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A CONSIDERATION OF THE SOCIAL COMMENTARY  
WITHIN D.H. LAWRENCE'S NOVEL THE RAINBOW

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment  
of the requirement for the degree  
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Raymond P. Miller  
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To my parents

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## CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION

D.H. Lawrence's critical essay "Why The Novel Matters" contains the personal claim:

"Nothing is important but life . . . For this reason I am a novelist . . . The novel is the book of life." <sup>1</sup>

This claim is elaborated upon in "Morality And The Novel":

"The business of art is to reveal the relation between man and his circumambient universe at the living moment . . . If we think about it, we find that our life consists in this achieving of a pure relationship between ourselves and the living universe about us." <sup>2</sup>

Arnold Kettle, writing in An Introduction to the English Novel suggests that The Rainbow contains within it a manifestation of these assertions. He contends:

"The search, the passionate, desperate search of the characters of The Rainbow is to achieve personal relationships which make them at one with the universe." <sup>3</sup>

He adds to this contention his conviction that this novel is firmly grounded in reality, that within The Rainbow Lawrence is concerned with "actual human social issues". <sup>4</sup> Some of these issues he then indicates:

" . . . there is the whole question of the relationship between work and personality; there is an examination of the social set-up of Cossethay and Beldover, the position of the squire and the vicar and the schoolmaster; there is the problem of industrialism, the significance of the canal and the railways and the pits; there is a great deal and from many points of view about the English

educational system; there is the question of the impact of the English Midlands on the Polish émigrés; above all there is all that is implied in the phrase 'the emancipation of women'." <sup>5</sup>

In D.H. Lawrence : Novelist F.R. Leavis advances similar contentions about The Rainbow. He maintains that within it Lawrence combines his interest in the struggle of the individual for fulfilment with his interest in the social issues which confronted him and his contemporaries:

"The novel has for theme the urgency, and the difficult struggle, of the higher human possibilities to realise themselves . . . And in the significantly different histories of his three generations Lawrence is giving an essential part of the history of civilization in England. An interest like his in the deeper life of the psyche cannot be an interest in the individual abstracted from the society to which he belongs." <sup>6</sup>

The scope and method of this thesis derives from these critical contentions. I intend to illustrate that within The Rainbow Lawrence incorporates a commentary on some of the social developments which occurred during the nineteenth and early twentieth century periods of English civilization, making this commentary through his depiction of the struggle for fulfilment of the different members of the successive Brangwen generations. In illustrating this it is not my intention to suggest that Lawrence is just a social historian or that The Rainbow ought to be regarded simply as a social history of English civilization. Although my thesis might give this impression as a result of its concentration upon the social

historical aspect it must be emphasised that Lawrence's interest in the effects of social developments upon the individual is just one of his many interests, and that The Rainbow can be considered from other critical angles, including with regard to its symbolic structure and content, its place in Lawrence's development as a novelist, and its intrinsic significance as fiction.

The method which I have adopted to accomplish my illustration involves considering the struggle of each of the Brangwen generations separately, in the order in which they appear within the novel. Although this method tends to incline the delineation of the thesis towards a parallel with that of The Rainbow itself, it is yet advantageous in enabling me to accentuate the different developments which occur, while still retaining the sense of transition which prevails throughout.

In the second chapter I am concerned with the generation of Tom Brangwen, although some initial attention is directed towards a consideration of his predecessors. This chapter, as with the subsequent ones, is divided into sections in order to facilitate discussion of the different developments and also to alleviate the tendency towards the sort of parallelism mentioned earlier. The various issues which I deal with in these sections are enumerated in an introductory paragraph, and this method is repeated in the later chapters. In brief, the issues considered in this second chapter are Lawrence's depiction of rural life; his description of the factors contributing to its decline; and his account of the problems confronting the individual living through this decline.

The third chapter, which is concerned with the generation of Anna and Will Brangwen, deals with Lawrence's presentation of the merging of the old rural, agrarian world with the emerging urban, industrial world. In its sections I concentrate on illustrating his impressions of the problems encountered by individuals associated with the unification of the two forms of living observed in these worlds.

The fourth chapter is concerned with the generation of Ursula Brangwen. She lives within the consolidated urban industrial world and in the sections of this chapter I concentrate on discussing Lawrence's account of her efforts to find satisfaction in this world.

In the conclusion I deal with the final chapter of The Rainbow and give consideration to the direction in which Lawrence's social commentary seems to tend in the finishing sections of the novel.

Throughout, I hope to show that Lawrence's accomplishment in respect to his social commentary is threefold, in that simultaneously he presents an impression of actual historical occurrences, he infuses this presentation with a criticism of some of the developments depicted, and he introduces into this criticism certain of his own personal ideas.

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## CHAPTER TWO : THE DECLINE OF THE RURAL LIFE

In this chapter the interest is concentrated on the figure of Tom Brangwen, the representative of the first of the three Brangwen generations with whom Lawrence is concerned with in The Rainbow. Some initial attention is given to a consideration of Tom's predecessors, through whom Lawrence constructs his impression of the traditional rural form of life and indicates the sort of discontent which led to its decline and eventual disintegration. After a brief consideration of the effects of industrialism upon the physical landscape and the economic sphere, attention is then shifted to the plight of the individuals living through this era of transition. Tom's life is discussed throughout with respect to its importance in reflecting the sufferings and dissatisfactions experienced by the individual clinging to the old form of life. The fulfilment which he obtains from his marital relationship with Lydia is related to this context and its significance in terms of the Laurentian marital ideal is considered. Finally consideration is given to the importance of his death in suggesting the inevitability of change and of the need for the individual to adjust in relation to his surroundings.

### I

The Rainbow begins in the early nineteenth century with the introduction of the Brangwens as an old established yeoman family living in the Midland district close to the borders of Nottinghamshire. Through the menfolk Lawrence constructs a nostalgic and romantic impression of the rural form of life traditionally associated with

this period of English civilization. He seems to be particularly concerned with three features of their lives. In the first place he depicts them as deriving their essential provisions from the land, both through cultivation of their fields and through utilization of the available natural resources, and he indicates that they labour industriously at all times, despite the abundance which surrounds them:

" . . . the Brangwens came and went without fear of necessity, working hard because of the life that was in them, not for want of the money. Neither were they thriftless. They were aware of the last halfpenny, and instinct made them not waste the peeling of their apple, for it would help to feed the cattle." <sup>1</sup>

Secondly, he emphasises that their life is one of immersion within the natural cycle. Their moods correspond to the climatic changes; their activities are directed by the rhythms of the seasons; their blood is infused with the pulsations of nature:

"They took the udder of the cows, the cow yielded milk and pulse against the hands of the men, the pulse of the blood of the teats of the cows beat into the pulse of the hands of the men." <sup>2</sup>

And thirdly, he suggests their lack of a conscious will and their dependence on their sensory faculties. In them desire and impulse are united in instinctive gesture which is the limit of their apprehension:

" . . . the limbs and the body of the men were impregnated with the day, cattle and earth and vegetation and the sky, the men sat by the fire and their brains were inert, as their blood flowed heavy with the accumulation of the living day . . . So much warmth and generating and pain and death

did they know in their blood, earth and sky and beast and green plants, so much exchange and interchange they had with these, that they lived full and surcharged, their senses full fed, their faces always turned to the heat of the blood . . . " <sup>3</sup>

Through the Brangwen womenfolk Lawrence then shows the sense of discontent and dissatisfaction which contributed to the decline and eventual disintegration of this form of rural life. In contrast to the men, the submissive, immersed, instinctive and inarticulate mode of living offered on the Marsh is not sufficient for them. They strive outwards for a different kind of awareness and resolution:

" . . . the women wanted another form of life than this, something that was not blood-intimacy . . . She stood to see the far-off world of cities and governments and the active scope of man, the magic land to her, where secrets were made known and desires fulfilled. She faced outwards to where men moved dominant and creative, having turned their back on the pulsing heat of creation, and with this behind them, were set out to discover what was beyond, to enlarge their own scope and range and freedom . . . She strained her eyes to see what man had done in fighting outwards to knowledge, she strained to hear how he uttered himself in his conquest . . . She also wanted to know, and to be one of the fighting host." <sup>4</sup>

They wish to improve their lives and they believe that "education and experience" and "not money nor even class" <sup>5</sup> will enable them to do so. Neither can be obtained on the farm. Realisation of this brings forth a bitter condemnation of their position:

"Why must they remain obscure and stifled all their lives, why should they suffer from lack of freedom to move? How should they learn the entry into the finer, more vivid circle of life?" <sup>6</sup>



This sense of frustration and anguish persists throughout The Rainbow, manifesting itself in almost all of the subsequent characters. Lawrence's attitude towards it here, which is one of acceptance and not of contempt or condemnation, is typical of his attitude later. He himself believed that the individual had to continually strive for fulfilment in life, often with considerable difficulty:

"The living self has one purpose only, to come into its own fullness of being . . . But this coming into full, spontaneous being is the most difficult thing of all . . . The only thing man has to trust to in coming to himself is his desire and his impulse. But both desire and impulse tend to fall into mechanical automatism: to fall from spontaneous reality into dead or material reality . . . All education must tend against this fall; and all our efforts in all our life must be to preserve the soul free and spontaneous . . . the life-activity must never be degraded into fixed activity." <sup>7</sup>

Since life itself progressively changed all the time the individual could not attain a state of complete satisfaction. Nor could he conceive of it:

"There can be no ideal goal for human life . . . There is no pulling opening the buds to see what the blossom will be. Leaves must unroll, buds swell and open, and then the blossom. And even after that, when the flower dies and the leaves fall, still we shall not know . . . We know the flower of today, but the flower of tomorrow is all beyond us." <sup>8</sup>

Even so, the struggle for at least partial fulfilment should be continued. The individual should not submit and **remain** content with his situation. He should strive to improve it. This the Brangwen womenfolk attempt to do, and Lawrence is accordingly sympathetic to them in their plight. Although he values the form of rural life which the menfolk embrace,

he deliberately refrains from encouraging it to be appreciated as an ideal. In his conception it is limited and he intends it to be regarded as such. As Leavis indicates:

" . . . it is not the drift of The Rainbow to exalt this order of things — the order presented by the immemorial life at the Marsh . . . — as finally adequate, the supreme fulfilment of life; the theme is rather the transcending of it. We watch the struggle towards self-responsibility in the individual — self-responsibility and a wider scope, things which entail a freer play of intelligence and a direct part in the intellectual culture and finer civilization of the age, the finer contemporary human conscious." <sup>9</sup>

## II

The struggle of the individual for fulfilment receives its initial specific consideration through the figure of Tom Brangwen. He belongs to the generation which witnesses the invasion of industrialism and urbanism into the traditional rural form of life outlined in the introductory section of The Rainbow, and in the beginning of Chapter two. Lawrence briefly shifts his interest away from social issues and documents some of the changes which accompanied this invasion. The discernable alterations in the natural landscape of the district are described at length. The construction of roads, canals, and railways, the erection of collieries, and the establishment of towns adjacent to them are all mentioned. It is indicated that the Marsh is now an isolated preserve of farmland and that its inhabitants look down on to a scene different ~~from~~ that which their

predecessors surveyed:

" . . . looking from the garden gate down the road to the right, there, through the dark archway of the canal's square aqueduct, was a colliery spinning away in the near distance, and further, red, crude houses plastered on the valley in masses, and beyond all, the dim smoking hill of the town." <sup>10</sup>

The images of darkness and drabness which dominate this description are significant for they recur throughout in subsequent depictions of industrial centres. They suggest the destructive, sterile qualities which Lawrence detected in this form of civilization, and here they contrast with the images of colourfulness which are associated with the Marsh and which are linked with notions of vitality and fertility.

Changes in the economic sphere are also given mention. It is noted that the Brangwen family receive monetary compensation for the losses in land which they incur as a result of developments around them, and that they relinquish their old subsistence form of agriculture in favour of a more prosperous commercial form of farming:

"The town grew rapidly, the Brangwens were kept busy producing supplies, they became richer, they were almost tradesmen." <sup>11</sup>

Lawrence's most concentrated attention is however directed towards the associated social changes. In this direction he deals with the minor members of this Brangwen generation before focussing his interest on the figure of Tom who becomes his primary concern in this section of The Rainbow.

The Brangwen elders are seen to be at first disturbed by the transformation of their surroundings:

"At first the Brangwens were astonished by all this commotion around them. The building of the canal across their land made them strangers in their own place, this raw bank of earth shutting them off disconcerted them."<sup>12</sup>

But they soon adjust. In a short while the embankment becomes "familiar", the rhythmic pulsations of the colliery engines, once startling, become "a narcotic to the brain", and the whistle of the train instils "a fearsome pleasure".<sup>13</sup> Even so the traditional routines of rural life continue to be observed. The elders, although interested in the developments around them, are not immensely affected by them or attracted to them. They simply live alongside them:

"As they drove home from town the farmers of the land met the blackened colliers trooping from the pit-mouth. As they gathered the harvest, the westwind brought a faint, sulphurous smell of pit-refuse burning. As they pulled the turnips in November, the sharp clink - clink - clink - clink - clink of empty trucks shunting on the line, vibrated in their hearts with the fact of other activity going on beyond them."<sup>14</sup>

The Brangwen children in contrast are profoundly influenced by these developments. Lawrence shows that they find the outside world attractive and the rural form of life unacceptable. The eldest son, who would presumably have inherited the farm, runs off to sea in his youth, seemingly lured by the unknown opportunities of life beyond the Marsh. The second son, Alfred, also leaves the farm. His rejection of rural life is more complicated. He is sent to school in his youth in accordance with the aspirations of his mother, but he fails as a pupil, for "in spite of his dogged, yearning effort, he could not get beyond the rudiments of anything, save of drawing".<sup>15</sup> Realising the worthlessness of it on the

Marsh he uses this one natural talent to obtain a position as draughtsman in a lace-factory in Nottingham. There he discovers that he must alter his drawing style to conform with industrial demand:

" . . . at drawing, his hand swung naturally in big, bold lines, rather lax, so that it was cruel for him to ped-gill away at lace designing, working from the tiny squares of his paper, counting and plotting and niggling. He did it stubbornly, with anguish, crushing the bowels within him, adhering to his chosen lot whatever it should cost." <sup>16</sup>

After his painful submission Alfred emerges with his rustic simplicity submerged beneath his resultant accumulated wealth and social prominence, and his affectedly refined wife. He has in effect elevated himself from the ranks of the rural working class to those of the urban bourgeois. That such elevation does not bring the individual complete fulfilment in life is made clear by Lawrence when, in later life, with his children growing up, and with himself seemingly a staid, almost middle-aged man, Alfred is shown to neglect his wife and to turn after "strange women", becoming as a result of this "a silent inscrutable follower of forbidden pleasure". <sup>17</sup>

The third son, Frank, assumes control of what had been the farm slaughterhouse and which is now a butchery business, supplying the adjacent towns. Like Alfred he too fails to find contentment in his work or in his marriage, and where his brother had resorted to women he resorts to drink:

"When he had taken over the butchery business already a growing callousness to it, and a sort of contempt made him neglectful of it. He drank, and was often to be found in his public house blathering away as if he knew everything

when in reality he was a noisy fool." <sup>18</sup>

The youngest son Tom is the only member of his generation to remain on the farm. Through him Lawrence illustrates in detail how rural life no longer satisfies the individual, showing the inadequacy of mere response to basic instinct which is essentially all that this form of life offers.

Tom is sent to school in his childhood in accordance with his mother's wishes just as his brother Alfred had been before him. He also lacks the necessary scholastic ability. Although he possesses advanced sensory faculties, being developed in feeling, and "sensitive to the atmosphere around him" and "refined in instinct", he is unable to develop any "power of thought and comprehension": <sup>19</sup>

"He could not learn deliberately. His mind simply did not work . . . He did not know how to begin. Therefore he was helpless when it came to deliberate understanding or deliberate learning." <sup>20</sup>

He accepts his enforced fate in the sure knowledge of his own inadequacy and with awareness of the inevitability of failure: "he knew all the time that he was in an ignominious position in this place of learning. He was aware of failure all the while, of incapacity." <sup>21</sup> After the anguish and frustrations of these schooling years he welcomes his return to the familiar surroundings of the Marsh. There, he feels capable and useful again:

"Tom Brangwen was glad to get back to the farm, where he was in his own again . . . he went about at his work on the farm gladly enough, glad of the active labour and the smell of the land again . . . " <sup>22</sup>

When his father dies and he inherits the farm at the age of eighteen he accepts the routines of rural life without hesitation:

"He worked and rode and drove to market, he went out with his companions and got tipsy occasionally and played skittles and went to the little travelling theatres." <sup>23</sup>

His acceptance of this form of living is abruptly disrupted following his seduction by a prostitute. Lawrence presents this encounter as a landmark in the life of Tom. It is shown to leave him knowing that the life which he leads is not completely what he wants. The simple satiation of the sexual impulse which the liaison accomplishes is obviously not sufficient for him:

"There was a slight wonder, a pang of anger, of disappointment, a first taste of ash and cold fear lest this was all that would happen, lest his relations with women were going to be no more than this nothingness . . . It had been so nothing, so dribbling and functional . . . " <sup>24</sup>

In the intimacy of the farmhouse the woman occupies the supreme position as the anchor and the security for the other inhabitants, being at once the initiator, guardian, and dispenser of the pieties, sanctions, ethical standards, and aspirations which infuse the rural household. Through her position she develops into "the symbol for that further life which comprised religion and love and morality." <sup>25</sup> Tom is influenced by this image. Instinctively, he is possessed by an innate desire to find in a woman the "embodiment of all his inarticulate, powerful religious impulses." <sup>26</sup> The prostitute fails to measure up to this aspired level of attainment, and she is rejected accordingly. When subsequent affairs prove to be similar Tom attributes the failure to his rural environment. He begins to ignore the life which the surrounding farming community offers him. He broods in solitude for long periods. He also indulges

increasingly in drink, something which a large number of the characters throughout do when in a state of confusion and dissatisfaction.

His troubled sense of the limitations of his rural form of life is further stimulated, soon after this episode with the prostitute, by an encounter with an attractive complaisant young woman and her foreign escort in the local Maitlock Hotel. The refined, intelligent and aristocratic foreigner particularly impresses Tom. On pondering his own position he is confused about the appeal of the foreigner:

"There was a life so different from what he knew it. What was there outside his knowledge, how much? What was this new influence? What did everything mean? Where was life, in that which he knew or all outside him?" <sup>27</sup>

He dreams of foreign parts. His customary life seems dull, limited, and confining in comparison. But his connection with the Marsh is a strong one and he is not confident of his ability to shift out of the district to begin a different life:

"Did he or did he not believe that he belonged to this world of Cossethay and Ilkeston? There was nothing in it he wanted. Yet could he get out of it? Was there anything in himself that would carry him out of it?" <sup>28</sup>

He longs though to improve his situation, yet his longings are filled with uncertainty. Just as his anguish is essentially inarticulate so his aspirations are essentially indefinable. In this condition he is incapable of "commitment" in life: he neither accepts his rural life nor knows what to replace it with. A most apt explanation of his predicament is given by Marvin Mudrick:

" . . . the impulse outward moves, necessarily, more rapidly than the possibility of comprehending and fulfilling it: the breakup of the community is too sudden and unanticipated



as railways and canals cut across the enclosed spaces of the mind and the individual is freed from traditional unquestioned preoccupations in order to think and do - what? . . . Individual aspiration, once it is released, has no certain or obvious goal . . . " <sup>29</sup>

Tom's initial reaction is to resort to drink. In attempting to submerge his discontent and confusion he is partially successful in that he does achieve a "kindled state of oneness with all the world." <sup>30</sup> But the notion of success associated with the continuation of this practice is qualified, for "he had achieved his satisfaction by obliterating his own individuality, that which it depended on his manhood to preserve and develop." <sup>31</sup>

### III

Tom attains a more complete, sustained, and favoured form of fulfilment through the figure of Lydia Lensky, the widowed Polish refugee who comes to Cossethay to act as housekeeper at the vicarage. His attraction to this older foreign woman is directly related to his sense of dissatisfaction with the rural way of life:

" . . . his aspiration toward the irreducibly alien woman is an inarticulate but not unconscious aspiration toward the experience of a life beyond the receding satisfactions of a community in process of dissolution . . . she is the awful chance he must take and the best he can do." <sup>32</sup>

The marital union which they establish receives the most concentrated attention of any "rural marriage" within The Rainbow. In one sense, as Kettle suggests, it is important as "a pre-capitalist relationship

between a successful working farmer and the daughter of a feudal landowner," <sup>33</sup> in which the accomplishment of fulfilment "is bound up with a sense of oneness with nature and a simple social set-up which is largely off the track of developing society." <sup>34</sup>

Before pursuing this direction and considering the implications of the marriage in terms of Tom's rural situation some attention will be given to the other sense in which this union is important, this being as an expression of the Laurentian marital ideal.

