

WOMEN IN LOVE

Although *Women in Love*, remodelled on the remnants of "The Sisters", is thematically complete in itself, in spirit it is a continuation and development of Lawrence's rainbow-thesis. The opening conversation between two sisters, Ursula Brangwen and Gudrun Brangwen, obliquely suggests at Ursula's ill-match with Skrebensky, her inevitable break with him and her suffering at the end of *The Rainbow*. For Ursula, at the very beginning of *Women in Love*, considered marriage a serious matter, the 'end of experience' in life. She, now more considerate than ever before, was 'trying to lay hold on life to grasp it in her own understanding' (*Women in Love*, p.8, Hereafter by page number). These authorial remarks about Ursula represent her as an aggrieved woman inwardly shaken by some bitter experience in life. *Women in Love* describes Ursula's ceaseless struggle to overcome the crisis she had faced in *The Rainbow*. She, as we find her at the end of *Women in Love*, in communion with Birkin, achieved salvation, which is 'the paradisal entry into pure single being, the individual soul taking precedence over love and desire for union, stronger than any pangs of emotion, a lovely state of free proud singleness" (232-33). Again, despite being complete in all respects, *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* are thematically inter-related at a deeper level. Ursula Brangwen, at Gent Station, having seen a man with a lantern coming out of a farm by the railway, took a trip down the memory lane to the remote past. "She thought of the Marsh, the old intimate farm-life at Cossethay She remembered the servant Tilly, who used to give her bread and butter sprinkled with brown sugar, in the old living room..."(360). On another occasion, "she told him

(Birkin) about the Brangwens, and about her mother and about Skrebensky, her first love and about her later experiences." (138). Besides, there are so many references to *The Rainbow* story in *Women in Love*. Considering this aspect of the novel, Graham Hough refuted Leavis's view that *Women in Love* "has no organic connection with *The Rainbow*, (Leavis, F.R., 1955, 113), and said : "I first read *Women in Love* without knowing of the existence of *The Rainbow* and I found the social setting and status of the Brangwen girls so difficult to grasp that it seriously interfered of their presentation. ...Ursula and Gudrun... have behind them the whole Brangwen family history." (Hough, G., 1956; 91-92).

Ursula met Birkin when she was enriched with that living experience which, if not sweet enough, she had gained from her previous relationship with Skrebensky. But Gudrun, lacking that experience, suffered a setback in establishing a living relationship with Gerald Crich. She, unlike Ursula who was wise enough, was desperate, emotional and whimsical in taking a serious decision in life. "Marriage" was a word that tempted her ; it was to her a matter of joy, not a thing to consider so seriously as Ursula did. Gudrun was looking for 'a highly attractive individual of sufficient means'(2) to get married. Abruptly ending their conversation on marriage, the two sisters went to attend a marriage ceremony of the aristocratic Crich family at a church. There they met other major characters like, Gerald Crich, Birkin and a minor character, Hermione Roddice. As soon as Gudrun saw Gerald, she sensed 'something northern about him that magnetised her'(8), for, 'in his clear northern flesh and his fair hair was a glisten like cold sunshine refracted through crystals of ice'(8). Ursula, on the other hand, was

inquisitive about Birkin who 'piqued her, attracted her and annoyed her'(13). She felt within herself a natural kinship and a tacit understanding between him and her that should be developed. The two love-relationships with different outlooks on life, thus, began to develop : the former towards fatalism and the latter towards salvation. The Gerald-Gudrun pair, through their love could not achieve 'wholeness, or completeness, which is peace' (*Phoenix*, 142), whereas the Ursula-Birkin pair was a successful one in their joint venture into married life. Indeed, *Women in Love* illustrates Lawrence's idea of individual freedom that one should enjoy in conjugal life. It is no doubt a traditional theme, but Lawrence's ultimate solution, as we find it in Ursula-Birkin pair, takes us to another shore, somewhat remote to the prevalent custom. Lawrence's assumption that the two terms 'love' and 'marriage' have been trivialized by modern man reducing their great significance to life, led him to search for an alternative meaning of love and marriage that can provide man with peace and fulfilment so that he can boldly face the loneliness and boredom of modern life.

