

## WOMEN IN LOVE

In Women in Love, Lawrence concerns himself with what he has previously suggested in The Rainbow, the search of men and women for individual fulfillment through contact with others. But while the ideal man-woman relationship represented in The Rainbow is symbolized by "the rainbow", here it is identified with the relation of the stars: "A pure balance of two single beings - as the stars balance each other."<sup>159</sup> However, this "star-equilibrium" stands for what "the rainbow" symbolizes, i.e. the complete polarized relationship between the "fulfilled" individuals, who remain individuals but who achieve, each through the other, some contact with a hitherto unknown power, the life-source. And again, like in The Rainbow, the proper relation is contrasted with the two wrong kinds of man-woman relationships, which is shown as destructive, bringing no real joy and fulfillment.

The relation between Rupert Birkin and Hermione Roddice is an old Paul-Miriam relationship on a more sophisticated level. Their love is a complete failure because of Hermione's attempt to spiritualize sex - to change it into something other than its primitive form which is a means of fulfillment in which man proves his maleness and woman her femaleness. Hermione is like

Miriam in her hatred of a sensual love, but while the coldness of the latter is caused by her devoutly religious nature, Hermione's comes from her intellectuality. She, a baronet's daughter, is "a woman of the new school, full of intellectuality and heavy nerve - worn with consciousness,"<sup>160</sup> a patron of intelligentsia. Birkin is opposite to her; he is a rootless, classless person without family, and his character wavering, lambent yet instinctive with life.<sup>161</sup> In spite of their very differences, Hermione is deeply in love with him, for he represents what she lacks - spontaneity and vitality. Lacking a "robust self" she has no "natural sufficiency," and is tortured by uncertainties and insufficiencies. For all her social assurances, she believes that Birkin alone can help her towards wholeness; his presence makes her feel complete. Hermione tries to establish a real relationship with him, but she fails because, for Birkin, she stands for what he hates - intellectuality and society. She asks him for what he cannot give; a passionate love without physical relationship. Considering her body as an animal part she despises it; she thinks that the ecstasy of spiritual love is the greatest thing in life, and she tries to experience it. Birkin is opposed to this, and he treats her rather brutally: "You don't want to be an animal, you want to observe your own animal functions, to get a mental thrill out of them...Passion and instincts - you want to

clutch things and have them hard enough, but through your head, in your consciousness..."<sup>162</sup> She reduces passions to particles of thoughts, and Birkin feels, as he tells her:

It isn't passion at all, it is your will. It is your bullying will. You want to clutch things and have them in your power...because you haven't got any real body, any dark sensual body of life. You have only your will and your conceit of consciousness, and your lust for power to 'know.'<sup>163</sup>

Like Miriam, Hermione has a single passion for abstract knowledge, which means power to her. "Nothing has meant so much to me," she tells Birkin, "as certain knowledge... it is the greatest thing in life - to know. It is really to be happy, to be free."<sup>164</sup>

Birkin hates her attempt to "know" everything, and opposes it strongly with his self-possessed indifference. But the more he tries to escape her, the more she pursues him. As Graham Hough remarks, she is a type of possessiva, intellectual love, a love unwarmed by physical passion, desiring only to absorb and soggulate the mental beings of its objects.<sup>165</sup> In Birkin and Hermione, Lawrence shows the contrast of two types of people. The one has the right kind of human naturalness, showing itself in a play of emotional spontaneity and mobility and capacity for tenderness - a man whose form of life grows from "life-centre", from the sensual, intuitive body. The other is a woman who lets "will-power," "personality," and "ideals" interfere with her proper relation to a

man and the universe, and who lacks the emotional depth and the capacity for sincere relationship and tenderness which for Lawrence were the evidence of a connection with some power above and beyond the individuals.

