

G. Eliot, Forster and Lawrence (6)
The Sisters : A Study of *Middlemarch*,
Howards End* and *Women in Love
(IV)

Masako Hirai

要約

G. エリオット, フォースター, ロレンス (6) 「姉妹」の小説 (*Middlemarch*, *Howards End*, *Women in Love* の比較)

IV

平井 雅子

今回は、特に *Women in Love* を中心に、表題に掲げた他の二つの小説と比較しながら、作中に展開される Love (愛) と Knowledge (知) についての論争の特異性と、その意味を論ずる。

Love——ことに男女間の愛には、男女それぞれの思惑と伝統的男性神話、女性神話、相互に対する無理解、偏見、自己主張という、限りなく甘美かつ救いようもなく不毛でもあるドラマの種が宿されている。その種を白日に晒すこと、ことに当の男女が、そのギャップを互いの口を通してあばきたてることは、二人の関係にとってはタブーである。それが小説の中でもタブーとして働き続けたことは、程度の差こそあれ *Middlemarch* や *Howards End* においてすら明らかであるが、*Women in Love* には、このタブーの壁を正面から破る男女の論争が展開され、それが作品全体と〈愛〉の構造に積極的に働きかける debating として機能している。単に破壊的なのではなく、その破壊を通して創造的に働く、という逆説的機能をもつのである。この場合も、その元は姉妹の debating の中に用意されており、その意味で *Middlemarch*, *Howards End* にも共通の基盤が見られるのだが、どこに、この男女の debating の特異性が生じ、それによって love の本質に変化がもたらされるのか、が問題である。

タブーの問題が暗示するごとく、love の debating に関わる、もう一つの debating のテーマは knowing (知) と not knowing (無知) である。この対立概念の各が、Lawrence にあっては固定的なものではなく、第一に、男性的知の原理 (male knowledge) と女性的知の原理 (female knowledge) という既成の〈知〉の枠組を突破する手段となりうること、第二に、knowing を究めることによって或る段階で not knowing の世界に突入でき、逆に not knowing を経て新しい knowledge への道が開けること、第三に、その新しい knowledge も含めて傲りと停滞、腐敗を免れるため、社会との新たな関係を樹立するために、他者の力を借りて絶えず自らの脱皮をはかる必要が生ずること、が *Women in Love* の中に示されている。それには、一つには文字通り verbal な登場人物の口を借りた debating が必要とされ、もう一つには、真理に正面から迫ろうとする求道的態度と、一定の距離を保つ虚構を前提とする game (遊戯) との相互補助の関係ないし対話が求められる。それが、どのようになされ、どこで失敗するかが、もう一つの大きな問題であり、それが Ursula と Gudrun の愛の成功と失敗を左右し、また、その基礎となる姉妹の関係に依存している事実を、text の中から明らかにしていく。

IV. The Debate on Love and Knowledge

(1) The Priest of Love vs. the Priestess

At the end of the last chapter, I suggested that Ursula's naive tender emotions towards natural lives, characteristic of her unconscious female knowledge, as well as her openness to the conflicting emotions roused by her meeting with Birkin, make it possible for her to break the limitation of her old female role—the 'insistent' female superiority in physical knowledge. It seems as if, to use Lawrentian terms, she "dies" in her "conscious knowledge" and "renews" her "unconscious knowledge". The relationship between the man and the woman itself is going through a ritual of death and renewal in the "Moony" scene.

But perhaps this "renewed" state never gets beyond the image of tender hesitation. As soon as Birkin tries to rationalize it or pave the way for it by attacking the existing relationship between man and woman, he looks "bullying", rigid, absurd, or boring, which Ursula's eyes do not fail to observe. On such occasions, she either attacks him or laughs at him with such pointed satire that he begins to "feel a fool" (*WL*, p. 129) even to himself. When Ursula complains that Birkin does not love her, that her life is "unfulfilled", he retorts:

What you want me to serve is nothing, mere nothing. It isn't even you, it is your mere female quality. And I wouldn't give a straw for your female ego—it's a rag doll. . . . I want you to drop your assertive *will*, your frightened apprehensive self-insistence, that is what I want. —I want you to trust yourself so implicitly, that you can let yourself go. (*WL*, pp. 250–1)

To this, Ursula replies in mockery:

It is you who can't let yourself go, it is you who hang on to yourself as if it were your only treasure. *You—you* are the Sunday school teacher—*you—you* preacher. (*WL*, p. 251)

If we believe literally what the lovers say, here is an argument between the *mere* "preacher" of love who teaches that the woman should drop her "assertive will" while he himself "hangs on" to his own, and the "female ego" which "insists" on "mere female quality".

Here is a new trend of thought, a violent clash between the male ego and the female ego who attack the blindness of each other to his or her self-assertion—the "web" and "maze" of fantasy which makes each of them believe, and thus traps them in, the superiority of his vision, her knowledge. I use the image of "web" and "maze" because the situation itself is familiar to us if we remember *Middlemarch* (the "maze" of Casaubon's mind which threatens to trap Dorothea in its narrow darkness) and Tennyson's "Lady of Shalott". However, the Lady of Shalott characteristically never

speaks to man. Dorothea does not dare to speak to her husband about the uselessness of his research when she knows he is shortly to die and now wants to entrust her with the work which he has jealously guarded from other people. Pity is at the bottom of her conduct towards him, which almost obscures her revolt against his egoism. She is caught in a dilemma between her pity and her ego, rather than between his ego and her ego. By Casaubon's timely death, she is spared the choice between complying with his wish (and binding her life to a futile work after his death) and speaking up honestly against his assertion (and injuring his ego before his death).

In *Howards End*, Margaret even tries to touch Henry on the quick when she cries :

You shall see the connection if it kills you, Henry! You have had a mistress—I forgave you. My sister has a lover—you drive her from the house. . . . Stupid, hypocritical, cruel—oh, contemptible!—a man who insults his wife when she's alive and cants with her memory when she's dead. A man who ruins a woman for his pleasure, and casts her off to ruin other men. And gives bad financial advice, and then says he is not responsible. These men are you. You can't recognize them, because you cannot connect. I've had enough of your unweeded kindness. I've spoiled you long enough. All your life you have been spoiled. Mrs Wilcox spoiled you. No one has ever told you what you are—muddled, criminally muddled. (*HE*, p. 305)

