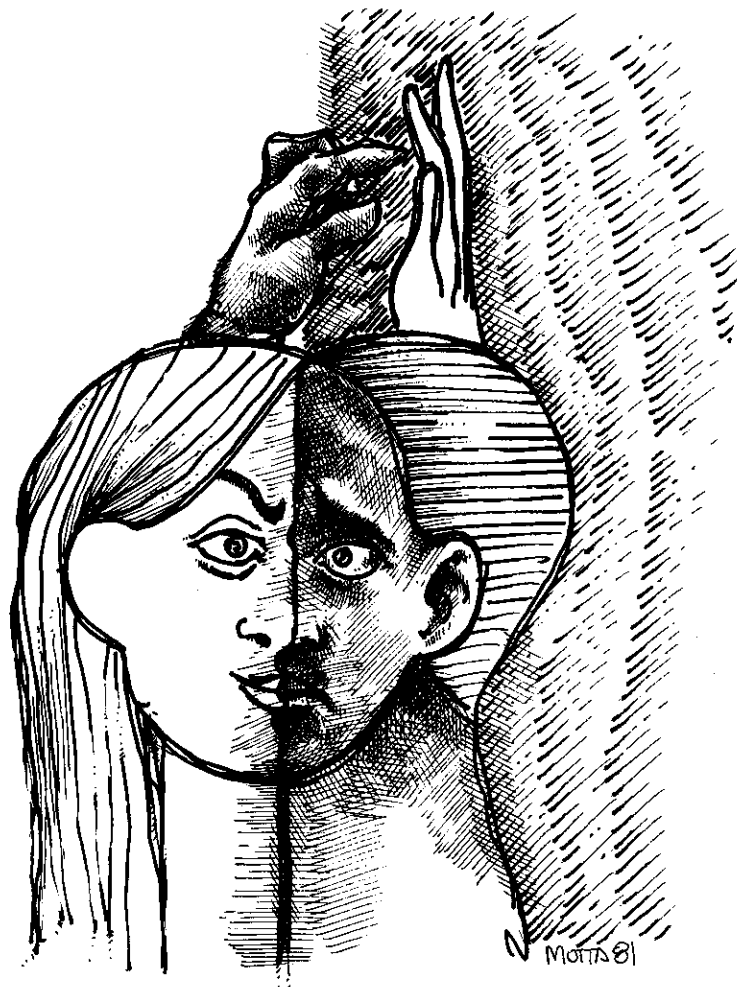


### 3. women in love



THE FALL OF THE "NEW EVE": A Psychological Reading of  
WOMEN IN LOVE.

Man must either lead or be destroyed.  
Woman cannot lead. She can only be at one  
with man in the creative union, whilst he  
leads; or failing this, she can destroy.

Lawrence

As the novel opens, Gudrun, Ursula's younger sister, now twenty-five, has just returned home, and from her first words it is possible to detect that "the desire for destruction in the self" has already taken precedence over "every other desire" in her, for she expresses her disillusionment in life: she feels that everything fails to blossom and that she herself is caught in the fading process. Yet, although the forces of disintegration, of "putting assunder," are very strong in her, she reveals that "the living desire for positive creation" still exists for her, that she is still linked to humanity, that the "highly complex unit"<sup>1</sup> formed by the male and female elements in herself has not yet been totally destroyed. Her return home points to the existence of a conflict between her desire for destruction and desire for creation: the reader senses that her hold on life has become very loose, and yet she still fights against some of the forces that threaten to make her fall. One senses that Gudrun's personality is dissociated: a psychotic level of her personality is threatening to encompass the neurotic one which, though also unbalanced, still holds the more integrated side of her ego.<sup>2</sup> Her coming back home reveals that she is in a "period en que se veia necesidad de consolidar su yo mas integrado"<sup>3</sup> and feels deeply

threatened now by the psychotic side of her personality.

Her "reculer" is explained by Gudrun herself: home for her represents a still point at which she expects to regain her energies in order to be able to "mieux sauter." She arrives at this conclusion after having "asked myself a thousand times" (WL,10) the reason for her coming back home. Indeed this conscious explanation bears the whole truth. On the one hand it makes it clear for the reader that she is a jumper, accustomed to being on the run. On the other hand the connotation that the word "mieux" carries suggests fear: she feels that she is in a dangerous position, otherwise she would not need to prepare herself better for the next jump. It is evident that her role in life as the "Good-Runner"<sup>4</sup> is shaky.

The ensuing conversation with Ursula brings forth other significant elements that help us understand the reason for her jumps and the nature of her fear. It reveals that Gudrun's carefulness has only to do with the jump itself, because she is not concerned with the achievement of a goal. Apparently she is an adventurous person to whom the jump is an end in itself. Her main concern is to reach the other edge and "land somewhere." In answer to Ursula's question: "But where can one jump to?" She answers "Oh, it doesn't matter." Yet the sudden way in which the sisters break off their conversation and the parallel jump that Ursula takes "as if to escape something" lead us to the conclusion that Gudrun's jump does have an objective: she jumps in order to escape something, something that lies at the root of the conflict that she now experiences and that, more than ever, threatens her already shaken integrity. The sister's conversation is abruptly cut off by Gudrun's sharp and cold answers. It is Gudrun who, pretending

to be "casual", suggests that they could go to the wedding, thus escaping from "the tension of the situation." This tension was aroused in the first place because the conversation had been forcing them to "look over the edge." Therefore it can be inferred that Gudrun jumps in order to avoid looking into her inner self, here called the "void" and also as a defense against inner collapse. It is enough to pay attention to Gudrun's cheek and see that it becomes flushed while the two sisters talk - meaning that she has something to conceal - whereas her voice becomes cold - meaning that she wants it concealed. She fears to have it unwrapped.

The assumption that she has built barriers both to protect the self that she wants to prevail and to conceal the part of her self that is a threat to her can be grounded not only on the fact that she is an adventurous person and yet not a seeker, but also on other major symptoms: she represses her emotions and she dislikes seeing others lose control. Ursula's spontaneous leap to escape the "tension of the situation" brought about by their conversation, causes "a friction of dislike to go over Gudrun's nerves." She had wanted Ursula II to pretend not to have been affected, as she herself pretends. Even "flushed with repressed emotion" and resenting "its having been called into being(WL,11), Gudrun is able to simulate calm, but self-consciousness is one indication of her habit of repressing emotions. Birkin attests to this by saying openly that she is "always on the defensive" (105) and his testimony is later corroborated by Ursula II, who worries that she is "never quite sure of how many defences Gudrun was having round herself (426). These symptoms lead us to suspect that she has a secret and that she is constantly on the watch, afraid lest any-

One might penetrate it, afraid that she herself might see it. Whenever anything threatens to reveal her, she immediately flushes and calls on mockery to protect herself.