Lawrence believed that the individual could only achieve an intense sense of fulfilment in life through relationships with other individuals. In this respect he maintained that of all the relationships possible the most satisfying was the one between man and woman. He remained consistent in this conviction all his life and scattered his beliefs throughout most of his writings, introducing only slight variations. A convenient summary of his ideas is provided in his essay "Morality and the Novel". In this he makes the assertion:

"The great relationship, for humanity, will always be the relation between man and woman." <sup>35</sup>

He proceeds then to illustrate the three different versions of this form of relationship which he considered could be established. In the first each of the participants involved seeks his or her own absolute being within the other and so initiates "a fight to the death". This version he calls "passion". In the second, one of the participants yields utterly to the other. This version he calls "sacrifice" and it also means "death". In the third the participants stimulate neither the "fight" nor the "sacrifice".

Each seeks only their true "relatedness" to the other:

"Each must be true to himself, herself, his own manhood, her own womanhood, and let the relationship work out of itself. This means courage above all things: and then discipline. Courage to accept the life-thrust from within oneself, and from the other person. Discipline, not to exceed oneself any more than one can help." <sup>36</sup>

Both of the participants accept their mutual differentness, not with resignation but willingly, recognising and respecting it as an essential condition of depth and wholeness in their response to each other. The accomplishment which this brings is considerable:

"Either lover is for the other a 'door'; an opening into the 'unknown' by which the horizon, the space of life, is immensely expanded, and unacceptable limits that had seemed final are transgressed." <sup>37</sup>

This third version is obviously the superior of the three and it is the one which the relationship of Tom and Lydia most closely resembles. As Leavis indicates:

"We have here the peculiar sense of the paradox of personal relations, especially of those between a man and a woman which make and validate a marriage; the insistence that, the more intimate and essential the relations, the more must the intimacy itself be, for the two lives that are brought into so essential a contact, a mutual acceptance of their separateness and otherness." <sup>38</sup>

The other two versions, those of "passion" and "sacrifice", also appear within The Rainbow in the later generations. Both Anna and Will and then Ursula and Skrebensky illustrate them within the course of their relationships, and the significance of this will be discussed when these characters are dealt with.

Tom and Lydia possess the essential qualities of "separateness" and "otherness" through being utterly different in person and in past. Tom, single, parochial and from the English rural working class is a complete contrast to Lydia. She has been married previously to a young doctor revolutionary. She has travelled widely in Europe and been engaged in a variety of different activities. And she is derived from a Polish landed gentry family. Lawrence shows that Tom and the life which he lives are unfamiliar to Lydia and in showing this he further adds to the impression which he constructs of the traditional rural form of life. The occasion of Lydia's first visit to the Marsh is one of the best illustrations of this. Lydia is seen to inadvertently transgress some of the customary procedures which the rural inhabitants rigorously and habitually observe. First she enters the Brangwen household without the prior invitation of Tom and so startles him for it is "the custom for everybody to wait on the doorstep till asked inside."<sup>39</sup> Then she makes her unheard-of request for butter:

" . . . according to the etiquette of people who bought butter it was no sort of manners whatsoever coming to a place cool as you like and knocking at the front door asking for a pound as a stop-gap while your other people were short."<sup>40</sup>

Lydia is shown also to be confused by the simple, warm and undeferential manner of Tom towards her:

"His protective manner and his sureness, and his intimacy puzzled her. What did he mean? If he was her equal, why did he behave so without formality?"<sup>41</sup>

And she feels uncomfortable too, in sensing his integration with his surroundings:

"She looked around the room he lived in. It had a close intimacy that fascinated and almost frightened her. The furniture was old and familiar as old people, the whole place seemed so kin to him, as if it partook of his being, that she was uneasy." <sup>42</sup>

But in spite of his strangeness and the unfamiliarity of her situation Lydia is attracted to Tom. She accepts his differences, and almost despite herself, inclines towards his alluring figure, which for her has associations of intimacy, security, and stability:

"She did not know him. He was a foreigner, they had nothing to do with each other. Yet his look disturbed her to knowledge of him . . . And whenever her eyes, after watching him for some time, inevitably met his, she was aware of a heat beating up over her consciousness . . . her impulse was strong against him, because he was not of her own sort. But one blind instinct led her, to take him, to have him, and then to relinquish herself to him." <sup>43</sup>

Tom's attraction to Lydia is of a similar kind. In his first apprehension of her he feels some strange, invisible but potent connection with her:

" . . . he had another centre of consciousness. In his breast, or in his bowels, somewhere in his body, there had started another activity. It was as if a strong light were burning there, and he was blind within it, unable to know anything, except that this transfiguration burned between him and her, connecting them, like a secret power." <sup>44</sup>

He is acutely conscious of her foreignness, of the unknown quality about her. But he accepts it, and marries her all the same, possessed by an inner belief that she will bring "completeness" and "perfection" in to his life. His faith is seen to be not unfounded. The satisfaction which Lydia enables him to attain

is a tremendous advance on his previous accomplishments. Through her he comes into contact with the mysterious fulfilling "beyond", the "unknown . . . unaccountable and incalculable" <sup>45</sup> world of the infinite:

"It made a great difference to him, marriage. Things became so remote and of so little significance, as he knew the powerful source of his life, his eyes opened on a new universe, and he wondered in thinking of his triviality before." <sup>46</sup>

With Lydia he is able to accept the routines of rural life and his position within it. His acceptance is induced by his shift of attention away from such things. He no longer assigns them the immense importance which he had before. Now Lydia and his liberated marital self receive the major portion of his attention, and his surroundings recede in importance: he simply accepts them and does not worry about them any longer.

Although Tom's concern with the rural life declines like this, the suggestion remains that the rural environment is important in enabling this decline to occur. The Laurentian marital ideal which Tom and Lydia attain is not accomplished in the succeeding generations, all of whom live predominantly in an urban, industrial setting. This fact indicates that Lawrence intends to relate the successful marriage with the rural form of living, with the implication that, in view of the disintegration of this form of life, successful marriages will prove impossible to establish, as indeed he proceeds to illustrate in later sections of The Rainbow.

## IV

While indicating that their marriage seems to resemble the Laurentian marital ideal, it has to be admitted that there is still some distance between the relationship which Tom and Lydia establish and the ideal form of relationship. Tom's sense of dissatisfaction with the rural form of life is shown to linger on even though he is no longer single. But it is important to notice that Lawrence indicates that he is now able to regain a state of contentment through the medium of his marital relationship.

His discontent manifests itself intensely again on the occasion of his visit to the home of his brother's mistress. Tom is immensely impressed with the dignified intelligent lady who confronts him and with her refined aged father. He is shown to leave the house with a contemptuous feeling for the inferiority of his own position in life:

"Brangwen went home despising himself for his own poor way of life. He was a clod-hopper and a boor, dull, stuck in the mud. More than ever he wanted to clamber out to this visionary polite world." <sup>47</sup>

His consideration of his own economic prosperity and of his own wife's respectable origins is no consolation to him. When he returns to the Marsh he realises "how fixed everything was, how the other form of life was beyond him" and he regrets that he succeeded to the farm. Later he tries unsuccessfully to dismiss such feelings. He tells himself that there is something cold and unattractive about the other woman, suggesting that she is "an inhuman being who used up human life for cold, unliving purposes." <sup>49</sup> But his sense of intense dissatisfaction persists. Lydia, discerning it,

attributes it to the indifference which has developed between them. She stimulates a similar realisation in Tom and together they consolidate their relationship again. In its consolidated form it once more reflects the Laurentian ideal:

"She was the doorway to him, he to her. At last they had thrown open the doors, each to the other, and had stood in the doorways facing each other, whilst the light flooded out from behind on to each of their faces, it was the transfiguration, the glorification, the admission. They did not think of each other - why should they? Only when she touched him, he knew her instantly, that she was beyond, near him, that she was the gateway and the way out, that she was beyond, and that he was travelling in her through the beyond." 50

Sustained by this union Tom emerges with the ability to accept the rural form of life again. His sense of discontent is suppressed beneath his marital bliss, which now obviously dominates his entire conception of things:

"There on the farm with her he lived through a mystery of life and death and creation, strange, profound ecstasies and incommunicable satisfactions, of which the rest of the world knew nothing . . . " 51

His feelings of dissatisfaction with his life reappear only once more, this time on the occasion of his daughter's marriage. Here also, in pondering his position in life, he gains comfort from his concluding recognition of his marital accomplishment:

"Was his life nothing? Had he nothing to show, no work? He did not count his work, anybody could have done it. What had he known, but the long, marital embrace with his wife! Curious, that this was what his life amounted to! At any rate, it was something, it was eternal. He would say so to anybody, and be proud of it. He lay with his wife



in his arms, and she was still his fulfilment, just the same as ever. And that was the be-all and the end-all." <sup>52</sup>

In their later years Lawrence indicates that their marital union continues to support the continuation of Tom and Lydia's acceptance of rural life. Lydia still fails to adjust completely to the form of living practised in the countryside. She seems "always to haunt the Marsh rather than to live there", and she is "never part of the life." <sup>53</sup> Her sustenance is Tom. Within his presence she subsides into becoming a woman of the old dispensation, "withdrawn and enigmatic . . . unharried, immured in domesticity and unamenable to self-questioning", <sup>54</sup> and oblivious to the activities in the surrounding outside world. Tom in his turn depends considerably on Lydia. With the passing of time his farm prospers and with affluence he seems to alter and to become an English gentleman farmer:

"He became indolent, he developed a luxuriant ease. Fred did most of the farm-work, the father saw to the more important transactions. He drove a good mare, and sometimes he rode his cob. He drank in the hotels and inns with better-class farmers and proprietors, he had well-to-do acquaintances among men." <sup>55</sup>

But it is clear that his primary concern and interest remains his wife. He continues to derive his satisfaction in life from his vital connection with her. To developments in his circumstance and surroundings beyond this union he adopts an acquiescent manner of "easy, good-humoured acceptance." <sup>56</sup>

The impossibility of the individual maintaining this position of indifference to the outside life which Tom and Lydia have displayed throughout is suggested by Lawrence in his depiction of

Tom's death. This occurs on a dark rainy night in spring when he arrives home in a drunken stupor after having attended a market in Nottingham. The Marsh is inundated with flood waters and Tom is seen to wade off into them, fascinated by their association with the unknown:

"He went to meet the running water, sinking deeper and deeper. His soul was full of great astonishment. He had to go and look where it came from, though the ground was going from under his feet." <sup>57</sup>

When he drowns, the suggestion is that his death is the result of more than coincidence. Lawrence draws attention to the fact that it is contributed to by Tom's suppression of the attraction of the surrounding world. All his life Tom has been seen to resist the lure of life outside the farm, to refrain from shifting into the urban, industrial environment, and virtually even to ignore his social elevation from working class to gentleman farmer. His conception of things has always ended in Lydia. On this occasion however, implicitly because of his intoxicated condition, he has responded to the pull of the unknown outside his life, and the consequences are fatal, not only for him as a person, but also for the way of life which he represents. Lawrence places emphasis on the fact that the flood which drowns Tom is the product of a bursting canal embankment. In so doing, he suggests that the waters claim more than a single life: they obliterate a whole way of living. The implication is that the traditional rural form of life is destroyed by the encroaching industrial world, and with its destruction, in Lawrence's conception, goes the possibility of

attaining his ideal marital relationship. Obviously this event is regrettable, and yet there is a strong sense of inevitability attached to it. On the one hand there is the impression that much is lost which is irretrievable. Balancing the tendency to mourn this loss is the indication that this development is a fact of life, and the suggestion that the individual, unlike Tom and Lydia, must adjust with his surroundings.

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### CHAPTER THREE : THE MERGING OF THE RURAL WITH THE URBAN

This chapter concentrates on the figures of Anna and Will Brangwen, the representatives of the second Brangwen generation. Some initial attention is given to describing the differences which are discernable in the surroundings of this generation in comparison to those of their predecessors. Attention is then shifted to a consideration of the lives of Anna and Will with the intention of showing the significance of their relationship in terms of the merging of the old rural agrarian form of living with the emerging urban industrial form of life. The inherent differences of the couple are first considered in relation to their respective backgrounds. Then Anna's importance as a predecessor of the "modern woman" is discussed and her marital relationship with Will considered with regard to its significance as the forerunner of the "modern marriage" situation illustrated in chapter four. Throughout the entire chapter attention is directed to the progression of this couple's struggle for fulfilment in life, in the process of which Lawrence's opinions on religion and educational issues are also given consideration. Finally the importance of Anna and Will as representatives of the bourgeois class is illustrated.

#### I

Before discussing the lives of Anna and Will it is important to notice that their environment and their form of life differ immensely from those of the previous generation. Although in

this section Lawrence provides no sustained detailed documentation of the transitional changes as he did in the beginning of Chapter two prior to his consideration of Tom and Lydia, he does make a number of significant incidental references to various developments which have the cumulative effect of indicating the environmental differences.

In the first place it is apparent that the predominant setting throughout this section is the town and not the countryside. The form of living which is observed is accordingly predominantly urban, not rural. Once married, Anna and Will live in a world of "houses, factories . . . streets, people, work, rule - of - the day",<sup>1</sup> firstly in the village of Ilkeston, and then later in Beldover, "a dirty, industrial town".<sup>2</sup> Both accept this world as their familiar realm. Will in particular adheres to it. When marital discord disrupts his life he seeks relief and comfort not in nature, as did Tom Brangwen, but in the town:

"He would go to Nottingham, to his own town. He went to the station and took a train. When he got to Nottingham, still he had nowhere to go. However it was more agreeable to walk familiar streets."<sup>3</sup>

Secondly, it is noticeable that this urban world is more mechanical than the old world of the Marsh. The modes of transport which Anna and Will use are the railway and the tram. They do not rely so much on walking as did Tom and Lydia, and they do not depend at all on the horse and cart. Anna also has the use of a variety of labour-saving devices to make the task of house-keeping easier, including "little machines for grinding meat or mashing potatoes or

whisking eggs", and "a little wringer, with clean indiarubber rollers", <sup>4</sup> for doing the washing.

And thirdly, it is obvious that it is also a more "social" world. Anna and Will come into contact with people outside the family more frequently than did Tom and Lydia. Will for instance finds his entertainment in the company of others, at football matches, at the music-hall, and at the hotel. His work too, firstly as a draughtsman, and then as an educational manual instructor, by its very nature brings him in to contact with other people.

These differences are all important, not just because they indicate the change in time, but also because, directly and indirectly, they provide some explanation of certain of the characteristics discussed in the consideration of Anna and Will's lives.

## II

Anna spends her childhood within the confines of the Marsh family farm and during her younger life she develops a strong attachment to the rural form of living. This attachment is shown to be strengthened when as a schoolgirl she makes her first venture into the outside world beyond the farm. Initially she is attracted to the other form of life and its inhabitants. But her disillusion soon eventuates and along with it her mistrust and resentful rejection:

"At first she thought all the girls at school very ladylike and wonderful, and she wanted to be like them. She came to a speedy disillusion: they galled and maddened her, they were petty and mean . . . They would have her according to themselves or not at all. So she was confused, seduced, she became as they were for a time, and then, in revulsion, she hated them furiously." <sup>5</sup>

She finds the way of living practised at school unacceptable. She resents not being able to be her own independent self and she rebels against being constantly restricted by adult authority and all the rules and regulations. Life at the Marsh seems utterly different in comparison:

" . . . at the Marsh life had indeed a certain freedom and largeness. There was no fret about money, no mean little precedence, no care for what other people thought." <sup>6</sup>

Within its confines she is able to be free and independent, and she can pursue her ideal of "a free, proud lady absolved from the petty ties, existing beyond petty considerations." <sup>7</sup>

With the onset of girlhood however, this life affords Anna less satisfaction. The "wordless, intense and close" <sup>8</sup> atmosphere of the household begins to irritate her. She finds faults in her parents who adhere to this form of contact and she finds herself attracted to the life outside. She becomes "sudden and incalculable". Often she stands at the window of her room "looking out, as if she wanted to go", <sup>9</sup> and eventually in fact she decides that she must leave the farm. Lawrence seems to indicate that her decision is part of a general trend associated with her generation by later showing that her brother Fred also becomes intensely dissatisfied with the rural form of life:

"Fred Brangwen, unsettled, uneasy . . . smoked and read and fidgeted . . . This wet, black night seemed to cut him off and make him unsettled, aware of himself, aware that he wanted something else, aware that he was scarcely living. There seemed to him to be no root to his life, no place for him to get satisfied in. He dreamed of going abroad. But his instinct knew that change of place would not solve his problem. He wanted change, deep, vital change of living. And he did not know how to get it." <sup>10</sup>

This confusion which Lawrence associates with Fred's unsettled state is also evident in Anna's situation. Her resolution to change her form of life is firm enough, but she unable to determine how to change it, or what to change it to. In all her ventures outside the Marsh she fails to find the satisfaction that she yearns for. Always she returns to the comforting security of her home, feeling limited and inferior:

"Sometimes she went, she mixed with people. But always she came home in anger, as if she were diminished, belittled, almost degraded . . . whenever she went, there came upon her that feeling of thinness, as if she were made smaller . . . She hastened home." <sup>11</sup>

Her failure seems directly related to her rural upbringing. On the Marsh communication between individuals is basically of the nature of "a deep, inarticulate interchange." <sup>12</sup> There is little dependence on verbal communication. As a result Anna is unable to converse freely with people. The "spoken word" is essentially alien to her. In the outside more social world it is the conversational mode of communication which dominates. Individuals there rely almost completely on the "spoken word". Anna accordingly finds herself unable to respond to the possible satisfactions which



this world offers. Lawrence provides three instances of when her inarticulateness acts as a barrier to her youthful efforts to obtain satisfaction outside the rural life. The first is when she turns to religion and becomes "an assiduous church-goer".<sup>13</sup> On this occasion the reason for her failure is made obvious:

"But the language meant nothing to her: it seemed false. She hated to hear things expressed, put into words. Whilst the religious feelings were inside her they were passionately moving. In the mouth of the clergyman, they were false, indocent."<sup>14</sup>

The second is when she tries reading. Again the cause of failure is obvious: "the tedium and the sense of the falsity of the spoken word put her off".<sup>15</sup> The third is when she directs her attention towards her schoolgirl companions. Although on this occasion the notion of inarticulation inducing disillusion is not specifically stated, it is nevertheless implicit:

"She went to stay with girl friends. At first she thought it splendid. But then the inner boredom came on, it seemed to her all nothingness."<sup>16</sup>

When she is older Anna finds her eventual satisfaction outside the rural life through the person of her cousin, Will Brangwen. Significantly, Will is an inhabitant of the "other life", being both an urban dweller and an industrial worker. He shifts to Ilkeston from Nottingham in order to take up a position as junior draughtsman in a local lace factory. His distinctive appearance is given considerable emphasis by Lawrence and it is indicated that it is this which attracts Anna's initial attention:

"He had town clothes and was thin, with a very curious head, black as jet, his hair like sleek, thin fur. It was a curious

head: it reminded her she knew not of what: of some animal, some mysterious animal that lived in the darkness under the leaves and never came out, but which lived vividly, swift and intense." <sup>17</sup>

The suggestion of animality contained within this portrait is important for it recurs throughout in Lawrence's subsequent descriptions of urban inhabitants and indicates something of the mindless, undeveloped quality which he detected in their characters. The figures of the taxi-driver and the waiter in Ursula's generation both illustrate this. The former frightens Ursula with his "full-blood, animal face . . . the face almost of an animal . . . of a quick, strong wary animal", <sup>18</sup> and so too does the latter with his "quick, sharp-sighted, intent animality". <sup>19</sup> Lawrence's description of Will also suggests the furtiveness and incompleteness of this character's being which manifests itself in later sections.