The wrong turn of Gerald Gudrun love affair appears at the outset to be an inevitable outcome of their faulty approach to life and Gerald is mainly responsible for it. But the reason behind it is intricately interwoven with the long history of social development, especially of the mechanical side, that is symbolically represented by Gerald, an aristocratic coal-mine owner. Gerald is a self-conceited and unsympathetic man. His accidental killing of his brother in childhood reveals an innate brutality within himself. Birkin, indeed reluctant to admit this incident as an accident, an isolated fact in life, thought that 'there was no such thing as accident; it all hung together in the deepest

sense'(19). Ursula, going a step further, commented : 'Perhaps there was an unconscious will behind it. This playing at killing has some primitive *desire* for killing in it'(40). Again, when Gerald's father, due to his acute illness, remained absent from the marriage ceremony of his daughter, Gerald played the host. His loud blowing of the conch-shell to get the guests together, troubled his ill father much, against which only a teen-aged girl cautioned him. On another occasion, both Ursula and Gudrun, while attending the water-party arranged by Gerald, found him with a bandaged hand, for he accidentally trapped it in some machine. Such is Gerald, the reckless man, whose life is full of accidents and accidental issues, and the final accident, his premature death, is not an unexpected matter.

D.H.Lawrence was mainly interested in the mystery of physical life. His literary pursuit, as some of the psychoanalytic critics have shown in *Sons and Lovers*, is a further testimony of Freud's philosophical speculations over Oedipus complex. Now, *Women in Love* suggests Lawrence's acquaintance with Mandel's 'Laws of Heredity' which describes human nature as an inherited quality of the parental generation. For, in order to provide a clear understanding about what Gerald is at bottom, Lawrence delved deep into Gerald's parental history. In the second chapter of *Women in Love*, the colourful celebration of the marriage ceremony of the Crich family also hints at something which suggests the wrong trend of the family. Mrs. Crich, Gerald's mother, while attending the wedding ceremony, appeared to be an 'estranged woman'(17) with 'tense clear face'(17). She came neither to enjoy nor to supervise the ceremony, but to meet Gerald, her eldest son. Her apathy towards the guests or the humanity itself points to her life-

long suffering and despondency. In Chapter XVII, we get a detailed account of what has gone wrong with her. Thomas Crich, Gerald's father, married Christiana, a proud haughty lady, and, as it seems, used her for his purpose, like his use of the pit, his another great 'mistress'. He never tried to understand her, nor to speak of loving her. As a consequence, she in her turn :

"took no notice of him, externally. She submitted to him, let him take what he wanted and do as he wanted with her. She was like a hawk that sullenly submits to everything. The relation between her and her husband was wordless and unknown, but it was deep, awful, a relation of utter interdestruction."(198)

To speak otherwise, Mr. Crich let himself be tied hard with his wife and also with the miners of his pit. His christian attitude of love and self-sacrifice and his emotional over-response to them led him into trouble. His idea of equality, indirectly provoked his fellow-workers to be ambitious about their material prosperity on the one hand, and on the other, forced him to use his own estate as a source for charity, a tendency that Christiana sternly refuted throughout her married life and that ultimately trapped Mr. Crich into a chaos. At the last stage of his life, Mr. Crich, a failed ideologue and a patient of acute pain, thought that "his wife and the consuming pain were the same dark secret power against him, that he never faced."(195). But whatever he did, the humanitarian side of his character always remained active, he never thought himself isolated or terror-stricken and at least was not unsuccessful in his relationship with the working people and with his wife although he had failed in keeping his mine in perfect order.

Now Gerald, as the new proprietor of the mine, deliberately set down to reform

the mining system with an intention to amend his father's shortcomings, but in the process he committed other wrongs. He brushed aside the philanthropic motives, the leading quality of his father, and led the mine towards "pure organic disintegration and pure mechanical organization"(210). What he needed was "a marvellous adjustment of myriad instruments, human, animal, metallic, kinetic, dynamic, a marvellous casting of myriad tiny wholes into one great perfect entirety"(208). He took the role of a super machine, the god of machine - 'Deus ex machina'(208). He himself appeared to be a great instrument of will-power not only at the pit but also in every sphere of life. A clear instance of his application of will-power in a brutal and 'unmanly' way is his treatment of the Arab mare. He took it for granted that the mare was for his use and he has used it in a way he liked, an act suggestive of his innate brutality.

