



**RELIGION OF D.H. LAWRENCE AS EXPOUNDED IN HIS MAJOR NOVELS**

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment for the degree of Master of  
Philosophy.**

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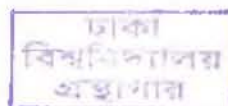
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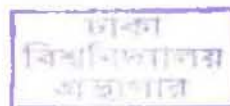
**University of Dhaka**

**December, 2008**



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M. Phil Dissertation

By

Mizanur Rahman

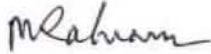
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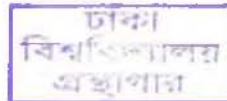
### Declaration

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled "Religion of D.H. Lawrence as Expounded in His Major Novels" is my original research work. I also declare that I have not submitted this thesis either in full part or in any other form to any other university or institution for any degree or for any other purposes.



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### Certificate from the Supervisor

This is to certify that Mizanur Rahman (Registration # 26. Session 2001-2) has submitted his dissertation to me and I find it acceptable and ready for examination. I, therefore, recommend that it be sent to the examiners for their reports.

*Fakrul Alam*

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### Abstract

The principal aim of this dissertation is to throw light on the religion of D. H. Lawrence as expounded in his major novels. Unlike many of the previous works done on the author, it deals not with each individual novel separately, but provides a detailed discussion on religion running through his major novels. In this dissertation *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* have been considered as Lawrence's major novels and the beliefs expressed in them as representative of his religious beliefs. This dissertation attempts to discuss *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* since they best demonstrate his religion, though it is far removed from the doctrines of Christianity or any other conventional religion. It undertakes the task of analyzing religion systematically in Lawrence's major novels. This study also reveals that Lawrence has always been dissatisfied with conventional religion and morality and that his belief has never been constant. Exploring religion in the above-mentioned novels will show his fluctuating belief throughout. Chapter 1 shows how the chapel left a distinct formative mark in Lawrence's childhood and how nonconformity within the Congregationalist chapel paved the way for his eventual abandonment of Christian faith. The chapter also demonstrates that denial of Christianity and the subsequent reception of heterogeneous ideas such as materialism, pragmatism, evolutionism, and pantheism failed to calm the inner tumult in Lawrence. Above all, it has been shown that though his Christian faith suffers major setback, obviously religion left in him where he found himself arguing for man's religious nature and experience. Here Schopenhauer and Nietzsche left indelible mark on his thought. And this is how Lawrence moved phase by phase, gradually

pursuing his own non-Christian religious path which was hued with varying and changing sensibilities. In Chapter 2 it has been shown how Lawrence in *The Rainbow* discarded Christianity and propagated a religion based on instinct or blood consciousness. The concept of male-female duality, a major component of Lawrence's religion in Chapter 2 (*The Rainbow*) of this dissertation undergoes radical changes in *Women in Love*; these changes are discussed fully in Chapter 3 (*Women in Love*). It also spotlights Lawrence's recast notions of men-women relationships evident in *The Rainbow*, and his new emphasis of "man to man" relationship. The disintegrating effects of the loss of the promptings of soul because of massive industrialization continue to be prominent in *Women in Love*. But Lawrence is always amenable to change and therefore this dissertation concludes with Lawrence ready to move forward to newer directions.

### Acknowledgements

I am greatly indebted to my supervisor Dr. Fakrul Alam, Professor, Department of English, University of Dhaka for his constant support and criticism. I am also grateful to Golam Gaus Al Quaderi for his suggestions and for making me acquainted with on-line resources for research work. I would also like to express my heartfelt thanks to my friend Mamun, assistant librarian, North South University for giving me access to on-line journals that his university subscribes.

I cannot help mentioning my calm and quiet office room located in the ground floor of Architecture building at BUET where I have formulated Lawrence's religious imagination.

Finally, I am grateful to the Almighty and indebted to my wife Nazia for her eternal inspiration and support.

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For my Parents

and

for Nazia

*...a man gradually formulates his own religion, be it what may. A man has no religion who has not slowly and painfully gathered one together, adding to it, shaping it; and one's religion is never complete and final, it seems, but must always be undergoing modification. (The Letters of D. H. Lawrence I, 40)*



## INTRODUCTION

Through his life and works D. H. Lawrence (1885-1930) has left a contentious legacy of thoughts on religion for writers and critics alike. Though they attract immense critical attention, critics have not paid a thorough and exhaustive attention to the religious dimension of his novels, considering the fact that he is a self-proclaimed “passionately religious man”. As he put it in a letter written on 22 April, 1914 Lawrence wrote to Edward Garnett (a writer and editor and one of Lawrence’s early mentors), “my novels must be written from the depth of my religious experience. That I must keep to, because I can only work like that.” (*The Collected Letters of D.H. Lawrence*, 272) It is not surprising, then, that the fountainhead of Lawrence’s novels always was religion.

Now the question that arises is what is the nature of Lawrence’s religion? The *Cambridge International Dictionary of English* defines religion as “the belief in and worship of a god or gods, or any such system of belief and worship.” (1200) This definition of religion being theistic and

ritualistic, it is not in line with Lawrence's religion, since he has not left any record of any belief in God or religious rites. However, the definition of the *Word Web* dictionary suits Lawrence's religion when it defines religion as "a strong belief in a supernatural power or powers that control human destiny". (89) Lawrence in fact believed in some kind of mysterious force that commands human destiny. His acceptance of a "power" working behind everything is noticeable in many of his writings. In "Study of Thomas Hardy", for example, he explores in Hardy's novels the working of "the stupendous theatre outside [that] goes on enacting its own incomprehensible drama, untouched". (19) In his novels as well, he acknowledges the inexorable control working behind which he called the "unexplored morality of life itself" or "immorality of nature". (19)

In an essay titled "Religion as a Field of Study" Ronald Cavanagh defines religion as "the varied, symbolic expression of, and appropriate response to, that which people deliberately affirm as being of unrestricted value for them". (20) This definition is more applicable to the religion of someone like Lawrence, since it is unorthodox and tinged with his distinct sensibility. In April, 1911 Lawrence wrote to his sister Ada Lawrence Clarke "It is a fine thing to establish one's own religion in one's heart, [and] not to be dependent on tradition and second hand ideals." (*The Collected Letters of*



*D.H. Lawrence*, 76) His “unrestricted value” paved the way for making him a disciple of idiosyncratic beliefs, which he himself had formulated.

Lawrence’s fictional and non-fictional works have received overwhelming critical attention. Compiled together they constitute grist for the mill of the Lawrence industry. The early literary concentration (on moral and religious preoccupation) was mostly hostile towards Lawrence oeuvre. The initial reception of *Rainbow* and *Women in Love* with scorn and raillery was further exacerbated by John Middleton Murry’s *Son of Woman*. Much of Murry’s critical energy is expended in diagnostic episodes which emphasize Lawrence’s mania for theorizing sexual relations around his own inadequacies. According to Murry, “sexual morbidity” is at the centre of Lawrence’s creative endeavours. So beliefs of any kind (including religious beliefs) manifested in Lawrence’s novels, Murry declared, emanated from a “sex obsessed” psyche. T.S. Eliot was also largely responsible for the view of Lawrence as a flawed, undisciplined writer of questionable values. He considered Lawrence to be a writer who is insensible “to ordinary social morality” (Quoted in *The Complete Critical Guide to D.H. Lawrence*, 124). Eliot finds Lawrence’s knowledge about religion to be defective. It is especially because of his lack of “ratiocinative power” and “an incapacity

for thinking". (124)

Lawrence's reputation, however, was revived by Leavis's *D.H. Lawrence: Novelist* (1955), Leavis defended the allegations made against Lawrence and against his creative endeavours. The book gave him an enduring place in English literature. For Leavis Lawrence's "supreme vital intelligence is the creative spirit - a spirit informed by an almost infallible sense for health and sanity". (*D.H. Lawrence: Novelist*, 81) Lawrence's greatness as a creative artist, Leavis argues, is that he brings his insight and wisdom in his dealing with the emotional aspects of his life in his fiction (We should remember that moral and religious preoccupation is at the centre of Lawrence's emotional life). Leavis points out that when the reader is "growing into understanding" about Lawrence's "revived and re-educated feeling for health", he or she can realize that our civilization has been distracted and "we desperately need" him to restore our civilization to the right track. Though not explicitly stated in *D.H. Lawrence: Novelist*, we note from it that Lawrence's formulations of religion are much needed for twentieth century civilization. Lawrence's religion is considered to be valuable because of the entire English tradition of the previous centuries resorted to spirituality and denied the very existence of "physical life".

Lawrence recognizes that while for Mann and Flaubert physical life is a disordered corruption ...(*Phoenix*, 308) for him it is the opposite. "I am a man alive and [...] I intend to go on being man alive", he asserts in his essay "Why the Novel Matters". (2115) Leavis explains why Eliot is scathing in his critique of Lawrence, Lawrence's inability to be like Flaubert and Mann, that is to "disgust and distaste" life made him unacceptable to the Anglo-American poet.

In the 50's the impact of Leavis's ideas about Lawrence's value and *oeuvre* went largely unchallenged. In *The Love Ethic of D.H. Lawrence* (1955) Mark Spilka discussed the fiction and concentrated on the religious impulse in Lawrence's writing. He considered Lawrence as an exponent of an affirmative moral philosophy. Lawrence's philosophy, Spilka argues, is an articulation of the full flowering of life; additionally, he claimed, it diagnoses the root of twentieth century maladies.

But the 60's posed challenges against Leavisite moral and liberal reading of the novels. Though in *D.H. Lawrence: The Failure and Triumph of Art* (1960), Eliseo Vivas adhered to Leavis's notion that *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* still constitute 'triumphant' achievements; he is less persuaded than many by the consistently affirmative and visionary version



of Lawrence created and sustained by Leavis's criticism. His study shows a greater willingness to examine the negative power in Lawrence. In contrast, Eugene Goodheart in his study *The Utopian Vision of D.H. Lawrence* (1963), criticized Lawrence for confusing the visionary with the ethical. For him Lawrence had ended up in a muddle since his visionary ideas did not get with his moral ones. He also does not find firm ground underneath Lawrence's vision. However, in underlining the importance of bringing Nietzsche and Freud to bear on readings of Lawrence, Goodheart anticipated the direction of much criticism to follow.