Will seems to Anna to be her "door into the unknown". Through him she gains a transcending feeling of detachment from her surroundings, similar to that which her father Tom had previously achieved through Lydia. Her stimulation however, is articulate, not inarticulate as his had been:

"In him she had escaped. In him the bounds of her experience were transgressed: he was the hole in the wall, beyond which the sunshine blazed on an outside world.

He came.. Sometimes, not often, but sometimes, talking again, there recurred the strange, remote reality which carried everything before it." <sup>20</sup>

It is also less sustained in duration, and therefore less likely to bring the sort of fulfilment which the previous generation's relationship accomplished.

When Will and Anna marry they are conscious of their differences although they do not realise the full significance of them. Such a realisation only comes later, and even then it is limited in scope. In the initial stages of their marriage both immerse themselves in the pleasures of their conjugal bliss and become oblivious to their surroundings. They subsist essentially only on their passion for each other. Nothing beyond the bedroom is important:

"Inside the room was a great steadiness, a core of living eternity. Only far outside, at the rim, went on the noise and the destruction. Here at the centre the great wheel was motionless, centred upon itself. Here was a poised, unflawed stillness that was beyond time, because it remained the same, inexhaustible, unchanging, unexhausted." <sup>21</sup>

In contrast to Tom and Lydia however, they are unable to sustain this oblivious condition. This seems to be partially a reflection of their urban situation and also partially a reflection of their inherent differences.

In Cossethay the outside world constantly intrudes itself into the life of the couple, suggesting that beyond the rural environment the individual is no longer able to dismiss his surroundings. The church bell serves as the first reminder of this fact. It recalls both Anna and Will from their initial passionate immersion in each other:

"Gradually they began to wake up, the noises outside became more real. They understood and answered the call outside. They counted the strokes of the bell. And when they counted midday, they understood that it was midday, in the world, and for themselves also." <sup>22</sup>

Their contrasting reactions to this awakening provide some indications

of their variant characters which are important in understanding the subsequent failure of their marriage in terms of the Laurentian ideal.

Anna is seen to soon dismiss the presence of her surroundings and to lapse again into her former condition of blissful oblivion. Her ability to do this reflects her rural upbringing which has encouraged her to develop an independent disposition and which has habituated her to a confined form of living.

Will on the other hand is shown to find such a dismissal a much more difficult proposition. His urban upbringing has instilled in him a developed dependent social sense which inhibits his movements. He possesses an "orderly conventional mind" and he is accustomed to a form of living which conforms to the "established rule of things." <sup>23</sup> Now that he is again aware of it he is unable to completely ignore the presence of the outside world. His sense of liberation is accordingly limited and of only momentary duration:

"There were only he and she in the world.

But when he unbolted the door, and half-dressed, looked out, he felt furtive and guilty. The world was there, after all." <sup>24</sup>

He is burdened henceforth by a continual feeling of guilt when submitting to the attentions of Anna:

"He could not get rid of a culpable sense of licence on his part. Was there some duty outside calling him and he did not come?" <sup>25</sup>

He considers that he should be up and about doing something, at least during the hours of daylight when his inactivity is most obvious to the other inhabitants of the village and when he himself

feels that there is something "unmanly" and "recusant"<sup>26</sup> in his marital indolence. But the attraction of concentrating his interest in Anna still prevails. He tries to discard his impulse to conform and to revert back to being his former responsible social self:

"Well, one might as well be hung for a sheep as for a lamb. If he had lost this day of his life he had lost it. He gave it up. He was not going to count his losses. She didn't care. She didn't care in the least. Then why should he? Should he be behind her in recklessness and independence? She was superb in her indifference. He wanted to be like her."<sup>27</sup>

He is, however, unable to accomplish the transition on his own. He eventually changes only by relinquishing himself to Anna, by placing himself entirely at her disposal. In doing this he illustrates a characteristic of the urban inhabitant which Lawrence criticises severely in the generation of Ursula: the willingness to surrender all independence and individuality when confronted with a crisis in life.

Nevertheless Will's decision to submit to Anna does bring him considerable satisfaction and a new perception of life which appears to be favoured:

"It was as if the surface of the world had been broken away entire . . . peeling away into unreality, leaving here exposed the inside, the reality: one's own being, strange feelings and passions and yearnings and beliefs and aspirations, suddenly become present, revealed, the permanent bedrock, knitted one rock with the woman one loved."<sup>28</sup>

His situation in fact indicates the foundation for the ideal Laurentian condition of fulfilment: a consolidated marital union

of man and woman. It is noticeable too, that his assertion which results from its acquisition:

"All that mattered was that he should love her and she should love him and they should live kindled to one another" <sup>29</sup>

bears a close resemblance to a sentiment advanced by Lawrence himself, variations of which he maintained throughout his life:

"That is the right way to be happy - a nucleus of love between a man and a woman, and let the world look after itself. It is the last folly, to bother about the world." <sup>30</sup>

#### IV

The impossibility of this couple being able to maintain this ideal condition of fulfilment is however, soon suggested by Lawrence. Anna is shown to tire of the immersed conjugal satisfactions which her relationship with Will offers. Her disenchantment is stimulated by a visit to her mother's Polish associates, the Skrebenskys. She sees that the marital relationship which the baron and the baroness have established is different from her own. In theirs "each person was detached and isolated", <sup>31</sup> a distinct, independent individual. Relations between them were formal, with each respecting the separateness of the other. In her own, such formality was dispensed with. Everything was intimate and dependent, and operated from a basis of impulsive passion. Realising this, and believing that her own union is obsolete and inferior to that of the Skrebenskys, Anna resolves to resist the "stifling" influence of Will, and to regain the independence which

she has lost:

"Her soul stirred, she became as another person. Her intimacy with her husband passed away, the curious enveloping Brangwen intimacy, so warm, so close, so stifling . . . was annulled. She denied it, this close relationship with her young husband. His heat was not always to suffuse her, suffuse her, through her mind and her individuality, till she was of one heat with him, till she had not her own self apart. She wanted her own life." <sup>32</sup>

Will is seen to oppose these tendencies of Anna and in opposing them he seems to have the sympathy of Lawrence. He wants "to go on as they were", to "have done with the outside world", and to "declare it finished for ever." <sup>33</sup> However his opposition is futile. He fails to succeed in changing Anna's intention. Unwillingly, he is forced to submit to her demands, and to himself alter along with her. That his action in doing so is to be regarded as regrettable is suggested in Lawrence's description of these developments:

"He was anxious with a deep desire and anxiety that she should stay with him where they were in the timeless universe . . . affirming that the old outward order was finished. The new order was begun to last for ever, the living life, palpitating from the gleaming core, to action, without crust or cover or outward lie. But no, he could not keep her. She wanted the dead world again - she wanted to walk on the outside once more . . . Now he must be deposed, his joy must be destroyed, he must put on the vulgar, shallow death of an outward existence." <sup>34</sup>

But at the same time that he mourns the lost opportunity of Anna and Will to obtain fulfilment in life through their marital relationship similar to that which their predecessors had achieved, Lawrence also suggests the inevitability of this loss. He indicates

that Anna possesses a conception of marriage which is different to that held by her mother in the previous generation. She is less willing to adopt a passive role. She is determined to become free and independent in her own right, and to assume a position of equality with her male partner. Her acquisition of these ideas seems to be directly attributable to the fact that she has a more developed conscious mind than her mother ever had, which again is an indication of the difference in generations. Lawrence's attitude to this marital conception of Anna's is initially one of acceptance. Only later, when he thinks that she continues her obsession with independence too far, is he directly critical of her.

While Anna's determined striving for independence finds the acceptance of Lawrence, it yet brings her into continual conflict with Will. His manner of living and his conception of the marital relationship identify him with the past in the sense that they are of the sort associated with the generation of Tom and Lydia. He prefers the inarticulate interdependence which he attained with Anna during their prolonged honeymoon period. Where Anna now begins to respond to the directives of her mind and no longer to her instincts, he persists in ignoring his mind and running after "his own dark-souled desires, following his own tunnelling nose."<sup>35</sup> He remains too, a dependent individual, a person who needs the support of other things to sustain him in life.

These differences of Anna and Will, and the sort of conflict which they produce that prevents the consolidation of their marital relationship, are illustrated by Lawrence in his depiction of the



couple's contrasting reactions to a common object: the Church. He includes in his illustration also, some general criticism of various religious approaches and certain aspects of the Christian religion which he himself disliked, conveying his critical commentary both directly and indirectly through the actions and attitudes of both characters.

Anna attends church but her attendance is a mechanical, meaningless action. She "did not care much for church. She had never questioned any beliefs, and she was from habit and custom, a regular attendant at morning service. But she had ceased to come with any anticipation." <sup>36</sup> As in her childhood, the sermons have no effect upon her other than that of irritation. She hates their prevailing emphasis on "social duty", on "being good" and on "doing one's best". She wants something other than humanitarian sentiments, something "that was not her ready-made duty". <sup>37</sup>

"Everything seemed to be merely a matter of social duty, and never of her self. They talked about her soul, but somehow never managed to rouse or to implicate her soul. As yet her soul was not brought in at all." <sup>38</sup>

Will displays a similar antipathy towards the articulate form of religion. He too is uninfluenced by the discourses delivered from the pulpit. He "simply paid no heed to the sermon or to the meaning of the service . . . The Church teaching in itself meant nothing to him." <sup>39</sup> These tendencies possess a religious significance as Eliseo Vivas indicates:

"Religion . . . is stripped from any relation to the life of the community . . . In the sense of binding, and of establishing community and love towards their fellows, and

hence of generating and sustaining a moral scheme, Anna rejects religion outright and Will rejects it implicitly." <sup>40</sup>

These tendencies also seem to be important in reference to Anna and Will's marital relationship. They appear to reflect the inability of this couple to contribute to or to appreciate anything beyond their conception of their own individual selves.

Will, although antipathetic to the articulate form of religion, does however obtain some satisfaction from the Church. Within the interior atmosphere of the local cathedrals he attains an ecstatic, sensual feeling of transcendence, one which brings him a considerable sense of personal consummation and fulfilment and one which he imagines brings him into contact with "the Infinite" and "the Absolute". <sup>41</sup> This feeling is most vividly described during the course of his visit to Lincoln Cathedral:

" . . . he pushed open the door, and the great, pillared gloom was before him, in which his soul shuddered and rose from her nest. His soul leapt, soared up into the great church. His body stood still, absorbed by the height. His soul leapt up into the gloom, into possession, it reeled, it swooned with a great escape, it quivered in the womb, in the hush and the gloom of fecundity, like seed of procreation in ecstasy . . . he gathered himself together, in transit, every jet of him strained and leaped, leaped clear into the darkness above, to the fecundity and the unique mystery, to the touch, the clasp, the consummation, the climax of eternity, the apex of the arch." <sup>42</sup>

Lawrence seems to intend this accomplishment of Will's to be regarded unfavourably, both in terms of its relation to Will's marital situation and in terms of its religious significance.

The analogy which he invokes between it and the sexual union with the use of such phrases as the "perfect womb", the "seed of procreation in ecstasy", the "touch, the clasp, the consummation, the climax", and such words as "possession", "quivered", "fecundity", "strained", and "swooned",<sup>43</sup> emphasises the fact that this religious affinity of Will's is a substitute for his unsatisfactory relationship with Anna. Significantly the limitations which he had displayed in his relations with her remain evident here. He responds to the interior atmosphere of the cathedral in the same inarticulate, instinctive, absorbing and dependent manner in which he had responded to her. In doing so he displays his continuing inability to develop any independence. He merely replaces his dependence on Anna with a dependence on the Church so that he remains an incomplete individual and is still unable to establish a consolidated marital relationship along the lines of the Laurentian ideal.

Lawrence's criticism of Will's accomplishment in terms of its religious significance is predominantly conducted in a direct manner through the reactions of Anna. It is important to notice that in the process she too is subjected to implicit criticism for some of her tendencies in both the personal and the religious spheres. She is unable to obtain similar fulfilment within the cathedral and her inability qualifies any endorsement of Will's accomplishment. She too is impressed with the interior atmosphere of the place but it fails to inspire her. She considers it to be limited:

"There was a great joy and verity in it. But even in the dazed swoon of the cathedral she claimed another right. The altar was barren, its lights gone out. God burned no

more in that bush. It was dead matter lying there. She claimed the right to freedom above her, higher than the roof. She had always a sense of being roofed in." <sup>44</sup>

Her inability also indicates her inherent difference to Will which contributes to the failure of their relationship. She fails to achieve a similar transported condition of being because she is incapable of inducing the necessary separation of self and soul. She is too conscious of and too preoccupied with the sense of her own personal self:

"The thought of her soul was intimately mixed up with the thought of her own self. Indeed her soul and her own self were one and the same in her. Whereas he seemed simply to ignore the fact of his own self, almost to refute it . . . And in the gloom and mystery of the Church his soul lived and ran free like some strange, underground thing, abstract." <sup>45</sup>

At the same time she is unwilling to allow Will to develop a similar independent self. She is jealous of his ability "to escape and run free of her" <sup>46</sup> and to have something which she cannot attain. As a result she develops an uncomprehending resentment of his accomplishment which eventually culminates in a resolution to initiate its destruction:

"In a way she envied it him, this dark freedom and jubilation of the soul, some strange entity in him. It fascinated her. Again she hated it. And again, she despised him, wanted to destroy it in him." <sup>47</sup>

With the critical detachment of the rationalist she illustrates the limitations of his position. She brings to his attention little things which undermine his imagined conception of the cathedral. She concentrates particularly on the grotesque faces of the

gargoyles, pagan, profane little creatures whose presence seems to ridicule the absolute atmosphere of the interior and to reduce it to reality:

"These sly little faces peeped out of the grand tide of the cathedral like something that knew better. They knew quite well, these little imps that retorted on man's own illusion, that the cathedral was not absolute. They winked and leered, giving suggestion of the many things that had been left out of the great concept of the church. 'However much there is inside here, there's a good deal they haven't got in', the little faces mocked." <sup>48</sup>

Lawrence's attitude to this situation seems divided. On the one hand he appears critical of the motivation behind Anna's criticism of the cathedral atmosphere and of her intellectual approach to religion. The latter he condemned in his religious writings in the belief that it promoted the disintegration not only of Christianity, which did not concern him unduly, but also of the religious sense itself: the sense of communication with the cosmic forces for which the particular form was inconsequential. The thought of losing this did concern him profoundly, for without it, he maintained, civilization would die of spiritual starvation. <sup>49</sup> On the other hand however, he implies that the essence of Anna's criticism is justified in view of the absolutist approach to religion which Will adopts, which he himself condemned on principle:

"We should ask for no absolutes, or absolute . . . There is no absolute good, there is nothing absolutely right. All things flow and change, and even change is not absolute." <sup>50</sup>

That Will is unable to ignore the criticism of Anna further suggests that Lawrence intended his religious approach to be

regarded unfavourably. Will is shown to admit that there "was life outside the church", that there "was much that the church did not include".<sup>51</sup> He recognises that his imagined absolute is not in fact an absolute, and that included in his ecstasy there had been much mere desire for a safe absorption, much mere reverence for ancient sanctities. He realises also that the cathedral will never again be his consummation, and that it will no longer bring him the satisfaction in life which it had previously.

When later, despite this disillusion, Will continues to maintain some connection with religion through assuming the positions of caretaker and then choirmaster for the local village church, Lawrence again appears to be critical of his actions. Will's motivations are particularly dubious:

"Still he loved the church. As a symbol, he loved it. He tended it for what it tried to represent, rather than for what it did represent."<sup>52</sup>

Such worship of symbols Lawrence denounced as obsolete and meaningless:

" . . . a symbol is something static, petrified, turning towards what has been, and crystallised against that which shall be . . . We must have the courage to cast off the old symbols, the old traditions . . . The past is not justification."<sup>53</sup>

And Will's association with this tendency indicates the continuation of his major failings: his inability to stand alone and his consequent dependence on things for support. It also identifies him with the urban inhabitants of the subsequent generation. Although he is less of a nullity than most of them, many of the characteristics which he displays are similar. They too are

criticised by Lawrence for the worship of abstractions, for the cultivation of ideas divorced from reality, designed only to offset personal inadequacies.

V

With the destruction of his ability to obtain fulfilment in the darkness, mystery and abstraction of the churches Will shifts his attention once again to Anna. Lawrence shows him attempting to assume the old traditional male role of "master of the house" <sup>54</sup> and suggests the futility of this through the reaction of Anna. She jeers scornfully at the efforts of Will to assert his authority. She refuses to acknowledge his right to the position which he tries to gain and she even declines to respect him as the worker and income-earner of the household:

"She did no service to his work as a lace-designer, nor to himself as bread-winner. Because he went down to the office and worked every day - that entitled him to no respect or regard from her . . . Rather she despised him for it." <sup>55</sup>

In doing so she displays something of the disdain for the function of man in general which is associated with the suffragettes in the subsequent generation of Ursula. Lawrence's attitude to these condemnatory tendencies of Anna seems to be ambivalent. On the one hand he appears to accept that the traditional position of man is no longer able to be maintained. He implies that the woman is justified in wishing to establish her independence and in striving to improve her situation within the marital relationship to one of

equality with her male partner. On the other hand however, he appears to indicate that the acquisition of independence in the woman should be limited. The man should still remain important to her. He should not be dismissed altogether and nor should he simply be used for the purposes of personal gratification. It is on this basis that Lawrence qualifies his endorsement of Anna's reaction. She is criticised for becoming too independent of Will and for denouncing him so completely, such that what "he thought about life and about society and mankind did not matter very much to her".<sup>56</sup> She is criticised too for using him only to satisfy her own needs such that she "only respected him as far as he was related to herself. For what he was, beyond her, she had no care. She did not care for what he represented in himself."<sup>57</sup>

Lawrence is also critical of the behaviour of Will following the failure of his attempt to impose his authority on the household. Whereas Anna is criticised for becoming too independent of her husband, Will is criticised for continuing to be too dependent on his wife. He is shown to be confused by the separate, self-sufficient sense of fulfilment which Anna, particularly during the duration of her pregnancy, seems able to obtain. In his confusion he develops a strong feeling of personal inadequacy which is intensified by comparisons of Anna's condition with his own. It gradually induces him to turn increasingly to her for support:

"He was afraid to know he was alone. For she seemed fulfilled and separate and sufficient in her half of the world. He could not bear to know that he was cut off . . . He wanted her to come to him, to complete him, to stand before him . . .



Nothing mattered to him but that she should come and complete him. For he was ridden by the awful sense of his own limitation. It was as if he ended uncompleted, as yet uncreated on the darkness, and he wanted her to come and liberate him into the whole." <sup>58</sup>

His inclinations eventually prompt him to force himself upon Anna's attentions. In doing this he is full of self-justification. He persuades himself that he is "entitled to satisfaction from her", arguing on the basis that "was not his heart all raging desire, his soul a black torment of unfulfilment. Let it be fulfilled in him, then, as it was fulfilled in her. He had given her her fulfilment. Let her rise up and do her part." <sup>59</sup>

Lawrence is sympathetic to the plight of Will in as much as he suggests that Will's problem is contributed to by the excessive yearnings for independence of Anna. But at the same time he continues to be critical of Will for being such a dependent individual, and he seems to condone the feelings of aversion which Anna develops:

" . . . she hated him, because he depended on her so utterly. He was horrible to her. She wanted to thrust him off, to set him apart. It was horrible that he should cleave to her, so close, like a leopard that had leapt on her, and fastened." <sup>60</sup>

Confronted with her relentless opposition, Will eventually relinquishes his struggle to gain the complete attention of Anna. He decides to "insist no more", to "force himself upon her no more". Instead he resolves to "let go, relax, lapse", to submit to his circumstances and accept that "what would be, should be" <sup>61</sup> in life. In submitting it is indicated that he alters inwardly and that he

achieves some sort of personal regeneration which Lawrence seems to favour:

"He was born for a second time, born at last unto himself, out of the vast body of humanity. Now at last he had a separate identity, he existed alone, even if he were not quite alone. Before he had existed in so far as he had relations with another being. Now he had an absolute self - as well as a relative self." <sup>62</sup>

But while he seems to favour Will's acquisition of this "separate identity" Lawrence does not appear to condone the rejection of the outside urban industrial world and the espousal of a more primitive world of basic essentials which Will, in his regenerated condition, is induced into advocating:

"London, the ponderous, massive ugly superstructure of a world of man upon a world of nature. It frightened and awed him. Man was terrible, awful in his works. The works of man were more terrible than man himself, almost monstrous . . . Sweep away the whole monstrous superstructure of the world of today, cities and industries and civilization, leave only the bare earth with plants growing and waters running, and he would not mind, so long as he were whole, had Anna and the child and the new strange certainty of his soul." <sup>63</sup>

Lawrence possessed such "escapist" tendencies himself, particularly in his later life, and it is not difficult to discover similar condemnations of London and its surroundings amidst his writings.