Since Henry Wilcox is not responsible in the legal or business sense, so he cannot feel responsible in an ethical and personal sense for advising Leonard Bast to move from a company, which subsequently became safe and sound, to another, which collapsed and fired him. He is socially respected as long as his affair with a prostitute does not become a scandal, so it does not occur to him that he has betrayed his first wife, that he is sentimentalizing over the 'unchanging' love between them when he weeps for his dead wife or that he has committed a misdeed (if it is one) similar to Helen's. On the other hand, the moment Helen's affair and resulting pregnancy threatens to bring social disgrace, he does not hesitate to turn her out of his house. Social opinion is the sole support on which his *ego* rests confident and content—the social opinion which he has cultivated with his business mind that "concentrates on five minutes before and five minutes after". Margaret's criticism that he "cannot connect", that he is "hypocritical" and "muddled", is aimed at his blindness outside those ten minutes' thought and outside social opinion which rests on them. That he has been "spoiled" or spared criticism not only by society but by the first Mrs. Wilcox and even by Margaret herself so far—this is a particularly telling point which shows the traditional dependence of woman's role on man's ego and on the social opinion which he has managed to control. Woman knows, or has known, that it is both ineffectual and dangerous to try to pull down man's flag. When Antigone attempts to do this, Ismene tries to stop her. Antigone goes against Creon's order, and she dies. Margaret, thinking she has better knowledge than her husband, at first seeks to use her woman's influence to lead him into the light, instead of

risking the danger of merely infuriating him with her criticisms. Only when she is forced by her irresistible sympathy for Helen to confront her husband's mind and driven to desperation by its impotence, does Margaret dare to speak what is really in her mind—that his mind *is* impotent and blind, that it has been impotent all the while. But he has no ears for this. Her explosion is useless, as she might have well expected. Henry “stammers” his first words, and needs a second to right “his brain. . . still in a whirl”—but this reaction is too feeble to mean anything of consequence, and he quickly overcomes it, regaining his stern social position. He can only see “blackmail” in her words. He is “never to pay the least attention to threats”.

Pursuing this line, we come to the quarrel between Ursula and Birkin. It is different because their minds are both more vulnerable and more adventurous. Ursula's daring and fiery criticism of Birkin's hypocrisy and limitation, flinging off ‘social respect’ and ‘woman's influence,’ is closer to Antigone's passion, which courts death, than it is to Dorothea's pitying irresolution or to Margaret's more intellectual and restrained attitude. Birkin, too, is more open and direct, even passionately so, in taking and reacting to Ursula's words, though he is more restrained than she and tries to assert his superior intellectual position. Although each is limited by the assertion of his or her ego, the openness of their speech and reactions presents a new possibility of *debating* the matter out and breaking the hedges between them. Above all, they debate passionately the relationship between them, “love”.

It is helpful to consider their exchange in terms of the ‘roles’ they play in their relationship and also to compare Ursula's speech with Gudrun's:

It is quite impossible really to let go, in England, of that I am assured. (*WL*, p. 394)

What I mean by ‘roles’ can be social and/or sexual. Birkin, who claims that Ursula should drop her “assertive *will*” based on her “female quality”, the old (and according to her, unchanging) female role, has inadvertently taken up the role of the “preacher” who does not put his theory into practice himself. The image of the “Sunday school teacher” is particularly appropriate because he does not carry his Sunday-spirit into his activities during the week-days. If we consider Sunday as the equivalent of “the paradisaic entry into pure, single being, the individual soul taking precedence over love and desire for union. . . even while it loves and yields” (*WL*, p. 254) which Birkin “preaches” as the desirable relationship between man and woman, then the week-days would be the social side of such men and women. When Gudrun says that it is impossible to “let go” in England, she shares Ursula's view that one's private relationship is related to one's social relationship, that it is a hypocritical lie to claim one can “let go” in private life while being bound hand and foot in social life.

Both sisters are honest and clean in that sense. Their difference is that Gudrun forsakes the possibility of final release and a life other than what she knows, while Ursula passionately attacks Birkin for his failure to relate his actual behaviour, private and social, to his claim upon herself. According to her, it is not she but he who cannot “let go”.

Yet Birkin is not a hypocrite in all respects. He himself admits:

I don't believe in the humanity I pretend to be part of, I don't care a straw for the social ideals I live by, I hate the dying organic form of social mankind—so it can't be anything but trumpery, to work at education. I shall drop it as soon as I am clear enough—tomorrow perhaps—and be by myself. (*WL*, p. 132)

When he says this, it doesn't sound as if that "tomorrow" will ever come. Even if he drops his work as a school-inspector and washes his hands of any work in education, or the maintenance of existing social ideals, what would remain in him would still "stink" with "foulness" both in social and private life.

In the chapter named "Excuse", Ursula and Birkin experience the most violent antagonism, which reveals the difficulties inherent in his position. After Ursula wistfully accepts the rings from Birkin, not because she is convinced but because of the pure beauty of the gems on her hands, Birkin tells her half awkwardly that he has an appointment for dinner at Shortlands and that he has to be there to say good-bye to and be "decent" to Hermione. It is then that Ursula revolts with a fury which seems to "burn his face".

Go to your spiritual brides—but don't come to me as well, because I'm not having any, thank you. —You're not satisfied, aren't you? Your spiritual brides can't give you what you want, they aren't common and fleshy enough for you, aren't they? So you come to me, and keep them in the background! You will marry me for daily use. But you'll keep yourself well provided with spiritual brides, in the background. . . . And *I, I'm* not spiritual enough, *I'm* not as spiritual as that Hermione—! . . . What does she work out to, in the end, with all her social passion, as you call it. Social passion—what social passion has she?—show it me!—where is it? She wants petty, immediate *power*, she wants the illusion that she is a great woman, that is all.—In her soul she's a devilish unbeliever, common as dirt. . . . but you love it. You love the sham spirituality, it's your food. And why?—Because of the dirt underneath.—Do you think I don't know the foulness of your sex life—and hers?—I do. And it's that foulness you want, you liar. Then have it, have it.—You're such a liar. (*WL*, pp. 306–7)

Throughout her speech, which is much longer, we can see the so-called "spiritual" or "social" life affecting the "sexual" life and vice versa. When she sees Hermione and Birkin hanging on to social, cultural and intellectual roles they no longer believe in, Ursula, seized with fury, refuses to pretend or to act a part even in the sexual life they have likewise contaminated with lies. The reason why she thinks he loves the "foulness"—and he admits that "she was in the main right"—lies in his (and Hermione's) sense of superiority to others. It is not only superiority in knowing more than other people (and being able to teach them) but superiority in knowing that all their knowledge is false and

hollow. That is the ultimate knowledge, which makes Birkin feel that he is in a position to “bow her [Hermione] off the field” with “decent” respect. The pathetic longing and respect for dying culture, for what mankind has stood for, when it comes through the eyes of superiority, is really sentimental and self-deceiving. It is self-deceiving because that kind of superiority, which Ursula thinks Birkin loves, depends on the self-deception that he is exempt from the “foulness” of civilisation. The glorification of “pure” sexual life, against the background of that self-deception becomes part of the lie.