In *The Forked Flame* (1965), H.M. Daleski drew attention to the importance of "Study of Thomas Hardy" in any reading of the major novels, and in particular on Lawrence's insistence on a model of dualistic thought that can constitute the underlying grammar of any "metaphysic" (99, 101). Acknowledging the importance of Daleski's thesis, Kinkead-Weekes emphasizes the exploratory nature of language in Lawrence. His 'art', he pointed out, contain dialectic of opposites, a real conflict in which both sides are allowed to assert themselves fully. Thus though counterviews were offered to Leavis' championing of Lawrence and his moral values and religion, reputation survived the many critiques of his position and beliefs.

Nevertheless, it must be said that for such a self-proclaimed “passionately religious man” as Lawrence was his religious side has not yet merited sustained critical attention. Indeed, a complete work on the religion of Lawrence as manifested in his major novels has not been attempted so far. Thus it is that in this thesis I will consider *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* as his major novels and the beliefs expressed in them as representative of his religious beliefs. It can be pointed out in this connection that *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* have been critically acclaimed for their unique dovetailing of themes and mood. To Lawrence as well, they were the “favourite among [his] novels” (*Phoenix*, 145); he saw these works as Bibles for the new generation. The earliest novels (*The White Peacock* and *The Trespasser*) have not been studied much as they are considered as “immature work”<sup>1</sup> (Daleski, 14). *Sons and Lovers* is also not analyzed for its religious theme because it deals mainly with the protagonist’s vacillation between romantic love and blood ties. The presence of the Bible is indeed not obvious in the novel that preceded *The Rainbow*. (Wright, 72) However, one may claim *Sons and Lovers* shows Lawrence’s embarking on a religious journey that will lead to the formulation of a theology that will eventually culminate in *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*. For sure *Sons and Lovers* is

not a counter Bible like *The Rainbow*, but an effort has been made in this novel to rewrite the Bible in a Nietzschean manner and there is an attempt to rebel against orthodox Christianity with a Nietzschean spirit. From the very outset of the novel though, Mrs. Morel, is shown as fervently religious she has a heavy impact through her religious beliefs not only on her sons but on her husband. *Sons and Lovers* records the effect of Mrs. Morel's religion on Paul. The young Paul sees all the aspects of life from the Biblical standpoint. But Paul's gradual development away from the conventional Christianity of his mother and his adolescent girl friend Miriam can be seen clearly in this novel. But *Sons and Lovers* has not been discussed in this dissertation as there is no denying the fact that the embryonic manifestation of religion in *Sons Lovers* can be better studied when it was fully developed in *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*. On the other hand, the main concern of the later novels (*Aaron's Rod* and *Kangaroo*) is with the themes of male friendship and leadership, and this is why they have been ignored since they too do not match with the purpose of this dissertation.

In both of its version, Lawrence's Mexican novel *The Plumed Serpent* (the early version was called *Quetzalcoatl*) introduced a "new religion" that virtually emanated from Christianity as can be seen from Lawrence's



insistence on adherence to the belief that all religion derives from a common source. It is hardly surprising that in *The Plumed Serpent* the symbols and images of Christianity continue to haunt the teachings and sermons of Don Ramón Carrasco, one of the leaders of the revived cult of the god Quetzalcoatl and his followers. They at the same time offer a sustained critique of the doctrine of Christianity. Most importantly, the religion introduced in *The Plumed Serpent* verges on the extreme of barbarism. For example, Don Cipriano Viedma, a military General and another leader of the revived cult and Kate Leslie a middle-aged Irishwoman, who travels to Mexico having tired of Europe are so committed to Ramon's new religion that they not only marry each other but Kate also agrees to become the goddess Malintzi in an exotic ceremony which involves embracing Cipriano naked on a rug of jaguar skins in front of the statue Huitzilopochtli in the old parish church of Chapala. The religion in *The Plumed Serpent* thus leads to extreme primitivism and barbarism, and failed to attract critical appraisal. I have thus excluded this novel from my discussion of Lawrence's religion. Not surprisingly, F.R. Leavis put *The Plumed Serpent* in a back shelf while as saying Lawrence's novels critically.

In Lawrence's last novel the *Lady Chatterley's Lover* there is a quest for paradise and renewed interest in resurrection. Moreover, the language of the novel is permeated with that of the Bible (like Lawrence's other novels). In addition it shares preoccupations with anthropologists of religion like James Frazer. In *Lady Chatterley's Lover* all these make for a "consistent movement ... from the divine to the human, from the spiritual to the carnal". (Cowan, 105) But the novel failed to gain recognition as one of Lawrence's major novels as was the case with *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*. It was slighted for attaching too much importance on phallocentrism and describing the exigency of "the resurrection of the body". (*LCL*, 78) For this reason it too has not been included in my discussion. Lawrence's own predilection for *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* has also been vital in my decision to concentrate on them.

This dissertation, therefore, attempts to discuss *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* since they best demonstrate his religion, though it is far removed from the doctrines of Christianity or any other conventional religion.<sup>2</sup> It undertakes the task of analyzing religion systematically in Lawrence's major novels. This study will also reveal that Lawrence has always been dissatisfied with conventional religion and morality and that his belief has never been constant. Exploring religion in the above-mentioned



novels will show his fluctuating belief throughout. Ultimately, it is to be hoped that my dissertation will succeed in tracking his evolving sense of religion by a sustained explanation of his two great novels, *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*.

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<sup>1</sup> Considering them as not quintessential works Dr. Leavis consigned *The Plumed Serpent* and early works like *The White Peacock* and *The Trespasser* to the back shelf. (Becket, 27)

<sup>2</sup> Though in this paper the discussion of *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* primarily focuses on Lawrence's religion, it also deals with the philosophical questions surrounding the novels since there is a large area of overlap between these two groups.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### *The Making of Lawrence's Religion*

Though Lawrence's religion has attracted considerable critical attention, critics have failed to throw light on one important area. Lawrence's denial of traditional beliefs and ideas is grounded not only on the scientific basis that questions the foundation and development of those beliefs; he has also scrutinized their ultimate effect on mankind. Unlike the traditional scientific critique of religion that seeks sustained and reasoned account of our beliefs, Lawrence's appraisal of religion is different. Though he strove for "a reasoned account", he proceeded more in the light of "emotion than reason", since he was convinced that the most important perceptions of human experiences should cross go beyond reason and rationality. Critics have failed to appreciate this aspect of Lawrence's belief and have thus not been able to do full justice to his perspective on religion.

Keeping Lawrence's "emotions" about religion in mind, in this opening chapter I will show how the chapel left a distinct formative mark in

Lawrence's childhood and how nonconformity within the Congregationalist chapel paved the way for his eventual abandonment of Christian faith. I will also demonstrate that denial of Christianity and the subsequent reception of heterogeneous ideas such as materialism, pragmatism, evolutionism, and pantheism failed to calm the inner tumult in Lawrence. Above all, I will try to show that though his Christian faith suffers major setback, obviously religion left in him. Interestingly, he found himself arguing for man's religious nature and experience. Here Schopenhauer and Nietzsche left indelible mark on his thought. And this is how Lawrence moved phase by phase, gradually pursuing his own non-Christian religious path which was hued with varying and changing sensibilities.

Being brought up in the tradition of chapel service "altered the colour of Lawrence's mind". (Worthen, 67) Though the Lawrences were traditionally Church of England goers and his father Arthur Lawrence had sung in the Brinsley church choir as a young man, he was not a church-goer and only rarely went to chapel. Religion was far more important in Lawrence's mother Lydia Lawrence's family. Lydia broke away from her family's Wesleyanism<sup>1</sup> and attended the Congregational chapel during her years in Eastwood. However, it is not quite clear what turned her away from



her family's denomination. The Congregationalists in Eastwood, as elsewhere, tended to represent reforming liberalism and though drawing their membership from the working class, they constituted something of an aristocracy amidst the miners and their families, something Lydia Lawrence always emphasized in her relationship.

Compared to other nonconformist churches in Eastwood, Congregationalism not only had a position of superiority within the working class, it also had a strong intellectual tradition from which the young Lawrence could profit. The congregational child grew up belonging to an institution which dominated not only Sunday but life during the rest of the week. The process of religious education for him continued at school as well as the chapel. Religious teaching thus dominated the consciousness of the growing child and moulded him:

From earliest years right into manhood, like any other nonconformist child I had the Bible poured everyday into my helpless consciousness ... but also it was day in, day out, year in year expounded, dogmatically, and always morally expounded, whether it was in day-school or Sunday school, at home or in

Band of Hope or Christian Endeavour. (*Apocalypse and the Writings on Revelation*, 59)

The main effect of these years of attendance and instruction, as Lawrence described them in 1928, was a kind of unconscious submersion in the language and imagery of the Bible and of the hymns which he sang. Therefore, Biblical imagery and hymns find their way into the writing of a staunch antichristian like Lawrence: "Teach to live that so I may / Rise Glorious at the Judgement Day"<sup>2</sup> (Quoted in "Him With His Tail in His Mouth", 195)

It is to be noted here that Lawrence's response to the Bible eventually manifested itself through a Nietzschean critiquing of the sacred text. No wonder biblical intertextuality in Lawrence's work is an area of interest for critics. David Lodge considers Lawrence to be a producer of "a kind of philosophical adventure story whose chief characters are questing, with religious fervour, for some new, ultimate satisfying way of life", a quest that borrows from a range of religious sources of which the Bible is perhaps most important. (66) While discussing biblical intertextuality in Lawrence's work T.R. Wright considers the Bible "only" to be "one of the many voices" found in Lawrence's texts. (*D.H. Lawrence and the Bible*, 15) Mikhail

Bakhtin, Harold Bloom and Jacques Derrida are the theorists of intertextuality for Wright whose “fascination with religion in general and the Bible in particular” is relevant in ascertaining the relationship between Lawrence and the Bible. (14) Bakhtin can help us “to recognize the complexity of the dialogue which takes place in Lawrence, [and] the play of languages (borrowed from the Bible) can be found in his (Lawrence’s) work. (Hyde, 76) A Bakhtinian understanding of intertextuality can contribute “to an understanding of the textual dynamics of a writer such as Lawrence, who is heavily reliant upon the language of the Bible and eager to appropriate it for his own purpose. (Wright, 17) Understanding of the complex intertextuality between Lawrence and the Bible can be seen in the transplantation or grafting “of passages from the Bible into Lawrence’s work, in a manner that leads to generating surprising new meanings in this process. (18) Thus throughout Lawrence’s work the Bible remains an everlasting source of inspiration for him.