Gudrun, who never thought of love and marriage as effective means of personal salvation, was longing for the establishment of a love-relationship with Gerald. But her attitude towards him was fiercely competitive rather than co-operative. Gerald's swimming in the Willey-Water perturbed her. She began to envy him for "the freedom, the liberty, the mobility" he used to enjoy being a man and that she could not being a woman. "She was so hot, so flushed, so furious that Ursula was puzzled"(39). With an intention to shatter his reckless freedom through her sportive and violent love relationship, she was seeking for a chance to meet him and she got it soon. One day, she was busy sketching the natural scene sitting beside the Willey-Water when both Gerald and Hermione Roddice arrived there to see her incomplete sketch book. At the time of handing it over to Gerald, the sketch book accidentally slipped on the mud and got

the first blow" (153). Gudrun, undaunted by his charge, replied with a smile that she would strike the last. Gudrun's violent game with Gerald, however, discloses that something is wrong with her, and that her association with Gerald cannot ensure the prospect of a peaceful settlement. Again, Gudrun's desperate attempt to bring Bismark, the wild rabbit, out of its cage is another act of impudence. The animal, with its sharp paws bruised her hands. She was bleeding and Gerald's immediate intervention relieved her. But at this moment :

"Gudrun looked at Gerald with strange darkened eyes, strained with underworld knowledge, almost supplicating like those of a creature which is at his mercy, yet which is his ultimate victor. --- He felt a mutual hellish recognition.--- He had the power of lightning in his nerves, she seemed like a soft recipient of his magical, hideous white fire."(220)

This animal scene, with two others, the cattle scene and Gerald's taming of Arab mare, completed the preliminary stage of their growing intimacy. Their physical brutality, unsympathetic application of will-power and blood shedding sports imply their violent nature and the grim prospect of their love-relationship. Everywhere they are non-cooperative and callous, scarcely showing any sign of positive approach to life.

Gerald's step to effect what may be called mechanical fulfilment in his mines, created within himself a void, diminishing his physical vigour. His abortive attempt to rescue Diana from drowning and his horror-stricken condition at the scene of his father's slow death, made him conscious of his own limitation. He, as he found himself trapped in his own mechanical devices, sought for a way out of this situation with the help of Gudrun, his last hope. In a state of mental trance, he set out for Gudrun at night and

stealthily got into her room. His night-long stay with Gudrun temporarily relieved her :
 “He felt his limbs growing fuller and flexible with life, his body gained an unknown strength. He was a man again, strong and rounded”(317). Gerald, for the first time understood the positive role of a woman in life. He immediately disclosed his intention to Birkin that he would marry Gudrun. But deeply rooted in tradition as he was, he never believed that “a woman and nothing but a woman will ever make my life” (47).
 With no feeling of true and sincere love in his blood, he became lovesick only to save himself from “agony of inertia’. The result is disastrous.

At Innsburck, both Gerald and Gudrun stayed together. But their close friendship only fuelled to further their combative moods. Gudrun seemed to have felt Gerald’s deficiencies both as a lover and a man more clearly. She took him for ‘a perfect instrument’(386) intending to combat him and to triumph over him. She never considered him as an individual, so atomic and private, a representative of modern industrial England. In him she thought ‘she had touched the whole pulse of social England’ (386). So Gerald was now finished to her. And she turned towards a new man Loerke, an “odd creature, slight and unformed like a boy’s”(374). Her intimacy with Loerke was further deepened when she found that he was also an artist and a sculptor. In him, she found “the rock bottom of all life”(394). But to Ursula, Loerke was nothing but ‘a rat in the river of corruption’(395). The statuette of a naked girl, small and finely made, sitting on a big horse that Loerke showed the two sisters at once unveiled his hide bound brutality before Ursula. He appeared to her to be an idealist who had modelled his horse to a stock, stiff animal to fulfil his own idea of corruption. But Gudrun took it

otherwise. Echoing Loerke, she declared 'art and life' as 'the Reality and the Unreality'(414), and love, in her opinion, was one of the temporal things in her life, a subsidiary issue. The only man she now considered worthy was Loerke, who "had understanding where Gerald was a calf"(416). She rejected Gerald for, he assumed that the subjection of woman depended on "handsomeness and nobleness" but never had gone further to understand the secret of woman's life and to transcend "the climax of sensual reaction".(417).

