover Nature." (Ch. xii.)

The young farmer, Mrs. Elliott's lover in The Longest Journey, may remind one a little of Tom Brangwen or even of Mellors. Their bastard son stands for physical health and moral normality.

Yet all these resemblances are loose and general, the result, perhaps of being contemporary and having a common literary culture more than anything else. The differences in the handling of this theme are essential to one's understanding of each writer. And the chief difference lies in the comparative lack of understanding and conviction with which these values are put forward by Forster. The sketchiness, idealisation or portentousness of some of the early portraits makes it impossible for the reader to be convinced that these characters might achieve any relationship that their aims call for. In A Passage to India the lack of conviction becomes an acknowledged general defeatism, part of the fibre of a novel that is chiefly concerned with insuperable obstacles to close personal relationships.

Lawrence's comparative breadth of interest, even as a youth, is demonstrated by his early enthusiasm for three other contemporaries, Wells, Bennett and Hardy.

In Wells's novels is to be found a correspondence of general intentions as remarkable as in Forster's. The didactic programme behind some of them with their stress on the value of individuality, of marriage and of social commitment is as determined as Lawrence's own on occasion. Wells of course was much concerned with the 'little man', like Kipps and Polly, who is trapped in the conventions of class and romance - a situation that gives the author an opportunity to exercise a two-way irony, against the limitations of the hero and the limitations of his environment. Lawrence was less interested in this kind of game-playing than in Wells's

portrayal of exceptional individuals like Ann Veronica and George Ponderevo.

Ann Veronica, a young student, has an 'innocent and audacious self-reliance'. (Ch. i, section 6.) She is

> wildly discontented and eager for freedom and life ... All the world about her seemed to be - how can one put it? - in wrappers, like a house when people leave it in the summer (Ch. i, section 2.)

Like Ursula she specialises in biology and finds in its study a general purpose she can identify with her own:

> And she, she in her own person too, was this eternal Bios, beginning again its recurrent journey to selection and multiplication and failure or survival. (viii, 2.)

She meets Capes, a lecturer, in a classroom. Their relationship is for her 'the dawn of the new life'. (xv,1.) He declares:

> "I'm making a mess of my life - unless you come in and take it. I am. In you - if you can love me - there is salvation." (xix, 5.)

They go to the Swiss mountains together.

> "We've deserted the posts in which we found ourselves, cut our duties, exposed ourselves to risks that may destroy any sort of social usefulness in us ... That wrappered life, as you call it - we've burnt the confounded rags!" (xvi, 2 and 6.)

Shorn of the sentimentality and glamour Wells lends it the relationship is remarkably akin to some aspects of Birkin's and Ursula's.

George Ponderevo is a more complex character with more influence on Lawrence, who described Tono-Bungay as 'a great book' when he first read it. (Lawrence to Jennings, 8 May 1909, Letters i, 54.)

George, like Dickens's David and Pip, tells his own story from childhood to maturity, and there is a well-documented typicality about it, especially in the earlier episodes, which borrow heavily from Dickens:

> I sat among these people on a high, hard, early Georgian chair, trying to exist, like a feeble seedling amidst great rocks, and my mother sat with an eye upon me, resolute to suppress the slightest manifestation of vitality.
> (Book I, ch. i, section 4.)

His sexual relationships parallel Paul Morel's (without the Oedipus complication). He falls in love with a girl whose conventionality and frigidity - 'for her my ardour had no quickening fire' (II,i,5) - make their marriage a failure. His two subsequent love-affairs are day-dream fulfilments, like Paul's with Clara. One is a brief compensatory interlude with a typist who is described as sensuous and 'eupeptic'. (II,iv,11.) The other is a glamorous affair with a sophisticated love-addict who is 'afraid of life'. (IV,ii,3.)

> It glows in my memory like some bright casual flower starting up amidst the débris of a catastrophe. For nearly a fortnight we two met and made love together. Once more this mighty passion, that our aimless civilization has fettered and maimed and sterilised and debased, gripped me and filled me with passionate delights and solemn joys.
> (IV, ii ,2.)

At the end of the novel he is left alone and disillusioned, not only with love but at the thwarting of his social and religious aspirations. He has wanted 'to find something beyond mechanism that I could serve'. (II,i,2.)

> All my life has been at bottom seeking, disbelieving always, dissatisfied always with the thing seen and the thing believed, seeking something in toil, in force, in danger, something whose name and nature I do not clearly understand, something beautiful, worshipful, enduring, mine profoundly and fundamentally, and the utter redemption of myself.
> (II,iv,10.)

His entanglement in his uncle's large-scale legalised fraud leads to self-disgust, so that he, the narrator of the story, says about the whole tale, 'I have called it Tono-Bungay, but I had far better have called it Waste.' (IV,iii,1.)

The pessimism is qualified by an enthusiasm for a grand generalisation about the transcendent purpose of life, which is

finally figured in the symbol of a naval destroyer,

> ... stark and swift, irrelevant to most human interests. Sometimes I call this reality Science, sometimes I call it Truth. But it is something we draw by pain and effort out of the heart of life, that we disentangle and make clear. Other men serve it, I know, in art, in literature, in social invention, and see it in a thousand different figures, under a hundred names. I see it always as austerity, as beauty. This thing we make clear is the heart of life. It is the one enduring thing. Men and nations, epochs and civilisations pass, each making its contribution. I do not know what it is, this something, except that it is supreme. (IV,iii,3.)

The ending of the novel, like the ending of Sons and Lovers, holds out hope for the development of the main character. But, as Lawrence put it,

> His folk have no personality - no passion. The feeling in the book wanders loose - like a sauce poured over it - Sehnsucht und Wehmut'. (Lawrence to Savage, September 1913, Letters, i, 226.)

In his later novels, Wells's didactic insistence on the social ideals he cherished grew more and more emphatic and the stories proportionately more empty of vitality and persuasiveness.