A letter of his written in May 1915 illustrates this:

"My eyes can see nothing human that is good nowadays: at any rate nothing public. London seems to me like some hoary massive underworld, a hoary ponderous inferno. The traffic flows through the rigid grey streets like

the rivers of hell through their banks of dry rocky ash . . .  
 The world of men is dreaming, it has gone mad in its sleep,  
 and a snake is strangling it, but it can't wake up." <sup>64</sup>

Within The Rainbow however, he suppresses support of "escapist" tendencies. He still inserts harsh criticism of the urban industrial world and illuminates the problems confronting the individual living inside its boundaries, but he suggests that the solution lies in forward progression, not in a reversion to the past. The individual, if he finds his surroundings unsatisfactory, must seek to improve them and not ignore them, or turn his attentions elsewhere. As a result Will's inclinations are shown to be of only momentary duration and they are seen to be soon forgotten as other problems in his surroundings present themselves.

## VI

Even though Will acquires a "separate identity" he and Anna remain unable to consolidate their marital relationship. It still fails to bring them any intense feeling of fulfilment. The reasons for this situation are suggested by Lydia Brangwen in her sagacious advice to her daughter:

"Remember child . . . that everything is not waiting for your hand just to take or leave. You mustn't expect it. Between two people, the love itself is the important thing, and that is neither you nor him. It is a third thing you must create. You mustn't expect it to be just your way." <sup>65</sup>

Some elaboration of this notion of the creative "third thing" is

provided by Lawrence in one of his letters. He mentions that "the true relationship established between different things, different spirits, . . . is creative life" while "the reacting of a thing against its difference, is death in life". Accordingly, he maintains, the act of love is "a kind of friction between opposites, interdestructive, an act of death. There is an extreme self-realisation, self-sensation, in this friction against the really hostile, opposite." But it is also he claims, at least in its perfected form, an act which induces "a passing of the self into a pure relationship with the other," a "new and creative coming together".<sup>66</sup> Both Anna and Will attain the condition of "self-realisation" in gaining individual recognition of their own independent selves, but they do not succeed in accomplishing the "new and creative coming together". Their failure to accomplish this seems related to the fact that having acquired them, both become preoccupied with their own independent selves. Each is interested in the other only for the purposes of personal gratification. It is as a result of these individualistic tendencies that their union is unable to ascend to the level of mutually satisfying love. It remains simply founded on the inferior basis of passion:

"There was no tenderness, no love between them any more, only the maddening, sensuous lust for discovery and the insatiable, exorbitant gratification in the sensual beauties of her body."<sup>67</sup>

As such it is limited. It brings no transcending, liberating and fulfilling sense of communion with the cosmic beyond of the sort which Tom and Lydia had enjoyed.

Both participants appear to realise the limitations of their union. Will, even after his acquisition of independence, feels that his relationship with Anna is incomplete:

"He was attended by a sense of something more, something further, which gave him absolute being . . . What was there outside? . . . What should he bring to her, from outside? . . . Nothing? Was it enough as it was? He was troubled in his acquiescence. She was not with him . . . So he was unsure." <sup>68</sup>

Anna in her turn is troubled by a similar sense of unfulfilment. She too feels that there is yet "something beyond her" <sup>69</sup> in life, something that her association with Will, which has brought her only "a slight expectant feeling, as of a door half opened", <sup>70</sup> has not enabled her to attain. However, their individual realisations of its inadequacies do not induce Anna and Will to attempt to improve the basis of their marital relationship beyond that of mere passion such that they can find a higher, more complete feeling of fulfilment in life. Rather they continue to maintain their union along its old lines, and they turn instead for satisfaction in life to interests outside each other.

Will turns his attention in the direction of education. Lawrence indicates that if his passionate attachment to Anna fails to bring him personal fulfilment it yet releases in Will strong feelings of social responsibility:

"His intimate life was so violently active, that it set another man in him free. And this new man turned with interest to public life, to see what part he could take in it. This would give him scope for new activity,

activity of a kind for which he was now created and released. He wanted to be unanimous with the whole of purposive mankind." <sup>71</sup>

Responding to these feelings he becomes a handiwork instructor for the local village boys, teaching them carpentry, joinery, and wood-carving at night classes.

His action in so doing is important not only in reference to his marital relationship but also in its reflection of the educational trends contemporary to his period. The mere creation of the position of handiwork instructor itself indicates the transition in time. It reflects the belief in the value of supplementing "mental education" with "manual education" to cater for the children with a less academic disposition. Lawrence himself subscribed to this belief and he seems to favour this new interest of Will's. In his educational writings he maintained the need for a system of education which could accommodate the fact that each individual is different. He urged the addition of handicraft activities to the mental activities in school curriculums and he intimated that a constant selection process should be introduced, by which children with intellectual or artistic gifts could be picked out for further education, and the others drafted out in due time to various grades of manual and clerical labour. If these measures were all brought into practice the individual, Lawrence believed, could develop into his own unique self, and not into a poor imitation of some standard cultural ideal. <sup>72</sup>

Whereas Will turns his attention to teaching following his dissatisfaction with his marital union Anna turns her attention

to her children. Just as he submits to the satisfactions of work she submits to the satisfactions of motherhood. In doing so she loses the opportunity to continue the struggle to establish a fulfilling marital relationship and with it the possibility of obtaining the mysterious connection with the "beyond" which the ideal form of relationship brings. With her developed conscious mind she realises something of her loss while simultaneously consoling herself with the notion that if she is no longer the wayfarer into the unknown, she is yet the producer of the possible travellers of the future:

"She should go also. But she could not go, when they called, because she must stay at home now. With satisfaction she relinquished the adventure to the unknown. She was bearing her children . . . She was a door and a threshold, she herself. Through her another soul was coming, to stand upon her as upon the threshold, looking out, shading its eye for the direction to take." <sup>73</sup>

Lawrence, although admitting the strength of this inclination to subside into parenthood, suggests that Anna's decision to relinquish the struggle for fulfilment through her marital relationship is not to be favoured. He once maintained that the mere bringing of children into the world brought no solution to the problems of life; that if anything, it was a retrograde action which encouraged the complication of a situation:

"You should be glad you have no children: they are a stumbling-block now. There are plenty of children and no hope. If women can bring forth hope, they are mothers indeed. Meanwhile even the mice increase - they cannot help it. What is this highest, this procreation? It is a

lapsing back to the primal origins, the brink of oblivion. It is a tracing back, when there is no going forward, a throwing life on to the bonfire of death and oblivion, an autumnal act, a consuming down." <sup>74</sup>

He seems to adhere to these notions here within The Rainbow. Anna is criticised for not having "played her fullest part" <sup>75</sup> in the regeneration of the surrounding social world. In preferring to direct her attention towards her children Lawrence indicates that she contributes to the postponement of such a regeneration until the era of the succeeding generation. How she could have implemented it is difficult to ascertain definitely. The implication is however, that she could have initiated it, and Will similarly, if she had established the ideal Laurentian sort of marital relationship. Lawrence's recurring suggestion throughout The Rainbow is that only through a consolidated marital relationship is the individual able to obtain sustained fulfilment in life. There is also implicit the suggestion that only after having established a fulfilling marriage is the individual able to effectively improve his surroundings to any considerable degree. Anna, like Will, having failed to accomplish the essential relationship and having even lost interest in doing so, is unable to either achieve sustained personal fulfilment or to stimulate the regeneration of her society.



## VII

The incompleteness and unsatisfactory nature of the lives of Anna and Will becomes most obvious when they reach middle-age. Will is then shown to lead a form of life which is without ambition or purposeful direction, one which is similar to that associated with urban inhabitants of the subsequent generation. Both are mechanical and meaningless, but whereas the latter submit to the social function for sustenance, Will submits himself with his mindless passion for Anna:

"He knew his work in the lace designing meant little to him personally, he just earned his wage by it. He did not know what meant much to him. Living close to Anna Brangwen his mind was always suffused through with physical heat, he moved from instinct to instinct, groping, always groping on." <sup>76</sup>

For a while, when he accepts the post of "Art and Handwork Instructor for the County of Nottingham" <sup>77</sup> and finishes his old job, there does seem a possibility that Will will find a higher more meaningful satisfaction in life. Even Anna emerges momentarily from her acquiescent indifferent attitude to her situation and her attentive devotion to her children to share in his hope:

"She was willing now to have a change. She too was tired of Cossethay . . . And since she was nearly forty years old, she began to come awake from her sleep of motherhood, her energy moved more outwards. The din of growing lives roused her from her apathy. She too must have her hand in making life." <sup>78</sup>

But the changes which occur are only those of location and

class. The shift to Beldover enables Anna and Will to ascend to the ranks of the bourgeois but it brings no personal regeneration to either of them. As members of the bourgeois class Lawrence contemptuously shows that they perpetuate the superficial meaningless form of living which they observed in Ilkeston. Outwardly the quality of their life becomes "good and substantial". They purchase "a fairly large house" in the "new, red-brick part" of the town. Its "admirably appointed" and "splendidly large" rooms they fill with furniture of the appropriate "good taste", including items such as "the great Wilton carpet, the large round table", and "the Chesterfield covered with glossy chintz in roses and birds". And since "there was no one of higher social importance than the doctors, the colliery managers, and the chemists", they, "with their Della Robbia beautiful Madonna, their lovely reliefs from Donatello" and "their reproductions from Botticelli", <sup>79</sup> soon come to represent culture in the district and so enjoy the added eliteness which this association brings them. But inwardly, they remain incomplete, unsatisfied individuals, predecessors of the type portrayed by Skrebensky, Winifred, and Uncle Tom in the succeeding generation.

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#### CHAPTER FOUR : THE URBAN INDUSTRIAL FORM OF LIFE

In this chapter attention is focussed on the figure of Ursula, the representative of the third and final Brangwen generation within The Rainbow. Throughout, Ursula's character and situation are seen to contain a discernable resemblance to those of Lawrence himself. As Leavis suggests:

"Ursula has to live her problem in the England of D.H. Lawrence. In fact, her life, though she is convincingly a girl and a young woman, bears something closely approaching an autobiographical relation to Lawrence's own." <sup>1</sup>

She confronts her problems of adjustment and emancipation in a predominantly twentieth century urban industrial environment and through his depiction of her struggle for fulfilment Lawrence provides his impression of "modern" society and incorporates a critical consideration of the life which he believed it offered the individual. Ursula is free as her parents and grandparents never were, but her freedom is qualified since it leaves her with no indication of which direction to turn to in life. <sup>2</sup> Her prevailing dilemma is accordingly that of the "modern" dispossessed individual:

"She became aware of herself, that she was a separate entity in the midst of an unseparated obscurity, that she must go somewhere, she must become something. And she was afraid, troubled. Why oh why must one grow up, why must one inherit this heavy numbing responsibility of living an undiscovered life?

Out of nothingness and the undifferentiated mass, to  
 make something of herself! But what? In the obscurity  
 and pathlessness to take a direction! But whither?  
 How take even one step? And yet, how stand still? . . .  
 How to act, that was the question? Whither to go,  
 how to become oneself?" <sup>3</sup>

Without the inherited boundaries which her predecessors possessed she struggles blindly if determinedly for her fulfilment. The various directions in which she turns in search of satisfaction are dealt with in the sections of this chapter. Sometimes she is inclined towards immersion in beliefs or activities; other times she is attracted towards people. On different occasions she becomes involved with religion and education. Her involvement with the former is of a passive nature, in contrast to her involvement with the latter which is initiated firstly when she becomes an idealistic schoolteacher and then secondly when she becomes an equally idealistic college student. In between these two interest she establishes two passionate relationships, the first with the Polish military aristocrat, Anton Skrebensky, with whom eventually she has two affairs, the second with her schoolmistress, Winifred Inger.

None of these involvements bring Ursula the satisfaction which she yearns for. In all of them she begins full of idealistic optimism, but this soon subsides as the satisfaction afforded declines, and she is eventually prompted to reject them. The pattern of life is accordingly one of a progression from hope to disillusion, although it is significantly indicated that she never relinquishes her struggle; she remains optimistic in her outlook throughout,

and the prevailing implication is that her failings add to her understanding of life:

"Always the shining doorway ahead; and the, upon approach, always the shining doorway was a gate into another ugly yard, dirty and active and dead. Always the crest of the hill gleaming ahead under heaven: and then, from the top of the hill only another sordid valley full of amorphous, squalid activity.

No matter! Every hill-top was a little different, every valley was somehow new." <sup>4</sup>

The causes behind this progression from illusion to disillusion which characterises Ursula's ceaseless quest for self-fulfilment are sometimes attributable to Ursula herself, and sometimes ascribable to the influence of others. In every case they afford Lawrence the opportunity to incorporate his social criticism which is as important an element of this section of The Rainbow as it is of the previous sections.

## I

In her younger life Ursula struggles to obtain fulfilment through religion. At an early age she is encouraged by her parents to live within the rhythms of the Christian cycle, to revolve each

week around the Sabbath and to focus each year on the occasions of Easter and Christmas. Along with the other children she complies, and so begins the habitual observation of "the epic of the soul of mankind":<sup>5</sup>

"Year by year the inner unknown drama went on in them, their hearts were born and came to fullness, suffered on the cross, gave up the ghost, and rose again to unnumbered days, untired, having at least this rhythm of eternity in a ragged, inconsequential life."<sup>6</sup>

Lawrence's attitude towards her compliance is a critical one. In his later life he rejected this Christian rhythm of living. Although admitting its contribution to civilization he maintained that it no longer possessed any meaning for the individual, that it had in fact become obsolete:

"I know the greatness of Christianity: it is a past greatness. I know that, but for those early Christians, we should never have emerged from the chaos and hopeless disaster of the Dark Ages. If I had lived in the year 400, pray God, I should have been a true and passionate Christian. The adventurer.

But now I live in 1924, and the Christian venture is done. The adventure is gone out of Christianity. We must start on a new venture to God."<sup>7</sup>

In this section he incorporates a similar denunciation of Christianity. Through the change in the reaction of Ursula he illustrates his belief that the observation of the Christian cycle of life amongst his contemporaries is only a mechanical and meaningless activity, one which eventually brings only disillusion and dejection. He emphasises too the social constraint which is associated with this cycle and the suppression and subordination of the individual which it promotes.

Ursula begins by accepting the imposed limitations of her religion. Together with the rest of the family she righteously adheres to the rigorous rituals of Sunday, the blessed "day of decorum".<sup>8</sup> She and the other children even act as the self-appointed guardians of its decency, in the process of which they become "very jealous and instant with each other".<sup>9</sup> They all solemnly attend church in the morning and then spend the afternoon in restricted activity:

"Indoors, only reading and tale-telling and quiet pursuits, such as drawing, were allowed. Out of doors, all playing was to be carried on unobtrusively."<sup>10</sup>

Ursula particularly welcomes Sunday as an occasion when she can remove herself from the everyday world and enter her own personal spiritual realm of transcending tranquility, "where her spirit could wander in dreams, unassailed".<sup>11</sup> Her appreciation of Easter and Christmas is similar. She looks forward to both occasions with feelings of expectation, enjoying the "sense of mystery and rousedness"<sup>12</sup> which surrounds them.

As Ursula grows older however, the satisfaction which she derives from the Christian form of religion declines. She gradually rejects the traditional pious ritualism of the Sabbath. Along with the other children she realises that she wants something more from religion than a multitude of regulations to apply to her own situation, something along the lines of a "sense of the eternal and the immortal", not "a list of rules for everyday conduct".<sup>13</sup> The sermons from the pulpit irritate her. She is unable to obey their directives to be poor and humble and loving. She "could not

do it in real life": <sup>14</sup> she finds it too limiting and unnatural and she rejects it accordingly as oppressive and unrealistic. She wants instead to be herself, to be a free and independent individual. On this basis her denunciation of the Christian doctrines resembles that of Lawrence:

"Christianity is based on reaction, on negation really. It says 'Renounce all worldly desires and live for Heaven'. Whereas I think people ought to fulfil sacredly their desires. And this means fulfilling the deepest desire, which is a desire to live unhampered by things which are extraneous, a desire for pure relationships and living truth . . . I am not a Christian. Christianity is insufficient in me." <sup>15</sup>

Ursula also becomes disenchanted with the traditional Christian observations of Christmas and Easter. Christmas fails to sustain her spiritually any longer. It brings her only a feeling of dejection and nullity as she recognises the superficial nature of the importance attached to it. Its religious meaning has disintegrated:

"It was bitter . . . that Christmas day, as it drew on to evening, and night, became a sort of bank holiday, flat and stale. The morning was so wonderful, but in the afternoon and the evening the ecstasy perished like a nipped thing, like a bud in a false spring." <sup>16</sup>

Easter stimulates similar feelings. She realises and mourns the emphasis upon notions of death, fear, and horror with which it has become associated and decries the absence of any connection of it with notions of life, joy, and delight:

"Alas, that a risen Christ has no place with us! Alas, that the memory of the passion of Sorrow and Death and the



Grave holds triumph over the pale fact of the Resurrection  
 . . . Why is the risen body deadly and abhorrent with wounds?" 17

She ponders too, the importance of the Resurrection to her contemporaries:

"Is the flesh which was crucified become as poison to the crowds  
 in the street, or is it as a strong gladness and hope to them  
 as the first flower blossoming out of the earth's humus?" 18

and in inferring that the latter situation prevails, suggests the self-destructive implications for Christianity of the traditional emphasis which it gives to Easter. That all this dissatisfaction with the traditional Christian form of religion with which Ursula is now associated is not simply just a personal reaction but is rather part of a prevailing social trend seems indicated by Lawrence in his later description of Ursula's visit to a church in Derbyshire. In describing the interior situation which confronts her he conveys an impression of the general decay of the established Church. This impression is accentuated by the presence of the workmen. They labour to effect the physical renovation of the church and the futility of their efforts seems suggested by the indication that no accompanying, more vital spiritual regeneration is occurring. All that they are doing is resurrecting a mere shell, a meaningless and uninspiring symbol, devoid of true religious significance:

" . . . the whole interior was filled with scaffolding, fallen stones and rubbish were heaped on the floor, bits of plaster crunched underfoot, and the place re-echoed to the calling of secular voices and to blows of the hammer . . . she found the immemorial gloom full of bits of falling plaster, and dust of falling plaster, smelling of old time, having scaffolding and rubbish heaped about, dust cloths over the altar . . . she watched the dirty, disorderly work of bricklayers and plasterers. Workmen in heavy boots walked grinding down

the aisles, calling out in a vulgar accent . . . There were shouts of coarse answer from the roof of the church. The place echoed desolate." <sup>19</sup>

Despite her increasing dissatisfaction with it however, Ursula does not immediately sever her connection with the Christian form of religion. Although recognising its inadequacies she persists in clinging to it, seemingly motivated by a belief that it is preferable to adhere to something in life than to nothing at all. The inherent perils of this situation are indicated by Lawrence. He shows that such adherence merely induces the individual to fabricate feelings which are designed to compensate for the felt sense of loss. Ursula is seen to develop an overwhelming affection for Christ in her dejected condition, and to be ecstatically transported by sensations of his presence, particularly during the course of a visit to her uncle's farm. But any tendency to regard this accomplishment favourably is soon dismissed by the revelation that in fact Ursula is confusing the spiritual with the carnal, that this passion for Christ which she enthusiastically feels is simply a self-indulgent substitute for loving and being loved in the flesh. Although she tries to suppress her awareness of it, Ursula herself realises the actual significance of her own feelings:

"And all the time she knew underneath that she was playing false, accepting the passion of Jesus for her own physical satisfaction . . . yearning towards Jesus, only that she might use him to pander to her own soft sensation, use him as a means of reacting upon herself." <sup>20</sup>

It is acceptance of this realisation that her religious feelings are only fabrications, designed to support the inclinations of her

self, which eventually prompts Ursula to dispense with religion

altogether. She decides that her association with it is only a limitation, not a source of inspiration or strength. She reasons to herself that it would be better for her own condition of being if she became a completely independent individual and she consequently adopts this resolution, arguing in self-justification that God has no need of her adherence anyway if He is everything He is meant to be:

"What was God, after all? If maggots in a dead dog be but God kissing carrion, what then is not God? She was surfeited of this God. She was weary of the Ursula Brangwen who felt troubled about God. Whatever God was, He was, and there was no need for her to trouble about Him. She felt she had now all licence." <sup>21</sup>

## II

After her disillusion with and rejection of religion Ursula shifts the direction of her struggle and begins to search for fulfilment in physical love through the figure of her Polish companion, Anton Skrebensky. Lawrence identifies Skrebensky with a specific profession and with specific ideals, thus enabling himself to incorporate in this section critical discussion of a variety of topics, including the military, utilitarian social ideas, and the concept of warfare. Skrebensky is also used, along with Ursula, to illustrate some of the failings which Lawrence believed the modern individual displayed.