The Gerald-Gudrun relationship at the outset may be called a love affair; but it is a dangerous game with life. Both realized that the germ of degeneration had already been latent within the relationship. They could never love each other devotedly. They were deficient in living understanding. We heard from Mrs.Crich that he (Gerald) is the most wanting of them all'(18). The word 'wanting' seems to imply that Gerald is "both the most lacking in self-sufficiency, and the most apt to demand vital support from others". (Leavis, F.R., 1976, 88). But the paradox is that he neither realized, nor admitted his own deficiency. In the last stage, when Gudrun protested against his parasitic nature, he for the first time in his life enquired of himself : "can't you be self-sufficient?"(411). But till then he failed to give up his domineering will-power that, as we have seen, defeated him in every vital activity, now leading him towards self-annihilation.

A positive and life-sustaining love is presented by Birkin and Ursula. Of course, through the Birkin-Ursula pair, Lawrence brought into question the whole institution of marriage which *The Rainbow* had taken for granted. Ursula was dissatisfied with what

may be called hellow-darling-kiss-me type of conjugal life and was seeking for an alternative type of marriage that would bring a new meaning in her life. She knew the school inspector Birkin as a progressive intellectual. But Birkin's hot debate with Hermione Roddice discloses to Ursula a new direction, downward from head to blood. Birkin supported the physical understanding (realizing and responding with one's whole being) in opposition to Hermione's desire to know (the intellectual understanding). This aroused Ursula's interest towards him. She heard him saying that "it is a fulfilment — the great dark knowledge you can't have in your head - the dark involuntary being. It is death to one self - but it is the coming into being of another."(34). Ursula, being unable to interpret his phrases, demanded a further explanation. Birkin curtly replied : "you've got to lapse out before you can know what sensual reality is, lapse into unknowingness, - -- you've got to learn not-to-be, before you can come into being"(35). Although Ursula hardly comprehended what he actually meant, she realized that his expression was itself a clue to understand the dark physical self. She was satisfied, for Birkin, like her, also "dared throw a firebrand into the darkness"(438).

But Birkin himself was caged into modern ideological humbug. His love of Hermione Roddice never let him be free from 'the vicious mental deliberate profligacy'(35). When he was busy inspecting Ursula's Grammar School, Hermione intervened in it and created "a little scene between the lovers"(28). Birkin's vehement protest against her abstract notion of life made her insistent and obstinate. In fact, she could neither come out of her bruised ego, nor transcend her life-denying intellectualism. Rather, a proud woman on that score, she tried to impress upon Birkin

her views and ideas of life. As she was thwarted by Birkin's refusal to be submissive to her, her "hatred of him was subconscious and intense"(77). She looked really gay while she insulted him. The conflict reached its climax when Hermione charged him at the time of copying a Chinese art. Birkin's decision to remain unsundered to her ideological humbug incurred her wrath. She was exasperated and hit him with a *lapis lazuli* with intention of taming him. But this desperate act was, so to speak, a death-blow to their wearisome intimacy; it loosen her hold over Birkin who was now forced to ponder over his relationship with Hermione. Her relentless act paradoxically provided Birkin with a new energy to come out free from her emotional spell.

True, Birkin had no past, no social history. But he had one thing intact. He never cut himself off from the great source, the nature. His every step, whether it was an act of seeking solace at difficult time or of establishing a living relationship with a woman, took place in the lap of nature. To soothe the pain he sustained from Hermione's attack, he went straight into the wild valley full of trees and plants while it was raining. There he relaxed himself lying down almost naked like a primitive man on the soft grass. The stillness of the place relieved him of his mental sore. He thought : "what a mistake he made thinking he wanted people, thinking he wanted a woman" (95). But Ursula of *The Rainbow* gained from a similar situation a different experience. She understood from her night long visit to a lone valley that fulfilment in life can be achieved through physical communion with a man who already had possessed in him the dark sensual knowledge. However, she was unlucky; Skrebensky lacked that wisdom.

Besides, Birkin often contradicted himself. Although he attacked Hermione

Roddice for defects of knowledge in the head, he, in his own way, argued more than anybody else in the novel. His argument figured prominently in the novel only to be dismissed or devalued by his interlocutors, mostly by Ursula. When both Ursula and Birkin visited a small island, overgrown with bushes and a few trees in the middle of a big pond, Ursula found that Birkin was misanthropic. He wished a world minus humanity, for, 'man is a mistake'(113). His highfalutin ideas, often absurd, fell flat to Ursula's sharp logic and "he was beginning to feel a fool?"(113). Immediately afterward, they decorated the pond with floating daises and enjoyed a romantic voyage together. At that time, Birkin declared that he was ready to throw away everything else to get one thing - 'freedom together' (117). It is a contradiction to his previous comment. It implies that Birkin, who appears to be more mental than Hermione Roddice, is no less physical or primitive than later Lawrentian heroes. He was two in one. When he remained with Ursula amidst wild nature, he became a dark Lawrentian hero.