But there are still other symptoms revealing the existence of barriers. One of them is her habit of distancing herself from and belittling things. She is always looking at the world "through the wrong end of the opera-glasses" (WL,42), a habit that Ursula II, with her capacity for divination, points to as perverse. Distancing gives Gudrun the possibility of gaining power over the object that is being focalized, as well as control over her own affective reactions. In this way she can look objectively at the world, and by distorting the objects, especially people, avoid my possibility of connection or communion with them. While the two sisters wait for the wedding, Gudrun's "objective curiosity" is sharply contrasted with Ursula's communion with the crowd, anxious and apprehensive because of the groom's delay. Through her glass, Gudrun only sees each person as "a marionette in a theatre, a finished creation"..."She knew them, they were finished, sealed and stamped and finished with, for her" (WL,15). Her eyeing is an armour; it gives her the possibility to create an obstacle to repress her highly intuitive and sensitive nature. She, then, "mocking and objective" (97), has the chance of veering away from seeing "the world... horrific" (508). Even Ursula II, who does know the reason for Gudrun's jumps, as the "look of knowledge" (10) shows, is slow to understand that Gudrun "finished life off so thoroughly, she made things so ugly and so final" (297). Once she understands this trait of her sister's, she associates Gudrun with Her- mione. In both women the grasping of reality is never

spontaneous. It has to pass through a mental process first.

Finally, a consequence of the role she has created as "voyeuse" is her skeptical outlook on life, her cry that "Nothing materializes;" marriage is merely the "inevitable next step," a means of finding financial support: man makes it "impossible;" she gets "no feeling whatever from the thought of bearing children;" home has no significance for her - "I find myself completely out of it" - and her father does not occupy her thoughts: "I've refrained" (from thinking about him at all) (WL, 11).

These facts, as Lawrence says, "hung together, in the deepest sense"(28). They make it clear for us because she is repressing something, Gudrun has had to deny life. They also explain why she has chosen to be a "bird of paradise" (105), as Birkin describes her. She does not want to find a place, since she is not in search of a meaningful life; she is not looking for her original identity, as Ursula I of The Rainbow was, since she is afraid of revealing her secret. She only wants to go on bearing the burden of her dissociated personality by herself. On the conscious level, her coming back home represents the one hope left in her: her belief that a marriage based on means will help her next jump: it would allow her to maintain the position of "onlooker" (WL, 185) a "watcher" of life, and it would provide her with means to continue the life of change indispensable for keeping the lid pressed tightly on her repression. Yet on the unconscious level it represents her loss of control over the repression. She has come back home unwillingly. A strange force, whose origin she could not explain, even after having asked herself "a thousand times" why she is returning, brings her back to the ugly town of her past, a town

that she hates and does not want to remember, to know "that this exists" (13). This compulsion certainly points to the return of the repressed: the side of her personality that she wants concealed is forcing itself into consciousness. The more integrated side of her personality, "su yo mas integrado,"<sup>5</sup> is being absorbed within the chaos of the psychotic side of her personality.

For Gudrun is a man-like woman<sup>6</sup> and the imbalance between her male and female components lies at the root of her conflicts. What makes these conflicts the more intense and the less easily resolved is that Gudrun does not want to bring her desire to be a man to the conscious level. In contradiction to the message which the novel gives, that the individual must know himself in order to become able to transcend, Gudrun deeply represses her homoerotic tendencies.

On the other hand, she wants Ursula II as her love-object and yet she envies her as a woman. Her desire is dramatized in the Breadalby chapter where Lawrence, making use of a Biblical passage, artistically conveys the strange nature of Gudrun's clinging to Ursula II. Gudrun plays the role of Ruth, who loves the helpless widow Naomi with "desperate passion(WL,102). Her envy of Ursula II comes about whenever she compares herself to Ursula II and she realizes the womanliness in her sister: she envies Ursula's spontaneity, she envies Ursula's self-centeredness, her self-sufficiency and peacefulness. She would like to be like Ursula II.

On the other hand Gudrun wants to exert the phallicism that her preponderantly masculine components confer upon her while at the same time desiring castration in order to place her homoerotic feelings in

abeyance . Her fetishistic reverence of her stockings reveals her sense of herself as a phallic being; her "I get no feeling whatever from the thought of bearing children" conveys a definite rejection of a woman's role; the chapter "Diver" also corroborates her dissatisfaction at being a woman. She sees Gerald swimming and she envies his mobility and freedom in the water. Being a man in a woman's body represents for her such a limitation as to "prevent (her) living;" a man hasn't "the thousand obstacles a woman has in front of her." Yet, she identifies herself with the subjugated mare, in the chapter "Coal Dust," an act that determines her sadomasochism toward her masculine components. Kate, in The Plumed Serpent, at seeing the disembowelment of the horse, leaves because she fears to be sacrificed. Gudrun, however, wants to undergo sacrifice, wants to be castrated, wants to kill the man in herself. Again, her rejection of the "cuttlefish" (WL,105), symbolic of a woman's phallic powers, is indicative of her refusal to acknowledge the masculine components in herself. In short, Gudrun is in rebellion against the woman in herself because as a woman she cannot be fulfilled; yet she is struggling against her masculine components because as a man she is incomplete.

The survival of such opposing impulses within Gudrun explains the nature of her "contrariness" (WL, 105): she can be both a "smart woman" that "intimidated" (8) the provincial people and yet have a soft, passive look: she can have a "strong, slow, almost man-like" voice (273) and a "gentle, solicitous" (198), "caresive" (135), "quiet" (199) voice; her "silky and rich and soft" body (268) encompasses both a calm face and a passive nature as well as a queer readiness to flush



and a "sullen passion of cruelty"(270). These opposing qualities find expression in her colourful, gaudy, defiant stockings and her feminine attire. To make her contrariness more evident still, Lawrence synthesizes the opposing qualities of Gudrun in the symbol of the clock, it is a "long-case clock, and inserted into its dial was a ruddy, round, slant-eyed, joyous-painted face" which "gave her an obtrusive "glad-eye!" (425). Significantly the "long case" supports a sexless face, symbolic of Gudrun's sexual indefiniteness that she wants to maintain.