In actual life, Lawrence “always had a string of them [spiritual brides] trailing after” (*WL*, p. 306) him, and here particularly we can hear Frieda Lawrence’s voice ringing in his ears. While writing the third version of what was later to become *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, Lawrence wrote to Garnett:

I am sure of this now, this novel. . . . Before, I could not get my soul into it. That was because of the struggle and the resistance between Frieda and me. Now you will find her and me in the novel, I think, and the work is of both of us.¹

The “spiritual” women, whether they be Jessie Chambers, Helen Corke, Ottoline Morel, Dorothy Brett. . . were always a matter of contention between Lawrence and his wife, and in the novel we can see why. Those women, who had high standards of how to behave in society but were not satisfied with themselves, followed him because, by sharing his ideas, they could feel “a great woman”, superior to the life they despised at bottom. Frieda, not being English but of a German aristocratic family, having had a very liberal and intellectual German education, having had affairs with other men including Otto Gross, the sexual emancipationist and disciple of Freud, could dare to be free and disrespectful, to show that she did not care a damn for English refinement and high-mindedness.

Not only Frieda but Lawrence came to share her antagonism to English culture more as the first world war started and dropped its shadow on his life.

The war, the approaching conscription, the sense of complete paltriness and chaotic nastiness in life, really robs one of speech. . . . I have begun the second half of the *Rainbow*. But already it is beyond all hope of ever being published, because of the things it says. And more than that, it is beyond all possibility even to offer it to a world, a putrescent mankind like ours. I feel I cannot *touch* humanity, even in thought, it is abhorrent to me.²

What he first called “the second half of the *Rainbow*” was to become *Women in Love*, and he was writing this version (the fourth version: April–June 1916) after *The Rainbow* was published and banned for obscenity. While he wrote at least six drafts and revisions of *Women in Love* between 1913 and 1919, the war brought him not only further disillusion with English society but the suppression or fear of suppression of all his works, continual harassment by police-inspection (for suspected spying for the Germans) and by the army for medical checks (though they knew he had t. b.), denial of his right to leave the country, expulsion from Cornwall, poverty, illness, plus—worst of all—the failure of his

friends to stand up for him against censorship and for his views. Some of them at first behaved as if they shared his ideas, but the severe test of public censure and the war situation revealed their disbelief at bottom. Particularly his project for forming an Utopian community with friends, which was impractical but seemed to him the only hope, was a complete failure.

Even Forster had a part in this, though he never “pretended” to share Lawrence’s view on “Rananim”. Many episodes of sharing and contention with his friends were re-interpreted and fed back into the novel while Lawrence was writing it. This is why it is possible to find traces of the actions and behaviour of people such as Katherine Mansfield and Middleton Murry (considered the prototypes of Gudrun and Gerald), Ottoline Morrell (who has similarities with Hermione), Bertrand Russell, Mark Gertler, and other artists and intellectual friends of this period, besides Lawrence himself (Birkin), Frieda, Louie Burrows (both appearing in Ursula), Jessie Chambers, Helen Corke, George Neville, and other friends of his previous years in Eastwood and Croydon. It is symbolic that Ottoline Morrell, to whom Lawrence wrote in 1916,

When one is shaken to the very depths, one finds reality in the unreal world. At present my real world is the world of my inner soul, which reflects on to the novel I write,³

turned against him in 1917 with a threat of legal action against publication of the novel which, she thought, caricatured her in Hermione. Admitting to Pinker that “there is a hint of [Ottoline] in the character of Hermione”, Lawrence went on to say, “. . . so there is a hint of a million women”.⁴ He also told Lady Cynthia Asquith that “his woman was infinitely superior” but that the Morrells asked Pinker to “come down and identify the character as his wife, and Ottoline asked Lawrence to return an opal pin she had given him.”⁵

According to my argument, and according to my interpretation of Ursula’s attack, Hermione’s “foulness” is not just hers but that of Birkin and Lawrence and thousands of other men and women of supposed refinement of spirit and intellect. Critics have pointed out that Hermione stands for modern man—especially the modern intellectual—and that she is an aspect of the author himself. In fact, similar things have been said about Mr. Casaubon and George Eliot, too. But I want to go further and assess its weight in the novel—a sort of ‘violence’ of actual life in the world of the novel. That is what happened typically in the case of Ottoline’s reaction against the novel. While Lawrence was talking to her about his “real world” of fiction, thinking it escaped the world of “a putrescent mankind”, this world was nevertheless “ours”, and his confidante or follower or protectress dragged his novel into a “disgusting” (Lawrence’s word to Lady Asquith) direct identification with this world. Although the incident occurred too late to be used in the novel, it illustrates the major issue of conflict between Ursula and Birkin, and also between Ursula and Gudrun.

When it comes to this world of “ours”, we must pay attention to a short but important passage in “Excuse”:

A clearer look had come over Birkin’s face. He knew she was in the

main right. He knew he was perverse, so spiritual on the one hand, and in some strange way, degraded, on the other. But was she herself any better? Was anybody any better? (*WL*, p. 308)

Turned around, the passage shows Birkin's admission that he is no better than anybody in the world he despised. Ursula herself is no better, though her "fury" (a reminder of the Greek "Furies") momentarily burns through her and disturbs their deceptive relationship with its violence. After some hesitation, Ursula throws the rings back at him and on to the mud, and walks away with "her sullen, rather ugly walk".

Birkin is exhausted and relieved, seeing more clearly :

Hermione saw herself as the perfect Idea, to which all men must come : and Ursula was the perfect Womb, the bath of birth, to which all men must come! And both were horrible. Why could they not remain individuals, limited by their own limits? Why this dreadful all-comprehensiveness, this hateful tyranny? Why not leave the other being free, why try to absorb, or melt, or merge? One might abandon oneself utterly to the *moment*, but not to any other being. (*WL*, p. 309)

Again by introducing the idea of 'roles' and contrasting rigid roles with flexible and changing ones, we can see the passage more clearly in relation to the rest of the world which Hermione or Ursula or Birkin try to conquer and yet are bound by. Why can they not admit that their 'roles' are limited by their own limits? Some of those roles, inspired by the moment and accepted without reserve by the individual for that moment, achieve a pure beautiful state comparable to the gems Ursula throws in the mud. The moment they try to insist on their roles, be they spiritual or physical or antagonistic to both, they seek to "tyrannize" others and, in so doing, tyrannize themselves into their fixed, "all-comprehensive" roles. They are deprived of the freedom to change their roles. They cease to be sensitive and to act according to the moment. They cease to live and persist in self-deception.