Skrebensky is a representative of old aristocratic Europe. He possesses the traditional complications of breeding and habit which the Brangwen family have never known but to which, throughout The Rainbow, some of its members have continually aspired. He impresses Ursula, as his predecessors had impressed previous Brangwens, with his refined and seemingly independent detachment:

" . . . Ursula thought him wonderful, he was so finely constituted, and so distinct, self-contained, self-supporting. This, she said to herself, was a gentleman, he had a nature like fate, the nature of an aristocrat." <sup>22</sup>

But he is in fact different from his predecessors, as is Ursula from hers:

"In the early days it is the gentry, the Skrebenskys and their English counterparts, who have freedom and subtlety. Now it gradually becomes clear that Skrebensky has only the appearance of these qualities - the reality of them has passed to Ursula, the newly emancipated daughter of the working class." <sup>23</sup>

At first, through Skrebensky, Ursula feels able to transcend her surroundings and to establish the sort of connection with the "beyond" which in the ideal Laurentian form of relationship brought considerable satisfaction in life to the individual. He brought her "a strong sense of the outer world. It was as if she were set on a hill and could feel vaguely the whole world lying spread before her", and he seemed too, "more and more to give her a new sense of the vast world, a sense of distances and large masses of humanity." <sup>24</sup> But this sense of the "door into the unknown" and the opening of horizons turns out to be mainly an illusion. Ursula finds that Skrebensky offers her only passion. He is interested simply in

himself, in gratification of his own personal desires. He is unable to offer her the mutually liberating and fulfilling feelings of love which she yearns for inwardly. As a result she is induced to respond on a similar basis. She too merely uses him to satisfy her personal desires and becomes concerned with him only in relation to her own self. Their relationship accordingly deteriorates. Although they persist in maintaining it, it develops into something limited, incomplete, and unsatisfying:

" . . . under it all was a poignant sense of transcendence. It was a magnificent self-assertion on the part of both of them, he asserted himself before her and he felt himself infinitely male and infinitely irresistible, she asserted herself before him, she knew herself infinitely desirable, and hence infinitely strong. And after all, what could either of them get from such a passion but a sense of his or her own maximum self, in contradistinction to all the rest of life? Wherein was something finite and sad, for the human soul at its maximum wants a sense of the infinite." <sup>25</sup>

Lawrence's interest in the failure of this relationship is considerable. He relates its incompleteness directly to the incompleteness of the individuals involved and he attributes their incompleteness in turn to inadequacies in the surrounding social situation.

In the process he incorporates a criticism of the two basic tendencies which he discerned amongst his contemporaries: the submission of the self to the "system", and the obsession with the self. Skrebensky's inability to offer Ursula anything other than passion, and his preoccupation with his own self are seen to reflect his enclosure within the bounds of his class and profession. As a

member of the aristocracy and as a military man he is shown to have suppressed his inner, living, spontaneous spiritual self and to have developed into an individual who accepts the social function as the ultimate meaning in life. His conception of his importance as a person reveals an obsession with notions of nationhood and service. Of his occupation as soldier he asserts:

"I belong to the nation and must do my duty by the nation." <sup>26</sup>

Of his position as a citizen he declares:

"What did a man matter personally? He was just a brick in the whole great social fabric, the nation, the modern humanity. His personal movements were small, and entirely subsidiary. The whole form must be ensured, not ruptured, for any personal reason whatsoever, since no personal reason could justify such a breaking. What did personal intimacy matter? One had to fill one's place in the Whole, the great scheme of man's elaborate civilization, that was all. The Whole mattered - but the unit, the person, had no importance, except as he represented the Whole." <sup>27</sup>

It is the community, he maintains, which supports the individual, and so it is the community which must be preserved. It controls the lives of all:

"The good of the greatest number was all that mattered. That which was the greatest good for them all, collectively, was the greatest good for the individual. And so, every man must give himself to support the state, and so labour for the greatest good of all . . . " <sup>28</sup>

Lawrence's attitude to Skrebensky is a strongly critical one. He first denounces these ideas with which Skrebensky is associated and it is obvious that he intends his denunciation to be regarded in more general terms as a criticism of tendencies amongst his

contemporaries as a whole. The importance which Skrebensky assigns to the concept of "the greatest good of the greatest number" is condemned on the basis of it being a meaningless abstraction:

" . . . the highest good of the community as it stands is no longer the highest good of even the average individual." <sup>29</sup>

So too is the conviction of Skrebensky's that the community must be infinitely more important than any single individual since it represents "millions of people". It forgets that "the community is an abstraction from the many, and is not the many themselves". <sup>30</sup> Also condemned is the consequential emphasis upon "vulgar conservative materialism" <sup>31</sup> which acceptance of these concepts promotes. It ignores the fact that all human beings are different and in encouraging conformity to a common ideal instigates the suppression of individuality:

" . . . we know what the community wants; it wants something solid, it wants good wages, equal opportunities, good conditions of living, that what the community wants. It doesn't want anything subtle or different. Duty is very plain - keep in mind the material, the immediate welfare of every man, that's all." <sup>32</sup>

As well as denouncing their actual content, Lawrence is also critical of the effect which association with these ideas has on the individual. Skrebensky's commitment to the social function is shown to render him an impersonal, dependent human being, one whose life lies simply in "his duties" and in "the established order of things". <sup>33</sup> His quality of humanness is even qualified for he possesses no inner living self of the sort which Lawrence considered necessary to

ensure completeness of being:

"At the bottom of his heart his self, the soul that aspired and had true hope of self-effectuation lay as dead, still-born, a dead weight in his womb." <sup>34</sup>

It is this limitation which prevents Skrebensky from obtaining the highest Laurentian form of fulfilment. He is incapable of establishing a transcending relationship with a woman because he is only able to respond on a physical level: the spiritual level is outside his scope. He himself recognises his inability, without fully comprehending it, when he witnesses the barge-man's appreciation of Ursula. The barge-man's ability to worship her with "body and soul together" <sup>35</sup> fills him with anguish:

"Why could not he himself desire a woman so? Why did he never really want a woman, not with the whole of him: never love, never worship, only just physically want her?" <sup>36</sup>

But this recognition brings no resolution to his problem. He continues to respond to Ursula on a merely physical basis: "he would want her with his body, let his soul do as it would." <sup>37</sup>

The inadequacy of this for the woman is illustrated through Ursula's reaction. While the barge-man's appreciation of her "made her feel the richness of her own life", Skrebensky only created "a deadness around her, a sterility, as if the world were ashes." <sup>38</sup>

Skrebensky's persistence in continuing his attachment to Ursula even after realising the inadequacies of his relationship is also criticised by Lawrence. A previous utterance of Ursula's grandmother, Lydia Brangwen, is significant in relation to this. In response to Ursula's youthful questioning as to whether anyone will ever love her she once told her grand-daughter that somebody



would indeed eventually love her, adding, "I hope it will be someone who will love you for what you are, and not for what he wants of you." <sup>39</sup> It is this latter situation which, unfortunately for Ursula, in fact eventuates. Skrebensky maintains his association with Ursula, not because he finds her a distinct and different person whom he can love, but because he finds in her compensation for his "unmanning sense of loss". <sup>40</sup> Within her presence, by submitting to becoming dependent upon her, he obtains a feeling of strength and independence, and imagines that he is able to dismiss his surroundings, to become oblivious to all but herself and himself. There are two occasions on which this development is particularly apparent. The first is during a visit to a fairground:

"After the swingboats, they went on the roundabouts to calm down, he twisting astride on his jerky wooden steed towards her, and always seeming at his ease, enjoying himself. A zest of antagonism to the convention made him fully himself. As they sat on the whirling carousel . . . it seemed that he and she were riding carelessly over the faces of the crowd, riding forever buoyantly, proudly, gallantly over the upturned faces of the crowd, moving on a high level, spurning the common mass." <sup>41</sup>

The second is when they are dancing at the wedding of Ursula's cousin:

"At the touch of her hand on his arm, his consciousness melted away from him. He took her into his arms, as if into the sure, subtle power of his will, and they became one movement, one dual movement . . . They were both absorbed into a profound silence, into a deep, fluid underwater energy that gave them unlimited strength." <sup>42</sup>

On both of these occasions Skrebensky's sense of accomplishment is

only momentary. It always ends when he separates from Ursula and in ending it leaves him feeling only pain and confused anger. But he still persists in associating with her in the hope of accomplishing this feeling of strength and this condition of oblivious dismissal again, even though he realises their limitations.

Ursula too is criticised by Lawrence, both in respect to the basis of her attraction to Skrebensky and for clinging to her relationship with him in spite of her recognition of his inadequacies. She is attracted to him, as he is to her, only for reasons of personal gratification. She simply uses him "as a mere vehicle for her lust, 'a fierce, white, cold passion' . . . He is the necessary medium for her self-contained, uncreative, corrosive lust, burning, poisonous, deadly." <sup>43</sup> In the process of so using him she contributes to his incompleteness by annihilating his last remaining attribute, his inner, male self. She accomplishes the destruction of this self in the prolonged scene following the wedding dance:

"She took him in the kiss, hard her kiss seized upon him, hard and fierce and burning corrosive . . . Till gradually his warm, soft iron yielded, yielded, and she was there fierce, corrosive, seething with his destruction, seething like some cruel, corrosive salt around the last substance of his being, destroying him, destroying him in the kiss. And her soul crystallized with triumph, and his soul was dissolved with agony and annihilation. So she held him there, the victim, consumed, annihilated. She had triumphed: he was not any more." <sup>44</sup>

Although after having realised what she has done Ursula restores Skrebensky's "whole form and figure", he remains thereafter nothing but a "shell", <sup>45</sup> a subservient, dependent being:

" . . . the core was gone. His pride was bolstered up, his blood ran once more in pride. But there was no core to him: as a distinct male he had no core. His triumphant, flaming, over-weening heart of the intrinsic male would never beat again. He would be subject now, reciprocal, never the indomitable thing with a core of over-weening, unabateable fire. She had abated that fire, she had broken him." <sup>46</sup>

Ursula realises this. She realises that Skrebensky is now just a "nothingness", a "sort of nullity". <sup>47</sup> And she is aware also that as a person he is significant to her "in her own desire only". <sup>48</sup> But she still persists in associating with him. Her motivation for doing so is simple and condemnable. Even though he fails to satisfy the yearnings of her passions Skrebensky yet remains a convenient distraction from the problems she faces in adjusting to the surroundings of the outside world, an object which she can manipulate and use at will.

The couple's relationship is eventually suspended when Skrebensky departs overseas with his regiment to fight against the Boers in Africa. Lawrence uses the occasion of Skrebensky's departure to incorporate, through Ursula, some of his feelings on the notion of warfare in general. Earlier Ursula had been used to criticise Skrebensky's occupation as a soldier. She had asserted then that the military life was only "a sort of toy-life", that the activities which the army engaged itself in were only a meaningless "game", <sup>49</sup> including the business of war, which if serious because it involved killing and the possibility of being killed, was yet insignificant in as much as individuals like herself were not concerned with the

result and did not care whether colonial territories were conquered and settled or not. She had maintained too, that the commitment of Skrebensky as a soldier was futile and debilitating. It was futile because if he were to be killed, nobody would be concerned about him: he would no longer be of any importance. It was debilitating because it encouraged him to become simply a "stiff", "stupid" and "wooden" <sup>50</sup> individual, an individual who impressed only as a nullity:

" 'It seems to me', she answered, 'as if you weren't anybody - as if there weren't anybody there, where you are. Are you anybody, really? You seem like nothing to me.' " <sup>51</sup>

This antipathy of Ursula's towards war is continued in this subsequent section. Her feelings now however, are more intensely personal and their critical significance is less direct. On hearing of Skrebensky's impending departure she admits to the "minted superscription of romance and honour and even religion" <sup>52</sup> which is associated with the concept of warfare. But her predominant sensation is one of confused aversion, of fear and helpless uneasiness:

"The idea of war altogether made her feel uneasy, uneasy. When men began organized fighting with each other it seemed to her as if the poles of the universe were cracking, and the whole might go tumbling into the bottomless pit. A horrible bottomless feeling she had . . . she felt an agony of helplessness. She could do nothing. Vaguely she knew the huge powers of the world rolling and crashing together, darkly, clumsily, stupidly, yet colossal, so that one was brushed along almost as dust. Helpless, helpless, swirling like dust." <sup>53</sup>

The implication which emerges from Ursula's reaction is that war is a desolating, disintegrating process, one which instigates universal destruction and devastation. This impression corresponds to that adhered to by Lawrence himself. He hated the concept of war, particularly after witnessing the initial conflict of World War I. His hatred is well illustrated in a letter of his, written in November, 1915, in which he advances his faith in love as the basis of his opposition to warfare in general:

"If I love then I am in direct opposition to the principle of war. If war prevails, I do not love. If love prevails, there is no war. War is a great . . . disintegrating autumnal process. Love is the great creative process, like spring, the making of an integral unity out of many disintegrated factors. We have had enough of the disintegrating process. If it goes on any further we shall so thoroughly have destroyed the unifying force from amongst us, we shall have become so completely a separate entity, that the whole will be an amorphous heap, like sand, sterile, hopeless, useless, like a dead tree." 54

### III

With the departure overseas of her lover Ursula concentrates her attention on her studies again. The motivation behind her studious concentration is significant. In this section she is important not just as a representative of the "modern individual", but also as a representative of "modern woman". As such she is seen to flirt with the public, political emancipation movement before rejecting it in favour of a more personal, private form of

emancipation. Lawrence indicates that her previous relationship with Skrebensky has induced in Ursula a recognition of the fact that her womanhood is to be regarded henceforth as an asset:

"She was always a woman, and what she could not get because she was a human being, fellow to the rest of mankind, she would get because she was a female, other than man." 55

But he also indicates that it is not Ursula's intention to depend on this attribute alone. She intends instead to become a self-responsible individual and to assume her position, with the rightful acknowledgement and respect, in the world of men and it is her aspiration to accomplish this which, he suggests, motivates her revived interest in study:

"An all-containing will in her for complete independence, complete social independence, complete independence from any personal authority, kept her dullishly at her studies . . . There was the mysterious man's world to be adventured upon, the world of daily work and duty, and existence as a working member of the community. Against this she had a subtle grudge. She wanted to make her conquest also of this man's world." 56

Lawrence directs some of his initial attention in this section towards illustrating the dull and demanding nature of the sort of studying which Ursula's decision involves her in. He mentions that "in odd streaks" only, did she get "a poignant sense of acquisition and enrichment and enlarging from her studies", 57 and he emphasises the tediousness and sheer boring drudgery of most of her work.

His major interest however, is in the other involvement which Ursula's decision leads her into: the passionate attachment which

She establishes with her class-mistress, Miss Winifred Inger. The plausibility and the initial social significance of this relationship are suggested by Mudrick:

"In a time when the injunctions of community and family have been broken, when the individual is responsible only to herself and to his own impulses, why should not Ursula first admire and then fiercely love the handsome independent woman who so resembles what she herself wishes to be? And why should the warmth and physical responsiveness of her feelings be curbed? No mere prohibition will do, for sanctions and prohibitions alike have gone under." <sup>58</sup>

Winifred is introduced as "a rather beautiful woman of twenty-eight, a fearless-seeming clean type of modern girl." <sup>59</sup> Of "fine, upright, athletic bearing", and with an "indomitably proud nature", she a clergyman's daughter and comes from a "good family". <sup>60</sup> She particularly impresses Ursula because she seems "proud and free as a man, yet exquisite as a woman." <sup>61</sup> Lawrence qualifies any endorsement of Ursula's impression however, by indicating that inwardly, Winifred is a lonely, sorrowful figure. In doing so he suggests her inherent inadequacies which are only fully revealed in her subsequent association with Ursula's Uncle Tom. Some indication of them is however provided in this section. The perverted passionate relationship which she establishes with Ursula is itself diagnostic in respect of her limitations. It goes with an attitude towards men that she states in terms of advanced feminist thought:

" 'The men will do no more - they have lost the capacity for doing' . . . 'They fuss and talk, but they are really inane. They make everything fit into an old, inert idea. Love is a dead idea to them. They don't come to one and love one, they come to an idea, and they say "You are my idea",

so they embrace themselves. As if I were any man's idea!  
 As if I exist because a man has an idea of me! As if I  
 will be betrayed by him, lend him my body as an instrument for  
 his idea, to be a mere apparatus of his dead theory." <sup>62</sup>

Ursula fails to respond to this attitude and her failure is indicative of the prevailing unsympathetic attitude of Lawrence within The Rainbow towards the suffragette movement. The reason given here for Ursula's lack of response is that "she was too young to understand it all." <sup>63</sup> But in fact in later life, when her powers of comprehension are more developed, her reaction to the suffragette movement remains the same. Although "the liberty of woman meant something real and deep" <sup>64</sup> to her, she never becomes identified with the actual political emancipation movement. She does however, acquire two companions who do. Significantly, both are described in terms which suggest they possess inner inadequacies similar to those suggested in Winifred. The first, Maggie Schofield, is described as being "always withheld", and as having "a heavy, brooding sadness" <sup>65</sup> about her. The second, Dorothy Russell, who spends her spare time "slaving for the Woman's Social and Political Union", is described as "a creature of fate". <sup>66</sup> She seems "old and relentless towards herself", even though she is "only twenty-two". <sup>67</sup> Ursula, although she attends suffragette meetings with these two women, and although she once considers becoming "a big woman" <sup>68</sup> and leading a movement, refrains in the end from becoming committed. The reason for this is provided in the beginning of her association with Maggie:

"Maggie was a great suffragette, trusting in the vote.

To Ursula the vote was never a reality. She had within



her the strange passionate knowledge of religion and living far transcending the limits of the automatic system that contained the vote." <sup>69</sup>

Besides introducing her to the suffragette movement Winifred is also important in instilling into Ursula certain ideas which she maintains throughout the remainder of her life in The Rainbow. Some of her notions are in fact similar to those to which Lawrence himself subscribed. Two in particular may be noted. The first is her claim that all religious groupings, though different, are related in aspiration:

"The Greeks had a naked Apollo, the Christians a white-robed Christ, the Buddhists a royal prince, the Egyptians their Osiris. Religions were local and religion was universal. Christianity was a local branch. There was as yet no assimilation of local religions into universal religion." <sup>70</sup>

This claim, which Ursula seems to find acceptable, contains a close resemblance to a suggestion once made by Lawrence:

"Whatever name one gives Him in worship we all strive towards the same God, so we be generous hearted: Christians, Buddhists . . . me, we all stretch our hands in the same direction." <sup>71</sup>

The second is her contention that "the human desire is the criterion of all truth and all good. Truth does not lie beyond humanity but is one of the products of the human mind and feeling." <sup>72</sup> It too resembles in concept an assertion made by Lawrence that "what our blood feels and believes and says, is always true . . . All I want is to answer to my blood, direct, without fribbling intervention of mind, or moral, or what-not . . . The real way of living is to answer to one's wants." <sup>73</sup> Ursula also appears to accept this

contention in as much as she develops a persisting faith that there is a world of living truth within herself, her surroundings, and all living things which she can discover by following the promptings of her inner self.