There are several instances in the book that exemplify her unattained genital fulfillment. Voyeurism or "her strange religion, that put (Gerald) to nought" (WL, 451) is one of her substitutes for mature sexual satisfaction. "She experienced a keen paroxysm, a transport" (16) the first time she sees Gerald. As a voyeur she identifies herself with the mare which Gerald spurs, and vicariously she experiences a masochistic sexual experience... "looking at him with black-dilated, spellbound eyes..." "Gudrun looked and saw the trickles of blood on the sides of the mare, and she turned white... The world reeled and passed into nothingness for Gudrun..."(124). At the water party, Gerald and Gudrun are in the same canoe; Gudrun is in charge of the rowing, and she even stops paddling in order to fully enjoy Gerald's beauty while he is fixing the lanterns in the boat: "She loved to look at him For the present she did not want to touch him, to know the further, satisfying substance of his living body... she only wanted to see him..." (199). After Diana's drowning, Gerald, tired of helpless combat with the "cold...endless" (206) watery world, clambers into another boat. Gudrun sees him from the distance and

"the beauty of the subjection of his loins, ... made her want to die"(203). Two out of the three times in which she achieves ecstasy in communion with the snow, voyeurism is, again, the vehicle for the rapport: "She crouched down in front of the window(450). "Gerald bent above her... Already he felt he was alone. She was gone. She was completely gone.."(451). "'It is beautiful, beautiful!' she sang in strange, rhapsodic tones. "It is the most beautiful thing I have ever seen in my life'"(503).

Only twice does she achieve full satisfaction with Gerald: the first time, under the bridge, and even here their intercourse does not reveal traces of mature sexuality. To achieve orgasm she has to bring to mind the sweetheart of a miner. Probably she is identifying with the miner and with Gerald and can thus exert her phallicism, for here she is the contained whereas Gerald is the container: "He lifted her, and seemed to pour her into himself, like wine into a cup." Like Skrebensky under the moon, it is Gerald who is seen as the "soft iron becoming surcharged with her electric life" (WL,374). The second time "she had extreme pleasure of him" was when "he did not come to, he remained remote and candid, unconscious"(507). In their other sexual encounters, described once in terms of their "supreme pangs of nervous gratification"(471), once in her reaction of feeling "nausea of him"(393), she feels that "his passion was awful to her, tense and ghastly, and impersonal... it would kill her"(500).

There is also evidence of masturbation on her part. "He was looking unconsciously, glisteningly, down at her head, from which the hair fell loose, as she brushed it with wild, nervous hand. She held her head aside and brushed and brushed her hair madly" (WL,466). As she sees the reflection of the "wolf" lo

oking at her and threatening to disturb her auto-erotic gratification she distracts his attention till she has obtained self-pleasure. "She turned, now her face white, her dark eyes blazing with uncanny, overwrought excitement"(467). In Gudrun's sexuality "there is no reciprocity." All the sexual excitements that give her pleasure reduce sex, degrade it. In Lawrence's terms they kill the religious mystery, fruit of the "give and take" <sup>7</sup> inherent in the nature of mature sex.

In spite of these signs of thwarted sexuality, both Mark Spilka and Eliseo Vivas are, so to speak, deceived by Gudrun's extraordinary beauty. Mark Spilka, after referring to her cynicism, adds that she is a "lovely woman, dressed always in bright colours, in handsome gowns, and her sheer sensual appeal is delivered to us at every turn." <sup>8</sup> Eliseo Vivas is also caught in the spell of her sensual appeal. For him "Gudrun is presented in the book as a sexually normal woman. We shall see that she craves for refinements of perversion, but she does not repudiate the male qua male, as a homosexual woman would." <sup>9</sup> Vivas fails to grasp her thwarted womanhood, but his statement has double weight for this analysis, since it reinforces the presence of self-contradictory qualities in Gudrun and it corroborates our assumption that she cannot simply be called "homosexual" since she wants to deny the man inside her, a man who, despite her denial, becomes visible. Both Hermione (who is also sexually abnormal) and the colliers detected Gudrun's flawed nature. "Gudrun was the more beautiful and attractive (Hermione) had decided again. Ursula II was more physical, more womanly"(WL,92). When on their way to church Ursula II and Gudrun meet an old and a young collier, it is the promiscuous old one who wants Gudrun. "I'd give my

week's wage for five minutes," says the elder, whereas the younger one adds, "It's not worth that to me"(127). True, the social aspect cannot be underestimated, and this passage does bear reference to the ignominious attitude of both men towards women and sex, but the implicit reference to Gudrun's strange appeal is undeniable. Further, the "cormorant" fixed upon a "little enamel box" which "she always kept so very private to herself" <sup>10</sup> confirms that she is not a sexually normal woman and that it is her sexual inversion that she wants to keep private. Significantly a cormorant is a snake-like bird that catches fish which it is not allowed to swallow.

This discussion of Gudrun's problems illustrates her volcanic inner state, and it helps to suggest the inevitability of an eruption, heralded by her necessity to come back home. Up to the "reculer," Gudrun had surely been able to reconcile within herself both her repulsion toward her female nature and her rejection of the preponderantly masculine elements of her psyche. Protected behind her denial of life and vital sex, safe as a mere onlooker and as a jumper, she has been able to bear the burden that her divided psyche has imposed on her. Her flights to London, her plunging into the loathsome Bohemian life, her subjection to the atmosphere of corruption and degradation that pervades the street of Beldover are the means she uses to dissipate, for a time, the poisonous depression that threatens to suffocate her. They are pain-killers that serve merely as palliatives against the repressed that is threatening to return. But the effort has undermined her strength, and the "reculer" (consciously meant to gather back her forces but forebodingly pointing to her fall) turns out to be the catalytic element of the

fall.