The terms Lawrence uses are not logically differentiated, and "individual" is one of them. Sometimes he uses it as in Birkin's ideal of "the free individual being", meaning something like the core of a being which does not change or merge as it moves on from one moment's role to another. In this passage, "individuals" can be more appropriately paraphrased as 'individuals in their roles', to be distinguished from the former specifically-Lawrentian use of the term. Such a flexible use of the term, however, allows the paradox that individuals, knowing and learning to remain "limited by their own limits" can be "the free individual being".

After this, Ursula comes back to Birkin with a piece of bell-heather, saying, "See what a flower I found you", and then, "Did I abuse you?" (*WL*, p. 310) The present of a pretty unpretentious wild flower signifies the simple acceptance of nature when everything has seemed spilled out. Nothing matters any more—even Ursula's fury. Then she realizes, "hanging her head", that she is in no better position to "abuse" him. But "her hands, with their over-fine, over-sensitive skin" holding the clump of purple-red bells

“wistfully” turn both her “abuse” and their degradation into something tiny to be smiled at and embraced with love :

Then a hot passion of tenderness for her filled his heart. He stood up and looked into her face. It was new and oh, so delicate in its luminous wonder and fear. He put his arms round her, and she hid her face on his shoulder.

It was peace, just simply peace, as he stood folding her quietly there on the open lane. (*WL*, p. 310)

Here is a beautiful moment of delicacy, wonder, and silence which supersedes all the words and knowledge that have preceded it. A patch of trembling luminous sky after the storm—and, significantly, the woman hides her face. She ceases to look into the mirror of knowledge, the female knowledge which seemed a tyranny to both of them in the “Moony” scene.

(2) The Question of Purity of the ‘New’ Sexual Mystery

Then they go on to discover the “bliss” and “glory” of physical mystery, which is portrayed with not a little uneasiness and over-mystification, in the old inn with the fire inside and the smell of straw and stables outside—“a great circumscribed reminiscence” of “one’s childhood”, the actual world having “become unreal”. In spite of his attempt to render the greatness of their physical experience, Lawrence has to include Birkin’s grimace when he reassures her that the best is true, “a faintly ironical contraction” (p. 313) in Birkin’s eyes, something “tight and unfree in him” over the “radiance” of Ursula’s crouching embrace and discovery of his loins, and Ursula’s anxiety and sighs when Birkin proposes to “wander away from the world’s somewhere, into our own nowhere” (p. 315). She says :

I’m so afraid that while we are only people, we’ve got to take the world that’s given—because there isn’t any other. (*WL*, p. 315)

Still he wants “to be free, in a free place, with a few other people!” and “those ‘few other people’ depressed her” (p. 316). Even though there is our understanding that their forgetfulness in the sexual mystery is given by the moment and not to be insisted on, they have discovered no other role to move freely in and out of. “Freedom” is in danger of becoming just a word, and the physical mystery would be “all-comprehensible”. The sign is already there in Ursula’s depression over the prospect of those “few other people”. Therefore, even to keep their man-to-woman relationship really free and mute, they need another “free” world for their social and cultural activities.

On the other hand, when they go out to the snowy mountains of Tirol, which seem like the death of this world, to join Gudrun and Gerald and to meet the boisterous Germans, the homosexual artist Loerke and his young partner, the world around them is no more natural or cleaner than the England they leave behind them, only more exposed, with fewer pretensions and decencies ; and there Ursula and Birkin experience and accept shame, contempt, and animosity as part of their relationship.

“Why are you like this?” she demanded again, rousing against him with sudden force and animosity.

The flickering fires in his eyes concentrated as he looked into her eyes. Then the lids drooped with a faint motion of satiric contempt. Then they rose again to the same remorseless suggestivity. And she gave way, he might do as he would. His licentiousness was repulsively attractive. But he was self-responsible, she would see what it was.

They might do as they liked—this she realised as she went to sleep. How could anything that gave one satisfaction be excluded? What was degrading?—Who cared? Degrading things were real, with a different reality. . . . Wasn't it rather horrible, a man who could be so soulful and spiritual, now to be so—she balked at her own thoughts and memories: then she added—so bestial? So bestial, they two!—so degraded! She winced. But after all, why not? She exulted as well. Why not be bestial, and go the whole round of experience? . . . She was free, when she knew everything, and no dark shameful things were denied her. (*WL*, pp. 412–3)

Still remembering the beautiful moment of bliss and peace which, she believes, has ruled their relationship, Ursula “winces” at Birkin’s degrading suggestions of “bestial” activities. They are “bestial” because they are apparently at odds with all ethical and aesthetic values—the values which even the ‘purity’ of their new tender relationship becomes part of. In Ursula’s mind takes place an implicit debate and balance between the unadmitted resistance to the limiting ‘purity’ and ‘soulfulness’ of their relationship and her disgust at the mirthful confirmation of their ‘fall’ in their actual physical contact. The final seal of their insistence on “purity” is broken, and Ursula feels that they are now finally free to do what they like, what satisfies them, according to each moment. Said like that, it sounds as if they are entering the orgy of bestiality without any hope of rising above it. However, underneath is a strong conviction that the state of shame, as well as the state of purity, belongs to the moment and will not persist, unless man imposes his will to persist in it.

This ultimate conviction will not change, which Lawrence at about the same period developed into the theory of “the balancer” and “Holy Ghost” in such philosophical pieces as “The Crown” and “Study of Thomas Hardy”.

. . . whenever art or any expression becomes perfect, it becomes a lie.

For it is only perfect by reason of abstraction from that *context by which and in which it exists as truth.*

So Turner is a lie, and Raphael is a lie, and the marriage in the spirit is a lie, and the marriage in the body is a lie, each is a lie without the other. . . . There must be marriage of body in body, and of spirit in spirit, and Two-in-One. And the marriage in the body must not deny the marriage in the spirit, for that is blasphemy

against the Holy Ghost. But *the two must be forever reconciled, even if they must exist on occasions apart one from the other. . . .* But neither in Raphael nor in Turner is the denial positive: it is only an over-affirmation of the one at the expense of the other.