In Arnold Bennett's novels Lawrence found less generalisation, more literalness. As Henry James put it,

> the canvas is covered, ever so closely and vividly covered, by the exhibition of inumerable small facts and aspects, at which we assist with the most comfortable sense of their substantial truth. ('The New Novel', Selected Literary Criticism, p. 321.)

The vindication of the average may never have been much to Lawrence's taste; but Bennett's best novel, The Old Wives' Tale, contains one feature whose appeal is attested by the way in which Lawrence developed it in The Lost Girl.

This is the environment and early development of Sophia Baines. Like Alvina Houghton, she is a draper's daughter in a Midland town, which has several incidential resemblances to the early picture of Woodhouse. She is an exceptional individual, not average

or conventional: like Alvina, but glamourised:

> She had youth, physical perfection; she brimmed with energy, with the sense of vital power; all existence lay before her; when she put her lips together she felt capable of outwying no matter whom in fortitude of resolution. (Book I, ch. iii, section 3.)

Baulked in her ambition to become a teacher, she elopes with a travelling salesman and creates an independent life for herself abroad. 'The foundation of her character was a haughty moral independence.' (III, vii, 1.) She ends, however, feeling that life is a puzzle; that in the moments one is forced to think about it, one is overwhelmed with sadness:

> The riddle of life was killing her, and she seemed to drown in a sea of inexpressible sorrow. (IV, iv, 3.)

'I hate Bennett's resignation', Lawrence wrote to McLeod. (6 October 1912, Letters, i, 150.) His portrayal of Alvina's exceptional later development was a reply to it.

Lawrence admired Hardy more than these other contemporaries. The direct influence of his narrative style in the most 'realistic' phase of Lawrence's career can be gauged by comparing, say, the opening of Part III, chapter ii of Jude the Obscure, where Jude and Sue go on a day trip, with any of the excursions that take place in the 'Lad-and-Girl Love' chapter of Sons and Lovers.

Lawrence admired in Hardy what he found in Bennett and Wells, a generous portrayal of provincial types. There is a good-humoured sympathy for ordinary people in Hardy's novels, though it may verge on the sentimental in its simplifications, and it may occasionally get overridden by other considerations - as in the case of Arabella in Jude the Obscure. As Lawrence noted, Hardy 'must have his personal revenge on her for her coarseness, which offends him, because he is something of an Angel Clare.' (Phoenix, i, 489.)

She is reduced to an example of insentience, 'not worth a great deal as a specimen of womankind.' (Book I, ch. ix.)

More important to Lawrence than Hardy's portrayal of country people was his portrayal of the countryside - 'a great background, vital and vivid, which matters more than the people who move upon it.' (Phoenix, i, 419.)

In Hardy's novels the natural processes, human and non-human, interact:

> Amid the oozing fatness and warm ferments of the Froom Vale, at a season when the rush of juices could almost be heard below the hiss of fertilisation, it was impossible that the most fanciful love should not grow passionate. (Tess of the d'Urbervilles, ch. xiv.)

The novels are also concerned with how these natural processes flourish or are thwarted in human beings. Even after the collapse of Tess's first love-affair and the death of her baby:

> Some spirit within her rose automatically as the sap in the twigs. It was unexpended youth, surging up anew after its temporary check, and bringing with it hope, and the invincible instinct towards self-delight. (Ch. xv.)

In the description of Tess's early relationship with Angel Clare, as in the courtship of Will and Anna in The Rainbow, the parallel drawn between their instinctive responses and the natural processes around them stresses the depth and inevitability of their attraction.

Many of Hardy's love scenes suggest resemblances to scenes in Lawrence's novels. Some of these are merely circumstantial, like Eustacia's dancing in the moonlight, which may recall scenes either with Lettie in The White Peacock or with Ursula in The Rainbow. The underlying affinity however consists in Hardy's offering symbolic situations to suggest underlying tensions. This makes Troy's sword-practice scene in Far from the Madding Crowd Lawrentian although it has no circumstantial resemblance to any scene in Lawrence's novels.

For Hardy, however, the relationship between flesh and spirit was 'a deadly war' (Preface to Jude the Obscure) - a 'mutually destructive interdependence'. (The Return of the Native, book II, ch. vi.) The irresolution between them leads in his novels to tragedy and a feeling of defeat which is shared by the author.

What gives the work of those four novelists only minor affinities with Lawrence's complex interest and analysis in this field is their lack of affirmative power. There is no lack of it in the work of the next two we shall consider. Such characters as Maggie Tulliver in The Mill on the Floss and Levin in Anna Karenin are commonly regarded as literary antecedents of Ursula and Birkin.

The story of Maggie Tulliver is not, however, basically in keeping with Lawrence's interests. She may well have been the 'favourite heroine' of his late teens (Chambers, A Personal Record, pp. 97-8) and might well have been a stimulus to the portrayal of Ursula, through her powerful animal vitality and her conflict with the conventions of her environment; but her development after adolescence, and George Eliot's endorsement of the sacrifice of her love for the sake of her loyalty to her friend could hardly have appealed even to the youthful Lawrence, who declared that she 'spoilt it halfway'. (Ibid.)

Levin, like Birkin, is portrayed full of an ambitious idealism that is infused with generous sensitivity - though Levin's ambitions are more practical than Birkin's and his generosity warmer. His understanding parallels Birkin's to some extent; there is the need for renewed contact with the natural creative cycle and the crystallisation of his longings for a more coherent way of life into his desire to marry Kitty; but where they parallel they surpass, in fullness and assurance. Levin's mowing with the peasants, for instance, creates for him an extraordinary harmony between mind and body and between spheres of existence often thought of as opposed or separate: the individual and the collective, the individual and the natural, the social and the natural. Levin's experiences, in fact, manifest that achieved integrity of individual response which Birkin is striving to reach.