Adopting José Bleger's concept of symbiosis ("La symbiosis es una interdependencia entre dos o más personas que se complementan para mantener controladas, inmovilizadas y en cierta medida satisfechas, las necesidades de las partes más inmaduras de la personalidad") we hold that Gudrun, unable to exert control over the repression any longer, makes of Gerald the "depositario" <sup>11</sup> of the part of her personality that she is repressing, and that has become dangerous to her. Her objective eyeing had not failed to work when she first saw Gerald: "Here was something not quite so preconcluded (WL,15), she thought as she saw Gerald and his mother among the crowd outside the church, waiting for the groom's arrival. She sees in Gerald both the "sinister stillness in his bearing," the danger of "his unsubdued temper" and the gleaming beauty, maleness, like a young, good-humoured, smiling wolf(15). These are certainly traits of her make-up that she prefers to see in Gerald. He, therefore, represents some complement to herself, a person on whom she can place her sadism, thus remaining basically masochistic, womanly. Her objective eyeing, the eyeing of the masochist, did not fail to recognize a true sadist instantaneously, dramatically conveying the psychologist's claim that "sadists and masochists have a secret language... a secret alliance with secret customs and secret agreement." <sup>12</sup> Gerald's childhood history, his handling of the mare, his thwarting the rabbit's desire to escape, and his attempts at killing Gudrun and Loerke do place him in the category of sadist. Gudrun's identification with the subdued mare and rabbit, her giving herself into Gerald's hands, and later Loerke's, are signs of her masochism,

exemplified again when the counter-impulse, for mastery, appears revealed in the pleasure she feels when she intercepts the mare and later in the ritual of her dancing before the cattle. The thrill of violation and death gratifies her thwarted sexuality and satisfies her psychosexual distortion.

Several critics, including Daleski, believe that Gudrun is first drawn to Gerald because of their mutual instinct towards destruction. But if the symbiotic nature of their relation is accepted, the impulse that drives them together is, in the last analysis, the impulse to keep alive.<sup>13</sup> Since she can neither assimilate the masculine, sadistic side of her nature to assume a feminine self, as Ursula II does, nor live out her sexual ambiguity, it rests with Gudrun to dissociate the male components in herself by placing them in Gerald. Of course, this is not a satisfactory solution, and Gudrun senses this herself. In placing the less integrated side of her personality on Gerald "el centro de la personalidad ya no será más la parte mas madura del yo; lo reprimido retorna desplazando y ocupando su lugar."<sup>14</sup> She will then be able to confront reality, although she will not be centered any more. She unconsciously knows that she had better avoid any kind of contact with him, although she knows that "he was the final approximation of life to her" (WL, 203). She also knows that in accepting the job in Beldover she is signing a pledge with him, she is accepting the symbiotic chain. "All the time, there was something in her urging her to avoid the final establishing of a relationship with Gerald" (237), because she senses that once she establishes it, she will lose control over her own destiny. And she only goes to Beldover after she has found in rationalization the means to

placate her mind: she would go there and stay there for a short period "if only to see what it is like" (263). This excuse is a measure of her desire to conceal from herself the fact that she cannot contain her psychotic and neurotic personality any longer. It also makes clear that she is giving in to Gerald, knowing that "it was fatal," because she is in extremity. Had she been in a less traumatic situation she would have escaped "the terrible hopelessness of fate," she would have been able to resist the impact that he caused on her already the first time she saw him: ... "She was tortured with desire to see him again, a nostalgia, a necessity to see him again..." (16). Therefore, her vinculum to Gerald cannot simply be explained in terms of her desire "to annihilate Gerald"<sup>15</sup> as Vivas proposes; it cannot be the testing ground for "her desire for violence against him" only.<sup>16</sup> It is, above all, Gudrun's projection of her masculine, sadist impulses onto Gerald, her making of Gerald an extension of her own self.

She will play the masochist to him and he will have to answer to her desire. Since, however, "toda perversão ativa se acompanha de seu equivalente passivo...",<sup>17</sup> her sadism will be called on when her masochistic instincts are not allowed full play. She becomes mad with rage when Gerald interrupts the ritual of her dancing before the cattle. Here she had been playing with death, and Gerald broke the enchantment that her lust for self destruction had created. She then "struck the first blow," as she will "strike the last," because he interrupts her intercourse with death. She herself cannot understand the irrational impulse that has led her to hit Gerald; she asks herself "Why are you behaving in this impossible and ridiculous

fashion." The answer that she gives to satisfy her consciousness is in part very satisfactory: "It is you who make me behave like this" (WL,191). Gerald had just interrupted her flirtation with death, and thwarted her masochism. Furthermore, the blow is an invitation for him to reply in kind, and Gerald refuses. Consequently, if Gerald fails to play the sadist to her, he will certainly make her desire to break the symbiotic chain. Her dancing before the cattle and the blow she deals Gerald preclude the outcome, foreshadows their relationship. First she will try to "lose (herself) in some ultimate black sensation" (434) by means of her degenerative relation with Gerald; later she will destroy him when he does not correspond sadistically, as he should.

It is in the chapter "Rabbit" that symbiosis is dramatically confirmed. Gudrun and Gerald "pass(es) through as if it were allotropic states"<sup>18</sup> which reveal to each other the distorted character of the other's sensuality. The scream of the rabbit tears "the veil of her consciousness" and the repressed unconscious comes out visibly inflamed. It is the brutal, warped, savage side of their natures that bursts out. "Some greater, inhuman will"<sup>19</sup> drives them to sign a hellish pact, symbolically sealed by the bleeding scratches that the rabbit inflicts. It is a pact that contains all the tones of a religious rite. The demoniacal, insane, cruel, "great black-and-white rabbit,"<sup>20</sup> binds them by blood<sup>21</sup> then confirms their union by racing "round and round the court" involving them in a circle that "binds their brains" (WL,273). The ceremony is witnessed by another rabbit - Winifred - significantly dressed in her "dress of black and white stripes" (266). The ritual in which the rabbit binds



their brains is the rite of passage into the world of "acute sensation" mentioned in the letter; it is to be the breaking of "the relation between the senses and the outspoken mind"(285) announced by the African statuette; it is their mutual recognition of themselves as partakers of the mystery of "frost knowledge"(287). It confirms Gudrun's intuitive apprehension of Gerald when she first sees him: "is there really some pale gold, arctic light that envelopes us two?"(16). Their pact is the acknowledgement of a violent sensuality that gratifies their lustful, forbidden desires, and it is the breaking open of a stream of ungovernable emotions till now carefully damped by them both. She will arouse Gerald - she will play the rabbit, the victim to Gerald - and finally, like the rabbit, she will be the "ultimate victor."