But in some men, in some small men, like bishops, the denial of marriage in the body is positive and blasphemous, a sin against the Holy Ghost. And in some men, like Prussian army officers, the denial of marriage in the spirit is an equal blasphemy.⁶ [my italics]

The terms are again confusing not only because he uses the old Christian and philosophical terms such as "Holy Ghost", "body" and "spirit" but because Lawrence himself knows there exists no "pure" spirit nor "pure body", though there may be their perfect (or near-perfect) moments. It is not that the "body" is impure and the "spirit" is pure, as in the old Puritan morality, but that both "body" and "spirit" have pure and impure moments and may flourish even in their impure moments. Although he objects to "confusion" of body and spirit, saying that "they must exist on occasions apart from each other", he further objects to the perfectionist view that the imperfect moments either of body or of spirit are unreal. So "whenever art or any expression becomes perfect" or claims to be perfect, "it becomes a lie". Any art, in fact, any experience—whether of body or spirit—exists in its "context" of time and there carries the burden of whatever degradation both body and spirit may have at the time, dormant or active as each may be. By ignoring this burden, art cuts itself off from its context and loses access to another form of expression. But the positive acceptance of imperfection in art or experience will ensure the free movement from imperfection to perfection and back, and consequently from body to spirit and back. This movement, which he sought, believed, and depended on, is called by different terms such as "Two-in-One", "Holy Ghost", "Reconciler", "Separator", and "Balancer". The variety of those terms itself is the sign of its changeableness, continuity, and totality.

To be sure, Lawrence was seeking to give expression to this movement in his novel. Stephen J. Miko in *Toward Women in Love: The Emergence of A Lawrentian Aesthetic*, discussing the quoted passage from *Study of Thomas Hardy*, says:

Perfection, like abstraction, implies both completion (consummation, fulfilment) and stasis. Lawrence wants to adopt the former but exclude the latter . . . Lawrence is unsure not merely about the province of the various pairs of analytic notions but about the process of pairing itself. Both the nature and the desirability of even eternal stability come persistently into question.⁷

But by incorporating the idea of imperfection and degradation as part of the Lawrentian ethic, one can understand Lawrence's inconsistency and unsureness in a more positive light. This is certainly reflected in the course which Birkin and Ursula's relationship takes. As the idea of art in its context and the need for its constant access to actual life were important to Lawrence—and this during his horrifying and degrading war-time experiences both in public and private life—so the positive experience of degradation in sexual life (satisfaction in bestiality) was both horrifying and liberating for Ursula. And

this marks her final break from Gudrun as well.

(3) Two Kinds of Combat : Debate and Game

Of course this is not to say that Gudrun and Gerald had no open combat between them. Far from it. Also, if we speak of the incorporation of "degradation" or "corruption" as part of the pursuit of man-woman relationship, we must remember that it is Gudrun and Gerald, rather than Ursula and Birkin, who consciously seek it out to achieve ecstasy—the pleasure of deliberately plunging into it and yet remaining untouched because of the sheer force of their will. We can find many parallels between Ursula and Birkin's combat and Gudrun and Gerald's combat, just as we found many parallels between Ursula and Gudrun. However, there is a subtle difference between the two couples—the difference which in the end will develop into a wide gulf and parting fates. I would like to distinguish the two relationships by calling the first one 'debate' and the second one 'game'. The incentive behind 'debate' is the passion to discover 'truth'. The incentive behind 'game' is the desire to hide and pretend, to make 'fiction'.

The secret of Gudrun's and Gerald's power lies in knowing and not telling, sensing but avoiding the sight, and, paradoxically, not knowing the whole truth and yet pretending to know the truth. Characteristically, they never really tell each other what they secretly think or fear almost up to the last moment when Gudrun in cold Tirol repeatedly insults Gerald with "the cold truth", flaunting her better 'knowledge' by saying, "You cannot love," and "I couldn't love *you*." These words culminate the gradual revelation of the horrible truth that their 'game' is the 'game of death'. Their 'fiction' becomes dangerously close to truth. Yet again, Gudrun's *secret* heart-beats, *mask-like* face, *un-admitted* nightmares, etc., suggest that even this piece of 'truth' may not be the whole truth, though its effect is to give a death blow to Gerald. Such ambiguities create the unique drama of their own.

(4) Knowing Adult vs. Innocent Child

From the moment that Gerald comes to Gudrun for their first night and plunges into the experience of utter forgetfulness and uninterrupted sleep, leaving Gudrun awake the whole night and unwilling to break his sleep, their relationship tends to be described as that between a mother and her child. She rarely admits to fear or unsureness before him; on the contrary, she often assumes superior knowledge, and so, either literally or figuratively, time and again she gives him a slap on the face.

At one stage, Gerald feels that he "had harder and more durable truths than any the other man [Birkin] knew. He felt himself older, more knowing." (*WL*, p. 64)

Up in the Tirol, Gerald's limbs are surcharged with desire for Gudrun which cannot be denied, and he feels a "pang", a "release" of "unsurpassable bliss".

"I shall always love you," he said, looking at her.

But she did not hear. She lay looking at him as at something she

could never understand, never: as a child looks at a grown-up person, without hope of understanding, only submitting. (*WL*, p. 402)

Afterwards, Gudrun watched the rosy, glistening peaks of snow from the window and “knew” how immortally beautiful they were, but “she was not of it”. When she comes down from their bedroom, she sees Ursula and Birkin waiting for them at the table.

How good and simple they look together, ‘Gudrun thought jealously. She envied them some spontaneity, a childish sufficiency, to which she herself could never approach. They seemed such children to her. (*WL*, p. 403)

Both for Gudrun and Gerald, and also for Ursula and Birkin “knowing” and “unknowing” are felt in a variety of ways and development, and so are the images of “a child” and “a grown-up”. For that reason, their meanings are not easily pinpointed. In fact, one of the major themes of the novel is the quest for the meaning of “knowing” and “unknowing”. At different times and in different degrees, all the major characters have both the passion “to know” and the passion to “cease to know”. A “knowing” person and an “unknowing” person may exchange roles according to the scene. These dilemmas, conflicts, and changes which the characters go through are fundamentally related to their awareness of corruption and deception in their experience.

For one thing, the question of knowledge is the question of experience. The more experience one has of the world, the more knowledge, and the more bondage one acquires. From that point of view, Gerald is the most mature person of the four. Although he sees the limitation and hypocrisy of his father’s half-philanthropic business management and the miners’ discontent and vengeful spirit lurking in their mean living condition, he chooses to “see it through” as his own heritage and experience as his aged but ever-composed, ever-generous father is struggling with death. Gerald’s life itself is largely devoted to pursuing the consequences of business and particularly industry, cutting away the admixture of sentimental emotion and slovenliness, and turning men into “pure” instruments. It requires great personal strength and dispassionate interest to carry it out, and in doing this he becomes the “purest” of instruments himself.