During Lawrence’s adolescence, the chapel was the major source of his the “outer life”. The nature of the Congregationalist chapel and its place in social life in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Eastwood is important for the understanding Lawrence’s ideas about religion, since they had a



formative impact on Lawrence. In the words of Jessie Chambers, “The chapel at Eastwood became the centre of our social life”. (*D. H. Lawrence: A Personal Record*, 27) Sunday evening services (with extended sermons) in chapel and the Congregational Literary Society on Monday evenings in winter months provided Lawrence with a whole range of social activities, in the course of which he met people, made friends and found opportunity for strolls into the country.<sup>3</sup> These provided intellectual stimuli for Lawrence and his group and paved the way for Lawrence’s intellectual development as the group discussed the sermons and the lectures in the Literary Society. In his late teens Lawrence even considered the ministry as a profession. Every Thursday evening he would go to the subscription library to change the week’s supply of books, and here again he would meet friends and acquaintances. It is hard to overestimate the value of the church or the chapel in the formation of Lawrence’s ideas, particularly the role of the chapel as a social institution. The Congregational Chapel provided him a whole outer life, lacking which socially Lawrence would have been poor indeed.

Ironically, however, the Congregationalist chapel contributed a lot in developing Lawrence’s skeptical ideas about religion since throughout 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century the Congregationalist Church was a wash with



new ideas.<sup>4</sup> For example, for his Sunday evening sermons in 1907 the Rev. Robert Reid “took on the so-called ‘New Theology’ – a great topic of the day – with a sermon on ‘The New Theology and the Atonement’”. He followed this topic up with a series of sermons intended to usher in a peaceful and just social order outside the traditional Christian system. (Worthen, 171) Jessie Chambers recalls that Reid’s sermons were “more lectures than sermons”(D. H. Lawrence: *A personal Record*, 27) and “What Lawrence’s group could not hear in sermons, it would bring to discussion when the service was over; and what Reid could not do in his sermons, he contrived to promote in the literary society”. (Worthen, 172)

The process of questioning the faith for Lawrence, as for so many others of his generation, was also stimulated by books such as Fitzgerald’s *Rubaiyat of Omar Khaiyam*. The poems of this volume are hedonistic and nihilistic in nature. The following stanza is one of the best examples of its skeptical perspective:

And that inverted Bowl they call the sky,  
Whereunder crawling coop’d we live and die,  
Life not your hands to *It* for help – for it

As impotently moves as you and I. (51)

Such stanzas clearly led to a kind of spiritual liberation in many people. Thus the congregational chapel coupled with books such as *Rubaiyat of Omar Khaiyam* had a special effect on the mental formation of Lawrence and his generation.

Remarkably, Lawrence was also influenced by the “nebular theory of the universe” at this stage of his life. This hypothesis about the origin of things stands in sharp contrast to the God articulated in the discussion in the Congregational chapel. Such a theory also played a part in prying Lawrence loose from Christianity and making him show an interest “in the question as to how the old religious ideas stood in relation to the scientific discoveries that were sweeping away the familiar landmarks”. (E.T., 84)

It is not surprising, then, that the young Lawrence kept discovering ideas and beliefs and that his findings about religion soon positioned him outside the puritan viewpoint.<sup>5</sup> However, not all of the newly discovered ideas left a permanent mark on Lawrence at this time. It was only when Lawrence became acquainted with Schopenhauer and Nietzsche that he found himself moving away decisively from conventional religion.

Among other concepts and beliefs Lawrence's reading of Darwin, Herbert Spencer, Renan "seriously modified [his] religious beliefs". (Boulton, 36-37) T. H. Huxley's *Man's Place in Nature*, Darwin's *Origin of Species*, and Hackel's *The Riddle of the Universe* also had an impact on him. Although there is little trace of Darwin and Huxley in Lawrence's subsequent writing, Heckel's work left its mark on him indelibly. Heckel's "Monistic" belief (expounded in *The Riddle of the Universe*) with its insistence upon the "law of substance" and his assertion that all life has a cellular basis, and that upon such a basis all structures – animal, plant, social – are founded, was an important concept for Lawrence since it helped him abandon the Christian concept of divinity and the Christian schema. It offered him his first insight into beliefs which might supplant the religion in which he had been brought up.

And yet Monism, even of Hackel's pantheistic kind ("pantheism is the world-system of the modern scientist"), was never quite satisfying' although Lawrence embraced it enthusiastically for a while. (Quoted in Worthen, 179) It offered only a rarified form of materialism; and, as Lawrence told Reid at the end of 1907, "I cannot be a materialist". (*The Letters of D H Lawrence* Vol.-I, 40)



In the end it was Ernest Alfred Smith, a lecturer in botany at Nottingham University College, whose ideas about pragmatism probably did more than anything else to steer Lawrence away from Monism. Pragmatism of course was James's way of attacking idealism, absolutism and Monism. It obviously helped free Lawrence from the last system of belief. Pluralism, in turn – also linked to James, who argued for it in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, in *Pragmatism*, and in *A Pluralistic Universe* – was a system of thought directly opposed to Monism, that recognized more than one ultimate principle. (Worthen, 180) It allowed for a God very different from the one revered as the traditional Christian deity. In his jocularly written critical essay "Him With His Tail in His Mouth", Lawrence approves of "a relative and pluralistic vision of the world", rejecting the monolithic absolute. (Introduction to *D. H. Lawrence Selected Critical Writing*, xix) as he asserts that "We live in a multiple universe" and "[he is] a chick that absolutely refuses to chirp inside the monistic egg." ('Him with His Tail in His Mouth', 195)

But to assert his freedom to believe in a materialistic universe was only a very partial answer to Lawrence's problems. He had very quickly discovered that he had on his hands a battle not only against Christianity, but against the very philosophy of scientific materialism which had destroyed

his Christianity. By 1908 he was no longer a believer in the Christian God (Boulton Vol.I, 72), not even in “a Godhead even – not a Personal God (99) but he still felt he had “still some religion left”. (58) So he ended up as a non-Christian and non-materialist, albeit a William James pluralist with a philosophy which included “a God, but not a personal God”. (256) Towards the end of his college career, he was more likely to explain his non-scientific but religious concern for human beings along socialist lines, as we see him doing in his letters to Robert Reid in 1907 when he emulates Blatchford or when he writes to Blanche Jennings during 1908-9 about the importance of knowing if “the great procession is marching, on the whole, in the right direction”. (57) But socialism, or a belief in the equal rights of all human beings when freed from the tyrannies of religious or scientific systems, was only another useful intellectual staging post for Lawrence. Very soon he would loose his interest in socialism too as he continued to move forward, his own unique system of belief

However, in contrast to the above mentioned concepts and ideas which he embraced and then abandoned readily, Lawrence’s attachment with Schopenhauer and Nietzsche and their influence on him was proved to be unwavering. The Lawrentian formulation of religion / philosophy was

decisively influenced by their ideas.<sup>6</sup> The German Philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer is probably the foremost philosopher to have left a permanent mark on Lawrence's literary career from the beginning to the end. Lawrence's conception of the duality of the universe, his denial of Victorian values and puritanical dogmas, and his attitude towards sex, concept of death and above all, the development of his personal belief - are by and large derived or formulated from Schopenhauerian philosophy. Allan R. Zoll has rightly observed that "Lawrence's works can be taken as a progression of working out the implications of Schopenhauer's ideas". (Zoll, 19)

Lawrence encountered Schopenhauer during the heady days of his youth when he was seeking to liberate himself from Puritanism, Victorian values, and his mother's middle-class morality. (Schneider, 1) Schopenhauer's contribution to Lawrence's "spiritual dyspepsia" is evident in Lawrence's discussion of about Rudolf Dircks' translation of Schopenhauer's *The Metaphysics of Love* with Jessie Chambers. (Brunsdale, 121) In her autobiographical book *A Personal Record* (1935) Jessie Chambers noted that:

Schopenhauer seemed to fit in with his mood. He thought he found there an explanation of his own divided attitude and he



remained under the influence of this line of reasoning for some time.”(41-42)

Lawrence, however, adapted and modified the Schopenhauerian element found in his formative period subsequently.

One of the most important ideas that Lawrence derived from Schopenhauer's philosophy is the dual nature of the universe i.e. the world as empirical phenomena with no real existence and an invisible world making up the essence of the universe or its true being. The idea that we as human develop about the world is erroneous or false as it is created by knowledge or intellect. Schopenhauer asserts that the true essence or *Ding an sich* of the universe is “will” or the “will to live” of which every object of the world of representation is simply an ephemeral and temporal manifestation. This phenomenal world has its existence only in our individual minds; as an objective reality it does not exist. Like Schopenhauer Lawrence believed firmly that the categories of time, space, and causality are not objective realities; rather, they are blinders that hinder our realization of union with the cosmos and hold us imprisoned in the false world of phenomena.

According to Schopenhauer, we however, live for the most part entirely in this world and as the highest embodiment of the endlessly active striving will. Like a marionette controlled from behind, we are tormented and our lives are a continual swinging of the pendulum between suffering and boredom. Schopenhauer stated in *The World as Will and Representation*:

As long as our consciousness is filled by our will, so long as we are the subject of willing, we can never obtain lasting happiness or peace. . . The subject of willing is constantly on the revolving wheel of Ixion, is constantly drawing water in the sieve of the Danids, and is the eternally thirsting Tantalus". (38)

Salvation from this torment is possible only through renouncing our identity as phenomena in the world of representation, by lifting the veil of Maya, recognizing our essential unity with this same cruel, eternally insatiable will, and thus totally abnegating the individual will to live within us in favour of the larger universal will of which it is only a part. In "The Crown" Lawrence underscores the Schopenhauereian line that our universe is "not much more than a mannerism with us now." (42) But if we break out of this "mannerism" we shall find that man and woman are more than they thought.