However worn out Birkin was by Hermione's suffocating love, he never became pessimistic about love and marriage and their significance in life. He stuck to the idea of perfect union with a woman-sort of ultimate marriage. He told Ursula that he wanted a strange conjunction with her, not meeting and mingling, but "an equilibrium, a pure balance between two single beings - as the stars balance each other"(133). Simultaneously he denied that it was love, but something else. Ursula was confused. It seemed to her, as if he were in love with the analysis of love that he directly denied to confess. Their entire discussion was more like fight than friendship. But in spite of all

of these, Ursula found in Birkin a seriousness and an earnestness in his discussion, although she was not convinced. While their debate was on, Ursula saw Minu, a male cat bullying a female one. It appeared to her disgusting like that of Gerald's brutal treatment of the mare. But Birkin sided with Mino that made her doubtful about Birkin as a big bully. Further, she found him fickle-minded and vacillating and criticized him saying that : "you don't trust yourself. You don't fully believe yourself what you are saying" (137). This implies that either Birkin was trying to make her understand what itself was till then incomprehensible to him, or he was struggling to express what words cannot express.

In the Water-Party, they saw the drowning of Diana Crich and Gerald's abortive attempt to rescue her . The horror of death terrified them. Ursula heard Birkin saying : "I do want to die from this life.... One is delivered over like a naked infant from the womb, all the old defences and the old body gone, a new air around one, that has never been brathed before."168). Ursula failed in her conscious ego to make out what he meant (--- that words themselves do not convey meaning - 168) except a feeling of "his gesture through her blood"(168). All of a sudden, she, being charmed by his physical grace, held him tight and "covered his face with hard, fierce kisses of passion"(169). This sudden act at once revived Birkin from his monklike state. The blood beat up in him. He became a potent lover, mainly physical to be united with her. This physical communion provided Birkin with a new wisdom. He now thought about nothing but "this ultimate and triumphant experience of physical passion, that had blazed up anew

like a new spell of life”(169) and except this, he contemplated : “I was becoming quite dead-alive, nothing but a word bag”(169).

Unlike later Lawrentian heroes who were desperate seekers after the dark mystery of physical life, Birkin was physically timid. He was eager to marry Ursula, but feared her female ego. “Women”, he thought, “wanted to have, to own, to control, to be dominant”(182). She was the Magna Mater, “Man was hers, because she had borne him and she now claimed again, soul and body, sex, meaning and all”(182). Birkin had a horror of Magna Mater. The ‘Moony’ scene is a dramatic/symbolic presentation of Birkin’s fight against female ego. One evening, Ursula set off for Willey Green and came to Willey Water. Here in the still moonlit night, she saw Birkin pelting stones at the pond to disperse the shadow of the moon in water. He was, at the same time, cursing the moon calling it Cybele, the accused Syria Dea. The moon is mythologically the white goddess, the primal woman image by which Birkin was obviously haunted. Ursula initially thought it ridiculous; but Birkin’s over insistence on it symbolically shattered her female ego. “She felt she had fallen to the ground and was spilled out, like water on earth”(226). She went to him, subservient and requested to stop it. This scene brought them closer together in the lonely woods. But here again they began the old fight that concluded with a new understanding that love relationship “must happen beyond the sound of words”(229).

In order to save himself from a destructive mechanism and sentimental love affair, Birkin now searched for something deeper, darker than ordinary life could give. He remembered what he had seen, at Halliday’s room, the African fetish, a symbol of

“pure culture in sensation, culture in the physical consciousness, --- mindless, utterly sensual” (68). But no, he did not want to retrace to the past. He thought :

“There was another way, the way of freedom. There was the Paradisal entry into pure, single being, the individual soul taking precedence over love and desire for union, stronger than any pangs of emotion, a lovely state of free proud singleness, which accepts the obligation of the permanent connection with others, and with the other, submits to the yoke and leash of love, but never forfeits its own proud individual singleness, even while it loves and yields.”(232-33).