Their attitudes after regaining consciousness show that neither of them desired this outcome. "There was a league between them abhorrent to them both." "He would have to make himself touch her, deliberately." "She knew that he was initiate as she was initiate. This thwarted her, contravened her, for the moment." At first, it is her intention to deny her role as a rabbit. But she realizes that it is impossible for her to continue attempting to suppress her sick, unconscious impulses, despite her conscious desire to hide them. Therefore she accepts that they are both rabbits, "add more"(WL,274).

It is the chapter entitled "Threshold" that contains the promise of fulfillment. As initiates they will experience a "brutal and licentious" sensuality that satisfies the repressed. Gudrun is looking forward to plunging into this unrestrained orgy. "She knew she wanted this...Ah, if that which was unknown and sup-

pressed in her were once let loose, what an orgiastic and satisfying event it would be" (WL,324).

Their sexual relations have the characteristics of the symbiotic bond as described by Jose Bleger: sometimes Gudrun plays the role that is Gerald's, at other times she is the mother to him, because, "si bien los roles son fijos, pueden rotar o alternar los depositarios que los asumen."<sup>22</sup> But their sexual relations always have a compulsory character.

When Gerald plays the feminine role in their relations, he agrees to being docked, or to put it his way, to sell his soul: "I'd sell my soul a hundred times - but I couldn't bear not to have you here." In their intercourse under the bridge "he threw his cigarette away" and "then he was quite free to balance her." She feels gratified playing the masculine role in this intercourse. He is the cup. "It was what she wanted" (WL,372). Her hands are the instruments with which she obtains the "precious knowledge of him" and they are compared to rapacious, greedy birds, that "could feed upon the fields of his mystical plastic form." Gerald feels that he is being castrated, sucked out, but "he could not help himself. Her fingers had him under their power."<sup>23</sup> Gerald cannot extricate himself from them, from Gudrun. The bond of their symbiotic relation is too strong, and can only be ruptured if the risk of total disintegration is run. For this, Gerald lacks the will and the strength.

At other times Gudrun plays the role of mother to him, and at these times it is she who becomes the recipient of the poison that his sick soul liberates. "And she, subject, received him as a vessel filled with his bitter potion of death." "Mother and substance of all life she was. And he, child and man, received

of her and was made whole." This part of the pact does not satisfy Gudrun in the least. "She was sick with terror, sick...her heart sank... and ache like nausea was upon her: a nausea of him... She felt old,old" (WL,393). She was even to dispense with her own sleep to afford him his. To understand the burdon that she has to bear, it is enough to compare the avidity with which she absorbed him after their intercourse under the bridge ("She kissed him, putting her fingers over his face, his eyes, his nostrils," (WL,374) to the repulsion that oppresses her after having nursed him. Here she kisses him in order not to look in "his dreadful opened eyes" (392). Yet she does not deny herself to him. Furthermore, she does not call on the cruelty that critics view as the basic trait of her make-up. Were Gudrun simply after Gerald's destruction, were she simply the "belle dame sans merci" she would have denied him this "sleep of fecundity within the womb."<sup>24</sup> But Gudrun respects the pact even when it demands that she play the mother to Gerald. She has had a strange intuition of this when she saw the arched, marble fireplace in Gerald's house: "She felt as if she were caught at last by fate, imprisoned in some horrible and fatal trap" (WL,370). But she has accepted it, and as if offering herself to fate, echoes Mrs. Crich's voice: "Don't come any further with me."<sup>25</sup> This Mrs. Crich said to Gerald when he was leading her to her bedroom, and Gudrun repeats the very same words as Gerald leads her to the gate, hinting at the limit he must respect in their relationship. She wants their roles to be defined for the maintenance of their pact, and ultimately for her survival.

It is not difficult to understand why she abhors the mother's role that she has to play as part of her

pact: it is the counterpart of "black licentiousness." The latter can dissolve her brain, prevent suffering; the former brings her into a state of overconsciousness, forcing her to investigate the very nature of her damage. "It was as if she drew a glittering rope of knowledge out of the sea of darkness, drew... and drew it out of the fathomless depths of her past, and still it did not come to an end, there was no end to it, she must haul and haul at the rope of glittering consciousness... till she was weary, aching... and yet she had not done" (WL,391). Her ties to him are so strong that even at the price of this new suffering, she will not untie them. Yet she does not try to understand her predicament. She forces herself to believe that the stability of marriage will bring her the peace that she misses and she submits to Gerald's strong and violent love, fooling herself that she is "living fully and finally" (424), accepting Gerald's "monstrous... juxtaposition against her"(141) "because of what had been, because of his coming to her that first night, into her own house, in his extremity, because" (511). She cannot finish her thought because the root of her malady remains buried in the unconscious, and defies her attempts at self analysis, but she continues her relation with Gerald because the chains of a symbiotic connection cannot be easily broken. "El secreto de la symbiosis es de un cadaver con vida que debe ser mantenido, controlado e inmovilizado entre sus integrantes: si se descontrola se produce la destruccion o, por lo menos, el riesgo."<sup>26</sup>

This relation, up to the point it is maintained, keeps both Gerald and Gudrun alive: it does not allow Gudrun and Gerald to disintegrate because it preserves their basic humanity. Gudrun remains human up to the

point when she gives in to Loerke, the conscious bisexual who has found his mate in a human being" (WL, 480); Gerald, who to the end never chased to play the role of the frost spirit, always "shining like the sun on frost" (442), keeps, till his death, a certain humanity, a humanity that is his "limitation." Whereas Loerke, no more a man, just a creature, "was detached from everything," "in Gerald's soul there still lingered some attachment to the rest, to the whole. ...He was limited, bornē, subject to his necessity, in the last issue, for goodness, for righteousness, for oneness with the ultimate purpose"(509). This relation never allowed "the snow (to melt)"(494) for Gerald, but it did not destroy his humanity. In the last analysis, Gerald dies of this limitation: "why should he close up and become impervious, immune..."(501).