Since the eternal will is greater than the individual will he proposes the following:

one glorious activity of man: the getting himself into a new relationship with a new heaven and a new earth [Schopenhauer's 'larger universal will'] . Oh, if we knew, the earth is everything and the sun is everything that we have missed knowing". (67)

It is for this relentless pessimism about the quality of life possible in our empirical world that Schopenhauer is most popularly known; his gloom and despair had a great attraction for Lawrence.

Not surprisingly, Lawrence does not pay much attention to the human will but responds to the greater "inhuman will". Nature for Lawrence stands as the representative of an essential will subduing the human will. In "Study of Thomas Hardy", while commenting on Hardy's *Return of the Native* Lawrence turns to the landscape i.e. Egdon, that "great background vital and vivid, which matters more than the people who move upon it".(Introduction to *Selected Critical Writing*, xii) He shows here how Egdon Heath manifested the greater inhuman will:

It [Egdon Heath] is the primitive, primal earth, where the instinctive life heaves up. ... *Out of the body of this crude earth are born Eustacia, Wildeve, Mistress Yeobright, Clym, and all the others. They are one year accidental crop. What matters if some are drowned or dead, and others preaching or married: what matter, any more than the withering heath, the reddening berries, the seedy furze, and the dead fern of one autumn Egdon? The Heath persists. Its body is strong and fecund, it will bear many more crops beside this. Here is the sombre, latent power that will go on producing, no matter what happens to the product. Here is the deep, black source from whence all these little contents of lives are drawn. And the contents of the small lives are spilled and wasted. There is savage satisfaction in it: for so much more remains to come, such a black, powerful fecundity is working there that what does it matter?*

*...Not Egdon is futile, sending forth life on the Powerful heave of passion. It cannot be futile, for it is eternal. What*

*is futile is the purpose of the man. (Phoenix, 415) ( My Italics]*

Lawrence notices that Egdon Heath is in unison with the will to nature which manifests the instinct of nature whereas human beings are not an inseparable part; rather, they have some mere phenomenal significance. The greater will has a disregard for mankind for the purpose of man is separated from the passionate will and eventually falls into a different category of “being”, a distinct status alienating him from the greater inhuman will. The one aspect of life which he always found fulfilling was his deep relationship to nature.

Lawrence developed and evolved Schopenhauer’s pessimistic view of life and nature as the pain-ridden manifestation of a senselessly striving will, employing it to serve a variety of different functions depending on his needs. *The White Peacock* juxtaposes the individual, often petty and unfulfilled life of its protagonist against the wider world of nature, stressing the continuity and greatness of the latter despite its impersonal cruelty. It is in Lawrence’s second novel *The Trespasser*, however, that the dualism of the world as will and the world as representation becomes one of Lawrence’s central themes. In this novel we find right at the start the protagonist Siegmund “might play



with the delicate surface of life, but always he recked of the relentless mass of cold beneath – the mass of life that has no sympathy with the individual, no cognizance of him”. (64) The Schopenhauereian duality in a novel like *The Rainbow* is more intense as it is manifested itself in two ways. The eternity of nature (through which will is manifested) is in conflict with the man-made one. Nature represents directly the central force of the universe, whereas man’s world belongs completely to the world of phenomena and, hence, in Schopenhauer’s terms has no reality. Eventually, Lawrence perceived the futility of the man-made against the natural world. *The Rainbow* more strongly presents the Schopenhauereian belief developed in Lawrence’s earlier work that through transcending the limitations of the ego and reaching past the phenomenal world, one can find peace, indeed the only true peace that the individual is allowed. Schopenhauer for his part used the image of the wheel to express this sense of a still center within the universal will, around which the restless, insatiable striving of phenomena takes place.

Similarly in *Women in Love* the will to live remains very close to Schopenhauer’s conception of it, and it seems to develop still further Schopenhauereian attributes. Birkin calls this life force “the vast, creative, non-human mystery”. For Birkin the “non-human is above the squalor of



twentieth century industrial civilization and the cheapness and pettiness of modern man". (222) The pessimism of *Women in Love* is a nihilistic pessimism that even goes to envision the end of humanity and civilization and even rejoices in the prospect. The phenomenal world offers less reality and challenge to superior persons who see through its futility than it had in Lawrence's earliest novels. Although Lawrence still does not go so far as to advocate a retreat from life itself, as Schopenhauer does, he causes his heroes and heroine, nevertheless, to flee society and its senseless activity and to withdraw into a world of their own. In *Fantasia of the Unconscious* Lawrence gives a formula for salvation as he saw it at this time that is very close to that of Schopenhauer's saint: "to be still and to ignore the false fine frenzy of the seething world, To turn away now, each one into stillness and solitude of his own soul." (11)

Furthermore, Lawrence's rebellion against the Victorian values and puritanical dogmas under which he was brought up was waiting to be confirmed by Schopenhauer's concept that Lawrence found in *The Metaphysics of Love*.<sup>7</sup> Emily Delvenay's observation "it must have been refreshing for Lawrence to discover in a writer as respected as Schopenhauer the theory that sexual passion is the primary motivating drive of all human

activity” is germane in this regard. (64). “Sex” according to Schopenhauer forms the central essence of everything that exists in the phenomenal universe. Lawrence rebelled against neglecting the central essence throughout the Victorian age. Schopenhauer’s account of sexual passion with ease and frankness comforted Lawrence.

During Lawrence’s lifetime Puritanism regarded instinct, or in a reductive sense sex, to be a matter that was subjected to suppression. Lawrence’s uneasiness about puritanical attitude towards “sex” was backed up by Schopenhauer’s concepts. Lawrence’s exposure to Schopenhauer provided him with the conviction that one cannot lead a healthy life suppressing our instinct. In Freud’s formulation of this idea repression of sexual passion might be disastrous as it leads to psychosis and neurosis.<sup>8</sup> The following aspect of Puritanism noticed by Schopenhauer concerning suppression of sex drew Lawrence’s attention:

... But now the act through [that] the will asserts itself and man arises is one of which all are, in their inmost being, ashamed, which they therefore carefully conceal; nay, if they are caught in it, are terrified as if they had been taken in a crime ... the shame ... extends even to the parts which are concerned in like all other

parts, they are given use by nature. (Quoted in “Schopenhauer and the Development of D. H. Lawrence's Psychology”, 16)

Such utterance of Schopenhauer coincided with Lawrence's beliefs and he posited himself against Victorian morality and puritan dogmas.

Thus Lawrence's central preoccupation in his creative endeavors i.e. a distinction between the passionate and the intellectual that notwithstanding emphasized the former, is largely derived from Schopenhauer's ideas of “will and knowledge”. As Lawrence wrote in a letter to Edward Garnett, “we can go wrong in our minds” but the blood consciousness which is guided by the desire of the will is always wiser than intellect or knowledge. (*The Collected Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, 180) If intellect gets precedence over blood consciousness in human activity; in other words, if our choices are determined by intellect rather than the will embedded in us, it is bound to result in mental disorder. Schopenhauer's comment is relevant in this regard:

If [... the impulse of the will ] is voluntarily suppressed, as we see in rare exceptions, then this is the turning of the will, which changes its courses. The will does not transcend the individual, but is abolished in. Yet this can only take



place by means of the individual, but is abolished in it. (*The World as Will and Idea*, 111)

Always very much in the Schopenhauerian mould Lawrence believed that though individuals can suppress the sexual impulse when it is manifested as a form of the will, they cannot go beyond the willingness of the will. Thus, acting in accordance with the promptings of the will is something desired both by Lawrence and Schopenhauer.

Apart from the necessity of liberating all the promptings concealed by the Victorian and congregational obscurantist, Lawrence learnt from Schopenhauer the exigency of expression of the knowledge of death. In the same way the generation of knowledge of sex is important, the knowledge of death is essential. Manifestly for Lawrence the “will to live” must be balanced by the “will to die” – for this juxtaposition of two wills ensures health.

Lawrence, however, modifies the Schopenhauerian concept of death, borrowing an idea from Eastern religions that as an eternal cycle life requires death to remain creative. This is how Lawrence realised the great purpose of death. He is like Schopenhauer’s wise man who does not take



death as fear or terror but who is ready “to die willingly, to die gladly, to die joyfully” because “he needs and desires no continuance of his person” (*The World as Will and Idea*, 167). Thus Lawrence’s religious formulation is not only greatly informed by Schopenhauer’s concepts, he also translated many of Schopenhauerian ideas in his literary endeavors.

No less important than Schopenhauer is Fredrick Nietzsche’s influence on Lawrence’s religious beliefs. Through his acquaintance with Nietzsche in the library at Croydon Lawrence was much influenced by his ideas. (Chambers, 120) The similarity in temperamental and mental fiber between Lawrence and Nietzsche is striking. Lawrence’s iconoclastic ideas and his whole-hearted belief in the power of ideas are strongly reminiscent of Nietzsche. In her memoir of Lawrence Jessie Chambers pointed out that Lawrence found in Nietzsche “something new and engrossing” (*D. H. Lawrence: A Personal Record*, 120). So Nietzsche’s influence during his formative period is indeed significant. As we will see next, Nietzsche turned out to be one of the formative influences on Lawrence.

Walter Kaufman in his book *Nietzsche* (1950) provides a vivid account of Nietzsche’s critique of Christ and Christianity. Kaufman believes

that Nietzsche had an ambivalent attitude to Christian ideas. Lawrence's grudge against Christianity somehow coincided with Nietzsche's. Nietzsche, we can note, was attracted to pagan ideas, and found Goethe's penchant for paganism attractive. (Kaufman, 317) Lawrence not only came to be aware about paganism through Nietzsche, he took it to be one of his core ideas. Indeed, Lawrence's literal beliefs in the mysteries of sun and moon worship and, above all, especially, the mystery of the sex, have a distinct pagan flavour. It is relevant to mention here that Paganism for Lawrence is not a return to the past ages; rather it is a remembrance of who we really are, since to Nietzsche "it is really not a going back but an *asceni*". (317)

Lawrence's distaste for Christianity led him to grope for a religion that would be vitalistic. In other words, he approved the instinctive passions of mankind. Lawrence found in Nietzsche that "pagans ... say Yes to life" (Quoted in *Nietzsche*, 330) and paganism knows nothing of the stigma which Christianity has put on sex, nor of the sublimation which the sex instinct has undergone under the impact of Christian spirituality. The distinction between lower and higher, or profane and sacred love which we recognize in everyday thinking, is a manifestation of a Christian dualism. In Luther's words, it is "the wisdom of the word", and "the wisdom of our flesh". (310)

Nietzsche considered this doctrine obstructing the harmony between body and soul. Contrarily, paganism has always striven to attain the harmony between body and soul. That love is naïve, instinctive and frankly sexual, as opposed to conscious, intellectual activity, is endorsed by Nietzsche and Lawrence.