Birkin had to fulfil this, getting married to Ursula. He went straight to her house and met her father instead of her. Later on, Ursula arrived there and found the situation getting tense and provocative. As a consequence, she angrily rejected Birkin’s proposal. This is one of Birkin’s unsuccessful attempts to fulfil his mission which reminds us, what Gerald said about Birkin, that “instead of wanting a woman for herself, he wants his ideas fulfilled, which, when it comes to actual practice, is not good enough”(264).

The final peace accord between them was established only after their stiffest quarrel, bitter than that of Hermione’s. Birkin appeared dubious to Ursula. When he was with her, he became free and frank to her; but the intervention of Hermione Roddice between them always shrank him back to her. Ursula suffered such a humiliation at the hands of Birkin and was ready to combat him. Next day, she mutely accepted Birkin’s proposal to accompany him in his tour. But as soon as she heard from Birkin about his early departure to meet Hermione, she got off the car and unleashed a storm of angry protest against him. Even she threw to his nose the gifts he had offered to her and left him in rage. Her violent criticism was too hard to digest for Birkin. But this brought

him back to his good senses. He found Ursula's accusation right. He thought that "his spirituality was concomitant of a process of depravity, a sort of pleasure in self-destruction. There really was a certain stimulant in self-destruction, for him - especially when it was translated spiritually. But then he knew it ---- and had done." (284). This understanding turned every impediment out of their fruitful communion. His defeat to Ursula finally let him win over Ursula. She came back to him and as it seems, surrendered to him when she got him as a dark physical hero bereft of all ideological humbug.

The couple now decided to marry. For, the married life, according to Birkin, is a state of new superfine bliss where "there is no I and You, --- only the third, unrealized wonder, the wonder of existing not as one oneself, but in a consummation of my being and of her being in a new one, a new paradisaal unit regained from duality"(341). Through marriage, they were transported into this state of 'freedom together'. In this connection, the final words came from Ursula who said to Gudrun :

"I believe in something inhuman, of which love is only a little part. I believe what we must fulfil comes out of the Unknown to us, and it is something infinitely more than love. It isn't so merely *human*."(405)

Ursula's realization of the "inhuman" in her love relationship, and of the "Unknown" in her known and performed living activities transcends the mere events of the novel and hints at the third force, the "Holy Ghost", which is, in Lawrence's opinion, the reconciler of the male and female.

The difference that Lawrence has drawn between Gerald-Gudrun and Ursula-

Birkin pairs reveals Lawrence's profound understanding. His integrated study of love, and marriage in terms of Gerald-Gudrum pair on the one hand, and Ursula-Birkin pair on the other presents "a dazzling original narrative form, through which profound intuition of life could be brought to confront the systems of custom and convention, habit and law, work and art, thought and emotion determining the nature of social existence"(Moynahan, J.; 1963, 89).

But the novel concludes with another theme, man-to-man relationship. Birkin, having been informed about Gerald's death at Innsburck, immediately rushed there. As he looked at Gerald, now dead and cold : "Suddenly his heart contracted, his own candle all but fell down from his hand, as, with a strange whimpering cry, the tears broke out. He sat down in a chair, shaken by a sudden access"(442). His grief-stricken condition implies his deep and intricate friendship with Gerald. Indeed, Birkin never wished to confine himself only within the man-woman relationship but also an equally important one between man and man, a matter that remained unresolved and unfulfilled in the novel. Frequent instances of Lawrence's life-long struggle to invest this man-to-man kinship with deep and mysterious meaning is conspicuous from the very beginning of his writing. *The White Peacock* depicts such a friendship between Cyril Beardsall and George Saxton. The same is present between Aron Sisson and Lily in *Aron's Rod*. But with a clearer description of it in *Women in Love*, Lawrence, as it seems articulates a revolt against the very conventional relationship between man and woman. For, in contemporary England, he found "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 married couples.”(181). Lawrence’s man-to-man relationship, an alternative and effective way to face boredom of loneliness one suffers in conjugal life, after all, satisfies his longing for something which he, in relation to woman, felt compelled to resist. But the apparent sense of vagueness of his idea inspired some critics to make the charge of homosexuality, a direct contravention of Lawrence’s thesis. Lawrence always disfavoured homosexuality. He strongly criticized the Cambridge dons like Keynes and Birrell and said : “these horrible little frowsty people, men lovers of men, they give me such a sense of corruption, almost putrescence---” (*Lett.*, Moore, H.T., 333). In the *Classic American Literature*, he said : “For the great merger, woman at last becomes inadequate--- so the next step is the merging of man for man love. And this is on the brink of death. It slides over into death” (Lon, 1924-25). A brief notice of the background of Lawrence’s preparation of the final draft of *Women in Love*, will help to make his view transparent. The suppression of *The Rainbow* in 1915 made Lawrence more alert and more cautious. Donald Carswell read one copy of the typescript of *Women in Love* and annotated it in December, 1916. He perhaps warned Lawrence of the risk of man-to-man relationship that, in Carswell’s opinion, was prone to homosexuality. Now Lawrence struck out from the final typescript of the chapter ‘Man to Man’ a passage in which Birkin thought :