This importance of Winifred is however, of only momentary duration. Once she has divulged her ideas her positive value ends. More and more, as seems intended, her corruption is recognised by Ursula. Ursula feels increasingly that deep within, life has somehow been thwarted and misdirected in Winifred. She begins to become nauseated with Winifred's absorbing physical dependence, the clinging quality of which suggests the debilitating parasitic influence of the latter, and she gradually realises that this smothering influence is nullifying and limiting in respect to her own individual development:

"She still adhered to Winifred Inger. But a sort of nausea was coming over her . . . a heavy, clogged sense of deadness began to gather upon her, from the other woman's contact. And sometimes she thought Winifred was ugly, clayey. Her female hips seemed big and earthy, her ankles and arms were too thick. She wanted some fine intensity, instead of this heavy cleaving of moist clay, that cleaves because it has no life of its own." <sup>74</sup>

Having acquired this realisation of Winifred's inadequacies Ursula decides to end their relationship. She considers the possibility of arranging a marriage for her companion and instinctively she thinks of her Uncle Tom, who manages a colliery in Wiggiston. After convincing herself of his suitability she persuades Winifred to accompany her on a visit to her uncle's home.

In his description of this visit Lawrence incorporates a criticism of the urban industrial situation contemporary to his own

life, conducting it in the main through the reactions of Ursula. He condemns the physical landscape associated with this situation, the living and working conditions which prevail, and the sorts of inhabitants which these conditions produce. The general trend of his criticism here contains a close resemblance to that of his later essay "Nottingham and the Mining Country", in which he denounced the ugliness associated with industrialism on the basis that it induced the disintegration of the human spirit:

"The real tragedy of England, as I see it, is the tragedy of ugliness . . . The great crime which the moneyed classes and promoters of industry committed . . . was the condemning of the workers to ugliness, ugliness, ugliness: meaningless and formless and ugly surroundings, ugly ideals, ugly religion, ugly hope, ugly love, ugly clothes, ugly furniture, ugly houses, ugly relationships between workers and employers." 75

Ursula's reaction to Wiggiston corresponds to this harsh denunciation. She is shocked by the outside appearance of the district which impresses her as "a meaningless squalor of ash-pits and closets and irregular rows of the backs of houses, each with its small activity made sordid." 76 Her entry into the town itself only confirms this impression of incredible ugliness, repetition and desolation:

"The streets were like visions of pure ugliness; a grey-black macadamized road, asphalt causeways, held in between a flat succession of wall, window, and door, a new-brick channel that began nowhere, and ended nowhere. Everything was amorphous, yet everything repeated itself endlessly . . . the same flat material of dwellings, new red-brick becoming grimy, small oblong windows, and oblong doors . . . the rigidity of the blank streets, the homogeneous amorphous

sterility of the whole suggested death rather than life. There was no meeting place, no centre, no artery, no organic formation." <sup>77</sup>

The inhabitants of the place startle Ursula even more. They seem to her to reflect the repulsive decadence of their surroundings from which they are derived and which are therefore responsible for their debilitated condition:

"Colliers hanging about in gangs or groups, or passing along the asphalt pavements heavily to work, seemed not like living people but like spectres . . . The terrible gaunt repose of their bearing fascinated her. Like creatures with no more hope, but which still live and have passionate being, within some utterly unliving shell, they passed meaninglessly along, with strange, isolated dignity. It was as if a hard thorny shell enclosed them all." <sup>78</sup>

Horrified by her confrontation with Wiggiston Ursula tries to find assurance from her uncle that her impression is an unduly harsh one. But he fails to provide the consolation which she looks for. In doing so he reveals his own involvement in this corrupted situation, and emerges as a representative of the nullified, materialistic bourgeoisie. This involvement is initially suggested in the description of his home. Its association with a sense of "hard, mechanical activity, activity mechanical yet inchoate" is stressed, as is its integration with the "hideous abstraction of the town" and the "great, mathematical colliery". <sup>79</sup> His affinity with the corruption of the place is made most obvious however, in his reply to the anguished questionings of Ursula. With cynical unconcern he assures his niece that Wiggiston is as awful as it looks, adding too that the miners work in atrocious conditions, and

that their lives are difficult and demanding. He mentions also that the men regard their individual selves as unimportant, that their lives have meaning only through work, through subordination to the social function, and that nothing else matters for them:

"Marriage and home is a little side-show. The women know it right enough, and take it for what it's worth. One man or another, it doesn't matter all the world. The pit matters . . . Every man has his own little side-show, his home, but the pit owns every man. The women have what is left. What's left of this man, or what is left of that - it doesn't matter altogether. The pit takes all that really matters." <sup>80</sup>

Winifred identifies herself with Ursula's Uncle Tom by attempting to justify his cynical unconcern. She maintains that the repelling situation which prevails in the mining district is no different to the situation which predominates elsewhere in the working world:

"It is the same everywhere . . . It is the office, or the shop, or the business that gets the man, the woman gets the bit the shop can't digest. What is he at home, a man? He is a meaningless lump - a standing machine, a machine out of work." <sup>81</sup>

Lawrence, in providing no denial of this contention, seems to admit the truth of its content. But it is obvious that he intends it to be regarded not in the mitigating manner in which Winifred advances it, but critically, as contributing further to the condemnation of tendencies in his contemporary society.

Winifred's identification with Uncle Tom's attitude is important in indicating their similar inadequacies. Both are shown to have failed to find fulfilment in life and in failing to have relinquished

all individual aspiration and will:

"She would now let fate do as it liked with her, since there was nothing remaining to be done . . . He too was at the end of his desires. He had done things he had wanted to. They had all ended in a disintegrated lifelessness of soul, which he hid under an utterly tolerant good-humour. He no longer cared about anything on earth, neither man nor woman, nor God nor humanity. He had come to a stability of nullification." <sup>82</sup>

In this condition they have submitted to worshipping the machine, to surrendering their lives to the mechanical social function:

"His only happy moments, his only moments of pure freedom were when he was serving the machine. Then, and then only, when the machine caught him up, was he free from the hatred of himself, could he act wholly without cynicism and unreality.

His real mistress was the machine, and the real mistress of Winifred was the machine. She too, Winifred, worshipped the impure abstraction, the mechanisms of matter. There, there, in the machine, in service of the machine, was she free from the clog and degradation of human feeling. There, in the monstrous mechanism that held all matter, living or dead, in its service, did she achieve her consummation and her perfect unison, her immortality." <sup>83</sup>

In such acquiescence they have significance within the novel in illustrating the contention of Lawrence that the subordination of the human will to the mechanical process leaves the individual incomplete, without a soul and therefore without a vital core of being:

"When pure mechanization or materialism sets in, the soul is automatically pivoted, and the most diverse of creatures fall into a common mechanical unison . . . It is not a homogeneous, spontaneous coherence so much as a disintegrated amorphousness which lends itself to perfect mechanical unison." <sup>84</sup>

Ursula herself suggests the possibility of submitting to such mechanical automatism and of adhering to the system when she is momentarily attracted to the situation which her Uncle Tom and Winifred accept:

"How terrible it was! There was a horrible fascination in it - human bodies and lives subjected in slavery to that symmetric monster of the colliery. There was a swooning perverse satisfaction in it. For a moment she was dizzy." <sup>85</sup>

But detection of the corrupt decadence in her companions which this situation induces hardens her into rejecting it. She recognises again the "gross, ugly movements" in her mistress, and the "clayey, inert, unquickened" nature of her flesh which reminds her of "great prehistoric lizards." <sup>86</sup> She discerns too, similar qualities in her Uncle Tom:

"He too had something marshy about him - the succulent moistness and turgidity, and the same brackish, nauseating effect of a marsh, where life and decaying were one." <sup>87</sup>

The marriage which this couple later establish, which seems intended to be regarded as representative of modern marriage in general, confirms this intensely unfavourable impression of them which Ursula constructs. Their marital relationship displays the same limitations which they manifest as individuals. Superficially it is impressive, but internally it is uninspiring and meaningless, a mere loveless, unfulfilling social contract. Uncle Tom seems to correspond to the ideal conception of the marital partner. He appears "full of human feelings", an "attentive father", a "very domestic" and "generous" husband, a "warm attentive host", and in fact "a model citizen". <sup>88</sup>

But appearance is deceptive. Inwardly, "neither marriage nor the domestic establishment meant anything to him."<sup>89</sup> He is interested in Winifred only in trying to "propagate himself",<sup>90</sup> in producing children. His major concern remains the system, into which he continues to lapse with "apathy, complete, profound indifference."<sup>91</sup>

"He would let the machinery carry him; husband, father, pit-manager, warm clay lifted through the recurrent action of day after day by the great machine from which it derived its motion."<sup>92</sup>

Winifred's condition is similar. She is a suitable "mate" and "good companion"<sup>93</sup> for Uncle Tom because she adopts an identical attitude to their relationship:

"She did not love him. She was glad to live in a state of complacent self-deception with him, she worked according to him."<sup>94</sup>

It is perception of such characteristics as these which stimulates Ursula's determination not to subscribe to this form of living to which Uncle Tom and Winifred adhere, not to live dependent for pleasure on the thrill of the physiological or mechanical process, not to handle and reject individuals and give nothing fulfilling in relationships with them and not to hate her humanness. She resolves instead to try and destroy the "system".

"No more would she subscribe to the great colliery, to the great machine which has taken us all captives. In her soul, she was against it, she disowned even its power. It had only to be forsaken to be inane, meaningless. And she knew it was meaningless . . . If she could she would smash the machine. Her soul's action should be the smashing of the machine."<sup>95</sup>



## IV

Ursula's conclusion of her affair with Winifred coincides with the successful completion of her schooling, which ends with her return home to Cossethay. Here she faces the conventional "empty period between school and possible marriage"<sup>96</sup> which confronts all young women of her age. The improbability of her conforming and accepting this situation is suggested by Lawrence when he mentions that she is still struggling desperately if blindly for fulfilment:

"Ursula, inflamed in soul, was suffering all the anguish of youth's reaching for some unknown ideal, that it can't grasp, can't even distinguish or conceive."<sup>97</sup>

It is indicated too that the thought of leading a life of calm, placid, physical, and maternal domesticity similar to that led by her mother is repulsive to Ursula. She resents and fights against this form of living. To her it seems common, trivial, and meaningless and in contrast to her female predecessors, she determines not to accept it. Instead she adheres to her earlier aspirations of being a "modern woman" and insists on her right to assume her position alongside men in "the field of action and work".<sup>98</sup> Her parents however, oppose her ideas. They ridicule and reject her announced intentions without comprehending that these aspirations reflect the change which successive generations invariably introduce. They insist that she remain with them in Cossethay and force her, unwillingly, to agree.

In this situation life at home becomes increasingly unbearable for Ursula. Her discomfort culminates in a feeling that she is without place or meaning or worth while there:

"What was her life - a sordid, formless disintegrated nothing; Ursula Brangwen a person without worth or importance, living in the mean village of Cossethay, within the sordid scope of Ilkeston. Ursula Brangwen, at seventeen, worthless and unvalued, neither wanted nor needed by anybody, and conscious herself of her own dead value. It would not bear thinking of." <sup>99</sup>

Finally, after considering various possible solutions to her plight including "running away and becoming a domestic servant" and "asking some man to take her", <sup>100</sup> Ursula writes to the mistress of her old High School for advice. This woman is more sympathetic to the ideas of Ursula than her parents had been. She urges her to enter the teaching profession, maintaining that through doing so she will be able to both fulfil a useful social function and acquire her own independence:

"You will learn that mankind is a great body of which you are one useful member, you will take your own place at the great task which humanity is trying to fulfil. That will give you a satisfaction and a self-respect which nothing else could give . . . If you could learn patience and self-discipline, I do not see why you should not make a good teacher. The least you could do is try . . . I shall be glad indeed to know that one more of my girls has provided for herself the means of freedom to choose for herself." <sup>101</sup>

Ursula's initial reaction to this advice is unfavourable. The sort of satisfaction which it offered seemed to her to be "cold, dreary . . . grim and desperate." <sup>102</sup> Implicitly she identifies it with the form of living associated with Skrebensky which she had denounced; the form of living involving submission to the social function as the highest meaning in life for the

individual. From her previous comments it is obvious that she wants a more personal, less dependent kind of satisfaction. But in spite of her initial lack of receptiveness to it, Ursula eventually accepts this advice, persuading herself that what it offers is sufficient. Her acceptance is however unenthusiastic. In mentioning that her "cold will" simply "acquiesced" <sup>103</sup> Lawrence suggests that her decision to comply with the urgings of her school-mistress merely reflects her intense dissatisfaction with her present situation at home. It is not indicative of any inherent ambitions to become a teacher, but rather a manifestation of her desire to live her own life, independent of her parents, the accomplishment of which seems possible through a teaching career.

Having convinced herself of her willingness to enter the teaching profession Ursula is confronted with the problem of obtaining actual permission to do so from her parents. In illustrating the conflict which develops on this subject Lawrence indicates the inherent difference of generations. It is obvious that Will Brangwen has neither intended that his daughters would go out to work, nor considered that they might like to. His conception of the position of women is the old traditional one: he believes that they belong in the home, that they are meant to produce children and meet the domestic needs of their husbands and families. When his daughter first announces her contradictory aspirations he indifferently attributes her ideas to the rashness of youth. Later, when Ursula's determination manifests itself, his reaction alters to one of uncomprehending resentment and authoritative refusal. He tries to force her to conform into accepting his ideas. But eventually he

himself is forced to concede defeat and to agree with her plans. In so doing he seemingly suggests the inevitability of the submission of one generation to its successor. Lawrence indicates however, that such submission is not necessarily complete. Will is seen to remain sufficiently influential to ensure that if Ursula is to enter teaching she will teach locally, at the Brinsley Street school in Ilkeston, not outside the district and all family jurisdiction in Kingston-on-Thames.

Through the long ensuing description of Ursula's teaching career Lawrence incorporates a criticism of the elementary schooling system which prevailed in the early twentieth century. His criticism, which doubtless derives much from his own personal experience, is conveyed as usual both directly and indirectly through the varying reactions and perceptions of Ursula. It includes a condemnation of the outward appearance of the school itself, but concentrates particularly on denouncing the "system" which dominates the interior situation. The concept of the "system" is shown to be responsible for the plight of the inhabitants of the place, and its harshness and rigidity are stressed. There is also criticism of the long hours and the large classes which the teaching staff are confronted with, all of which, Lawrence argues contributes, along with the impositions of the "system", to the exhausting, debilitating nature of the profession.

Ursula begins her teaching career enthusiastically, full of sentimental, idealistic optimism:

"She was excited. The very forest of dry, sterile brick had some fascination for her. It was so hard and ugly,

so relentlessly ugly, it would purge her of some of her floating sentimentality.

She dreamed how she would make the little ugly children love her. She would be so personal. Teachers were always hard and impersonal. There was no vivid relationship. She would make everything personal and vivid, she would give herself, she would give, give, give all her great stores of wealth to her children, she would make them so happy, and they would prefer her to any teacher on the face of the earth." 104

The probability of her being disillusioned and of her resolutions being frustrated is soon suggested however. On her initial journey to the school it is indicated that in becoming a schoolteacher she unknowingly identifies herself with incomplete individuals of the sort reflected earlier in Skrebensky, Winifred and Uncle Tom, all of whom she had denounced:

"She mounted into the wet comfortless tram . . . She was shut in with these unliving spectral people. Even yet it did not occur to her that she was one of them." 105

Then when she reaches Brinsley Street the depressing location and outward appearance of the school is emphasised. The narrowness and meanness of the street in which it is situated, the griminess of its buildings, and the ugliness of its railed asphalt yard all receive particular mention. Attention is also directed towards suggesting the association of the place with oppression:

"The whole place seemed to have a threatening expression, imitating the church's architecture for the purpose of domineering, like a gesture of vulgar authority . . .

The place was silent, deserted, like an empty prison . . . " 106

When Ursula actually enters the school this suggestion of the

disillusioning, frustrating probabilities of her career continues. The other teachers are shown to be in essence impersonal mechanisms, abstract instruments of authority who have abnegated their personal selves and assumed the character of an automatic unit as demanded by the educational system. The only attribute which they appear to recognise is power. Those who possess it in considerable quantities are envied, hated and feared by the others; those who lack it are ridiculed, reviled and despised. Since all compete for it together amiable human relationships are impossible to maintain. As a result the atmosphere in the staffroom is seen to be an "hideous" one "of hostility and disintegration, of wills working in antagonistic subordination . . . " <sup>107</sup> The atmosphere within the classroom is seen to be similar. Operating from a platform of force, the teachers impose the curriculum upon their deliberately depersonalised pupils:

"She saw Mr. Brunt, Miss Harby, Miss Schofield, all the schoolteachers, drudging unwillingly at the graceless task of compelling many children into one disciplined, mechanical set, reducing the whole set to an automatic state of obedience and attention, and then of commanding their acceptance of various pieces of knowledge." <sup>108</sup>

The children respond by resisting this process. They "never naturally acquiesce to sitting in a class and submitting to knowledge." <sup>109</sup> They "always strive to revolt." <sup>110</sup> This prompts the teacher to strengthen the imposition of his will which in turn increases the inclination of the children to resist it so that the relationship between the two groups is perpetually one of antagonistic conflict and hostility.

Ursula herself is not immune to this critical and disillusioning impression of the educational system. In a moment of insight during the beginning of her teaching duties she is suddenly filled with misgivings over the situation which confronts her:

"This prison of a school was a reality . . . the desks before her had an abstract angularity that bruised her sentiment and made her shrink. She winced, feeling she had been a fool in her anticipation. She had brought her feelings and her generosity to where neither generosity nor emotion were wanted. And already she felt rebuffed, troubled by the new atmosphere, out of place." <sup>111</sup>

But her doubt is only of momentary duration. Her initial idealistic optimism soon returns. Sustained by this, she tries to implement her resolution to alter the prevailing system. The difference between her conception of the teaching position and the one which prevails is made obvious:

" . . . the first great effort of every teacher of a large class must be to bring the will of the children into accordance with his own will. And this he can only do by an abnegation of his personal self, and an application of a system of laws, for the purpose of achieving a certain calculable result, the imparting of certain knowledge. Whereas Ursula thought she was going to become the first wise teacher by making the whole business personal, and using no compulsion. She believed entirely in her own personality." <sup>112</sup>

She fails however to introduce her ideas successfully into the classroom, and in failing she seems to suggest the impossibility of any individual being able to alter the "system" as she herself in the earlier section had resolved to do. Her attempted innovations

encounter the derision of both pupils and staff. The children are not sensitive enough to appreciate the personal relationship which she offers them. They abuse her abolition of compulsion with a result that their response and discipline decline abruptly. The other teachers resent this development. In the internal situation of the school in which "it was power and power alone that mattered"<sup>113</sup> the loss of control in one classroom soon threatens the efficient operation of all others. The other teachers realise this and they despise what they consider to be inadequacies in Ursula. Their ideal of what a teacher ought to be is reflected in Miss Harby:

"Miss Harby was a splendid teacher. She could keep order and inflict knowledge on a class with remarkable efficiency."<sup>114</sup>

In order to preserve their positions they put pressure on Ursula to either conform to this ideal or to resign.

Ursula eventually adopts the former course and conforms. Her conformity is motivated by her determination to succeed in the "man's world", to take her place in the great liberating world of responsible work. It testifies to the strength of the prevailing "system", and in conforming Ursula proceeds to illustrate the limitations of the functional life of submission which this system offers, and to illuminate the alterations which it induces in the individual. She gradually removes herself to a position of distance and officiality in the classroom, obliterating her personal self in the process and acquiring the required mechanical character. She becomes hard and impersonal. She fights to subdue her pupils, to impress her will upon them, and to enforce their obedience. Her transition culminates in the brutal beating of the recalcitrant "rat-like"<sup>115</sup> William.