Therefore, the Nietzschean conception of pagan-Christian conflict and Nietzsche's parting with the former is duly sanctioned by Lawrence. Nietzsche noted the way pagan gods were transformed into Christian devils and the turning of Olympus into hell by the medieval church. He accused Christianity of the deepest crimes against the spirit of man. Moreover, Nietzsche observed that ancient sacred beings did not survive the onslaught of Christianity. The old gods and goddesses were desacralized and demonized. Christianity seeks to curb man's instincts, especially his will to power and self-development. Christianity teaches "that simple pleasure must be sacrificed to 'ascetic ideals'" (Kaufman, 316), and condemns man to a life of gloom, of joyless asceticism, of spiritual impoverishment and frustration, and to a life which is death. Contrary to Christianity, the pagan virtues are those which further the development of man's chthonic forces: the aristocratic principle, physical beauty and prowess, pride, courage, and



war. The mission of Christianity has been to transcend the bounds which nature imposes on man. Instinct versus intellect, *natur* versus *geist*, the unconscious versus conscious cerebration: these are the polarities in the pagan-Christian conflict. In the Nietzschean spirit, Lawrence sided with instinct, since Puritanism as opposed to paganism stands against life and health. We should not forget, however, that Lawrence sought for the possibility of a new type of human life which combines "the old blood-and-vertebrate consciousness" with the modern white "mental-spiritual consciousness. ... The sinking of both beings, into a new being." (*The Plumed Serpent*, 415)

Like Nietzsche, Lawrence was convinced that Christianity and paganism would always be mortal enemies and pretty much for the same reasons. There are scores of passages in Lawrence's works in which his hostility towards Christianity comes out into the open and strikes one as uncompromising. This hostility is probably best expressed in his novella *The Man Who Died*, one of the most daring treatments of the life of Christ in literature, where Christ after denouncing his role as a propagator of Christianity, turns to Paganism. Lawrence wrote to Brewster that the story (*The Man Who Died*) is about the Resurrection, "where Jesus gets up and



feels very sick about everything and can't stand the old crowd any more—so cuts out— and as he heals up, he begins to find what an astonishing place the phenomenal world is, far more marvelous than any salvation". (Quoted in *D. H. Lawrence: Reminiscences and Correspondence*, 127-28)

*The Man Who Died* indeed tells the story of Jesus after crucifixion. Here Jesus does not die on the cross and awakens to life in His tomb. His appraisal of his former life makes him realize that all his former teaching was false. Henceforth, he will no longer seek to convert his fellow man. He thinks with nausea of his old life where He had "tried to lay the compulsion of love on all men." (28) Moreover, he will not subject his body to deprivation as he used to do and will seek a woman whom He can love sexually without losing His identity. He also finds fault with his missionary spirit of preaching which violates the rights of others and thereby acts as a hindrance to the development of the individual personality. He arrives in the temple of Isis where he meets the virgin priestess who is waiting for the risen god Osiris to fulfill her destiny. She takes him to be Osiris and their physical union culminates in the completion of the conversion to paganism which Jesus has been undergoing since his resurrection. Because of the trouble that will come from the authorities if he stays, he leaves, but he tells her that he will come again just as the sun comes back in the seasons.

Influenced by Nietzschean ideas Lawrence uses the risen pagan Christ as a symbol within the Christian mythology, becoming in the process a Christian weapon which turns against Christianity itself.

Nietzschean concepts and ideas were a kind of revelation for Lawrence that brought into his perception ideas about the destruction of the mystery that is life. And the destruction was done through the act of subverting the promptings of the soul manifested by Paganism where Christianity diminishes man's sense of wonder and blunts its sensitiveness. Therefore, Lawrence perpetually laments at a modern age that seeks to know everything but can feel very little.

Lawrence tried to reinterpret the basic symbols which Christianity had co-opted from pagan religions, thereby attempting to restore some of their original life-giving meaning. This is why he returned to using the Church as a norm in passages such as this one: "the rhythm of life itself was preserved by the Church, hour by hour, day by day, season by season, year by year . . . down among the people." ("Apropos of Lady Chatterley's Lover", 493) He lists Church festival days such as Christmas and Easter. He continues: "This is the wheeling of the year, the movement of the sun through solstice and equinox, the coming of the seasons, the going of the

seasons."(501) Passages in *The White Peacock*, his first novel, dwell ritually on seasonal change. Many scenes of the Morel family in *Sons and Lovers* during the time Paul Morel (Lawrence) was growing up, celebrate the ritual of the seasons in Christian terms. These seasonal motifs continue in most of his works.

Seasonal motifs and nature rituals are to be found in Lawrence's works. What is more, throughout their life together, wherever he and Frieda lived, they held nature rituals. Katherine Mansfield referred to one such rite that they observed in Cornwall:

Always, when I see foxgloves, I think of the Lawrences. Again I pass in front of their cottage and in the window—between the daffodil curtains with the green spots—there are the great, sumptuous blooms. 'And how beautiful they are against the whitewash!' cry the Lawrences. As is their custom, when they love anything, they make a sort of Festa. With foxgloves everywhere. And then they sit in the middle of them, like blissful prisoners, dining in an encampment of Indian braves." (*Journal*, 141)



Lawrence often displayed his penchant for establishing a living connection with the cosmos. He wrote that although the landscape and the sky become only a background to their personal life, "to the pagan . . . the cosmos was a very real thing. A man *lived* with the cosmos, and knew it greater than himself." (*Apocalypse*, 41) At the end of his life, Lawrence gives a definite formulation of the relation between man and the cosmos: "We and the cosmos are one. The cosmos is a vast living body, of which we are still parts." (45) He continued, "what the human heart secretly yearns after" and "What man most passionately want is his living wholeness,"not just the salvation of his isolated soul. (47) The last section of *Apocalypse* sums up some aspects of Lawrence's religious ideas concisely and I must quote it in full:

For man, the vast marvel is to be alive. For man, as for flower and beast and bird, the supreme triumph is to be most vividly, most perfectly alive. Whatever the unborn and the dead may know, they cannot know the beauty, the marvel of being alive in the flesh. The dead may look after the afterwards. But the magnificent here and now of life in the flesh is ours, and ours alone, and ours only for a time. We ought to dance with rapture that we should be alive and in



the flesh, and part of the living, incarnate cosmos. I am part of the sun as my eye is part of me. That I am part of the earth my feet know perfectly, and my blood is part of the sea. My soul knows that I am part of the human race, my soul is an organic part of the great human soul, as my spirit is part of my nation. In my own very self, I am part of my family. There is nothing of me that is alone and absolute except my mind, and we shall find that the mind has no existence by itself, it is only the glitter of the sun on the surface of the waters.

So that my individualism is really an illusion. I am a part of the great whole, and I can never escape. But I can deny my connections, break them, and become a fragment. Then I am wretched.

What we want is to destroy our false, inorganic connections, especially those related to money, and re-establish the living organic connections, with the cosmos, the sun and earth, with mankind and nation and family. Start with the sun, and the rest will slowly, slowly happen. (199-200)

The underlying theme throughout *Apocalypse* is that the organic connection with the cosmos is not a “helpless, panic reversal” to the past, it is “the profound attempt of man to harmonize himself with nature, and hold his own and come to flower in the great seething of life.” (*Etruscan Places* 75). Lawrence consciously and carefully chose to go back to the past and to pick up old threads and broken impulse that will connect us with the mystery of the cosmos again, since he believed that we are at the end of our tether. Lawrence’s longing for an organic connection with the cosmos is beautifully expressed in the following two stanzas of his poem “Reach Over”:

I have come back to you, for I never left you.

Half-way round the circle now

I feel I’m coming near.

I never left you.

I went opposite way round the circle,

Because it was the surest of meeting you at last.

("Reach Over", 764)

Perhaps the most succinct way to explain what Lawrence was trying to do in much of his work is to quote, from his essay, "New Mexico". "For the whole life-effort of man [is] to get his life into direct contact with the

elemental life of the cosmos, mountain-life, cloud-life, thunder-life, air-life, earth-life, sun-life. To come into immediate *felt* contact, and so derive energy, power, and a dark sort of joy." (141-50) These words provide a lyrical description that indicate the necessity of the sheer naked contact, without an intermediary or mediator is the real meaning of religion. In a letter to Rolf Gardiner, on July 4, 1924, from Kiowa Ranch, Lawrence wrote:

I know there has to be a return to the older vision of life. But not for the sake of union. And not done from the *will*. It needs some welling up of religious sources that have been shut down in us: a great yielding, rather than an act of will: a yielding to the darker, older unknown, and reconciliation. Nothing bossy. Yet the natural mystery of power." (*The Collected Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, vol. 2., 796-97)

Lawrence urged us to rediscover the wholeness of the "old ways" after confronting the limitations of rational thinking and "ideal" politics and religion in his own life.