When Tolstoy's and George Eliot's later work becomes overtly didactic - 'lapses from the picture to the diagram' (Eliot to Harrison, 15 August 1866, Letters, iv, 300) - it comes closer in kind to the later Lawrence novels. Like him they are concerned with salvation, involving the individual's subordination to larger forces in life. Deronda, for instance, is an authorial spokesman who rejects the conventional values of his upbringing and enters on a quest to rediscover and renew his heritage, a quest that involves a marriage with one of his own kind, a commitment to the redemption of individuals who like Gwendolen turn to him as to a conscience, and beyond this, to the redemption of his race. Levin, at the end of Anna Karenin (in spite of the equilibrium he has achieved

through the novel) falls back on a wholesale self-commitment to the wisdom of common humanity; while Nekhlyudov in Resurrection seeks his salvation in a regenerative marriage with the woman he has wronged.

In the novels of Hawthorne, Dickens, Dostoevsky and Conrad we can find regenerative themes handled in a way that illuminates more centrally Lawrence's own: we find here what we have found throughout Lawrence's career, the exploration of and around the idea of regeneration.

It is in the structure of their novels - how the destructive potential is balanced by the creative - that these novelists show the closest affinities with Lawrence. From this point of view it will be interesting to look at a novel by each of them, choosing one in which we have already examined some of the degenerative themes.

In Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter Dimmesdale's high-mindedness and Chillingworth's malignity (a perverse impulse of negation which is called into being by the element of dishonesty and weakness in the high-mindedness) is shared to some extent by all the main characters. These two themes are explored as destructive of the potentially creative; and when Hester Prynne in the forest flings away the stigma of her adultery that is pinned to her breast:

> The objects that had made a shadow hitherto embodied the brightness now. The course of the little brook might be traced by its merry gleam afar into the wood's heart of mystery, which had become a mystery of joy.
>
> Such was the sympathy of Nature - that wild, heathen Nature of the forest, never subjugated by human law, nor illumined by higher truth - with the bliss of these two spirits! Love, whether newly born, or aroused from a deathlike slumber, must always create a sunshine, filling the heart so full of radiance that it overflows upon the outward world. (Ch. xviii.)

The scarlet letter itself stands for the glory as well as the sin of sensuality. They are embodied in Hester's daughter, Pearl, who is, as Lawrence put it, 'the scarlet letter incarnate'. (The Symbolic Meaning, p. 148.) The creative outcome of the tale lies in Hester's (and her daughter's) surviving the struggle, and in her understanding and accepting her own and society's guilt, and her own and society's rightness, to become eventually one to whom

> ... people brought all their sorrows and perplexities and besought her counsel, as one who had herself gone through a mighty trouble. Women, more especially - in the continually recurring trials of wounded, wasted, wronged, misplaced, or erring and sinful passion - or with the dreary burden of a heart unyielded, because unvalued and unsought - came to Hester's cottage, demanding why they were so wretched, and what the remedy! Hester comforted and counselled them, as best she might. She assured them, too, of her firm belief, that at some brighter period, when the world should have grown ripe for it, in Heaven's own time, a new truth would be revealed, in order to establish the whole relation between man and woman on a surer ground of mutual happiness. (Ch. xxiv.)

In spite of the fact that Lawrence in his essay in Classic American Literature debunked the piety with which Hawthorne invested his heroine, and stressed her destructiveness from Dimmesdale's point of view, the general pattern of Hester's experience, both in the suffering and the outcome, is similar in design and thematic interest to aspects of Women in Love.

In Dickens the regenerative theme is important and omnipresent, but it is explored not as to its content so much as to its

effect. The need to achieve a balance and a renewal - as is shown in such characters who falter on the edge of failure and despair as Clennam and Wrayburn - is generally seen as a matter of exposing oneself to the benign influences of life rather than a matter of rigorous challenge and self-questioning. The good influences are constants not only in nature but in people. So in the front rank as expressions of unmixed goodness are heroines like Florence Dombey, Sissy Jupe, Amy Dorrit and Lizzie Hexam, who as regenerative influences are unvarying. Such influences are also to be found among pairs like the Bagnets and the Boffins and whole families like the Toodles, the Peggottys and the Plornishes. They are set up against monomaniacs like Dombey, Gradgrind and Mrs. Clennam, and the casts of supporting characters throughout the novels who cripple the vitality of others and are themselves crippled.

Let us look for a while at the structure of Dombey and Son, since this is the book we have studied most. The sources of regeneration are to be found in a cross-section of society and in widely differing characters. In the Toodles, in Miss Tox, Susan Nipper, Sol and Cuttle, and in Cousin Feenix we have low, middle and upper class representatives of survivors; just as we have a similar range of those whose natures, co-operating with their circumstances, have kept them negative and destructive: as with Mrs. Brown and Alice, Mrs. Pipchin, Bagstock and Carker, and Mrs. Skewton. The width of coverage given to these lines of interest takes the place of depth of analysis given to individual characters. This is not to suggest that there is a lack of psychological understanding in Dickens's novels, but that this understanding is at the disposal of the author's more general moral diagnosis before anything else. The themes are worked out both by tracing their effects through different characters

and by studying closely various ideological strongholds - for example, the educational one through Blimber and his colleagues and the commercial one through Dombey and his. Where the individual characters are developed as a result of their central importance to the structure of the novel, and they have to be more and more carefully defined as people within a greater variety of contexts of experience, this too is accomplished from the standpoint of the leading themes or moral directives.

Dombey's every response is referred back (as we have seen in the second chapter) to his obsession and the pride through which it operates. The slow infiltration of a new and regenerative experience starts as far back in the book as his consciousness of a growing hatred of his daughter, and this regenerative theme grows in strength, both through Paul's tragedy and through Florence's development.

In order to see how intricately diagnosis of a general pattern, analysis of the mentality of an individual character, symbolism and direct authorial commentary are woven together, let us look at Dombey's journey after Paul's death. During this journey the train he travels in represents the process of death, and death itself: it is Dombey who sees it as such, as he is 'hurried headlong, not through a rich and varied country, but a wilderness of blighted and gnawing jealousies'. (Ch. xx.) It stands for death in its suddenness and single-tracked indifference to people and their works. Nevertheless, around it:

> There are jagged walls and falling houses close at hand, and through the battered roofs and broken windows, wretched rooms are seen, where want and fever hide themselves in many wretched shapes, while smoke and crowded gables, and distorted chimneys, and deformity of brick and mortar penning up deformity of mind and body, choke the murky distance. As Mr. Dombey looks out of his carriage window, it is never in his thoughts that the monster who has brought him there has let the light of day in on these

things: not made or caused them.