“Gerald and he had a curious love for each other. It was a love that was ultimately death, a love which was complemented by the hatred for man. --- It tore man from woman, and woman from man. The two halves divided and separated, each drawing away to itself. And the great chasm that came between the two sundered halves was death, universal death.”(40)

Lawrence rejected the type of writing that intensified the contradiction between male-to-male and male-female relationships. In the preparation of the novel, he struggled to make the former a complement to the latter relationship. In the published version of the novel, Birkin's kinship with Gerald is presented as a complement to his love relationship with Ursula, a new possibility not fully realised but wistfully longed for by Birkin. He proposed Gerald to swear *Blutbruderschaft*, an eternal conjunction between two men :

"You know how the old German knights used to swear a *Blutbruderschaft*" he said to Gerald---- "Make little wound in their arms and rub each other's blood into cut" said Gerald.

"Yes- and swear to be true to each other, of one blood, all their lives - that is what we ought to do".(188)

In chapter XX, Gerald found himself without real work and felt bored. He had completed the mechanization of his pits. Despite being free to do anything now that leisure affords, he found nothing to do, a condition of non-action like death in life. Birkin visited him when 'he was suspended motionless, in an agony of inertia, like a machine that is without power'(243). With mutual consent, they engaged in a wrestle, entwined with each other until both fell down on the floor, unconscious, for 'the wrestling had some deep meaning to them - an unfinished meaning'(249). Regaining consciousness, Gerald, now curious about the significance of the bout in life, enquired of Birkin if it was something like *Blutbruderschaft*. Birkin replied : 'perhaps, Do you think this pledges anything?'(249). This implies that Birkin was not confident about what he wished. But the wrestling, as we see later, revitalized Gerald by removing his physical inertia. This process of enhancing physical intimacy and vigourness is perhaps

borrowed from the nomads like the patterers who used to hawk on the streets and believed in the idea of 'duel'. It was for them a way to purify the body. The youths occasionally engaged in such physical bouts to develop greater intimacy among themselves. As soon as the fight was over, 'they shake hands and forget all about it'(Watt, Ian. 1971,472).

After this refreshing bout, both Gerald and Birkin could not resist talking about their love affairs. Birkin kept saying about the latest development of his love with Ursula, his visit to her father who angrily turned him down as Ursula's suitor; and Gerald, about his interest in 'love-true love'(251) of women. Thus Lawrence here complemented the man-to-man kinship to the man-woman love relationship. But this never implies the former's subservience to the latter relationship. Lawrence struggled to present man-to-man relationship, as a unique theme, complete in itself, not less significant than man-woman relationship. To provide a full-fledged elucidation of the significance of man-to-man kinship, Lawrence borrowed his idea from Cooper, an American artist, whom he quoted in *Classic American Literature* :

'A stark, stripped human relationship of two men, deeper than the deeps of sex. Deeper than property, deeper than fatherhood, deeper than marriage, deeper than love.'(1923, 61)

Clearly, Birkin suffered a great shock from Gerald's immature death and finally remained a failed prophet due to the non-fulfilment of his mission of true friendship with Gerald. A few days later, Ursula, resuming her talk about Birkin's unfulfilled relationship with Gerald, said to Birkin : 'You can't have two kinds of love---. You can't have it, because it's false, impossible.'(444). And Birkin's last reply, as well as

the last sentence of the novel : 'I don't believe that'(444), keeps incomplete not only the dialogue between two characters but also the novel itself. The conflict is not resolved, the final word is not said, and the book remains open-ended suggesting a thematic freedom of the novel in terms of a plurality of meanings.

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