As Paul Delany observed throughout his life Lawrence rarely “scrupled to sacrifice the consistent development” of anything “if he wanted to accommodate new and more pressing concerns”. (*D. H. Lawrence's Nightmare*, x) As Willie Hopkin, a noted socialist, remembered that Lawrence “restless mentally and spiritually”, “delved deep into his mind and to raise from it a strange mixture of ideas and beliefs”. (Worthen, 178) Rebelling early against the Congregational chapel and dismissing Christianity, however, he discovered that the problem of religion remained with him long after the debris of chapel Christianity had been cleared away. As he moved forward, he found himself to be a man whose mind and conscience were imbued with the habits of religious thoughts. He lacked the context and support of any particular faith and found himself wanting to develop his religion for himself. He came to believe in the absolute primacy in human life, of processes of feeling and consciousness which were physical and non-rational: he became convinced that the most important perceptions have little to do with ideas or thought. Such conclusions were absolutely alien to formal and moral teachings. Unable to find refuge in established beliefs and ideas, Lawrence could go nowhere and had to formulate his own religion:



Jehovah is the Jew's idea of God – not ours. Christ was infinitely good, but mortal as we. There still remains a God, but not a personal God: a vast, shimmering impulse which wavers onwards towards some end, I don't know what – taking no regard of the little individual, but taking regard for humanity. When we die, like rain-drops falling back again into the sea, we fall backward into the big, shimmering sea of unorganized life which we call God. We are lost as individuals, yet we count in the whole. (*The Collected Letters of D H Lawrence*, vol. I., 76)

Here Lawrence's ideas tinged with William James's philosophy is pluralistic and "Buddhist in its language but non-Buddhist in its belief in a God and in being purposive and moralist" (Worthen, 184) Always wavering and unbending, Lawrence wonders 'can the human mind fix absolutely the definite line of a book, any more than it can fix absolutely any definite line of action for a living being?' His ultimate quest, however, is for "giving off the joy of life . . . togetherness in pure complete motion." Each one going on its own way but all moving in "swift laughing togetherness." ("The Flying Fish", 78) Lawrence ultimately gives in to the idea of the fullest acceptance of life. He denies that life is devilish to all, as he puts it "Evil, what is evil? There is only one evil, to deny life." (Quoted in *Phoenix Paradox*, 222)

Lawrence remarks that we know for sure “that which is good, and moral, is that which brings into us a stronger, deeper flow of life-energy: evil is that which impairs the life-flow.”

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<sup>1</sup> Wesleyan beliefs are very similar to Anglican ones but have strong emphasis on personal faith and personal experience.

<sup>2</sup> 'Teach me . . . Judgment Day': conflated version of the third verse of the 'Evening Hymn' ('Glory to thee, my God, this night') of Bishop Thomas Ken (1637- 1711): 'Teach me to live, that I may dread / The grave as little as my bed; / Teach me to die, that so I may / Rise glorious at the awful day.'

<sup>3</sup> The group also regularly visited local preachers and even went to Nottingham to hear sermons (Nehls, vol. I., 23)

<sup>4</sup> Some of the nineteenth century's most innovative and influential theologians were Congregationalists. During the late-nineteenth century, many Congregationalists introduced their so-called New Theology that rejected the formal categories of Calvinist thought, emphasizing instead a more optimistic, ethical creed centering on Christ's role as a moral exemplar, affirming human efforts to bring about a just and peaceful social order. By the early twentieth century, however, these views were no longer those of the radical persuasion, as liberal theology dominated the curriculum of most Congregational seminaries, and spread rapidly into church pulpits across the country. (posted in the *Wikipedia*)

<sup>5</sup> The Congregationalists are of course a segment of the Puritan movement that originated in sixteenth-century England and that was more radical than Anglican Puritans. (posted in the *Wikipedia*)

<sup>6</sup> The word “philosophy” in the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary has been defined as “a set of beliefs or an attitude of life that guides somebody’s behaviour”. Therefore,

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here and hereafter in this paper on many occasions, I have used Lawrence's "philosophy" and "religion" or "religious beliefs" quite synonymously.

<sup>7</sup> Lawrence read Rudolf Dirck's translation of Schopenhauer's *The Metaphysics of Love* in 1908 and had annotated for Jessie Chambers.

<sup>8</sup> Lawrence became acquainted with Freudian Psychology through his German wife Freida but was not fully convinced by Freud's ideas.

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## CHAPTER TWO

### *The Rainbow: Felt in the Heart and Felt along the Blood*

In *The Rainbow* Lawrence discarded Christianity and propagated a religion based on instinct or blood consciousness. The ritual of such a religion, however, was to be accomplished through marital relationships, i.e. relationship between men and women, taking cognizance of the “law of the woman” and the “law of the man”. Atypically, evil in Lawrence’s religion is not metaphysical; it is industrialism manifested through the colliery in *The Rainbow* that threatens socio-economic emancipation, making human beings a “side show beside the colliery”. (*The Rainbow*, 440) Salvation in the Lawrentian creed is possible only through the individual, as the individual alone can go beyond and make connection with eternity as symbolized by the rainbow in the novel, since only a rainbow connects heaven and earth. It is relevant to admit here that Lawrence’s religious enterprise in *The Sisters* (*The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* was initially conceived as *The Sisters*) was further developed in *Women in Love*, a novel that embraces beliefs germinated by writing of the earlier work.



Before commenting on *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* we need to discuss an issue relating to the complexity of *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*. John Middleton Murry, one of the earliest critics of Lawrence, was unable to feel the subterranean pulse of these texts and was confused about the precise nature of the experience that Lawrence sought to uncover. His ultimate conclusion about the failure of Lawrence's art was that Lawrence's psycho-sexual obsessions had misled him. The Scottish novelist Catherine Carswell too felt when reviewing *The Rainbow* that it is difficult to define "even to one's self what Mr. Lawrence's aim exactly is". (Quoted in *Icon Critical Guides: The Rainbow and Women in Love*, 23)

One of the reasons for Carswell's inability to see what Lawrence was aiming to achieve might arise from the fact that the central characters are barely distinguishable from one another. Richard Beynon notes that Lawrence's giving up of the "old stable ego of character" gives birth to the difficulty of these texts.<sup>1</sup> (*Icon Critical Guides: The Rainbow and Women in Love*, 28) It is noteworthy here that after *Sons and Lovers* Lawrence discarded the "old stable ego" of character and followed a different route in characterization, which he explains in a letter to Edward Garnett as portraying "according to whose action, the individual is unrecognizable, and passes through, as it were, allotropic states which it needs a deeper

sense than any we've been used to exercise, [and] to discover are states of the same single radically unchanged element." (*The Collected Letters of D H Lawrence*, Vol.-I, 282) This difficulty is, therefore, a measure of Lawrence's profound originality. Lawrence wrote that the important truths about human experience are not necessarily the ones that are at once obvious. The importance of some of them is to be measured by the difficulty with which we recognize them. They have no place in our habits of conscious thought, and what we say and what we believe with our conscious minds ignores or denies them.<sup>2</sup>

Lawrence's essay on Hardy also deserves special attention in this regard. While writing *The Rainbow* he had finished "Study of Thomas Hardy". Designed as a critique of Hardy's novels, it served to focus his ideas on religion, marriage and sexuality. The theory that lies behind *The Rainbow* is supposedly to be found in "Study of Thomas Hardy". In a 1914 (December 18) letter to Amy Lowell Lawrence had written about the work that it has "turned out as a sort of story of my own heart". H. M. Daleski in his influential book *The Forked Flame* (1965) writes "it is desirable to read *The Rainbow* with the Hardy essay in mind". Lawrence himself wrote in "Study of Thomas Hardy" that "... a novel is a microcosm, and because

man in viewing the universe must view it in the light of a theory, therefore every novel must have the background or the structural skeleton of some theory or being ...".(40) The theory of these two novels is no doubt propagated in the Hardy essay and expounded in these two novels. To articulate his theory of *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, special attention has been to the Hardy essay and the work has been quoted frequently in the following pages to establish his views on religion.

The world of *The Rainbow* that took shape in Lawrence's imagination does not conform to Christianity. *The Rainbow* has also been considered as a "counter-Bible".<sup>3</sup>(Wright, 85) Lawrence's ideas about religion, were, in fact, influenced by Nietzsche. Lawrence's awareness about Nietzschean philosophy is evident in *Study of Thomas Hardy* and in his letters. Nietzsche's proclamation in "Human All to Human", that "youthful, vigorous barbarians Christianity is poison" (*A Nietzsche Reader*, 172-173) resonates with Lawrentian significance when he terms Christianity as "like a leprosy, a white sickness" (*Study*, 22). Nietzsche's impassioned critique of the ethics of Christianity suggested that "transvaluation of all values" (*A Nietzsche Reader*, 177) involved transcending the difficulties of the modern age; it is



something like this order that permeates the moral world of *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*.<sup>4</sup>

Not surprisingly, three generations of Brangwens in *The Rainbow* stand separate from the Christian moral world and gradually distinguish themselves as very unique beings. The Brangwens, in fact, have world of their own, which is separate, isolate and imperceptible; “they were a curious family, a law to themselves, separate from the world, isolated, a small republic set in invisible bounds”. (103) Temperamentally “the Brangwens shrank from applying their religion to their own immediate actions. They wanted the sense of the eternal and immortal, not a list of rules for everyday conduct.”(274) Outward forms of religion never attract the Brangwens. Lydia, the mother of Anna and wife of Tom had been brought up as a Roman Catholic, but “the outward form [of religion] was a matter of indifference to her”. (103) She anchored her religion instead in a god who denotes mystery, without even attempting to define what He was. It is not surprising then, that Lydia’s daughter Anna’s initial unquestioning allegiance to church sermons did not last long:

Everything seemed to be a matter of social duty, and never of her *self*. They [vicars] talked about her soul, but somehow

never managed to rouse or implicate her soul. [...] then she became hostile to the ostensible church, she hated it for not fulfilling anything in her. [...] There was something else she wanted to hear, it was something else she asked for from the church. (157-158)

Anna's perception indicates Brangwens' shift towards a world far away from Christianity and towards one suitable for their taste. Again, erotic experience for the Brangwens is subsumed in religious initiation. For them "[it] was the entry into another circle of existence, it was the baptism to another life, it was the complete confirmation". (90) So intense and value laden is their erotic experience that the lovers seem virtually transformed into religious icons.