The train represents change and progress as well as death, something that Dombey in his sealed condition cannot respond to. The death of Paul is a means by which 'the light of day' is let in on him. The thought of his daughter Florence, that on this journey is 'abroad in the expression of defeat and persecution that seemed to encircle him like the air,' is finally at the end of the story understood as 'that which he could so easily have wrought into a blessing and had set himself so steadily for years to form into a curse'. (Ch. lix.) The recognition of squalor, of defeat and persecution, is identified with one of the life influences, Florence, and placed within the responses of a man who is not at this stage resilient, and is unable to understand his share of responsibility for what has happened or to feel the complex unity of good and bad. In Dickens's novels, as in Lawrence's, the thematic interests that are pursued and analysed are subordinate to an understanding of the way 'it all [hangs] together in the deepest sense.' (Women in Love, ch. ii.) They are complexly related with a structure that finally expresses life's indomitability. Dombey, with great suffering, changes. When one remembers that Toodles is a train-driver and that Carker is killed by a train, one sees the extensive analytic work that such a symbol is doing; and it is only one fraction of the complex structure by which Dickens sustains the analysis of the themes that interest him.

The linking together, at the end, of all the natural representatives of 'life' and the regenerated survivors, which is brought about by the marriage of Susan Nipper and Toots, of Florence and Walter; the reuniting of Florence and her father and his redemption through his devotion to his grandchildren; the joining of Miss Tox with the Toodles family - all this, when coupled with the

death and condemnation to single existence of the destructive characters, makes up the final analysis. It is an analysis accomplished not so much through individuals as by means of them.

Moreover, the story is packed out with direct and indirect comment. Indirectly the comment occurs in the comic or ominous slanting of the description of environment or of group activities - as in the descriptions of Dombey's house and street, or of his wedding, or Paul's christening.

In general the simplicity of the idea of regeneration is unlike Lawrence's, but some of the ways of expressing the interplay of this with the other themes that are nearer Lawrence's own shows close affinity.

In Conrad's novels we have already noticed the recurrence of characters imprisoned within ideals and of characters who suffer from the breakdown of these ideals. We have also noted a few of the insulated and dangerous, such as Kurtz and the anarchists of Secret Agent. Conrad's portrayal of degenerative tendencies shows close analogies with Lawrence's, but there is no wealth of detail on the side of regeneration to compare with the detailed exploration of it by Lawrence. The concentration, as with Dickens, is on the posing of the constructive against the destructive - the constructive remaining a comparatively unexplored influence.

The epic range and diversity of Nostromo is organised so that each individual character gets its significance less from the psychological insight shown in its portrayal - though this is intelligently convincing in itself - than from the way it relates to other components of the pattern. The differing forms of idealism in Viola, Don José, Gould, Holroyd and in Nostromo himself reflect critically on each other, and are shown as related to the balancing

theme of predatory brutality as seen through Heron, Sotillo and Montero. Both these sides are challenged by the intelligent cynicism of Decoud, and judged against the innocent or affirmative characters like Mrs. Gould and Monygham.

Conrad found affirmation more difficult than any of the major novelists we are considering in this chapter. Lawrence remarked that he was one of the 'Writers among the Ruins. I can't forgive Conrad for being so sad and for giving in.' (Lawrence to Garnett, 3 October 1912, Letters, i, 152.)

Much of the regenerative potential in his novels lies neutral, passive, expectant, easily victimised. Decent, average humanity, as shown through such a character as Captain Mitchell in Nostromo, is as helpless to oppose destruction as the outworn banners of the older idealists, who are in a way accomplices of the destructive principle. The animal vitality of the populace - pictured in the scenarios of Nostromo and centred in the popular hero, Nostromo himself - is a resource like the natural resources of the San Tome silver mine, to be used or misused by the individual who owns it or by others who usurp it - and it is generally misused. The love and compassion of Mrs. Gould and the women of the Viola family is similarly exploitable. We have seen in our first chapter how Mrs. Gould's love is partially defeated by her husband's idealism, but how it gives her the stature to pass judgment on the outcome of the whole story. Such innocents - usually women and children - are generally victims in Conrad's novels, even when, like Winnie Verloc in The Secret Agent, they turn avengers.

Conrad is continually interested in the possibilities of regeneration. In Victory the regenerative love of Axel and Lena breaks through his inertia and her despair - though not in time to

save them. In Chance Flora de Barrall wins through to five years of happiness with the man whose offer of love has saved her from suicide; although this is only in the last few pages of a novel preoccupied with her miseries.

Monygham in Nostromo is perhaps the portrait given in most convincing detail of a man who suffers and wins through. He manages to achieve what the hero of Lord Jim fails to. Like Jim he suffers from the shame of betrayal - in his case he has told incriminating lies under torture. The shame is all the stronger in that:

> Dr. Monygham's view of what it behoved him to do was severe; it was an ideal view, in so much that it was the imaginative exaggeration of a correct feeling. (Part III ch. iv.)

Monygham's self-abasement, after his wanderings among the wild Indians and his period of self-appointed exile from normal human contacts and conventions, produces an instinctive sympathy with individual suffering and a determination to fight on behalf of what he conceives as right and innocent:

> People believed him scornful and soured. The truth of his nature consisted in his capacity for passion and in the sensitiveness of his temperament. What he lacked was the polished callousness of men of the world, the callousness from which springs an easy tolerance for oneself and others; the tolerance wide as poles asunder from true sympathy and human compassion. This want of callousness accounted for his sardonic turn of mind and his biting speeches. (III, xi.)

In Dostoevsky's novels everyone has noticed the recurrence of similar characters. We have already in previous chapters noticed resemblances between such idealists as Stepan Verkhovensky, Varvara Stavrogin and Katerina; between such tense and precariously balanced characters as Rogozhin, Stavrogin and Ivan Karamazov; and between such as Svridrigailov, Smerdyakov and the nihilists of The Devils.