Birkin could not help seeing how beautiful and soldierly his face was, with a certain courage to be indifferent. (*WL*, p. 64)

Whatever it may be, he is willing to bear the consequence of his experience, which is the impact of his action on the world he is in.

Now, this has both the aspect of “knowledge” and the aspect of “innocence”—the aspect of an “older” person and the aspect of a “child”. However knowing he may be, given the amount and depth of experience he has gone through, “a certain courage” and simplicity in his attitude to life is partly due to and inseparable from his ignorance—or willing ignorance—or his indifference, not caring what may come. This is both his strength and limitation, which both Birkin and Gudrun are alienated from. In his relationships with women, Gerald can be both the apparently irresistible, virile male who overwhelms and reaps women without paying any thought to them (as his relationship

with the Pussum shows) and the desperately vulnerable male, helpless before the desirability of the woman “that would destroy him” and yet willing to suffer “a whole eternity of torture rather than forego one second of this pang of unsurpassable bliss” (as the previous scene with Gudrun shows). From the latter experience, he gains the sort of knowledge, the baptism of self-annihilating bliss, which Gudrun is “divorced” and “debarred” from.

Yet we cannot simply assume that Gudrun is not risking herself in her relationship with Gerald. Although her knowledge is different from that of Gerald, she with her artist’s sensitivity and daring approaches him like a sky-diver making a leap. There is, however, more sophistication and enigmatic playfulness in her attitude towards him.

He was wonderful like a piece of radium to her. She felt she could consume herself and know *all*, by means of this fatal, living metal.

She smiled to herself at her fancy. And what would she do with herself, when she had destroyed herself? For if spirit, if integral being is destructible, Matter is indestructible.

He was looking bright and abstracted, puzzled, for the moment. She stretched out her beautiful arm, with its fluff of green tulle, and touched his chin with her subtle, artist’s fingers.

“What are they then?” she asked, with a strange, knowing smile.

“What?” he replied, his eyes suddenly dilating with wonder.

“Your thoughts.”

Gerald looked like a man coming awake.

“I think I had none,” he said.

“Really!” she said, with a grave laughter in her voice.

And to Birkin, it was as if she killed Gerald, with that touch.

(*WL*, p. 396)

This scene follows the discussion among the four on the fate of England and Englishmen, and again it is an example of how one’s commitment to society is reflected in one’s personal relationships. Gerald, who ruthlessly pursues the goal of business and industry without heeding the absence of protection (such as his father’s deceptive philanthropy or the miners’ lurking malice) over his vulnerable human self, also exposes himself to Gudrun’s scorn, blind to the thought and sophistication which separates her from whatever world she is in. The superb touch by Gudrun is the hot brand of violence upon the heart of Gerald’s strength and limitation—courage to go through death without any thoughts of his own. Because his instrumentality is so pure, the falsity, corruption, and petty spite of man’s experience in society is transformed almost into death itself before he realizes it, but all the same, it *is* falsity, corruption, and spite he is going through. Gudrun is keenly aware of this malevolence from the first chapter when she takes a walk through Beldover. Gerald is thoroughly cynical, too, in his understanding of man’s thoughts and feelings, including his own, but he is not aware of their reactive impact on himself. It is his childish indifference, vulnerable abandon to the sleep of the mind, that makes possible the thoroughness and transformation of experience.

Therefore, Gudrun's reaction to Gerald's "childish" thoroughness is divided, particularly concerning her "knowledge": On the one hand, by touching him and adjusting her "artist's" sensitivity to Gerald's experience, Gudrun can know what she herself can never attain to. She sees more. On the other hand, by willfully "consuming" herself and deriving ecstasy from her ritualistic or theatrical experience of Gerald, she cannot help finding herself infinitely alienated and turns on him with sharp spite and contempt. As she does when he first comes to her for release from the agony of his father's death, she repeats her experience of exulting on his perfect sleep, not wishing to break it, keeping awake herself through the night, being stretched by tension to a breaking point, and awakening him (to shame and bitterness as the relationship progresses) with the pleasure ("grave laughter") of relief.

As I suggested above, all the major characters here have both the passion "to know" and the passion to "cease to know". This is a particularly important point for understanding Gerald and his ambivalent relationship with others. Even Gerald has a "passion for argument", though on a rather superficial level as a form of mental exercise, and he often "seemed to press the other man [Birkin] for knowledge which he himself knew far better".

... as if his [Gerald's] own knowledge were direct and personal, whereas Birkin's was a matter of observation and inference, not quite hitting the nail on the head:—though aiming near enough at it. —But he was not going to give himself away.... Gerald would be a dark horse to the end. (*WL*, p. 204)

Gerald has more cunning secretiveness than his simple appearance reveals. It is his unwillingness to admit his direct "knowledge", to expose it to scrutiny and speculation probably even by himself. In other words, his desire to extract from Birkin the knowledge which Gerald is already familiar with, is the desire to 'displace' his personal knowledge and to turn it into an indirect knowledge.

In this respect, Gudrun shares Gerald's inclination towards the 'indirectness' of knowledge. From another viewpoint, she shares Birkin's indirectness of experience, though Birkin does consciously fight to cut through its limitation. Though she regards Birkin's and Ursula's spontaneity as a "childish sufficiency", Gudrun presses Birkin for knowledge "as if she could conjure the truth out of him, as out of some instrument of divination". (p. 395) What we gather from this is: first, that both Birkin and Gudrun have indirect knowledge of another man's experience, spotting its effect and limitation with the heightened sensitivity of the person standing just outside it; and, secondly, that both Gerald and Gudrun have a reluctance to face their own ultimate knowledge, pressing Birkin for knowledge as a means of displacement and compensation.

Though the distinction seems relative, it is important in terms of the roles the people play against each other in the context, which, again, centres around the distinction between the two Brangwen sisters. After snatching Birkin's philosophical letter on the corruption of human beings in Western civilisation from the jeering Bohemian artists and walking away with it, Gudrun meets Ursula in the Tirol, who asks her to give it back

despite her reluctance to do so.

Even now she could not admit, to Ursula, that she wanted to keep it as a memento or a symbol. But Ursula knew, and was not pleased. (WL, p. 393)

Gudrun's action starts as an attempt to preserve Birkin's message intact from the debasement and spite of unbelievers, and becomes her possession which she does not openly admit to have a claim upon her but which she would like to hang round her neck as a sign of half-dangerous fictional identification with the letter. In one way, it is an honourable, even heroic action—quite theatrical—to stand up for Birkin against the unsympathetic crowd. On the other hand, it shows her sense of superiority and self-dramatization, which not only sets the other people at nought but deprives the letter of its meaning. It is on the effect of her action (or fictional identification which is a form of glorification of the self) rather than on Birkin's letter that people's (and her) eyes fall. This is another superb form of displacement, which Ursula clearly resents. For Ursula the letter, right or wrong, has a personal meaning, which she accepts or criticizes as her own problem. Although, from Gudrun's viewpoint, it seems limited or common, as does Ursula's heated resentment against the "insensitive" and "unnatural" horse in Loerke's sculpture, Ursula's view is open to direct contact with particular knowledge and together can form a triple challenge to the meaning of the knowledge, herself, and society.