Yet, such a relation by its very nature - that of keeping two sick people immobile - cannot cure, cannot bring them to an awareness of the nature of their sickness for it keeps the participants unknowing. For this reason, such a relation inevitably leads to the destruction of what it is intended to preserve. Locked in this self-consuming relationship, Gudrun's torment becomes unbearable. The moments of over-consciousness that her relation with Gerald entail, though not sufficient to reveal the nature of her sickness, reveal to her the hollowness of her life, a hollowness that becomes more intensified when she compares her life to that of Ursula II. Ever since she formed her connection with Gerald she has seen Ursula II and Birkin as her parental substitutes. The appeal that Ursula II and Birkin have for her is so strong that she wishes

she could stay with them in their happiness. "How pleased Gudrun was to come out of the shop, and enter the car, ... with Ursula (II) and Birkin! what an adventure life seemed at this moment! ... Ah, if she could be just like that, it would be perfect!" (WL, 424). "That seemed like life indeed to her" (425). But she cannot escape her deathly connection to Gerald; free, she would again desire Ursula II and see Birkin with contempt: "Living with him (she) should think would be more than impossible."

Since the rabbit ritual has tied Gerald and Gudrun, she has to go on bearing "the intense suffering" before the soul breaks and falls "into the long, long (Arctic) process of purely sensual understanding" (286), before the human soul is metamorphosed into a soulless "creature" like Loerke. To convey the intensity of Gudrun's suffering, Lawrence, in a fantastic visual image, establishes the contrast between the grandfather clock, which underlies Ursula's being, and Gudrun's apprehension of the clock: the former "had two pink roses in a basket painted above the figures on the face" (440); the one that symbolizes Gudrun, as we noted, is a "long-case clock, and inserted into its dial was a ruddy, round, slant-eyed, joyous painted face" which gave her an obtrusive "glad eye." Like this face "she has never really lived, she only watched." And the double meaning contained in the word "watch" fully expresses her role in life: to watch the unremitting watch. At the height of her psychotic despair she even sees her face reflected on a mirror as "a twelve-hour clock dial." It fills her with a mad desire for relief, a need of human comfort, peace, rest. For once, she consciously calls for "otherness": "Oh, why wasn't there somebody to take her in their arms and fold her safe and perfect, for sleep. She want

ed so much this perfect enfolded sleep." This, Gerald could not give her. They are the two sides of one coin: "Ha! He needed putting to sleep himself - poor Gerald" (524).

In developing the conflicts in the depth of Gudrun's mind, Lawrence shows an incomparable understanding of human nature. He perceives the multiplicity of motives that lie behind human behaviour, the complexity of the inner structure of the psyche, the impenetrable mystery of the forces that work upon the individual and the lack of control of the individual over them. More, in portraying the suffering inherent in the nature of this inner conflict, Lawrence shows an enormous sympathy with Gudrun and the characters that struggle with corruption. Therefore the reader cannot help sympathizing with Gudrun, in spite of her thwarted apprehension of life; he cannot help feeling sorry for her when her suffering becomes so intense as to blind her to the possibility of salvation.

It is in one of these crises that she hears Birkin's letter read aloud at the Café Pompadour. The shock that the letter causes her proves that, in spite of her cynicism, in spite of the attempts at dissolving herself in "black licentiousness," there has always been a flicker of hope burning in her for life and that it is this hope for life that causes her to suffer. The letter, however, brings her face to face with the fact that she suffers "horribly from a complication of diseases for which there is no hope" (WL, 445). She then embraces her fate, embraces dissolution consciously. She then understands that there is no hope for her. Significantly, when Gudrun and Ursula II next meet at a hotel, Gudrun "began to move downstairs as Ursula (II) ran up" (441). More signifi

cant still is that she wears a "strange black-and-white band round her hair"(444) on that same night. These are the rabbit's colours, and since, till now, she has been "at (Gerald's) mercy" her gesture is the premonition of a turning point in her relation with Gerald. She will cut her hold on life by cutting the symbiotic vinculum. This is the way to become "ultimate victor" (272) over Gerald.

The ensuing conversation with Birkin (at dinner) that same night strengthens her decision to lapse from "thedesire for goodness"(286). "It might have been her own fate she was inquiring after," when she asks Birkin if the English would have to disappear. Though Birkin refuses to admit that "there is no hope" for the "complication of diseases" we suffer from, Gudrun accepts hopelessness as true for herself and accepts the fact that it is her fate "to disappear." She will disappear as Gudrun, the human being, whereas "a new creature (will step)into life" (445).

Even after her conscious decision to "disappear," there is still a long way of suffering to travel. Her connection with Gerald, though deathly, is the last connection she can have with life. Though she wants to "break away from its organic hold" (286),

the source of creation is central with the human soul, and the issue from that source proceeds without any choice or knowledge on our part.<sup>27</sup>

It has taken a long time and has caused Gudrun suffering to accept the dissociation of her male and female components; it will cause her still greater to accept her total dehumanization.

I think that when she first intended to "disap-



pear," she intended to use her sexual ambivalence consciously, for this purpose, burning herself out through regression with Gerald, whom she now sees as doomed, to consume herself by his radio-active, "living metal." In the snowy Alps both had felt like "opposite poles of one fierce energy... powerful enough to leap over the confines of life into the forbidden places and back again" (WL, 448). The hostel, half-buried in the expanse of snow, would be their coffin. But Gerald refuses to become aware of his unconscious perversity and somehow refuses to fo<sup>l</sup>low Gudrun in the exploration of her fantasies. "Because, however much he might mentally will to be immune and self-complete, the desire for this state was lacking" (501). In her first communion with the snow she is rapt at the window, fully embarked on her "great retrogression," feeling the ecstasy of acute sensation in the barren land of autistic phantasies, when Gerald breaks her isolation and forces her back to the human world. The three scenes in which she obtains ecstatic communion with the snow show that the more immersed she becomes, the more insistent Gerald's call. As before, when he had failed to play up to her expectations, she becomes sadistic towards him: now because of his refusal to leave his human world and to enter her less human, more disintegrated world of sensation. Gudrun's reactions against Gerald's interference become more and more violent, there is an increasing "diabolic coldness in her" (498). She did not react violently against Gerald the first time he debarred her communion with the snow, by pressing his violent passion on her. She had felt "some terror and a little horror" of him, but she had lain passive, "silent and... remote" (452). But dur-

ing her second "intercourse" with snow she reacts more strongly, to make him understand his exclusion. The look of "terrible merriment" that is reflected on her face and the admission that "it was the most complete moment of my life" penetrates Gerald's heart like "a fine blade" (473). The time that precedes "the last blow," Gudrun becomes cruel and brutal. She tells him openly not to try to prevent her from getting her consummation. "If you can't see it yourself, why try to debar me?" (503). His passion does not satisfy her any longer; she no longer desires the "sheer blind force of passion" but "the subtle thrills of extreme sensation in reduction" that lie "far out of Gerald's knowledge" (507): a greatly refined sadism.