The similarity of feature marks a similarity of function. Throughout Dostoevsky's novels the recurrent themes are more and more sharply defined against one another, until in Brothers Karamazov they achieve their clearest and most complex expression. Raskolnikov, for instance, in the first of the four major novels, Crime and Punishment, has the representative significance of three characters in The Brothers Karamazov. Like Ivan, he is the theorist of the elect; he is like Smerdyakov the half-demented wretch who commits the crime; and he is the man of impulsive sympathies who like Dmitry is hounded into guilt and exile and then resurrected to a new life. Similarly, in Zossima and Alyosha are developed aspects of human goodness that are rather uneasily combined in Myshkin of The Idiot.

The theme of regeneration is most fully explored in The Brothers Karamazov. The concept basic to this of vitality or lust for life is examined on four levels, through Fyodor, through Dmitry, and through Alyosha and Zossima.

The study of Fyodor is an inverted Birkin theme: the study of a warped lust for life. Fyodor in many respects has a greater vitality, or at least demands more from life, than those around him who appear content with halves - half-truths and half-desires. His sensuality and buffoonery are in equal proportion, and indicate not only exacting desires but an exacting need to have these desires, or the energy that prompts them, accepted, and understood. He too demands a passional integration; and it is his being unable to get it, or to escape from the defiant, perverse indulgence of that sensual vitality that he feels is generally denied, that is at the root of his buffoonery:

> "She fell perhaps in her youth, ruined by her environment. But she loved much and Christ Himself forgave the woman 'who loved much'."

"It was not for such love Christ forgave her," broke impatiently from the gentle Father Iosif.

"Yes, it was for such, monks, it was! You save your souls here, eating cabbage, and think you are the righteous. You eat a gudgeon a day, and you think you bribe God with gudgeon." (Book II, ch. vi.)

He sends up the conventions, duties and ideas that make nonsense of his vitality, as well as sending up himself for being unable to come to terms with them. He sneers at the pretences or defences of others, like Miusov, or even of Zossima -

"Is there room for my humility beside your pride?" (II,ii)

- who achieves balance and a form of passional integration with the world only by not joining the scrum. The vigorous sensual life that others seem to defend themselves from or to condemn he uses against himself, against his own growth, as a revenge against himself and a mockery of others. But his actions in company are calculated to disconcert to the extent that the company should realise their basic similarity with himself.

"For sin is sweet; all abuse it, but all men live in it, only others do it on the sly, and I openly. And so all the other sinners fall upon me for being so simple." (Book IV, ch. ii.)

At the same time he constantly suspects that somewhere they are right and he is wrong, because their lives have order. Unable to break out of the circle of revenge and desire to be accepted, alienating almost all others, he is thrown back on himself, and this contributes further to the violence of debauchery he goes in for. What he says about his skirmishes with the monks speaks for the rest of his life as well:

"Well, there is no rehabilitating myself now. So let me shame them for all I am worth. I will show them I don't care what they think - that's all!" (II, viii.)

He is non-thinking generally, except in shafts thrown out by the passionate need to get under the guard of his listeners. He is

credulous and childlike in his desire to be wholly accepted and to be recognised as the same, basically, as everyone else; it is in fact his representativeness that makes his life and his buffoonery so loathsome to the others. His abuse of innocence, his own and others', in fact destroys him. He is murdered by Smerdyakov, his own son by the innocent idiot, Lizaveta, whom he has raped. Trapped in his bewilderment and misery, he is the right vehicle for some of the keenest insights the book has to offer on the pre-requisites for regeneration.

Both the lust for life and some of the vengeful spite are passed on to Dmitry. But Dmitry, though often at sea among his own responses, begins to think things out and to objectify. Even while oscillating between extreme guilt and whole-hearted indulgence in what he considers to be his worst responses, he makes a laborious but persistent progress towards some understanding of himself. He attempts to understand the essential complex unity of the warring factors in himself. A part of the early processes of his fight towards balance is to identify what he sees as the most destructive leanings of his nature with the obvious representative of them, his father Fyodor, and this creates the murderous tension between them at the outset of the novel. But Dmitry's understanding just keeps pace with his experience.

Like his father he can see the insufficiency of the ideals he flies in the face of, and the insufficiency of some of those who uphold them; but having the lesson of his father behind him, he still holds confusedly to the objective of an orderly life as seen in conventional moral terms. He has to learn by experience to redefine what goodness means for himself - for a fulfilled life. Early in the novel he speaks to Alyosha of his confusion:

"What's still more awful is that a man with the ideal of Sodom in his soul does not renounce the ideal of the Madonna, and his heart may be on fire with that ideal, genuinely on fire, just as in his days of youth and innocence. Yes, man is broad, too broad, indeed. I'd have him narrower." (Book III, ch. iii.)

Partly he sees his sensuality as a source of life and growth, he fully knows it as an inescapable manifestation of his vitality:

"For when I do leap into the pit, I go headlong with my heels up, and am pleased to be falling in that degrading attitude, and pride myself upon it. And in the very depths of that degradation I begin a hymn of praise." (III, iii.)

He says:

"I always liked side-paths, little dark back-alleys behind the main road - there one finds adventures and surprises, and precious metal in the dirt. I am speaking figuratively, brother." (III, iv.)

The need to discover afresh the sources of life for himself is as strong in him as the need to belong to his fellow men and to be accepted and respected by them. He moves towards achieving a balance between the two whereby the two can operate together, mutually enriching. Doubting all the time, he still seeks his salvation in the same direction:

"What to the mind is shameful is beauty and nothing else to the heart. Is there beauty in Sodom? Believe me, that for the immense mass of mankind beauty is found in Sodom ... I go on and I don't know whether I'm going to shame or to light and joy, that's the trouble, for everything in the world is a riddle!" (III, iii.)