Although Hermione knows that Birkin cannot be her lover, she tries to impose her dominating will on him - to make him love her on her own terms. Hermione's possessiveness is seen even in her attitude towards a deer which she finds in a park. "They (Hermione and her intellectual friends) looked at the shy deer and Hermione talked to the stag as if he too were a boy she wanted to wheedle and fondle. He was male, so she must exert some kind of power over him..."<sup>166</sup> She considers herself to be "the perfect idea, to which all men must come,"<sup>167</sup> and, like Miriam, she wants to "wheedle the soul out of things." For her, power is knowledge, and since she knows everything, she feels that everyone must submit to her. Hermione, after the walk in a park, goes to see Birkin whom she has invited to join her party, and finds that he is copying the Chinese drawing of geese from the boudoir. Determined to "know" what he has seen in that picture, Hermione uses her feminine insisting will to force Birkin to tell her. "She must know. It was a dreadful tyranny, an obsession in her, to know all he knew..."<sup>168</sup> And Birkin has to answer her:

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 inoculation of corruptive fire - fire of the cold burning mud - the lotus mystery.<sup>169</sup>

His reply forces her to realize the impossibility of satisfying her own hunger to "know." Birkin symbolically shows her that there is something which she cannot see mentally - "the unknown mode of living" or "spontaneity." She suddenly recognizes her awareness of such mode in herself; unknown and unknowable in the sense that they cannot be reduced to terms of the "mental consciousness." This recognition is intolerable to her; it is a recognition that the reality of life is something she cannot command or possess.<sup>170</sup> And she realizes that it is impossible to live by her "will":

Hermione looked at him along her narrow, pallid cheeks. Her eyes were stranger and drugged, heavy under their heavy, drooping lids. Her thin bosom shrugged convulsively. He stared back at her, devilish and unchanging. With another strange, sick convulsion, she turned away, as if she were sick, could feel dissolution setting in her body. For with her mind she was unable to attend to his words, he caught her, as it were, beneath all her defence, and destroyed her with some hideous occult potency.<sup>171</sup>

She collapses when her will lost its illusion of command, and she feels herself, for a while, a victim of her "mental consciousness." Hermione immediately "came down to dinner strange and sepulchral, her eyes heavy and full of sepulchral darkness."<sup>172</sup> And in the atmosphere of social intellectual talk between her friends at a dinner table her possessive will - her personality - rallies: "She took very little part in the conversation, yet she heard it all, it was hers."<sup>171</sup> At a party Birkin dances rapidly and with a real gaiety. Seeing him Hermione is very angry. "he is not

a man, he is treacherous, not one of us,"<sup>172</sup> says itself over and over in her consciousness. She hates him because of his power to escape her, and because he has shattered her and broken her down. The changeableness noticed in Birkin is a capacity for surrender to the spontaneous life that "will" cannot command. She feels intolerable because it assures her that she cannot hope to take possessive hold on Birkin who alone, she feels, can remedy the insufficiency from which "will" cannot save her. Birkin affronts her idealism ("in the spirit we are all one, all equal in the spirit."<sup>173</sup>) in his discussion on man with her: "One man isn't any better than another, not because they are equal, but because they are intrinsically 'other'."<sup>174</sup> And Birkin "could feel violent waves of hatred and loathing of all he said, coming out of her. It was dynamic hatred and loathing, coming strong and black out of the unconscious."<sup>175</sup> The personal crisis between Birkin and Hermione arises at its climax, when Hermione, maddened by his indifference, picks up a heavy paper-weight and nearly stuns him by dropping it on his head, as he sits reading Thucydides. It shows the destructive nature of Hermione's passion. If she cannot absorb Birkin mentally, she must destroy him physically. She thinks that spiritually she is right; and Hermione lives "in and by her own self-esteem, conviction of her own rightness of spirit."<sup>176</sup> Birkin escapes, shaken, to the countryside: "Here was his world, he wanted nobody and nothing but the lovely, subtle responsive vegetation, and himself, his own living self."<sup>177</sup> And on

reflection he agrees with Hermione: "It was quite right of Hermione to want to kill him. What had he to do with her? Why should he pretend to have anything to do with human beings at all?"<sup>178</sup>

After that episode there is no amity between them. Birkin is afraid of her destructive will and he tries to escape her by turning to Ursula Brangwen. Hermione, however, tries to pursue him; she goes to his house, arranges his furniture for him, and gives him a carpet that he doesn't want. She wants to draw Birkin to her; she is successful enough that Ursula feels that she is "an outsider" and that Hermione is closer to Birkin. When Hermione calls the cat in Latin, Ursula finds this display of superiority unbearable and goes away. But Birkin prefers Ursula; he dislikes a woman with an obsessive will like Hermione. He feels that friendship and love from such a woman can only be a form of bullying; with Hermione emotional and spiritual bullying must always continue, because the obsessed will can never be satisfied. And because it is never satisfied, there is always inner torment, inner unrest<sup>179</sup>.