Loerke, indeed, poses a difficult and embarrassing problem for everybody. He seems more knowing than any of the four. Loerke, the sinister artist who claims that art and life have no relation to each other, attracts *both sisters* but particularly Gudrun through his understanding, and his propensity for corruption. Birkin explains the reason, which is probably the basis of his own reaction :

Because they hate the ideal also in their souls. They want to explore the sewers, and he's the wizard rat that swims ahead. (WL, p. 428)

Loerke not only admits his knowledge of corruption. He not only unashamedly displays his ugly, thin body, his destitute background, his exploitation of the rich, the young and the beautiful, and his understanding that all human activity is slavery to the process of reduction and mechanization. Both through his art and through his contemptuous attitude to those who do not understand his work, he elevates his understanding to the level above the common run of mind and above ordinary human experience. Birkin also says that Loerke exists "almost like a criminal" and that "the women rush towards that" because "he has the fascination of pity and repulsion for them". Those who "want" to explore the sewers dare not swim there themselves, but they would gladly find a substitute for their hidden desire in a man they could "pity" or "hate", worshipping their implication while worshipping his knowledge.

But "there were moments when to Ursula he [Loerke] seemed indescribably inferior, false, a vulgarism". (p. 427) The men's reaction to Loerke, too, is ambivalent—not just because of jealousy but because of some unwillingness to tackle him directly :

Both Birkin and Gerald disliked him. Gerald ignoring him with

some contempt, Birkin exasperated. (*Ibid.*)

This ambivalence, with similarities and dissimilarities in people's attitudes towards corruption, is not only a stylistic device for illustrating the complexity and variety of modern people but is the result of a dilemma inherent in the problem of self-deception and honesty (or liberation from self-deception). The moment one thinks oneself free from self-deception, one starts glorifying, analyzing or defining the new state, so turns the experience into a subtler form of self-deception. Birkin and Ursula's new physical experience after the purgation of their stormy argument in "Excuse" is often criticized for its false note—the over-emphatic and repetitive use of mythical and visual images ("Pharaoh", "sons of gods" and "daughters of men", "thighs", "back of loins", etc.), which is perhaps an embarrassing but illustrative example of the author's own difficulty. It is the very difficulty that Birkin has to overcome, though in the form of dogmatization as well as mystification. Yet even when he accepts his own falsity and so frees himself from its bondage, he comes close to Loerke's double standards (the false world of life and the world of art which is never false despite its falsity) by his very action. That is why he is "exasperated", being open to attack himself. Loerke implies the negative side of Birkin's openness to knowledge, its falsity.

So there are two sorts of knowledge, the knowledge *as* an experience and knowledge *of* an experience, and—as a logical next step—knowledge of knowledge. All those knowledges have potential for falsity and corruption, a repulsion to life and experience, but they also serve as a way of revealing falsity and elevating themselves above its bondage. Hence the fascinations, the continually deceptive traps, of knowledge. Birkin and Loerke form a pair which illustrates the bright and the dark sides of a puritanically thorough search for knowledge. Loerke, by placing his art above the right or wrong, life or death, *seems* able to secure a 'purity' of his understanding, while his life is like that of a "wizard rat" swimming in the sewers. Birkin, as an individual, is more ambiguous. Although his need to feel free from and 'above' the corrupting force of knowledge forces him to alienate himself from ordinary experience and 'impure' knowledge placing him in an embarrassing link with Loerke, Birkin is not confident of that 'purity' because he chooses not to cut the connection between 'experience' and 'knowledge', or between life and art.

For one thing, Birkin, like Gerald, is still committed to experience, and wants moments of 'ceasing to know'—ecstasy :

"I suppose we want the same," said Birkin. "Only we want to take a quick jump downwards, in a sort of ecstasy—and he [Loerke] ebbs with the stream, the sewer stream." (*WL*, p. 428)

So Birkin and Gerald, in different ways, seek 'death' so that they may be released from the corrupting force of knowledge. But that is not all with Birkin.

(5) Detachment vs. Common Sympathy

In considering further the difference between Birkin from Loerke and Gerald—and

also the difference between Ursula and Gudrun—it is helpful to remember what John Beer says about Leonard Bast's presence and speech which "cut right across the novel":

... a being that actually represents all that is left when the work of art is created, the intractable surd that no artist can bring into his harmonic pattern.

... Every other character has some sort of style or note by which he or she is fitted into the action, but Leonard is a creature devoid of style.

In this respect, the presentation of him differs radically from Beethoven's goblin footfalls. The footfalls are themselves musical: they fit the harmonic pattern of the symphony; they do not fight against the artistic medium that contains them. Leonard does fight against the medium.⁸

Of course, in *Howards End*, Leonard does not *consciously* fight against the medium, but what Beer says is relevant if we compare the effect of Leonard's insensitivity (or lack of critical faculty) with that of Margaret's practical thinking and sympathetic allowance for those who fail to understand her sense of values. Margaret can "accept" occasional failures, but she would not *represent* what is not beautiful. Helen sometimes comes close to representing what is not beautiful, when she becomes hysterical, reacting against the contact of passion and forgetfulness first with Paul Wilcox and later with Leonard, but her changes are merely reactions and never really hit the mark.

Compare this with *Women in Love*. Loerke, like the goblins in the symphony of *Howards End*, is a wizard rat that both represents and is aware of ugliness and corruption. Moreover, like the goblins, he "ebbs with the stream" and does not fight against the music. The striking difference is that in *Women in Love* the stream of music is represented as "the universal river of dissolution". And Loerke himself admits, though in the meantime people have "the opportunity to make beautiful factories, beautiful machine-houses",

... their ugliness ruins the work in the end. Men will not go on submitting to such intolerable ugliness. In the end it will hurt too much, and they will wither because of it. And this will wither the *work* as well. They will think the work itself is ugly: the machines, the very act of labour. Whereas machinery and the acts of labour are extremely, maddeningly beautiful. (*WL*, p. 425)

So the work of art, which is "ugly" to most people, is beautiful *only to those* who have the sensitivity to appreciate it. But where does Birkin stand in relation to such an elitist and exclusive view of art? Birkin, who has the ability to change himself like a chameleon and is sometimes described as "ugly", "repulsive" or "sardonic" but aware "all the time" of what he is doing, seems to swim consciously with *and* against the stream.