What he cannot do is inhibit his responses out of the fear or the uncertainty:

"Beauty is a terrible and awful thing! It is terrible because it has not been fathomed and never can be fathomed, for God sets us nothing but riddles. Here the boundaries meet and all contradictions exist side by side. I am not a cultivated man, brother, but I've thought a lot about this. It's terrible what mysteries there are! Too many riddles weigh men down on earth. We must solve them as we can, and try to keep a dry skin in the water." (III, iii.)

As Zossima sees when he kneels to Dmitry in an early scene in the novel, not only must Dmitry, because of his unconquerable vitality take part in life to the full but he must experience to the full the suffering resulting from the struggle to adapt and achieve a balance.

He finally achieves the prospect of his balance and his regeneration through Grushenka, the woman he has sexually loved throughout the novel. At first, using the conventional moral measure, he undervalues this love, even though and even because he knows it to be obsessive. It is his consuming interest and the source of his greatest joy as well as misery, and he treats it suspiciously, as if it testified to a form of helplessness on his part - as if he were in the grip of his own sensuality that had made a fool and a slave of him. He is anxious about it in spite of the fact that he feels he genuinely understands and sympathises with Grushenka - far more naturally and readily than with Katerina, with whom he temporarily shares an 'ideal' love.

Grushenka too has to approach an understanding of herself and her needs slowly, the way Dmitry does. She undervalues herself in some ways and refuses to be underestimated in others (as we saw earlier in her relationship with Katerina.) She has to discover the mixture of personal pride and false romanticism that is in her first affair with the Polish officer and that contributes to the disappointment and bitterness at the end of the affair. With the experience of Dmitry's devotion and need of her and the meeting with the Polish officer who had jilted her many years before, she realises the falsity of many of her motives and of the position she has been adopting. Grushenka, like Dmitry, does not know where she is going or what she really wants until the experience swallows her up. The processes in

her that have dictated action (often bitter and revengeful) for so many years have been the product of attempting to reconcile a passionate giving of the self with a certain dishonesty on her own part and on the part of others. The two, Grushenka and Dmitry, discover their deep need and understanding of each other under the stress of Dmitry's arrest and imprisonment for the murder of his father. The essential commitment of each to each is both made clear to them and tested by the murder charge. Dmitry says during his imprisonment:

> "The past was nothing! In the past it was only those infernal curves of hers that tortured me, but now I've taken all her soul into my soul and through her I've become a man myself." (Book XI, ch. iv.)

With the assurance of their genuine unity he feels in the days in prison that:

> "A new man has risen up in me. He was hidden in me, but would never have come to the surface if it hadn't been for this blow from heaven." (XI, iv.)

He says he is not afraid of imprisonment or suffering but afraid that 'the new man' may leave him. In prison he can still rejoice in the new understanding of life:

> "I may find a human heart in another convict and murderer by my side, and I may make friends with him, for even there one may live and love and suffer. One may thaw and revive a frozen heart in that convict .... It's all come to me here, here, within these peeling walls. There are numbers of them there, hundreds of them underground, with hammers in their hands. Oh yes, we shall be in chains and there will be no freedom, but then, in our great sorrow, we shall rise again to joy, without which man cannot live nor God exist, for God gives joy. .... If they drive God from the earth we shall shelter Him underground. One cannot exist in prison without God; it's even more impossible than out of prison. And then we men underground will sing from the bowels of the earth a glorious hymn to God, with whom is joy." (XI, iv.)

He identifies his achievement so strongly with suffering that he is simple-mindedly afraid that if the imposed suffering of imprisonment is in fact removed (by conforming to Ivan's plans for escape) the 'new man' may leave him.

The social commitment Dmitry feels after his finding himself to be a 'new man' is based upon the new faith in life that is born out of personal struggle, and in this respect it is not unlike the faith experienced at the sight of the rainbow by Ursula. Dmitry says:

> "In thousands of agonies I exist. I'm tormented on the rack - but I exist! Though I sit alone on a pillar - I exist! I see the sun, and if I don't see the sun I know it's there. And there's a whole life in that, in knowing that the sun is there." (XI, iv.)

Dmitry shoulders his way through his experiences by means of his indomitable vitality until he reaches a balance similar to that Birkin achieves. The vitality, the exposure to experience and the suffering is in both. Birkin, less robust and mentally keener, carves a short way ahead for himself intellectually, attempting to clear the way in the hope of making the passage through a little easier. But the structure of their development and the sources of regeneration that are relied upon are similar.

Through Zossima and Alyosha Dostoevsky explores in greater detail the mental directives and passionally sympathetic features of vitality, growth and involvement.

Alyosha is directly juxtaposed to Ivan. His total venturing of sensibility is opposed to Ivan's sealing off, his faith in and 'love of humanity' opposed to Ivan's mistrust and dislike. Through Alyosha the emphasis is put upon 'the wholeness of things'. When Alyosha is childishly grieving over the fact that the corpse of his beloved Elder Zossima not only smells but does so more rapidly than most, and that thereby his hopes of a miracle are dashed - even then there is 'reigning in his soul a sense of the wholeness of things - something steadfast and comforting - and he was aware of it himself.' (VII, iv.) His very disappointment pushes him towards a

closer understanding:

> His soul, overflowing with rapture, yearned for freedom, space, openness. .... The silence of earth seemed to melt into the silence of the heavens. The mystery of earth was one with the mystery of the stars ... There seemed to be threads from all those innumerable worlds of God, linking his soul to them and it was trembling all over 'in contact with other worlds'. .... It was as though some idea had seized the sovereignty of his mind - and it was for all his life and for ever and ever. (VII, iv.)

Alyosha's sympathetic involvement is what produces his balance, so that:

> he did not care to be a judge of others ... he would never take it upon himself to criticise and would never condemn anyone for anything. He seemed, indeed, to accept everything without the least condemnation, though often grieving bitterly: and this was so much so that no one could surprise or frighten him even in his earliest youth. (I, iv.)

This great openness makes his Elder Zossima tell him:

> "When it is God's will to call me, leave the monastery. Go away for good. ... This is not your place for the time. I bless you for great service in the world. Yours will be a long pilgrimage. And you will have to take a wife too. You will have to bear <u>all</u> before you come back." (II, vii.)