The relation between Birkin and Hermione is contrasted with the relation between Birkin and Ursula, which is shown as a Laurentian ideal man-woman relationship in terms of the balance of opposites.<sup>180</sup> Birkin feels a revulsion from the mechanized wilderness of the modern world, the disappearance of clear significance and purpose in living from every class of society. In order to be immune from social disease, the over-emphasis on the mind, Birkin seeks for a personal way of salvation for himself. He thinks that he can find it in

his relationship with a woman, as he admits to Gerald when they are in the train to London: "The old ideals are dead as nails - nothing there. It seems to me that there remains only this perfect union with a woman - sort of ultimate marriage - and there is nothing else."<sup>181</sup> He sees marriage as a panacea. But this ultimate marriage is not a matter of love - it is something beyond love. His failure with Hermione proves to him that a relationship based on love is the most unsatisfactory one, because love, as a relationship of union, means to some extent the loss of individuality. Strongly believing in the "sacred and holy individual", Birkin feels that he cannot give himself to any woman. Although he really loves Ursula he cannot accept the love she offers. What he wants is an impersonal relation in which there is no kind of "merging" or loss of individuality in the union of love." If we are going to know each other, "he tells Ursula, "we must pledge ourselves forever. If we are going to make a relationship, even of friendship, there must be something final and infallible about it."<sup>182</sup> He does not want love, but "something" much more impersonal and harder: "he wants to meet her" not in the emotional, loving plane, but there beyond, where there is no speech and no terms of agreement..."<sup>183</sup> "One can only follow the impulse," he adds, "taking that which lies in front, .. asking for nothing, giving nothing, only each taking according to the primal desire." This is not the ordinary relationship between man and woman, but a clear recognition of the "isolated strangeness" of all men.



Birkin has this idea because he believes that man and woman are not broken fragments of one whole,<sup>185</sup> but both of them are complete and single individuals: "each has a single, separate being, with its own laws."<sup>186</sup> What he wants is a relationship in which Ursula and he are "fulfilled" but at the same time remain individuals: "What I want is a strange communion with you - not meeting and mingling...but an equilibrium, a pure balance of two single beings - as the stars balance each other."<sup>187</sup> His idea is a noble one, free from selfish lust and dominance; but Birkin finds it difficult to make Ursula accept it.<sup>188</sup> She, like many girls, wants love in the ordinary sense; and she finds his idea absurd, and they quarrel. But like many Laurentian lovers' conflicts, the quarrels end with tenderness; they are a part of their relationship. Ursula finds it hard to see eye to eye with Birkin, who is certainly fond of laying down the law on the recondite nature of love. And she admits to Gudrun, her sister, that Birkin is "too much of a preacher;" He is really a priest. She wants to be adored, and does not believe in love like that; she tried to make Birkin aware that his idea about man-woman relationship is absurd. But Birkin still insists on his theory of "equilibrium" which, he feels, is the only proper relationship between man and woman. So long as man and woman attempt to dominate each other the mystery of life is travestied. The lesson about the balance of opposites is reinforced by Birkin's cat, which proceeds to deal in an extremely male and lordly way with a little stray that has come into the garden. The cat bullies the small pussy, and

Birkin takes the chance to show Ursula that a relationship which is not based on the balance of the sexes is always unsatisfactory. But Ursula is convinced that he is going to bully her and they quarrel again. She feels that Birkin selfishly puts their relation in his own terms. Ursula, although she is in love with him, cannot submit to his will. She mocks his impersonal relationship beyond the emotional, loving plane: "You only want want your own enda. You don't want to serve me, and yet you want me to serve you. It is so onesided."<sup>189</sup> She wants to abandon herself to him, but on a condition that he loves her the same way. But Birkin cannot; to him individuality is much more important than love.