She emerges from this episode as "a specimen of modern industrial society, possessing its facelessness, its insentience, its brutality." <sup>116</sup> She is no longer just Ursula Brangwen but is instead Miss Ursula Brangwen, Standard Five teacher of Brinsley Street school. Significantly Lawrence indicates that Ursula's accomplishment of the alteration, her assumption of a mechanical identity, is not made without loss. Ursula herself senses this:

"Something had broken in her, she had passed a crisis.

Williams was beaten, but at a cost." <sup>117</sup>

And she resents herself for having become "leagued . . . to this evil system" where she must "brutalize herself" <sup>118</sup> to live. But her resortion to brutality is not her only limitation. She is also deprived of her freedom and her individuality:

"She was like a young filly that has been broken into the shafts, and has lost its freedom. And now she was suffering bitterly from the agony of the shafts. The agony, the galling, the ignominy of her breaking in. This wore into her soul." <sup>119</sup>

It is such realisation of the inadequacies of her position which finally prompts Ursula to relinquish her schoolteaching career.

Although on occasions "when her individual soul was left out . . .

she could be almost happy", <sup>120</sup> she feels increasingly that "some-

where, in something, she was not free." <sup>121</sup> She decides that she

will no longer remain imprisoned in the "dry, tyrannical man-world",

the world in which "the teaching hours were too long, the tasks too

heavy, and the disciplinary condition . . . too unnatural." <sup>122</sup>

But Lawrence again indicates that this decision is easier to

formulate than it is to accomplish, that the individual, having

submitted to the system finds it impossible to completely reject it. Ursula is seen to recognise, "vaguely", the fact that "responsibility had taken place in her for ever, and as yet her prime business was to work."<sup>123</sup> And even though she maintains her resolution to finish teaching her conception of life continues to be dominated by the conditioning influence of the systematized working world of man. This becomes obvious firstly on the occasion of her actual departure from Brinsley Street school. It is significantly shown that the feelings of liberation which she enjoys on leaving are tinged with a strong sense of regret. The suggestion from this seems to be that in submitting to the system she has developed an appreciation of the limited sort of satisfaction which individuals accepting the social function as the highest meaning in life esteem. This suggestion seems confirmed by her final consideration of her accomplishments as a teacher:

"She carried away from the school a pride she could never lose. She had her place as comrade and sharer in the work of the school, her fellow teachers had signed to her, as one of them. And she was one of all workers, she had put in her tiny brick to the fabric man was building, she had qualified herself as co-builder."<sup>124</sup>

The continuing influence of the "system" upon Ursula is illustrated secondly in her decision to become a student at college. The advice given earlier by her old school mistress seems influential in stimulating this decision:

"I most strongly urge and advise you to keep up your studies with the intention of taking a degree. That will give you a qualification and a position in the world, and will give you more scope to choose your own way."<sup>125</sup>

Ursula, in adopting this advice, remains obsessed with the idea of fulfilling her social function. Although she does not fully realise this herself her hopes of acquiring personal freedom are quite obviously still related to the "system", still dominated by a belief in the necessity of taking one's place within it:

"For there was this world to conquer, this knowledge to acquire, this qualification to attain. And she worked with intensity, because of a want inside her that drove her on. Almost everything was subordinated now to this one desire to take her place in the world. What kind of place it was to be she did not ask herself. The blind desire drove her on. She must take her place." 126

V

In between deciding to relinquish her teaching career and actually accomplishing this resolution Ursula comes into contact with the figure of Arthur Schofield, a young market-gardener from Belcote, with whom she establishes a brief relationship. Lawrence's motivation in inserting this encounter seems to be to emphasise the fact that the individual must not retreat into the past to escape the problems of the present. The life which Arthur offers Ursula on the farm at Belcote is obviously similar to that associated with the early Brangwens of the Marsh. It is an immersed, isolated, and intimate form of living, one in which the human response is limited to a reliance on the promptings of the instinct. Ursula, although initially attracted to it, subsequently rejects it as she

seemed intended to. She realises that Arthur lacks her developed consciousness and that he possesses none of her ambitiousness:

"She turned away, she turned round from him, and saw the east flushed strangely rose, the moon coming yellow and lovely upon a rosy sky, above the darkening, bluish snow. All this so beautiful, all this so lovely. He did not see it. He was one with it. But she saw it, and was one with it. Her seeing separated them infinitely . . . She was a traveller on the face of the earth, and he was an isolated creature living in the fulfilment of his own senses . . . She must go on and on . . . " 127

In realising this, and in recognising their irreducible differences, she regretfully declines Arthur's proposal of marriage and turns once again to the outside life, consoled by her thoughts of the immense possibilities for satisfaction awaiting her at college.

When Ursula enters Nottingham College to begin her scholastic career Lawrence indicates that she is filled with the same enthusiastic and optimistic sentimental idealism which characterised her condition in the beginning of her schoolteaching career. In indicating this he invokes the suggestion that Ursula's initial conception of her surroundings will again here be unrealistic, and that once more full realisation of her situation will bring only disillusion. This realisation does indeed eventuate, and in depicting its development Lawrence incorporates a criticism of the higher educational system, concentrating in particular on illustrating its subordination to the prevailing "system" of the surrounding social world. He also includes a criticism of science, conducting it too through the changing reaction of Ursula. As with his criticism of the elementary

schooling system, much of Lawrence's criticism here of college is derived from his own personal experience. <sup>128</sup>

In her first year at college Ursula blissfully immerses herself in the "magnificent seclusion and activity of learning." <sup>129</sup> She is immensely impressed with the place in its entirety. The buildings seem to her to contain "a reminiscence of the wonderful, cloistral origin of education" <sup>130</sup> and she regards the lecturers, not as ordinary human beings, but as sublime, mystical and reverential figures:

"She could not consider the professors as men, ordinary men who ate bacon, and pulled on their boots before coming to college. They were the black-gowned priests of knowledge, serving for ever in a remote hushed temple. They were the initiated, and the beginning and the end of the mystery was in their keeping." <sup>131</sup>

Inspired by this impression she considers herself to be one of the educational "elect" <sup>132</sup> in believing that she is a scholar enrolled for the purpose of acquiring a "pure education", not just for the acquisition of "mere professional training". <sup>133</sup> In this sublimated condition of mind she finds her studies liberating and enjoyable, in direct contrast to her schooling says:

"It was a joy to hear the theory of education, there was such freedom and pleasure in ranging over the very stuff of knowledge, and seeing how it moved and lived and had its being." <sup>134</sup>

Although seemingly sympathetic towards her display of enthusiasm Lawrence suggests throughout his description of Ursula's initial scholastic year that her conception of the college is mainly illusory. On frequent occasions he indicates some of the college's

less attractive features which she prefers to ignore or dismiss or fails even to seem including its "dirty industrial town" <sup>135</sup> location, the ugliness of its architecture, and the "harshness and vulgarity" <sup>136</sup> of its gloomy cloak-room and lobbies. His mention of such features suggests the integration of the place with the corrupt social surroundings which is subsequently confirmed. He also brings attention to the mundane countenance of the majority of the students, mentioning that the girls "chattered and giggled and were nervous" and "were dressed up and frizzed" <sup>137</sup> and that the men looked "mean and clownish", <sup>138</sup> and in so doing suggests the unrealistic nature of Ursula's yearnings:

"She wanted all the students to have a high, pure spirit, she wanted them to say only the real, genuine things, she wanted their faces to be still and luminous as the nuns' and the monks' faces." <sup>139</sup>

In her second year Ursula herself realises the illusory quality of her initial impression of college:

"Gradually the perception stole into her. This was no religious retreat, no seclusion of pure learning. It was a little apprentice-shop where one was further equipped for making money. The college itself was a little slovenly laboratory for the factory . . . the religious virtue of knowledge was become a flunkey to the god of material success." <sup>140</sup>

Bitterly she realises the futility of her strivings for fulfilment through higher studies. The college, like everything else, is subordinated to the "system"; it too is "debased to the same service" <sup>141</sup> and designed "to produce vulgar things, to encumber material life." <sup>142</sup> Dejectedly she concludes that there is this

"permanent substratum of ugliness" <sup>143</sup> under everything in her contemporary civilization.

Following this disillusion with college Ursula's interest in her studies declines. The work which she does becomes mechanical, produced simply out of habit. Only one field continues to receive her concentrated attention: the field of botanical science:

"This was one study that lived for her. She had entered into the lives of the plants. She was fascinated by the strange laws of the vegetable world. She had here a glimpse of something working entirely apart from the purpose of the human world . . . in her botany laboratory . . . the mystery still glimmered . . . " <sup>144</sup>

This interest of Ursula's in botany is significant in illustrating her dissatisfaction with her social surroundings. Botany seems to her to offer the possibility of becoming her own self. This the outside world does not do. It restricts her movements. Within its confines she is unable to achieve the completeness of being which she is striving to develop. The adherents of the outside world maintain that they already possess this completeness of being, that they have progressed as far as is possible. They deny that there is anything which they do not have or which they do not know:

"There is no darkness. We move and live and have our being within the light, and unto us is given the eternal light of knowledge, we comprise and comprehend the innermost core and issue of knowledge. Fool and knave, how dare you belittle us with the darkness?" <sup>145</sup>

Ursula however, does not accept their contentions. She refuses to believe that life can be so limited, believing instead that

something mysterious persists, something which botany, which is based on a connection with the mysterious and unknown, might just be able to reveal to her.

Ursula eventually becomes disillusioned with science and rejects it, but not before obtaining something of the revelation sought. Her disillusionment is initiated by a conversation on life with one of her science lecturers, Dr. Frankstone, "a woman doctor of physics in the college."<sup>146</sup> This woman, with her confident, calculating and analytical denial of the mysteriousness of life, identifies the scientific field of study with the uncompromising, omniscient attitude which Ursula had refused to accept earlier:

" 'I don't see why we should attribute some special mystery to life . . . We don't understand it as we understand electricity, even, but that doesn't warrant our saying it is something special, something different in kind and distinct from everything else in the universe . . . May it not be that life consists in a complexity of physical and chemical activities, of the same order as the activities we already know in science? I don't see really, why we should imagine there is a special order of life, and life alone - ' " <sup>147</sup>

In advancing these contentions and so identifying science with the earlier attitude Dr. Frankstone destroys the very basis of Ursula's association with this field of study. But before severing her connection with it Ursula obtains from science an indication of the goal towards which her strivings in life ought to be directed, while she is viewing a slide under her microscope:

"She looked still at the unicellular shadow that lay within the field of light, under the microscope. It was



alive . . . If it was a conjunction of forces, physical and chemical, what held these forces unified, and for what purpose were they unified? . . . Was its purpose just mechanical and limited to itself? . . . Suddenly in her mind the world gleamed strangely, with an intense light, like the nucleus of the creature under the microscope. Suddenly she had passed away into an intensely-gleaming light of knowledge. She could not understand what it all was. She only knew that it was not limited mechanical energy, nor mere purpose of self-preservation and self-assertion. It was a consummation, a being infinite. Self was a oneness with the infinite. To be oneself was a supreme, gleaming triumph of infinity." 148

On attaining this recognition Ursula dispenses with science, the suggestion being that having obtained her sought-after revelation she no longer has any need of its services. But although having realised that she ought to strive to become herself, Ursula is still confronted with the problem of how to accomplish this, how to actually become herself.

## VI

When Anton Skrebensky enters her life again on returning from Africa Ursula decides that her former lover holds the solution to the problem which still confronts her of how to become her self:

"He held the keys of the sunshine. Still he held them. He could open to her the gates of succeeding freedom and delight." 149

Ursula's decision is somewhat surprising considering her previous

disillusion with Skrebensky but not implausible when it is remembered that she had not fully comprehended the inadequacies of their relationship when they separated and that she had retained some affection for him when he left. As he had done previously Lawrence uses their relationship in this section to illustrate the inadequacies which he detected in his contemporaries. Both are again representatives of the "modern individual" and their failings seem intended to be regarded as the failings of the "modern" generation. Lawrence also again uses Skrebensky's identification with a particular class and profession to incorporate a specific criticism of the ideals of democracy and imperialism, conducting his criticism as usual through the actions and attitudes of Ursula.

It is obvious to Ursula at their first reunion that nothing has changed between her and Skrebensky, the old irreducible differences remain:

"She knew, vaguely, in the first minute, that they were enemies come together in a truce. Every movement and word of his was alien to her being . . . He talked, but not to her. She tried to speak to him, but she could not reach him . . . He seemed made up of a set of habitual actions and decisions." <sup>150</sup>

But instead of rejecting him as she ought, Ursula accepts Skrebensky again, accepting him on the old basis of passion. She realises that no higher form of human relationship is possible with him. In his mechanical condition he responds only to the promptings of his desires and she recognises that to retain him she must adopt a similar response:

"She could feel the dark, heavy fixity of his animal desire . . . The same iron rigidity, as if the world were made of steel, possessed her again. It was no use turning with flesh and blood to this arrangement of forged metal." <sup>151</sup>

Eventually they consummate their relationship and the suggestion which is sustained following this is that they find considerable fulfilment through each other. Ursula believes that in Skrebensky she has "the glimmering core of fecundity . . . her mate, her complement, her sharer in fruition." <sup>152</sup> Sustained by this belief she becomes contemptuous of others, scorning them for continuing to submit to the "system" and so suppressing the development of their beings:

"What are you, you pale citizens? . . . You subdued beast in sheep's clothing, you primeval darkness falsified to a social mechanism." <sup>153</sup>

She imagines that she herself has obtained completeness of being. Although she continues to conform to the "system" by still attending college, her conformity is cynical, done in "a mood of superficial, mocking facility". <sup>154</sup> Having Skrebensky she feels no need of other people, no need of anything else for support in life. Skrebensky too, when in her presence, has similar feelings. With her alongside him he feels free and responsible only to himself. He is able to ridicule others of his contemporaries who continue to live as he did previously. He recognises the limitations of the form of life which they lead, and his critical condemnation of it seems endorsed by Lawrence:

"He despised it all . . . Their good professors, their good clergymen, their good political speakers, their

good earnest women - all the time he felt his soul was grinning, grinning at the sight of them. So many performing puppets, all wood and rag for the performance.

He watched the citizen, a pillar of society, a model, saw the stiff goat's legs, which have become almost stiffened to wood in the desire to make them puppet in their action, he saw the trousers formed to the puppet-action: man's legs, but man's legs become rigid and deformed, ugly, mechanical." 155

When together they travel abroad, unmarried, but living as husband and wife they ignore the numerous restricting sanctions of their social surroundings and immerse themselves in their sustaining mutual passion. In doing so they attain a satisfying sense of personal liberation which Lawrence implies is impossible to obtain through conformity to the ordinary, submissive, conventional form of living:

"The fact of their own consummate being made everything else so entirely subordinate that they were free . . . They had revoked altogether the ordinary mortal world. Their confidence was like a possession upon them. They were possessed. Perfectly and supremely free they felt, proud beyond all question, and surpassing mortal conditions . . . The world was a world of servants whom one civilly ignored." 156

Although seeming to favour this accomplishment to a degree Lawrence yet remains critical of it in suggesting that it represents a mere escape from the problems of life rather than a resolution of them. Moreover, he indicates that it is of only momentary duration and that it brings no durable improvement to the condition of the individual. When Ursula and Skrebensky separate their

feelings of liberating fulfilment end, and they fail to accomplish them again. They revert back to their former inadequate selves. Without Ursula, Skrebensky is essentially nothing. He becomes his old mechanical, nullified self again. And despite his efforts to prevent it by resorting to the obliteration of drink he falls back into the meaningless, decaying routines of ordinary modern life. The limitations of this form of living are accentuated by Lawrence through his contrast of it with the previous form of living which Skrebensky had enjoyed with Ursula:

"He had lived with her in a close, living pulsing world, where everything pulsed with rich being. Now he found himself struggling amid an ashen dry cold world of rigidity, dead walls, and mechanical traffic, and creeping spectre-like people. The life was extinct, only ash moved and stirred or stood rigid, there was a horrible, clattering activity, a rattle like the falling of dry slag, cold and sterile." <sup>157</sup>

Skrebensky, in desperation at his plight, offers Ursula a proposal of marriage. His motivation in doing so is clearly a reflection of his inability to be independent:

"If only he could be with her! All he wanted now was to marry her, to be sure of her . . . He felt as if his life were dead. His soul was extinct. The whole being of him had become sterile, he was a spectre, divorced from life. He had no fullness, he was just a flat shape. Day by day the madness accumulated in him. The horror of not-being possessed him." <sup>158</sup>

Ursula's reaction to Skrebensky's proposal is an unenthusiastic one. She registers it "without any particular response", <sup>159</sup> and virtually ignores it. Her indifference reflects her differing

development during their period of separation. Whereas Skrebensky had developed an acute feeling of inadequacy and had tended to become increasingly dependent upon her, she had developed an intense sense of independence which had resulted in her feeling less need of him. But in spite of this she lets herself become engaged to him. The motivation behind her compliance is revealed in one of her letters to him:

"I love you very much. I love your body. It is so clear and fine. I am glad you do not go naked, or all women would fall in love with you. I am very jealous of it, I love it so much." <sup>160</sup>

Their relationship, in being maintained on this basis of selfish manipulation, of self-satisfying passion and nothing else, soon deteriorates. Skrebensky is frightened by Ursula's control and use of him. She "owned his body and enjoyed it with all the delight and carelessness of a possessor", <sup>161</sup> and this induces in him "a constraint which prevented his enjoying the delicious approach and the loveable close of the endless embrace." <sup>162</sup> A tension develops between them and they begin to argue with each other on different subjects as they had done during their previous association. As he did then Lawrence uses their conflicts to insert criticism of some of the ideas prevailing amongst his contemporaries, conducting his criticism again through the actions and attitudes of Ursula.