The key to this is to be found when we compare Birkin's ambiguous attachment to the London Bohemians with Gudrun's antagonism both to them and to Birkin. Gudrun, who walks off with Birkin's letter, criticized him earlier in the novel:

'Because he has no real critical faculty—of people, at all events,' said Gudrun. 'I tell you, he treats any little fool as he treats me or you—and it's such an insult.' (WL, p. 21)

Gudrun distinguishes herself from ordinary human beings and wants her artistic talent to be valued above other minds. She cannot stand Birkin's indiscriminate approach to people, sharing his knowledge and experience. On the other hand, sometimes she cannot stand the milieu of young London artists where she should be able to find her kin. This is also due to her proud and independent nature. She resents the stupidity and insensitivity of their crowd spirit which turns what does not come into *their* common understanding into a butt for ridicule—their crassness which they take for superiority to the rest of the world.

Birkin, too, is aware and often exasperated when people do not understand him, but there is something in him which makes him attempt to cross the barriers, despite his negative judgment. His attitude to London Bohemia has its own ambiguity :

... the most pettifogging calculating Bohemia that ever reckoned its pennies. —But there are a few decent people, decent in some respects. They are really very thorough rejecters of the world—perhaps they live only in the gesture of rejection and negation—but negatively something, at any rate. (WL, p. 60)

They are a mixture of artists, hangers-on and advanced young people, "anybody who is openly at outs with the conventions, and belongs nowhere particularly". Birkin cannot help seeing their falsity. They have to live somewhere, and they have to take account of that world, though they may deny it. They have to deceive themselves with the illusion of their utter negation, and deception makes them stink with their own "fixed monotony"—their monotone spirit which shuts out anything which may disturb their 'thorough' negative understanding. Though Birkin, too, has his wish to move out of this world's "somewhere" to "nowhere", he knows also that their Bohemian "nowhere" is the last thing he wants. Even so, he is willing to find some meaning in their imperfect struggle against the bondage of society because he believes in the impulse behind it. There is a tension between Birkin's exasperation and sympathy.

Such ambiguity is characteristic of Birkin's relationship with other people—with Hermione, with Gerald, with Gudrun. . . and, implicitly, judging from his own words, with English people and humanity in general. That creates a problem for his relationship with Ursula and their decision to quit their jobs, to leave England, and to "wander a bit".

"Yes," said Gudrun slowly, "you love England immensely, *immensely*, Rupert."

"And leave her," he replied.

"No, not for good. You'll come back," said Gerald, nodding sagely.

"They say the lice crawl off a dying body," said Birkin, with a glare of bitterness. "So I leave England."

"Ah, but you'll come back," said Gudrun, with a sardonic smile.

"*Tant pis pour moi.*" he replied.

"Isn't he angry with his mother country!" laughed Gerald, amused.

"Ah, a patriot!" said Gudrun, with something like a sneer. (*WL*, p. 396)

What Gerald and Gudrun call Birkin's "patriotism" or "love" of mother country refers to his all-embracing responsibility and sympathy with the English people at large, which is different from dilettantism. It is inconsistent with his other quality, his need to keep his knowledge independent and intact, which becomes apparent after he and Ursula experience the utter abandonment to the moment and fulfilment of their relationship. They "make a leap", "cease to care", mean to "wander a bit" to "nowhere". This crucial "leap" or break in his constant and conscientious struggle between two moods takes place as a result of the open conflict between the couple, when he finally accepts his "limitation" and relativity in the whole scheme of life and death in the universe. It is the relativity of his knowledge, rather than the superiority or exclusiveness of his knowledge, that frees him from the bondage of society, and yet, paradoxically, the same relativity relates him to all other living creatures in the universe.

The philosophy, in the abstract, seems to hold true; but the application presents problems. Birkin seems unsure whether to leave England for good. He feels the pain of love for Gerald and Gudrun, but he is unable to help them. He hates Loerke, but it is a helpless exasperation. On the one hand, these inabilities are the signs of Birkin's ambiguity and inconsistency rather than rigidity. What made the inconsistency accessible and acceptable to Birkin is his chameleon-like character, the easy change of roles, supported by the belief that there is a final, invisible and indivisible kernel self (or "individual" in its etymological meaning) which remains the same and inviolate through changes. On the other hand, structurally, his final meeting with Ursula and their "leap" together out of their social commitment creates a sudden narrowing of focus and a widening of the gap between the two couples.

Suddenly it seems as if Birkin and Ursula's relationship were only personal and led no further, however much he may philosophize and relate to the universe. When Ursula asks Birkin to take her away from the "unnatural" white world of the Tirol mountains, they do, in fact, desert Gerald and Gudrun, which makes Gudrun feel free in her combat with Gerald, and consequently Gerald dies, exposed to the nausea of endless nullity, deficiency and degradation. Critics have called attention to the 'limitation' of the Ursula-Birkin love-relationship, and there is also a general view that the novel ends on a pessimistic note. The reason for this can be seen to lie in that disintegrative development.

The key to the disintegration—particularly the going-apart of the two couples—is to be found in the ambiguity and tension of the relationship between the two couples, and this again can be traced back to the ambiguity and tension of the relationship between the sisters *at least as much as* in the relationship between the two men. Whereas the men's relationship has been usually discussed and then dismissed as deficient, the sisters' relationship in this context has rarely been touched.

Notes

- 1 *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, II, p. 164.
- 2 *Ibid.*, p. 602.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 610.
- 4 *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, III, ed. by James Boulton and Andrew Robertson (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1984), p. 95.
- 5 Lady Cynthia Asquith, *Diaries: 1915-1918* (Hutchinson: London, 1968), p. 294.
- 6 *Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays*, ed. by Bruce Steele (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1985), pp. 87-8.
- 7 *Toward Women in Love* (Yale Univ. Press: New Haven, 1971), p. 196. Miko also says, in somewhat similar terms to mine, "By identifying a dying civilization with destructive but still vital ontological forces, 'The Crown' provided Lawrence with a vehicle for expressing the ambivalence toward community which caused difficulties in *The Rainbow*. And by enlarging the realm of transcendent but incomplete experience, it gave him room to explore more thoroughly than before a variety of modes of characterization." (*Ibid.*, pp. 211-2)
- 8 *The Achievement of E. M. Forster*, p. 118.

(Received April 18, 1990)