However, Ursula's strong disagreement with his ideal even makes Birkin question it. But when he thinks of the African statuette, a female figure, which he and Gerald saw at Halliday's in London, he feels his theory of "equilibrium" is completely reliable. To him the African fetish represents "pure culture in sensation, culture in the physical consciousness, really ultimate physical consciousness, mindless, utterly sensual."<sup>190</sup> Since civilization has over-emphasized the mental consciousness, Birkin feels that to bring back the harmony between the mind and the body he has to turn to the "African way" by accepting the values of the purely physical experience. But when he meditates on it he is repelled, for he realizes that the "African way" and the "Western way" destroy the happy bond between the flesh and the spirit, the blood and the intellect. It is the destruction of all specifically human creativity and the relapse into -

pure sensuality, hot and putrescent in the tropics, cold and icily destructive in the north. He thinks of Gerald, and sees him as one of these dissociated creatures whose sensual life is cold and destructive. Birkin fears not only for Gerald - "Was he a messenger, an omen of the universal dissolution into whiteness and snow?"<sup>191</sup> - but also for himself. What could he do to deny the disintegrative forces of the Africans, whose sun would destroy him? Birkin answers with the only possible working solution for a northerner:

There was another way, the way to freedom. There was the paradisaical 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 accepted 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.<sup>192</sup>

He believes that the regeneration of society can only be accomplished by a new relation between individuals. Almost the only genuine relation that modern life offers is the "meeting and mingling" which demands the loss of individuality. He has already rejected this as a denial of freedom. There are two other possibilities - the complete acceptance of pure sensuality, symbolized by the African fetish, and the whole awareness of consciousness, represented by Gerald, cold and unpassionate. Both ways of life are destructive, and Birkin rejects them. There remains the only one way - "the way of freedom" - a profound and permanent bond between men and women which still leaves them separate and independent as persons: the achievement at the same time of freedom and relationship; freedom on the personal level, a profound relationship at the deeper than

personal roots of being - the source of life, which lies beyond love. Birkin sees it as a relationship between "fulfilled" individuals, who remain individuals but who achieve, each through the other, come contact with an unknown power. One lover is a "door" of the other to this unknown power, the life source to which, Birkin feels, Christianity and modern humanititarianism and democracy have no access.

Birkin determines to practice "the way to freedom" with Ursula; but he feels that he has to educate her out of the sentimental and romantic love ideal which she tries to impose on their relationship. He senses behind it that devouring and essentially egocentric maternal possessiveness:

"it seems to him, woman was always so horrible and clutching, she had such a lust for possession, a greed of self-importance in love. She wanted to have, to own, to control, to be dominant. Everything must be referred back to her, to woman, the Great Mother of everything, out of whom proceeded everything and to whom everything must finally be rendered up.<sup>193</sup>

For him Ursula is also a "Magna Mater", "the awful, arrogant queen of life, as if she were a queen bee on whom all the rest depended...<sup>194</sup> Before a permanent relationship is established between them Birkin has to fight against Ursula's feminine instinct to possess, and she against his independence and ideal. The possessiveness he sees in her is what he sees in the reflected moon in the lake,<sup>195</sup> and he, watched by Ursula, furiously throws stone after stone at the reflection of the moon, trying to break it into fragments, trying to drive it from the surface of the lake. Seeing it re-born every time he stops throwing stones; Birkin is very angry:

At the center, the heart of all, was still a vivid, incandescent quivering of a white moon not quite destroyed, a white body of fire writhing and striving and not even now

broken open, not yet violated. It seemed to be drawing itself together with strange, violent pangs, in blind effort. It was getting stronger, it was re-asserting itself, the inviolable moon. And the rays were hastening in their lives of light, to return to the strengthened moon, that shook upon the water in triumphant re-assumption. 196

Furiously he calls the moon "Cybele", the accursed Syria Dea. The moon is regarded as the white goddess, the primal woman image, who is not, and will not, abandon her instinct to possess the man she loves. He tries to drive her away, but of course she always comes back. As soon as he stops his stone-throwing, the moon-image is regorn. Ursula silently watches him in the bush. And she "wanted to laugh loudly and hysterically, hearing his isolated voice speaking out. It was so ridiculous."<sup>197</sup> His curse against Cybele and the Syria Dea adds to her amusement, which then turns to horror when she realizes it is her image he is trying to split apart. She goes to him; he gives up his stone-throwing, and they talk together about the old subject - she wants love while he wants something beyond it. They reach no solution, but the night ends in a mood of gentle tendernees.