Determined to have her consummation yet firmly tied to the symbiotic chain, Gudrun is left with the only alternative of open combat. She has learned through Loerke the kind of detachment that will save her from his constant torture and allow her a different kind of disintegration. Either she will make Gerald give up the connection with her and accept the more destructive sensuality which Loerke opens before them, or they will have to separate. But Gerald neither leaves her nor becomes immune. Their relation continues on the same basis: "Sometimes it was he who seemed strongest... sometimes it was the reverse. But always it was this eternal see-saw, one destroyed that the other might exist, one ratified because the other was annulled" (WL, 500). In searching for reasons to break this deadlock, Gudrun suddenly grasps that Gerald's attraction to other women means that he is no man of hers at all: "He should have all the women he can - he is naturally promiscuous." This accusation

seems to appear like the Biblical "Mene! Mene!" (464) justifying her irrevocable decision to combat him.

Eliseo Vivas says that "Gudrun murders Gerald without premeditated guile or plan, in a more or less unconscious manner..."<sup>28</sup> Yet, she has now made it clear that she must rid herself of the suffering that her relation with Gerald is causing her. She consciously goads him to fury in order to provoke a reaction from him: She knows that "he might kill her" (WL,508). But she does not want to die; she wants only to break her hold on life because it is causing her too great a suffering; she wants to break "the relation between the senses and the outspoken mind" (285); she wants to "ebb with the sewer stream" through Loerke. If one of the two had to die, "it should not be her death." Since none of formulae she tried worked out - neither "the going apart of the two protagonists, (nor) the subjugating of the one will to the other " (508), she would try the last alternative: his death.

With Loerke's help she begins to attack Gerald where he is most vulnerable: first she makes him drink the biliousness of her pity: "I had to take pity on you. But it was never love" (497). Then she denies herself to him and asks him not to desire her anymore. The shock makes him rigid, unconscious. Again, to prove the triumph of her pity, she brings him back to life. Finally she makes him bleed by publicly cutting the "umbilical cord" in front of his rival. She cries aloud in the hotel that she is not to be called Mrs. Crich since she is not married to him, or better, since from now on she is not going to play the mother's role to him.

Yet in spite of the ever-harsher conflict, des-

pite her ever-increasing cruelty to him, she cannot break free yet of their symbiotic bond. At the height of her repulsion for him, aversion becomes attraction and she falls prey to "his domination" (WL,506). Unable to bear these turnabouts, she makes use of her last weapon. She goads him to fury by affirming that their relationship had been a total failure because of Gerald's inability to love. Gerald becomes so blind that his only desire is to kill her, and only her adroitness saves her from his wrath. The next day she takes part in the ceremony that unties them. Loerke officiates.

The religious ritual of their break-up, while containing the sexual overtones of the regressive mode of sexuality upon which she is going to embark, parodies the sacrifice of the Lamb. It weirdly mixes that part of the mass which offers God the immolation of the Lamb with the crucifixion of Christ. The voices of Gudrun and Loerke are like bells; Loerke, the priest, produces and dispenses the wafers and wine. Water and wine are symbolized and parodied by hot coffee and Heidelbeer, made of the fruit which grows under the deathly snow. The sacrifice is rendered to Christ instead of being rendered to the Father. Gerald, the son of man, is going to be immolated for the sake of the creature, Gudrun. Without Gerald, she will become like Loerke: detached, absolute in herself, divorced from the subjection to goodness.

When Gerald meets them, the strange ritual has already been initiated. There is no more coffee and Heidelbeer is offered instead. "Then, suddenly, (Loerke) elevated the bottle gallantly in the air." Unlike Jesus, Gerald refuses the chalice. Still he does not admit that disintegration is the only way left. He

does not want to become, like Loerke, aware of his sickness: he does not want to become, like Loerke, a creature. Therefore he tries to do away with him, striking him twice on the head.

But now Gudrun's "last blow" is struck: "She raised her clenched hand high, and brought it down... on to the face and... breast of Gerald." At this "stroke," Gerald feels "his soul opened" (WL, 530). The tie is cut. He will be free now to act out his lusts openly: first his overpowering desire to strangle Gudrun. In this, in a frenzy of sadism, he almost succeeds; then, in disgust, he lets her fall, and drifts away. But his "profound if hidden lust... to be murdered" (36) that Birkin long ago warned him of has also been released by Gudrun's blow: and now this desire to be violated, murdered, takes over Gerald. It is this he recognizes when he sees the half-buried crucifix, and he "feel(s) the blow descending" (532) as he stumbles toward death.

The moon, woman's ally, watches "unremitting" (532) in the same way it had watched Diana<sup>29</sup> choking her young rescuer. Now Gudrun, "whether she wanted it or not" (WL, 298) knows she has become the dangerous "cuttlefish" (196) that coldly destroys her man, and finally she is "cold, a cold woman" who cannot even cry, "and the sight of her cold, pale, impassive face soon stopped the fountain of Ursula (II's) tears" (535). Finally, finally, she is detached from the necessity of human contact, divorced from the subjection to goodness and from the pangs of consciousness. "The long case" that bore the sexless clock face dial is sealed forever, and her immunity prevents her from hearing the terrible "tic-tac," from answering the tormenting human question "whither." Gerald is "mute Matter" (540).

Gudrun is the "living matter" who has buried her own spirit "in pang after pang of vital, explosive self-reduction."<sup>30</sup> She will experience the long process of disintegration which succeed the breaking point, "the point when the soul in intense suffering breaks, breaks away from its organic hold like a leaf that falls." Gudrun has finally escaped suffering and fallen "from the connexion with life and hope" "into the long (Arctic) process of purely sensual understanding, knowledge in the mystery of dissolution"(WL,286). In this, she has discarded the neurotic side of her personality and assumed the psychotic level. The repressed has taken over and she has regressed "a la época en que el yo aún no se habia delimitado netamente frente al mundo exterior y frente al prójimo."<sup>31</sup> Detached from the external world and prey to her introversion, Gudrun seeks refuge in the kind of world which a Loerke has offered; in "the inner mysteries of sensation" (wl,504), in a final "reducing back"(432).