The most important argument which Ursula has with Skrebensky in terms of Lawrence's polemic is the one concerned with the concepts of democracy and imperialism. It begins with a simple consideration of these concepts and ends with a condemnation of

Skrebensky himself for his identification with and adherence to the ideals which Ursula denounces. Ursula initiates the argument by maintaining that only "the greedy and ugly people come to the top in a democracy . . . because they're the only people who will push themselves there." <sup>163</sup> On this basis she claims that it is only "degenerate races" <sup>164</sup> which are democratic. Only those "who have money and the brains for money" become rulers, and the inhabitants themselves know only equality "on a money basis", which in her conception is "the equality of dirt." <sup>165</sup> Ursula's feeling towards the democratic ideal of her contemporaries contain a close resemblance to those of Lawrence. He considered its concept of materialistic egalitarianism to be a falsity, inapplicable to reality. He maintained that cultivation of such idealism could lead only to the disillusion and corruption of civilization, and eventually to its disintegration. In his view, towards which Ursula is inclining, notions of equality and inequality held no importance: only the individual human person in his inimitable uniqueness counted:

"When I stand with another man, who is himself, and when I am truly myself, then I am only aware of a Presence, and of the strange reality of otherness. There is me and there is another being . . . There is no comparing or estimating. There is only this strange recognition of present otherness . . . comparison only enters when one of us departs from his own integral being, and enters the material mechanical world. Then equality and inequality starts at once." <sup>166</sup>

And in the democratic ideal which he himself formulated he stressed that this uniqueness and separateness of all individuals would be

recognised and respected:

" . . . each man shall be spontaneously himself - each man himself, each woman herself, without any question of equality or inequality entering into it at all . . ." <sup>167</sup>

Having denounced the democratic ideal of her contemporaries Ursula shifts her attention to Skrebensky and condemns him for his adherence to this ideal. Besides his importance as a "modern individual" figure, Skrebensky is significant in this section in being a representative of the imperial ruling class of India. Previously, Ursula had seemed impressed by the thought of him in this position, although in her imagination she had felt an underlying feeling of distaste:

"She could see him so well out there, in India - one of the governing class, superimposed upon an old civilization, lord and master of a clumsier civilization than his own. It was his choice. He would become again an aristocrat, invested with authority and responsibility, having a great helpless populace beneath him. One of the ruling class, his whole being would be given over to the fulfilling and the executing of the better idea of the state. And in India, there would be real work to do. The country did need the civilization which he himself represented: it did need his roads and bridges, and the enlightenment of which he was part. He would go to India. But that was not her road." <sup>168</sup>

Now however, she discards her earlier admiration for him. Her criticism becomes more pronounced. She scathingly condemns him for going to assist in the imposition of democracy upon India, indicating that she regards his mission as contemptible both on political grounds and on the basis of it being a reflection of his own personal inadequacies:



" 'You with your dainty fingers, and your going to India because you will be one of the somebodies there. It's a mere dodge, your going to India' . . . 'You think the Indians are simpler than us, and so you'll enjoy being near them and being a lord over them' . . . 'And you'll feel so righteous governing them for their own good. Who are you, to feel righteous? What are you righteous about in your governing? Your governing stinks. What do you govern for, but to make things there as dead and mean as they are here! ' " 169

Her condemnation concludes with her old affirmation that he is just "a nothingness", <sup>170</sup> and with a vehement assertion that she despises him and everything which he is associated with:

" ' . . . I'm against you, and all your old, dead things.' " 171

But in spite of her announced intention to reject him Ursula retains her relationship with Skrebensky. Her persistence in clinging to him reflects the strength of her obsession with passion. She is not interested in him at all as a person, as an individual human being. He is important only as a means of satisfying her personal desires. The futility of continuing the relationship on this basis, and the debilitating effect which doing so has on those concerned is suggested by Lawrence:

" . . . it all contained a developing germ of death. After each contact, her anguished desire for him was stronger, her love was more hopeless. After each contact his mad dependence on her was deepened, his hope of standing strong and taking her in his own strength was weakened. He felt himself a mere attribute of her." <sup>172</sup>

Ursula's recognition of this situation however, comes only when she is confronted with the fact of her failure at college. Life then seems to offer her the choice of being "Mrs. Skrebensky, even

Baroness Skrebensky, wife of a lieutenant in the Royal Engineers, the Sappers . . . living with the European population in India" or of being "Ursula Brangwen, spinster, school-mistress." <sup>173</sup>

She realises that neither proposition appeals to her. She hates the thought of entering "the bondage of teaching" <sup>174</sup> again, while the thought of marriage and living with Skrebensky in India induces in her no feelings at all. During a conversation with her friend, Dorothy Russell, she considers the possible reasons for her lack of response towards the latter proposition, and comes to a realisation of the limitations of her relationship with Skrebensky. She recognises the inadequacy of its foundation upon passion and the worthlessness of it in relation to her own development:

" 'Love - love - love - what does it mean - what does it amount to? So much personal gratification. It doesn't lead anywhere' . . . 'As an end in itself, I could love a hundred men, one after the other. Why should I end with a Skrebensky?' " <sup>175</sup>

Having obtained this realisation she decides to end her affair with Skrebensky. But her decision proves easier to formulate than to accomplish. It is only after prolonged conflict that she finally finishes with him.

The end to the relationship comes following a passionate love-making session in the moonlight on the Lincolnshire coast where they are on holiday at the home of his great-aunt. The unsatisfactory nature of their love-making induces in Ursula an acceptance of the fact, which she has realised all along but which up until now she has chosen to dismiss, that Skrebensky is unable to bring her the fulfilment which she yearns for, and that this

inability will persist in him forever. She recognises that their relationship has been a failure although she still does not fully comprehend its failings. Such comprehension only comes later and even then it is limited. Perhaps the most perceptive indication of them both outside and inside the novel is provided by Lawrence's wife, Frieda, who comments of the relationship's failure:

"In the end the man fails Ursula because he has no ideal beyond the old existing state, it does not satisfy her nor him. For perfect love you don't only have two people, it must include bigger universal connection. An idea, something outside themselves, and it is really against individualism." 176

In losing Ursula, Skrebensky reverts back to his old form of living and becomes once again an obvious representative of the incomplete "modern individual". The degree to which he had developed a dependence on Ursula is reflected in his obsessive fear of being alone. To combat this fear during the night-time hours he resorts increasingly to drink, both for the company of others which he finds this activity affords, and more especially for the condition of oblivion which indulgent drinking brings him. During the hours of daylight he finds his relief through working:

"No matter how little and how futile his occupations were, he gave himself to them entirely, and felt normal and fulfilled." 177

Eventually however, Skrebensky decides that marriage holds the solution to his problem. Having decided this he proposes to an is accepted by his Colonel's daughter and after a courtship of

fourteen days marries her. With his new wife he then leaves the following week for India, seemingly content with the prospects of life in his new country, although the lingering suggestion is that he will continue to be the same mechanical, nullified person he had been in England, and that he will lead the same meaningless, uninspiring form of life.

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## CHAPTER FIVE     :     CONCLUSION

This chapter deals with the final chapter of The Rainbow. It is intended within it to illustrate the shift in direction of Lawrence's social commentary away from the historical towards the visionary. This illustration is conducted through a consideration of the actions of Ursula Brangwen who in this period of her life alternates between feelings of hope and despair as she moves between the mystical world of her imagination and the cold, hard world of reality.

### I

When Skrebensky departs overseas to India following his rejection by Ursula it seems initially that he has departed out of her life forever. But Ursula's interest in him in fact resumes once more when she finds herself to be pregnant to him. Ill with despair and self-doubt she ponders her recent decisions and choices and decides to discard both her personal and her "modern woman" aspirations in favour of conformity to the more ordinary routines and satisfactions of marital domesticity:

"She began to think, that she would write to Skrebensky, that she would go out to him, and marry him, and live simply as a good wife to him. What did the self, the form of life, matter? Only the living from day to day mattered, the beloved existence in the body, rich, peaceful,

complete, with no beyond, no further trouble, no further complication. She had been wrong, she had been arrogant and wicked, wanting that other thing, that fantastic freedom, that illusory, conceited fulfilment which she had imagined she could not have with Skrebensky. Who was she to be wanting some fantastic fulfilment in her life? Was it not enough that she had her man, her children, her place of shelter under the sun? Was it not enough for her, as it had been enough for her mother? She would marry and love her husband and fill her place simply. That was the ideal." <sup>1</sup>

Lawrence indicates that Ursula's resolution to conform is not to be regarded favourably. He suggests that once again she is simply deluding herself and that the satisfaction which she seems to obtain through conforming is just another indication of her tendency to ignore the realities of her situation:

"A great mood of humility came over her, and in this humility a bonded sort of peace. She gave her limbs to the bondage, she loved the bondage, she called it peace." <sup>2</sup>

A more favourable form of satisfaction for Ursula to strive for is indicated by Lawrence in the ensuing symbolic episode of the horses. In the preceding sections on Ursula's life he indicated that "modern" civilization seemed to offer the individual only two possible life alternatives. One involved creating a life to fit oneself and seeking fulfilment within one's own being. The other involved accepting the given life and seeking fulfilment outside oneself, in someone or something worthy of service. Lawrence illustrated the inadequacies of these two alternatives, mainly through the activities of Ursula, but also on occasions through the activities of other

characters. The first alternative was shown to induce obsession with one's self and to encourage exploitation of others merely to serve personal needs. The second was seen to induce submission to the "system" and to result in a loss of one's individuality and one's completeness of being.

The third possible life alternative which Lawrence now suggests through Ursula's encounter with the horses associates the individual with neither egotism nor submission. Rather it is involved with the concepts of "true relatedness" and "spontaneity of being." The symbolic significance of the horses is indicated by Lawrence in Fantasia of the Unconscious:

"A man has a persistent passionate fear-dream about horses. He suddenly finds himself among great, physical horses, which may suddenly go wild. Their great bodies surge madly round him, they rear above him, threatening to destroy him. At any minute he may be trampled down . . . Examining the emotional reference we find that the feeling is sensual, there is a great impression of the powerful, almost beautiful physical bodies of the horses, the nearness, the rounded haunches, the rearing." <sup>3</sup>

They represent 'the great sensual male activity', in reference to which Lawrence commented:

" . . . the greatest desire of the living spontaneous soul is that this very male sensual nature . . . shall be actually accomplished in life. The spontaneous self is secretly yearning for the liberation and fulfilment of the deepest and most powerful sensual nature." <sup>4</sup>

Although she does not realise this herself the implication for Ursula of the encounter with the horses is that a third life alternative is possible involving the establishment of a relationship

with a male who is her counterpart in life in being as strong and as indominatable as she is herself. Such a relationship it is inferred, will bring her the transcending sense of fulfilment which she is striving for in life, and will enable her also to attain "completeness of being."

## II

Ursula's encounter with the horses leads directly to her becoming "very ill for a fortnight, delirious, shaken and rackened."<sup>5</sup> Her illness is important in that it brings her an insight into her former life which subsequently promotes the regeneration of her inner self. She ponders first the relationship which she had established with Skrebensky and recognises the essential falsity of her previous yearnings for him. The thought of belonging to him again arouses in her a persisting "ache of unreality".<sup>6</sup> She realises that she is now no longer attracted to him, that it is only some "extraneous thing"<sup>7</sup> which continues to bind her to him. She decides eventually that it is the child which is this "extraneous thing":

"The child was like a bond round her brain, tightened on her brain. It bound her to Skrebensky."<sup>8</sup>

Having decided this she convinces herself that the child is her own affair and that she can have it without Skrebensky. She determines "to be free of him and his world, to put it aside, into its place."<sup>9</sup>

She then begins her long struggle to achieve this freedom. She fights to "extricate herself",<sup>10</sup> to "disengage herself from feeling, from her body, from all the vast encumbrances of the world that was



in contact with her, from her father, and her mother, and her lover, and all her acquaintance." <sup>11</sup> In "an ache of utter weariness" <sup>12</sup> she attempts to repudiate all connections with her surroundings and to persuade herself of their unreality and of the need for her to shift outside them. She repeats continually to herself:

"I have no father nor mother nor lover, I have no allocated place in the world of things, I do not belong to Beldover nor to Nottingham nor to England nor to this world, they none of them exist, I am trammelled and entangled in them, but they are all unreal. I must break out of it, like a nut from its shell which is an unreality." <sup>13</sup>

In her "feverish" condition she subsequently imagines herself accomplishing this regeneration and discarding her surroundings to being life anew, a life more complete and more fulfilling than her former one, and possessing a connection with the outer beyond:

"She was the naked, clear kernel thrusting forth the clear, powerful shoot, and the world was a bygone winter, discarded, her mother and father and Anton, and college and all her friends, all cast off like a year that has gone by, whilst the kernel was free and naked and striving to take new root to create a new knowledge of Eternity in the flux of Time. And the kernel was the only reality; the rest was cast off into oblivion." <sup>14</sup>

She sustains this vision of her position in life when she is recovering from her illness. Convinced that she has "her root in new ground", <sup>15</sup> she rejects the "faint smoky landscape" <sup>16</sup> outside the window of her bedroom as nothing but a "husk and shell". <sup>17</sup> She considers that now there is "a space between her and the shell", <sup>18</sup> and this seems confirmed by the loss of her child and the receipt of the telegram from Skrebensky informing her that he is married. Both of these

events suggest the final severance of her connections with her surroundings. Neither affect her profoundly. She is preoccupied with looking ahead, not with concerning herself with the past. It is the "New World" <sup>19</sup> which interests her now, not "the Old" <sup>20</sup> And she accepts that the right man for her will come from the "Infinite", <sup>21</sup> out of the "Eternity" <sup>22</sup> to which she imagines she herself belongs. He will be "a man created by God", <sup>23</sup> not somebody she herself has created "for the time being" <sup>24</sup> to simply satisfy her personal desires, as Skrebensky had been.

Lawrence suggests that this faith which Ursula feels in regard to her imminent regeneration is shared by others of her contemporaries. They too, seem to anticipate a similar rebirth of their inner selves:

"As she sat at her window, she saw the people go by in the street below, colliers, women, children, walking each in the husk of an old fruition, but visible through the husk, the swelling and the heaving contour of the new germination. In the still, silenced form of the colliers she saw a sort of suspense, a waiting in pain for the new liberation; she saw the same in the false hard confidence of the women. The confidence of the women was brittle. It would break quickly to reveal the strength and patient effort of the new germination." <sup>25</sup>

In so suggesting that Ursula's faith is part of a general trend as well as being part of her own inherent character, Lawrence indicates his belief that the social regeneration of a civilization required the active, unselfish involvement of all the inhabitants. This belief he outlined in a letter written in 1915:

"To live, we must all unite, and bring all the knowledge into a coherent whole, we must all set to for the joining

together of the multifarious parts, we must knit all the worlds together into a great new utterance, we must cast off all personalities into the melting pot, and give a new Humanity its birth. Remember, it is not anything personal we want any more - any of us. It is not honour nor personal satisfaction, it is the incorporation in the great impulse whereby a great people shall come into being, a free race as well as a race of free individuals. The individual is now more free than the race. His race hurts him and cribs him in. No one man can create a new race. It needs all of us. So we must all unite for this purpose." <sup>26</sup>

Ursula is not always impressed by the inward potential for regeneration of her contemporaries however. Her condition of mind is not one of sustained faithfulness, but is rather one of oscillation between feelings of hope and despair, and on occasions she is overwhelmed with feelings of hopeless desperation at the thought of "the husk which bound in her and all mankind." <sup>27</sup> It is through a detailed description of just such an occasion that Lawrence incorporates into this final chapter of The Rainbow one of his most critical condemnations of his contemporary urban industrial civilization. He concentrates on suggesting its associations with death and decay and on emphasising its corrupting, smothering influence upon its inhabitants and upon the surrounding landscape:

"She saw the stiffened bodies of the colliers, which seemed already enclosed in a coffin, she saw their unchanging eyes, the eyes of those who are buried alive: she saw the hard, cutting edges of the new houses, which seemed to spread over the hill-side in their insentient triumph, a triumph of horrible, amorphous angles and straight lines, the expression of corruption triumphant and unopposed, corruption so pure that it is hard and brittle: she saw the dun atmosphere over the blackened hills opposite,

the dark blotches of houses, slate roofed and amorphous, the old church-tower standing up in hideous obsolescence above raw new houses on the crest of the hill, the amorphous brittle, hard edged new houses advancing from Beldover to meet the corrupt new houses from Lethley, the houses of Lethley advancing to mix with the house of Hainor, a dry brittle, terrible corrupting spreading over the face of the land, and she was sick with a nausea so deep that she perished as she sat." <sup>28</sup>

Lawrence does not end The Rainbow with this sort of horrifying, disillusioning impression however. Instead, he brings it to a close with Ursula in a state of hopeful anticipation. Her changed condition is induced by the sudden appearance of a rainbow outside her window. It illuminates the surrounding district and convinces Ursula that a rebirth of her civilization is impending. Significantly, Lawrence indicates that this rebirth will be effected amidst the same people criticised previously by Ursula for their inadequacies:

"She knew that the sordid people who crept hard-scaled and separate on the face of the world's corruption were living still, that the rainbow was arched in their blood and would quiver to life in their spirit, that they would cast off their horny covering of disintegration, that new, clean, naked bodies would issue to a new generation, to a new growth, rising to the light and the wind and the clean rain of heaven. She saw in the rainbow the earth's new architecture, the old, brittle corruption of houses and factories swept away, the world built up in a living fabric of Truth, fitting to the over-arching heaven." <sup>29</sup>

This vision of the rebirth of Ursula's surroundings is an individual vision, presented imaginatively rather than literally, and as such it is an appropriate ending to this novel which has implicitly

described the quest for the individual's imaginative transcendence, at the same time that it has explicitly indicated the limitations and frustrations of this quest. The suggestion is that regeneration is possible, and the messianic tone of the whole treatment of Ursula implies that a new relationship, vital and unlimited in a way that Ursula has not hitherto known, is necessary in order to ensure that this regeneration may occur. It is implicit also, that personal regeneration is to be closely associated with social regeneration and that in a new spiritually rejuvenated society the individual, the couple, and the society at large will attain a harmony of a sort which Lawrence believed the "modern" world denied. The reader is led to understand that out of this harmony there will develop individuals who will find themselves capable of the simultaneous achievement of freedom and relationship, the freedom being found on a personal level, the relationship on a more profound plane. Ursula has not yet of course attained this state of being which is only the promise of The Rainbow's conclusion and not the accomplishment. But the indication is that she will eventually accomplish it, so that the novel therefore ends on a note of social and individual optimism.

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59. The Rainbow p. 336.
60. ibid., p. 337.
61. ibid., p. 337.
62. ibid., p. 343.
63. ibid., p. 343.
64. ibid., p. 406.
65. ibid., p. 412.
66. ibid., p. 432.
67. ibid., p. 432.
68. ibid., p. 407.
69. ibid., p. 406.
70. ibid., pp. 341, 342.

71. D.H. Lawrence, in a letter to Ada Lawrence Clarke, 9th April, 1911. The Collected Letters of D.H. Lawrence p. 76.
72. The Rainbow p. 342.
73. D.H. Lawrence, in a letter to Ernest Collings, 17th January, 1913. The Collected Letters of D.H. Lawrence p. 180.
74. The Rainbow pp. 343, 344.
75. D.H. Lawrence, "Nottingham and the Mining Country", D.H. Lawrence. Selected Essays pp. 119, 120.
76. The Rainbow p. 346.
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79. ibid., p. 346.
80. ibid., p. 349.
81. ibid., p. 349.
82. ibid., p. 344.
83. ibid., p. 350.
84. D.H. Lawrence, "Democracy", D.H. Lawrence. Selected Essays p. 94.
85. The Rainbow pp. 349, 350.
86. ibid., p. 351.
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105. ibid., p. 368.
106. ibid., p. 369.
107. ibid., p. 380.
108. ibid., p. 382.
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112. ibid., p. 383.
113. ibid., p. 377.
114. ibid., p. 385.
115. ibid., p. 398.
116. Seymour Lainoff, "The Rainbow : The Shaping of Modern Man" Modern Fiction Studies November, 1955. Volume I. p. 23.
117. The Rainbow p. 401.
118. ibid., p. 405.
119. ibid., p. 406.
120. ibid., p. 407.
121. ibid., p. 406.
122. ibid., pp. 407, 408.



123. ibid., p. 410.
124. ibid., p. 425.
125. ibid., p. 358.
126. ibid., p. 411.
127. ibid., p. 417.
128. Lawrence taught as a "pupil-teacher" from 1903 to 1905 firstly at Eastward, and then in the nearby borough of Ilkeston, in Derbyshire. Then in 1906 he began attending Nottingham University College, where he worked hard and "was particularly interested in botany." He remained at college until 1908 when he resumed his teaching career at Croydon. (Harry T. Moore and Warren Roberts, D.H. Lawrence and his world Thames and Hudson, London. 1966. pp. 17 - 20.)
129. The Rainbow p. 432.
130. ibid., p. 431.
131. ibid., p. 431.
132. ibid., p. 429.
133. ibid., p. 429.
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150. ibid., pp. 442, 443.
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152. ibid., p. 449.
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155. ibid., p. 449.
156. ibid., pp. 452, 453.
157. ibid., p. 457.
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160. ibid., p. 459.
161. ibid., p. 460.
162. ibid., p. 460.
163. ibid., p. 461.
164. ibid., p. 461.
165. ibid., p. 461.
166. D.H. Lawrence, "Democracy" pp. 92, 93.
167. ibid., p. 93
168. The Rainbow pp. 443 - 444.
169. ibid., pp. 461, 462.
170. ibid., p. 462.
171. ibid., p. 462.
172. ibid., p. 463.

173. ibid., p. 474.
174. ibid., p. 474.
175. ibid., p. 475.
176. Frieda Lawrence, Frieda Lawrence, The Memoirs and Correspondence  
quoted by Keith Sagar, p. 63.
177. The Rainbow p. 482.

#### CHAPTER FIVE

1. The Rainbow pp. 484, 485.
2. ibid., p. 485.
3. D.H. Lawrence Fantasia of the Unconscious  
quoted by Keith Sagar, p. 64.
4. ibid., p. 64.
5. The Rainbow p. 491.
6. ibid., p. 492.
7. ibid., p. 492.
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23. ibid., p. 494.
24. ibid., p. 494.
25. ibid., pp. 494, 495.
26. D.H. Lawrence, in a letter to Lady Ottoline Morrell, 1915.  
The Letters of D.H. Lawrence p. 231.
27. The Rainbow p. 495.
28. ibid., p. 495.
29. ibid., pp. 495, 496.

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