Zossima expresses articulately, withdrawn from life as he is and yet vividly concerned with it, the general directives behind growth and renewal. Through him is explored that factor of reflexion and crystallisation of experience that is necessary to renewal. Zossima knows himself closely. He represents honesty. He knows himself to be inferior to those who live a full life in the world; he recognises that to a great degree he protects himself from the suffering and uncertainty involved in a whole participation in life:

> "I entered upon the safe and blessed path." (VI, ii.)

He holds to an acquired understanding and puts it to use in the form of advice and comfort. It is his knowledge and full admission of his inability to risk his balance in the world that lies behind his falling on his knees to Dmitry, and it is this knowledge that makes

him love 'the greatest sinners the best' since their sin measures their exposure to the onslaughts of life. Of the directives he offers, honesty is among the first:

> "Above all, avoid falsehood, every kind of falsehood, especially falseness to yourself. Watch over your own deceitfulness and look into it every hour, every minute. Avoid being scornful, both to others and to yourself. What seems to you bad within you will grow purer from the very fact of your observing it in yourself. Avoid fear, too, though fear is only the consequence of every sort of falsehood." (II, iv.)

He tolerates people's near-worship of himself as useful. People need to feel that the forces of good are interpretable:

> Alyosha did not wonder why they loved him so, why they fell down before him and wept with emotion merely at seeing his face. Oh! he understood that for the humble soul of the Russian peasant, worn out by grief and toil, and still more by the everlasting injustice and everlasting sin, his own and the world's, it was the greatest need and comfort to find someone or something holy to fall down before and worship.
>
> "Among us there is sin, injustice, and temptation, but yet, somewhere on earth there is someone holy and exalted. He has the truth; he knows the truth; so it is not dead upon the earth; so it will come one day to us, too, and rule over all the earth according to the promise." (I, v.)

The stinking of his corpse is a shock to many of these followers and the novel comments in this way not only on Zossima's humanity but, through the speed of the physical corruption, upon that aspect of it which in Zossima has been unused and negated. But there is a service to be done in the isolation of wisdom, and Zossima does it. His advice is always carefully related to the people to whom it is given, and in its freshness on each occasion and its adaptability is quite unlike the conventional moral precepts in its effect on the listener. The advice is specifically tailored to the need, and the aim behind it is to promote greater honesty and participation. The difficulty of living a full or even a satisfactory life is always emphasized. The struggle is life itself. He tells Madame Hohlakov:

"Love in action is a harsh and dreadful thing compared with love in dreams. Love in dreams is greedy for immediate action, rapidly performed and in the sight of all." (II, iv.)

He tells Alyosha:

"In sorrow seek happiness." (II, vii.)

And to a visiting penitent:

"How is it possible to pray for the peace of a living soul?" (II, iii.)

For Alyosha Zossima 'is holy. He carries in his heart the secret of renewal for all'. (I,v.)

Notes on Other Affinities

The breadth and complexity of this theme makes brief notes on other novelists out of the question. I therefore won't consider the influence of Lawrence's early enthusiasms for Balzac, Borrow, Fennimore Cooper, Jefferies and Meredith, nor his later interest in Giovanni Verga.

The influence of nineteenth century poets is so general in relation to this specific theme as to make it impossible to pick out briefly any special affinities. One is tempted to mention Wordsworth, Blake and Whitman as possible outstanding influences, but it would require a special study to make the observation illuminating.

As regards the influence of theorists, I should like to stress very briefly the importance of Carlyle, Nietzsche and Ruskin in connection with this theme. In Carlyle's writings Lawrence found advocated 'a faith in an Invisible, Unnameable, Godlike' (Past and Present, Book III, ch. ii); a reverence for the wholeness of life, physical and spiritual; and an enthusiasm for the regeneration of mankind - 'the Phoenix Death-Birth'. (Sartor Resortus, (Book III, ch.v.)

He also found an advocacy of a leadership principle not unlike the one he adopted himself in the later part of his career. He found developed by Nietzsche the belief in instinctive powers, the insistence on the unity of mind and body, the affirmation of individuality against the conventional collective (which Nietzsche inflated into the ideal of the Superman) and the longing for regeneration: 'There, my brothers, do you not see it: the rainbow and the bridge to the Superman?' (Zarathustra, 'The New Idol'). The self-assertive excesses of these theorists were corrected in Lawrence's education to some extent by writers like Ruskin, for whom the power endorsed was the 'power to heal, to redeem, to guide, to guard'. (Sesame and Lilies.) Ruskin valued reverence and compassion, and affirmed the sensitive and sympathetic faculties, 'the "tact" or touch faculty of body and soul". (Ibid.)

These and other influences are discussed in the theses by R. K. Sinha and R. L. Drain already mentioned. The influence of Trigant Burrows has been examined by John Remsbury in his thesis, 'D. H. Lawrence: Critic of Life'; and that of the Russian thinker Rozanov, by George Zytaruk in Comparative Literature Studies, iv, 283-94.

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A list of the novelists mentioned in the study of affinities, together with details of Lawrence's acquaintance with their fiction, including the date of his reading, when known. (Our knowledge is necessarily sketchy, culled mainly from incidental references in letters, essays and memoirs. This list has been independently compiled, but checked against Rose Burwell's dissertation on the subject. Corroboratory references are added only to those items that don't appear in her list.)