Anna's hostility to the church in the backdrop of nineteenth century intellectual development is not atypical. Carlyle, one of the leading prophets of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, described church creed and sacraments as "Hebrew Old-Clothes", (Quoted in *Nineteenth Century Studies*, 106) subject to decay and destruction. His premonition that dissatisfaction in worship will lead to "seeking after strange Gods" (106) resembles Anna's naked submission to the Lord. Anna danced before the Lord but mutilated traditional rite by her

naked submission. Like her mother (Lydia) she submitted herself to some unseen, mysterious, amorphous Lord. Ursula's belief leads her to believe that she does not belong to the world of Christianity as it is unable to embrace the "ultimate", and never offers soothing balm for her wounds. To her Jesus was "beautifully remote and shining in the distance, like a white moon at sunset, a crescent moon beckoning as it follows the sun".(275) And always "a yearning for something unknown came over her, a passion for something she knew not what" (478). At this point we find a resemblance to Carlyle's clothes philosophy which suggests that old clothes must be replaced by new clothes just as the old moral world must give way to a new moral world.<sup>5</sup> Hence "In everything [Ursula] saw [and] grasped and groped to find the creation of living God, instead of the old, hard barren form of barren living."(495)

According to Lawrence, "sin" is a word coined by Christianity. *The Rainbow* not only gives us an anatomy of "sin", it repudiates two great motives of Christianity: fear and love. Ursula realizes "that which was feared [is] not necessarily all evil". (342) Evil may even be necessary just as chaos is necessary occasionally if it is propitious for life and growth. (Choudhury, 92) Her philosophical conclusion is that "there is really nothing



to fear [...] motive of fear in religion is base, and must be left to the ancient worshippers of power.”(342) Such impressions of Ursula remind us of the influence of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche on Lawrence. Here Lawrence duly endorses Schopenhauerian and Nietzschean views about the discovery of “sin” by the medieval church and its continual adaptation by Victorians and Puritans. Ursula also finds “something unclean and degrading about the humble side of Christianity” (285) and is “revolted to the other extreme” (285). Her disregard for the distinction between the sacred and the profane is implied in the novel. All her disregard can be assumed as the influence of Nietzsche’s predilection for the paganism and discounting of Christianity. Again, Ursula’s perceptions on different religions imbued with “national taste or need” and Christianity’s confinement to provinciality is worth quoting:

Gradually it dawned upon Ursula that all the religion she knew was but particular clothing to a human aspiration. The aspiration was the real thing. – the clothing was a matter almost of national taste or need. The Greeks had a naked Apollo, the Christian 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. (341-342)

Ursula's conclusion about religions shows the gulf between Ursula and Christianity and draws her to look beyond conventional religions. Thus *The Rainbow* registers Brangwen religious and moral beliefs over generations: Lydia's indifference to the external appearance of religion, Anna's submission to "strange gods" and Ursula's movement away from Christianity – all three Brangwens take their steady departure from Christianity.

Interestingly, the moral world is the centre of Hardy, Tolstoy Shakespeare and Sophocles' works as it is of Lawrence – the writers have all breached the established moral world and seem to be bent on setting up a new one. Ursula is not a tragic character in *The Rainbow*, but the suffering she undergoes for violating traditional morality has its parallel in the Wessex novels. This is obvious when Lawrence posits the origin of tragedy in Shakespeare and Sophocles vis-à-vis Tolstoy and Hardy in "Study of Thomas Hardy":

And this is the quality Hardy shares with the great writers, Shakespeare or Sophocles or Tolstoy, this setting behind the

small action of his protagonists the terrific action of unfathomed nature: *setting a smaller system of morality, the one grasped and formulated by human consciousness within the vast, uncomprehended and incomprehensible morality of nature or of life itself, surpassing human consciousness.* The difference is, that whereas in Shakespeare or Sophocles the greater, uncomprehended morality, or fate, is actively transgressed and gives active punishment, in Hardy and Tolstoi the lesser, *human morality, the mechanical system is actively transgressed, and holds, and punishes the protagonist, whilst the greater morality is only passively, negatively transgressed, it is represented merely as being present in background, in scenery, not taking any active part,* having no direct connexion with protagonist. Oedipus, Hamlet, Macbeth, set themselves up against, or find themselves set up against, the unfathomed moral forces of nature, and out of this force comes their death. Whereas Anna Karenina, Eustacia, Tess, Sue and Jude *find themselves up against the established system of human government and morality,* they cannot detach themselves and



are brought down. Their real tragedy is that they are unfaithful to greater unwritten morality.... (19) [Italics added]

It is as if Lawrence has adopted Hardy's moral world for Ursula. Unlike Oedipus, Hamlet or Macbeth, she is not at odds with the greater morality of the world. Like Anna, Eustacia, Tess, Sue and Jude, her "crusade" is only against the "man made" moral world. But what is special about Ursula is that her conflict with it emanates from the feeling that industrial England was obstructing the smooth flowering of life. He therefore he considers industrial progress to be a major obstacle in one's attaining the fullness of being. While seeking "fulfillment" Ursula transgresses the conventional moral world. Though this transgression increases her suffering, it is good for her own self. The "Study of Thomas Hardy" anticipates Ursula's violation of conventional moral world in many ways:

Had Oedipus, Hamlet, Macbeth been weaker, *less full of real, potent life, they would have made no tragedy; they would have contrived some arrangement of their affairs*, sheltering in the human morality from the great stress and attack of the unknown morality. But being, *as they are, men to the fullest capacity*, when they find themselves, daggers drawn, with the very forces of life itself, they can only fight till they themselves are killed,

since the morality of life, the greater morality, is eternally unalterable and invincible. It can be dodged for some time but not opposed. On the other hand, Anna, Eustacia, Tess or Sue – what was their in their position that was necessarily tragic? Necessarily painful it was but they were not at war with God, only with society. Yet they were all cowed by the mere judgement of man upon them, and all the while *by their own souls they were right.* (20) [My italics]

Unlike Anna, Eustacia, Tess or Sue, Ursula does not fall short of her ideals. She has an uncompromising attitude towards “Life”. Despite occasional wavering, Ursula is always guided by the promptings of her soul. Thus Ursula suffers in not complying “with arrangement of affairs” but strives to establish a “Life-centric” moral world that never goes against the promptings of her soul.

To understand this promptings of soul we can resort to another of Lawrence’s phrase, “blood consciousness”, one of the prime beliefs underscoring Lawrence’s *The Rainbow*. In 17 January 1913, he wrote to Ernest Collings, “My great religion is a belief in the blood, the flesh, as being wiser than intellect.” (*Letters*, 180) This was the first important

statement of what became an essential part of Lawrence's religion. Lawrence's refusal to treat logic as the only valid activity of the mind was in many ways vindicated by the findings of Frazerian anthropology and Freudian psychology. (Clarke, 20) Lawrence wanted to bring what he called "blood knowledge" into balance with what he saw as "mind knowledge". He believed in the unity of body and soul and might also have been influenced by Coleridge's view "that distinction is not division" (Jackson 316). Lawrence thought civilization had gone too far in the direction of the crippling intellect and felt that what civilization now needed was an emphasis on the passionate, and equilibrium between the Apollonian and Dionysian i.e. between intellectual and physical, to restore balance.

Lawrence accepted Nietzsche's assertion that the split of the Western consciousness was started by the ancient Greeks i.e. their high intellectual-visual (Apollonian) culture created the divisions within the self. ( *Phoenix*, 523 and *Birth of Tragedy* 33-36) In "The Crown", he describes art as "the revelation of a pure, an absolute relation between the two eternities" – the antinomies of flesh and spirit, female and male, origin and end, stasis and motion (*Phoenix II*, 412). Lawrence, found the full-bodied awareness in medieval consciousness also demonstrated in the medieval church. In a



December 20, 1914 letter, he tells Gordon Campbell that he has understood the mystery at the heart of the medieval church: "It is necessary to grasp the Whole. At last I have got it, grasping something of what the mediaeval church tried to express" (*Letters*, Vol. II, 249). Lawrence thought that the rapid growth of visual and verbal culture which began in the Renaissance eventually produced a devaluation of body and cosmos. In "Study of Thomas Hardy," Lawrence says that from the sixteenth century onward, "man is more and more occupied with his own experience" and "less and less aware of anything unknown" (*Phoenix*, 456).

Lawrence also adopts the Biblical position of blaming women for human conflict: like Eve, the Brangwen women have a double desire to eat both the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge. Lawrence asserts that the story of Eve and the serpent represents the inception of split subjectivity: the Eve myth symbolizes the birth of the consciousness which rebels against the physical being, against connection with the passionate body. The serpent is the symbol of division in the psyche which sets the spiritual being against sensual one, man against woman, and introduces of the hostile duality into the human psyche. Lawrence's Eve falls out of the harmonious relationship she once had with the divine passion in her body, while the Eve of Genesis

uses her body (by eating the apple) to rebel against the transcendent God. Thus the Biblical story of the conflict between men and women, the revelation of the mystery of the medieval church, and the Nietzschean influence upon Lawrence – all these lead him to consider the promptings of soul as one of the supreme sources of religious beliefs.

No wonder three generations of Brangwens veer towards the acceptance of the instinctual and move steadily away from the intellectual. Blood swells in the veins of the first Brangwens and “their brains were inert, as their blood flowed heavy with the accumulation from the living day”, (*The Rainbow*, 8) not only evoking “blood intimacy” but also “blood togetherness”; here their brains are shown as static but the flow of their blood is heavy. This shows Lawrence as privileging instinct over intelligence.<sup>6</sup> Instinct prompts the Brangwens to lead a fecund life. Ultimately all of them except Ursula are aligned to the productive force of nature. Even Lydia, in remembering her relationship with her first husband Lensky and her marriage with Lensky believes in what is “real” only when it is accompanied by passion. The loss caused by the death of Tom is compensated by the passion of Will for Anna during and after the funeral. Among the Brangwens instinct is most important for Ursula as she finds her maximum self only when guided by it. Not surprisingly, for a while she

wavers in regard to assessing her relationship with Skrebensky when she denies the verdict of the “inner soul”, but the instinctual verdict leads her break up her relationship with Skrebensky. Lawrence’s proclamation is justifiable: knowledge or intellect may misguide us but “what our blood feels and believes and says, is always true” (*Letters*, 180). He believes that God’s knowledge passes not through our mind or intellect but that His unraveled mystery flows through our blood and veins. As a consequence throughout his life Lawrence adopted and discarded many beliefs and ideas of his religion; he has always shown his firm confidence in the promptings of the soul. It always remains one of the core adherents of his religion.