David Cavitch is one of the first critics to inquire into the genesis of Gudrun's "distorted feelings of love"<sup>32</sup> and he explains them "as Birkin's persona."<sup>33</sup> According to him "Lawrence transferred to her the feelings that would have been Birkin's if his homosexuality had become explicitly the central issue in the fiction."<sup>34</sup> Thus he explains the character's illness by the author's.

Cavitch's view is important as a testimony of Gudrun's nature as extremely perverse, regressive, distorted. Yet, since we have proposed to show that the phallicism which causes Lawrence's women to become psychically distorted is the source of the heroine's strength and artistic appeal, rather than the projection of the author's sickness, we will try

to discover the genesis of Gudrun's psychosexual distortion in her own life, as described both in Women in Love and The Rainbow. If, as hoped, we have shown her as a complex, psychologically valid character, a person in her own right - the reason for her psychic split should be given in the earlier novel or hinted at in the later one.

In Women in Love we are given a clue in the chapter "Death and Love:" here we are invited to pick up the thread which Gudrun, in a crisis of "active superconsciousness," brings into the open, but drops, after a desperate, tormenting attempt at penetrating into the caverns of her unconscious: while lying wide awake beside Gerald, whom she has just nurtured with motherly love, it is the remembrance of "her childhood... her family...her past" (WL,391) which torments her. Therefore we strongly suspect that it is in her past, impenetrable to her, that the answer for her problems must lie.

Going back to her childhood, to The Rainbow, we are told that she "was the mother's favourite" for only the first year of her life, for the mother "always lived in her latest baby" (R,220). We also learn that Gudrun could not, anytime in her early infancy, claim much love from the father, because Ursula I was "the child of her father's heart" (R,213). She may not have found the father when she was in need of him to place on him the intense feelings she had devoted to the mother in their short yet excessively binding attachment. This lack of object love may have caused the split of Gudrun's personality: it certainly would explain why the infant Gudrun, in attempting a "re-direction" of her "psychic energies,"<sup>35</sup> places them into the world of "her own fancies" (R,220,261) and

in an attachment to Ursula I.

We know from The Rainbow that in her early years she is already absorbed in her autistic world: she "would have nothing to do with realities" (R,261). This trait is carried throughout infancy, and in early adolescence Gudrun has become even more immersed in her fancies: "She seemed to avoid all contact, instinctively... pursuing half-formed fancies that had no relation to anyone else" (R,270).

Her attachment to Ursula I is also formed in her early infancy. When the third daughter, Theresa, is born, they "were much together, Gudrun and Ursula... From the first she (Gudrun) followed Ursula's lead" (R,220). While Ursula I at this time feels that her father is "her strength and greater self," Gudrun has already had to share the moderly love with the newly born baby. She then follows "Ursula's lead" almost as if her elder sister were her father. We know that this attachment continues throughout her childhood, for when she is ten, Lawrence tells us that Gudrun "left all (reality) to her elder sister: only she believed in Ursula, and trusted to Ursula." Her sister, in turn, "had a great tenderness for he co-mate sister" (R,261). As the girls grow into adolescence, this binding love is tied closer: "The younger girl lived her religious, responsible life in her sister, by proxy" (R,270), avoiding contact with the rest of the world.

Knowing this about her past, we recognize that the traits Gudrun exhibits in Women in Love - mistrust of people, distancing herself to keep from contact, her outward placidness, her inward agressiveness, her attachment to Ursula II - are really a continuation of early traits: we feel that the later Gudrun acts in accordance with attitudes brought from childhood.



In short, we feel that Lawrence developed his characterization of Gudrun coherently through both novels. Lawrence's use of the same adjectives in both novels strongly reinforces our feeling: her outward passivity and placidness which conceals her inward aggressiveness is thoroughly described by the narrator of Women in Love in the following terms: "her nature, in spite of her apparent placidity and calm, was profoundly restless" (WL,237). This description is echoed through Hermione's apprehension of her as "the more beautiful and attractive" in contrast to Ursula II whom she sees as "more womanly" (92). Gerald also detects of "a body of cold power in (Gudrun)" (135). The narrator of The Rainbow, while describing Gudrun as "strangely placid, almost passive" (R, 220) and speaking of her "long sleepy body" (R, 261) takes care to show how powerful and untamed Gudrun's forces are: when she is only two, and such a quiet child ... "absorbed in her fancies," we hear "yet her will was indomitable, once set" (R, 220). Several times she is described as a wild animal, a "lithe, farouche animal (R,335), and we are made to feel in the Gudrun of The Rainbow the same hidden and potentially dangerous power which Gerald detected in her Women in Love: there is a force unalterable " in her.

Our belief in Lawrence's development of Gudrun's characterization from one book to the other allows us to infer that Gudrun's return home, in the beginning of Women in Love, was forced by her repressed love for Ursula: she would want the old connexion with Ursula again. This would explain why she came back, despite her lack of identification with her father and mother, and her complete rejection of the ugly reality of Beldover. While she walks along the streets

of Beldover we are made to feel the compulsive nature of her return:

But all the time her heart was crying, as if in the midst of some ordeal: "I want to go back, I want to go away, I want not to know it, not to know that this exists." Yet she must go forward. (WL,13)

This would explain why Gudrun, in her opening conversation with Ursula II, is so irritated when Ursula II refuses to assume a definitely hostile attitude against marriage. Ursula II, in response to her sister's "don't you really want to get married?" admits instead that she would "marry like a shot" if she found the right man. Gudrun is left with the alternative of finding for herself the "highly attractive individual of sufficient means" who could afford her the possibility of continuing her role of "Good-Runner". These clues, which have allowed us to trace Gudrun's psychosexual distortion in Women in Love back to her childhood as described in The Rainbow, are however enough to reveal Lawrence's attitude toward her in The Rainbow, since Gudrun is not fully developed there. Yet, considering that in The Rainbow he gives the phallic Ursula I the possibility of achieving fullness of being, by allowing her to accomplish the balance between her male and female elements through self-knowledge, we see Lawrence's refusal to allow Gudrun the inner balance which would redeem her, in Women in Love, as a symptom of the accentuation of his antagonism towards woman, the tipping of his ambivalence toward her on to the side of sometimes open, often disguised misogyny. This same antagonism will bring him to use a male hero in Women in Love, a hero necessary for the redemption of Ursula II.