BALZAC	Eugénie Grandet	pre 1909
	La Peau de Chagrin	"
	Le Père Goriot	"
	Short Stories (Walter Scott edition)	"
	The Atheist's Mass	"
	Lys dans la Vallee	1922
	Seraphita	1922
BARRIE	The Little Minister	1901
	Sentimental Tommy	pre 1910
	Tommy and Grizel	1901
	When a Man's Single	
	A Window in Thrums	1901
BENNETT	The Old Wives' Tale	c. 1909
	Anna of the Five Towns	November 1912
BARNARDIN de St-Pierre	Paul et Virginie	pre 1911
BORROW	Lavengro	c. 1906
BRONTE, Charlotte	Jane Eyre	c. 1904
	Shirley	pre 1908

BRONTE, Emily	Wuthering Heights	c.1905
BUNYAN	The Pilgrim's Progress	pre 1916
CONRAD	Early tales (See Lawrence in Love, p.31 and Letters, i, 152.)	c. 1909-1912
	Almayer's Folly	
	Lord Jim	c. 1909
	The Nigger of the Narcissus	
	Typhoon	
	Under Western Eyes	September 1912
	The Rover	1923
COOPER, J. Fennimore	The Pathfinder	c.1903 and 1918
	The Last of the Mohicans	c.1903 and 1918
	Deerslayer	c. 1916
	The Pioneers	c. 1918
	The Prairie	c. 1918
	Anglo-American novels including Eve Effingham	c. 1918
	and Homeward Bound	c. 1918
D'ANNUNZIO	Il Fuoco	
	L'Innocente	
	Il Trionfo della Morte	
	Le Virgini delle Rocce	
DICKENS	Bleak House	c. 1902
	A Christmas Carol	
	David Copperfield	c. 1904
	Dombey and Son	c. 1902
	Great Expectations (See Letters, i, 515.)	
	Nicholas Nickleby	
	Martin Chuzzlewit	
	The Old Curiosity Shop	
	A Tale of Two Cities	c. 1905
	Pickwick Papers	May 1916
DOSTOEVSKY	Crime and Punishment	May 1909
	The Brothers Karamazov	1913
	The House of the Dead	February 1914
	The Dream of a Queer Fellow (See Letters, i, 492.)	1916
	The Idiot	Summer 1915
	The Possessed (The Devils)	February 1916
ELIOT, George	Adam Bede	c. 1904
	The Mill on the Floss	c. 1904
	Romola	c. 1902
	Silas Marner	
FLAUBERT	La Légende de saint Julien l'Hospitalier (See Phoenix, ii, 358.)	
	Madame Bovary	c. 1906
	Salammbô	c. 1906

FORSTER	Howard's End	1911
	A Passage to India	1924
	The Celestial Omnibus	1915 and 1927
GALSWORTHY	A Country House	c. 1909
	The Man of Property	c. 1909
	In Chancery	
	Five Tales	
	Fraternity	
	The Island Pharisees	
	The Apple Tree	February 1927
	The Stoic	
GORKY	Stories	c. 1910-1913
HARDY	Desperate Remedies	pre 1914
	Far from the Madding Crowd	"
	The Hand of Ethelberta	"
	Jude the Obscure	"
	The Laodicean	"
	The Mayor of Casterbridge	"
	A Pair of Blue Eyes	"
	The Return of the Native	"
	Tess of the d'Urbervilles	"
	The Trumpet Major	"
	Two on a Tower	"
	Under the Greenwood Tree	"
	The Well-Beloved	"
	The Woodlanders	"
HAWTHORNE	The Blithedale Romance	c. 1918
	The House of the Seven Gables	c. 1918
	The Scarlet Letter	1918
	Twice-Told Tales	c. 1918
	The Marble Faun	c. 1923
JEFFERIES	The Story of my Heart	pre 1911
MELVILLE	Moby Dick	Februay1916
	Omoo and Typee	1916
	Mardi	c. 1922
	Pierre	c. 1922
	White Jacket	c. 1922
MEREDITH	Diana of the Crossways	c. 1908
	The Egoist	
	The Ordeal of Richard Feverel	pre 1911
	Rhoda Fleming	pre 1911
	The Tragic Comedians	April 1911
PETRONIUS	Satyricon	February1916
POE	Tales of Mystery and Imagination	pre 1908 and 1915-18

ROUSSEAU	La Nouvelle Héloise	1910
RUTHERFORD	Autobiography	c.1906 and 1912
	Clara Hopgood	c. 1906
	The Revolution in Tanner's Lane	December 1912
STENDHAL	La Chartreuse de Parme	1928 and earlier
	Le Rouge et le Noir	April 1911
TOLSTOY	Anna Karenin	c. 1905
	War and Peace	pre 1909 and c. 1925
	The Kreutzer Sonata	1913
	Resurrection	1924
TURGENEV	Fathers and Sons	c. 1908
	Rudin	c. 1909
	Torrents of Spring	1911
	A Sportsman's Sketches	November 1916
VERGA	Cavalleria Rusticana (etc.)	December 1916
	I Malavoglia	c. 1921
	Mastro-don Gesualdo	"
	Novelle Rusticana	"
	Storia di una Capinera (See Phoenix, ii, 280.)	"
	Vagabondaggio	"
	Tigre Real and Eros	"
	Eva and Il Marito di Elena	"
WELLS	Ann Veronica	January 1910
	The Country of the Blind	pre 1914
	The Invisible Man (See Aaron's Rod, ch. xiii.)	
	Kipps	c. 1909
	Love and Mr. Lewisham	c. 1909
	Marriage	c. 1913
	The New Machiavelli	April 1913
	Tono-Bungay	1909
	The War of the Worlds	c. 1909
	The World of William Clissold	1926
WILDE	The Picture of Dorian Gray	c. 1906
ZOLA	l'Assommoir	pre 1911 and 1916
	le Débacle	1911

Note

It will be observed that titles appear in the study that don't appear in this list. It is a study of affinities rather than

influences. Moreover, Lawrence's reading can and ought to be guessed at beyond the limits set by the casual references on which this list is largely based. For instance, there is no reference anywhere to George Eliot's Middlemarch; yet we know from Jessie Chambers that Lawrence read three of her novels in his late teens and was enthusiastic in his admiration, and that it was characteristic of him at this time to read everything he could obtain of an author that interested him. It seems likely, therefore, that he read Middlemarch - and it is a likelihood assumed by other critics, like Frank Kermode in his essay, 'D. H. Lawrence and the Apocalyptic Types'. A similar argument applies to novels like Little Dorrit, Nostromo and some of Forster's.

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