Birkin tries to made Ursula realize the value of his ideal man-woman relationship. Again Ursula reacts strongly. However, they are determined to get married. Yet they still quarrel; once, while Birkin is driving Ursula in his car he says that he must get back to see Hermione for the last time, although everything is over between them. Angry as she is, Ursula accuses him of still wanting Hermione, his "spiritual bride", and wants to marry her only for "daily use." They stop the car to argue, and Ursula walks away, leaving his ring

on the road. Birkin feels tired; he does not understand why Ursula considers herself to be "the perfect womb, the bath of birth, to which all men must come,"<sup>198</sup> and why she does not want to leave him alone, to be himself. A moment later Ursula drifts back, bringing a flower to him. "See what a flower I found you,"<sup>199</sup> she tells him. And as a Laurentian flower usually suggests the vital individuality of being, Ursula's offer of a flower to Birkin shows that she is willing to respect his "otherness", and thus their "freedom together" is established.<sup>200</sup>

Ursula finally sees the value of their relationship of unity and separateness - the profound connection between the two beings who are nevertheless eternally different. Birkin feels supremely happy with her, and he congratulates himself on being fit to unite with such a woman as Ursula:

... 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 gloried 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. <sup>201</sup>

And both "are caught up and transcended into a new oneness where everything is silent, because there is nothing to answer, all is perfect and one... But in the perfect one there is perfect silence of bliss."<sup>202</sup> However, Ursula, although she is happy with her husband, feels that this bliss is not yet complete. She has to be satisfied with being loved; she still wants love. Birkin himself is not completely fulfilled; he tells her that he can live all his life with her, but he adds: "To make it complete, really happy, I want eternal union with a man too - another kind of love."<sup>203</sup> He accepts the

classical idea of friendship in which "man is fulfilled by relating to another man," and a woman as the child-bearing mate is unfit for companionship on a higher plane. No matter how complete Birkin's union with Ursula may be, there is still something left over - the "eternal union with a man." Ursula thinks this a perversity, but Birkin is far from homosexual in his desires. Even if sexual contact with a male may be in his mind, it is incidental to his real purpose: the need for touch with each species, man and woman, the need for connection with everyone of life's kind.<sup>204</sup>

The complete polarized relation of Birkin and Ursula is opposite to the relation between Gerald Crich and Gudrun Brangwen. And in the latter pair Lawrence shows the influence of modern industrial civilization on man-woman relationship: the destruction of passionate impulses of the sexes, and the reduction of them to automation. For Lawrence problems of civilization must always be focused through problems of personal relationships, for civilization is judged by kinds and qualities of human relationships. And in handling a situation dealing with personal relation Lawrence is also projecting through the personal situation some central truth about the nature of modern civilization. This is true in the case of Gerald and Gudrun. Gerald is a product of industrialism; he was born in a mining village, son of a great industrialism; Thomas Crich, whose idealism ruins his wife's spontaneous life, went to study mining in Germany. He is portrayed as the "industrial magnate" who discovers "a real adventure at last in the coal mines;"<sup>205</sup> He rejects his father's ideal of running the

business on love which has been proved false by the strike of the miners. Gerald knows that efficiency is everything in industry, and if efficiency is to be achieved, sentiment and emotion must be forgotten. He destroys the old personal relations between owners and miners; he considers himself and his men as parts of a machine, but he happens to be a controlling part. Experts are brought in, the latest methods and machinery are introduced, expenditure is cut, and old charities, such as free coal for widows, are abolished. Although the machine takes the very hearts out of them, the miners have an evil vital satisfaction in what Gerald has done to the mines and to them; and in these men we see that "life, itself warm" is a victim of the triumph of mechanism:

Gerald was their high priest, he represented the religion they really felt...There was a new world, a new order, strict, terrible, inhuman, but satisfactory in its every destructiveness. The men were satisfied to belong to the great and wonderful machine, even while it destroyed them.. It was the first great step in undoing, the first great phase of chaos, the substitution of the mechanical principles for the organic, the destruction of the organic purpose, the organic unity, and the subordination of every organic unit to the great mechanical purpose. 206

Only Gerald is dissatisfied. The mines no longer interest him once the system is perfected. He feels as isolated as Cain; indeed he is a kind of Cain, having accidentally shot his brother when they were children. He, a man who has made the machine his god, realizes that his god cannot give happiness to his inner life; and he becomes "emptily restless, utterly hollow...suspended motionless, in an agony of inertia, like a machine that is without power,"<sup>207</sup> and he is afraid that "one day he would break down and be a purely meaningless bubble lapping round a darkness."<sup>208</sup> He knows that his only way to salvation is through some relationship



with a woman, and he turns to Gudrun, Ursula's younger sister, who seems to offer him a promise of a new life.<sup>209</sup>

Gudrun is fascinated by Gerald's dominant masculinity and his "will-power", seen first in his attempt to force his terror-stricken Arab mare to stand while the coal train passing the level-crossing does its worst with wheels, brakes, buffers, chains and whistle.<sup>210</sup> The mare is terrified but Gerald forces her to stand facing the train by striking his spurs into her bleeding side when she tries to turn back. Watching Gerald spur the horse unmercifully, Gudrun and Ursula react in completely different ways. Gudrun is terrified, but also fascinated at the sight of Gerald's implacable determination, and, besides, his "blue eyes, full of sharp light", "his glistening half-smiling look" attract her very much. He rides his mare with a persistence and tenaciousness that recommend him as a potential lover. As the horse suffers pain and humiliation, she senses sensuality: "And then on the very wound the bright spurs came down, pressing relentlessly. The world reeled and passed into nothingness for Gudrun, she could not know any more."<sup>212</sup> She wants to be possessed and Gerald's combination of sadism and hardness of purpose draws her toward him. Moreover, Gudrun's attraction to Gerald is based on his command of social power. Their first kiss, for example, takes place under the collier railway bridge, where the miners press their sweethearts to their breasts: "And now, under the bridge," thinks Gudrun, "the master of them all pressed her to himself."<sup>213</sup>

The slow disintegration and death of Mr. Crich, Gerald's father, brings rude realization to Gerald about the void in his

life which "will-power" is powerless to fill. It reduces him to the depths of despair, and he takes the desperate plunge into Gudrun's arms. He goes cross-country through darkness to her house where he takes her physically.

He had come for vindication. She let him hold her in his arms, clasp her close against him. He found in her an infinite relief. Into her he poured all his pent-up darkness and corrosive death, and he was whole again... This was the ever-recurrent miracle of his life, at the knowledge of which he was lost in an ecstasy of relief and wonder...<sup>214</sup>

But even in their first encounter there is a sense of failure, symbolized by Gudrun's dissatisfaction; "she lay wide awake, destroyed into perfect consciousness... while he was sunk away in sleep..."<sup>215</sup> Lawrence liked to represent people, who live superficially at too shallow a level, (excessive "consciousness", as Lawrence called it, drawing their perverse power from thwarted and misdirected emotional forces) as sexual failures; but it is clear that this is only the sign or symbol of a failure in life.<sup>216</sup> And Gerald is one of these people. Gudrun, however, accepts him as her lover; she feels that some day she may love him. Thus their relationship is not based on love: it is the sense of an inner lack that drives him to her, and she is drawn to him because of his good physique and social position. Besides, they are very different from each other: he is conventionally successful, and conventionally effective while she is a born free-lance, outside society, and too assertive and self-conscious. But one thing they share in common is this attitude toward marriage. Unlike Birkin and Ursula, Gerald and Gudrun do not believe in marriage as the ultimate, and they are unable to accept the responsibility of a permanent bond. Gerald always feels that he belongs to

the mines; "he would not make any pure relationship with any other soul. He could not."<sup>217</sup> As for Gudrun, she loves her freedom so much that she hates any idea of binding herself to a man: "...One must be free. One may forfeit everything else, but one must be free...To marry one must have a free-lance or nothing else, a comrade-in-arms...It's just impossible, impossible."<sup>218</sup> Thus both of them are incapable of having real love, and each cannot enter into any living relationship with another person. They are, as Birkin tells Ursula, "a born lover" and "a born mistress."<sup>219</sup>

Gerald and Gudrun never think of marriage. Their relationship is based purely on a physical side of love; they regard sex as a pleasure, a means to relieve them from tensions. And the sexual act between them is mechanical, dull and disappointing. Only Gerald can get benefit from it. In love as in business, he is selfish, efficient, unemotional and rather ruthless: "His passion was awful to her, tense and ghastly, and impersonal, like a destructive ultimate. She felt it would kill her..."<sup>220</sup> Gudrun resents Gerald's sexual success, and she openly resists him more and more.

Moreover, she hates his dominating will which he tries to impose on her. Gerald's love is desperate need and utter dependance, and these make him a deadly oppression to her, and the knowledge that there is no dominance to be achieved that will ensure his safety, makes him hate her more and more and ignore her feminine tactics. In return Gudrun becomes openly hostile to him. She comes to realize that industrialism is a deadly enemy of an organic life, for she sees in Gerald that

his every contact with her is only mechanical, without any warm feelings at all, and she rejects the social world of money and industrialism to which he will bring to her: "Oh God, when I think of Gerald, and his work - those offices at Beldover, and the miners - it makes my heart sick. What have I to do with it..."<sup>221</sup> She turns to find salvation in her new relationship with Loerke, German sculptor, whom she meets at an Australian hotel where she and Gerald stay; he is the rock bottom of life, the disillusioned man, the man without social position. But he is a type that also fascinates Gudrun, and they are drawn closer to each other. Through art Loerke can have the impersonal relationship which Birkin needs: "I and my art, they have nothing to do with each other. My art stands in another world, I am in this world."<sup>222</sup>

Gerald is, of course, against Gudrun's relation with Loerke. He wants to keep her always with him - to give him a relief from the void in his inner life. Gudrun, all the time, is fighting off Gerald, and her relationship with Loerke is a weapon against Gerald and what he represents. Determined to possess her eternally he decides to kill her. And when he sets up his mind to do anything he must do it successfully. This is the power of his "will", a destructive force. Gerald's aversion of Gudrun increases to its climax when he sees her and Loerke sitting close together in a sleigh. He sees a chance to kill her; "Oh, what bliss, at last, what satisfaction at last."<sup>223</sup> He knocks down Loerke and nearly strangles Gudrun. He does not kill her because he feels that her death caused by him will show that he still cares for her. "I don't want

it, really,"<sup>224</sup> is the last confession of disgust in his soul. Consumed by the death-wish, he climbs blindly across the steep slopes, higher and higher till he falls down, and dies in the snow. Gerald is a symbol of the northern man, a man of snow and ice; "he was one of these strange white wonderful demons from the north, fulfilled in the destructive frost mystery".<sup>225</sup> His death in the white snow symbolically illustrates a spiritual death of modern man, caused by the "icy-crystal" quality, imposed from mechanism. He is a victim of "frost knowledge, death by perfect cold."<sup>226</sup>

Of the three pairs of lovers represented in Women in Love, Birkin and Ursula are the most successful, because they can establish a satisfactory relationship, free from selfish lust and dominance. It is a communion in which they remain individuals but each achieves through the other fulfillment beyond the physical and sensual self. Hermione fails with Birkin because she tries to reduce him to his abstract spiritual essence. Her over-intellectuality makes her ignore the sensual side of love. "We are creatures of two halves," writes Lawrence, "spiritual and sensual - and each half is as important as the other. Any relation based on the one half - say the delicate spiritual half alone - inevitably brings revulsion and betrayal..."<sup>227</sup> This is the best explanation of Hermione's failure with Birkin, and Gerald with Gudrun, whose relation with him is based only on sensual love.

Throughout the novel Lawrence emphasizes the importance of love. Both Gerald and Birkin try to find salvation through love; Gerald wants his relationship with Gudrun to relieve him

from a strong void within himself - a void that makes him feel "as if his centres of feelings were drying up -,"<sup>228</sup> caused by his absorption in machines; Birkin turns from the mechanized humanity to Ursula, with whom his relation is his "resurrection." This search for a purposeful meaning in life through love is one of the central themes in all Lawrence's novels and stories. And it is the main theme of The Lost Girl, published immediately after Women in Love.