If Lawrence’s central theory in *The Rainbow* is “blood consciousness”, his central interest is in the relationship between men and women. In line with biblical tradition, marriage is considered one of the important sacraments in Lawrence’s religion. But he also treats premarital relationship and relationship that do not culminate in marriage with consideration. F.R. Leavis notes that the distinctive feature of Lawrence’s treatment of the relationship between men and women comes into focus when he uses the word “religious”. (*D. H. Lawrence: Novelist*, 119). The nature and form of men-women relationship in three successive generations



is shown in *The Rainbow*. Lawrence's observations on the Wessex novels in "Study of Thomas Hardy" resonate with the thematic concerns of men-women relationships in *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*:

The first and chiefest factor [in the Wessex novels] is the struggle into love and the struggle with love: by love, meaning the love of a man for a woman and a woman for a man. The *via media* to being, for man or woman, is love, and love alone. [...] Of anything that is complete there is no more to tell. The tale is about becoming complete, or about the failure to become complete. (09)

Lawrence notices that in the Wessex novels the outcome of love is not important. In other words, there is a disregard for the consequence of a love affair. Both the sexes come into their "being" through the process of love in a manner where struggle is predominant. The Lawrentian male too must struggle to preserve the core of his being; although he desires union with the unknown and he fears absorption into woman.

In both *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* struggle is obligatory in love. These works are similar to the Wessex novels of Hardy in this respect. If fruition in love is not possible, characters must strive for it. Lawrence's

hypothesises, however, is that personal relations, especially between a man and woman, cannot be lasting and satisfactory. The painful effort of resolution through which Tom Brangwen has to go through to bring himself to propose to Lydia is notable: "He had to come down from his pleasant view of the case – she might refuse him. And, besides he was afraid of her." (*The Rainbow*, 34) She, too, looking at "the stranger who was not a gentleman, yet who insisted on coming into her life", (36) resists the profound inner response. And "she was beyond him, the unattainable". (37) Their coming together is felt as the contact between two utterly different pasts. "They were two very separate beings, vitally connected, knowing nothing of each other, yet living in their separate ways from one root." (13) Though the two lives are brought into an essential contact, their separateness and otherness are mutually accepted.

What, in fact, strikes one as religious is the intensity with which Lawrence's men and women, harkening to their deepest needs and promptings as they "seek fulfillment in marriage", know: they "do not belong to themselves". (Leavis, 111) Their coming together is not the mere approach of couples to each another; rather it is the performance of some rituals of Lawrence's religion obsessively. At the time of Lydia's pregnancy

“he [Tom] went out more often to the Red Lion again, to escape the madness of sitting next to her when she did not belong to him, when she was as absent as any woman in indifference could be”. (*The Rainbow*, 64) His action shows the widening crack in their relationship which, however, was then amended. So the marriage prospers, the relation is established “and the Lord took up his abode and they were very glad”. (96) Tom Brangwen thus considers his marriage a success:

What he had 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 could say so to anybody, and be proud of it. (129)

The apparent gratification of conjugal life makes Tom content for a while. But conflict is inevitable and may even be indispensable. Tom now turns to his stepdaughter Anna. In the end “there still remained an unsatisfied Tom Brangwen, who suffered agony because a girl cared nothing for him”. (107) The nature of conflict and satisfaction is difficult if not obscure since the forces of attraction and repulsion are inherent in marriage relationships. It is in fact an essential part of conjugal life. Conflict and reconciliation is obvious in the relationship between Will and Anna:



So it went on continually, the recurrence of love and conflict between them. One day it seemed as if everything was shattered, all life spoiled, ruined, desolated and laid waste. The next day it was all marvelous again, just marvelous. One day she thought she would go mad from his very presence, the sound of his drinking was detestable to her. The next day she loved and rejoiced in the way he crossed the floor, he was sun, moon and stars in one. (167)

The conflict of Will and Anna is strikingly depicted in *The Rainbow*. Their conflict issues from their unconscious self which they themselves do not understand. The unconscious conflict is manifested through Anna, especially in her naked defiance during her pregnancy, which shatters the possibility of any fruitful relationship between her and Wil. Anna celebrates a kind of victory during her pregnancy over Will's spirit in a spontaneous fertility rite in which the "rhythmic exulting" of the dance enacts a "primitive religious sensibility" (Stewart, 59):

[She] swayed backwards and forwards, like a full ear of corn, pale in the dusky afternoon, threading before the firelight, dancing his non-existence, dancing herself to the Lord, to

exultation.... Her fine limbs lifted and lifted, her hair was sticking out all fierce, and her belly, big, strange, terrifying, uplifted to the Lord. Her face was rapt and beautiful, she danced exulting before her Lord, and knew no man. (170-71)

Here Anna's defiance towards Will has its religious fervour. This unconscious dance of Anna reminds us of the dance of primitive rituals for which Lawrence had strong likings.

But the limitations on the freedom of one character affect the freedom of the other. This is certainly the pattern Lawrence employs in the relationship between Anna and Will Brangwen in *The Rainbow*. In a poem Lawrence wrote:

She touches me as if I were herself, her own.

She has not realised yet, that fearful thing, that I am the other,  
she thinks we are all of one piece.

It is painfully untrue.

I want her to touch me at last, ah, on the root and quick of my  
darkness

and perish on me, as I have perished on her.

Then, we shall be two and distinct, we shall have each our  
separate being.

And that will be pure existence, real liberty.

("Manifesto", 266-67)

Lawrence suggests in this poem that freedom can be attained by the recognition of distinct entity. The idea of a relationship that transforms two lovers into one is utterly false. This feature of the relationship between Will and Anna is apparent to the reader (though they themselves are unaware about it) from the very beginning of their married life, where only a few days after their wedding Anna shows a readiness to "return to the outside world," making Will "frightened and furious and miserable" (140) at the idea of being alone:

He ground his soul in uneasiness and fear. But she rose to a real  
outburst of house-work, turning him away as she shoved the  
furniture aside to her broom. He stood hanging miserably near.  
He wanted her back. Dread and desire for her to stay with him  
and shame at his own dependence on her drove him to anger.  
He began to lose his head. The wonder was going to pass away



again.... Driven by fear of her departure into a state of helplessness, almost imbecility, he wandered about the house.

And she, with her skirts kilted up, flew round at her work, absorbed. "Shake the rug then, if you must hang round, " she said.

And fretting with resentment, he went to shake the rug. She was blithely unconscious of him. He came back, hanging near to her. (*The Rainbow*, 140-141)

The only obstacle to the couple's attainment of "real liberty" was the insistence of one of the lovers that "we are all of one piece." For Lawrence this is a "painfully untrue" idea about love, primarily because it mistakenly looks upon "separate being" as a sterile and absolute form of isolation, and not as the means to true "conjunction." ("Manifesto", 266-67)

Will eventually does become free, but only after Anna succeeds in "pushing him off from her, pushing him away, breaking his fingers from their hold on her" (174). Only then does her husband have a "separate identity" with a "new, deeper freedom;" only then does she also become free: "He would insist no more, he would force her no more. He would force

himself upon her no more. He would let go, relax, lapse, and what would be, should be." (*The Rainbow*, 177) Anna has her "final release" once Will has finally developed a "free, separate, independent" self. She is really free when she is "free of him". (177) Lawrence believes that a man and a woman can become "all of one piece" – only through a process of mutilation; without it the chances of forming a single entity by men and women are not simply "untrue" but are considered as "painfully untrue."

Lawrence believes that love alone cannot bind a married couple since marriage involves complex and delicate relations that can only be achieved through it. Therefore, Lawrence's conception of marriage necessitates the recognition of something beyond love. Ursula looks for more than personal gratification in love:

'Then, what do you care about?' she [Dorothy] asked, exasperated.

'I don't know', said Ursula. 'But something impersonal. Love-love- love-what what does it mean-what does it amount to? So much personal gratification. It doesn't lead anywhere.'

‘It isn’t supposed to lead anywhere, is it?’ said Dorothy satirically. ‘I thought it was the one thing which is an end in itself.’

‘Then what does it matter to me?’ cried Ursula. ‘As an end in itself, I could love a hundred men, one after the other. Why should I end with a Skrebensky?’ (380)

Ursula’s utterance about the banality of unfocused love is justified as she discovers the lack of connection with the “beyond” in her relationship Skrebensky:

She knew him all around, not on any side did he lead into the unknown. Poignant, almost passionate appreciation she felt for him but none of the rich fear, the connexion the unknown, or the reverence of love. (384)

It is the want of connection with the infinite that stops Ursula from uniting in a marital bond with Skrebensky as a loveless marriage could bring anything but fulfillment. Ursula’s notion of marriage that lacks any momentum has been elucidated clearly in “Study of Thomas Hardy”:

The Goal of the female impulse is the announcement of *infinite oneness, of infinite stability*. When the two are working in combination, as they must in life, there is as it were, *a dual*



*motion, centrifugal for the male, fleeing abroad, away from the centre, outward to infinite vibration, and centripetal for the female, fleeing to the eternal centre of rest* A combination of the two movements produces a sum of motion and stability at once, satisfying. But in life there tends always to be more of one than the other. (29-30) [Italics added]

By decoding the above mentioned scriptural statements we can say that according to Lawrence we are all composed of female and male forces which co-exist in ceaseless conflict within us all as well as in the relationships between every man and woman. The female within us is the life of pure being and is in unity with the universe of created things; the male in us is the impetus to move from the female state of being into “knowing” his (male’s) own identity / individuality. Skrebensky does not show any symptom of having a “centrifugal” force; as a result, after much vacillation Ursula does not opt for marriage with him and decides to choose the path of loneliness wherein “she was sad but free”. (467) The “true” marriage, is what we see in *Women in Love* in the persons of Ursula and Birkin, both of them representing “centripetal” and “centrifugal” force respectively.

A marriage with inbuilt limitations cannot bring fulfillment since it cannot be creative. By creativity in marriage, Lawrence, does not mean passionate creativity alone. For him it refers to the establishment of a firm relation with “things” beyond the institution of marriage, including passionate creativity. *The Rainbow*, however records disintegration from the inner harmony of Lydia’s union with Tom through the partial unity of Anna and Will to the final collapse of Ursula’s union with Skrebensky which leaves her poised at a point of “new germination”, symbolically registered through the rainbow, from which “new, clean, naked bodies would issue to a new germination, to a new growth, rising to the light and the wind and the clean rain of heaven.” (496)

However, the union and ultimate relation symbolized through the rainbow are certainly compatible with and illustrative of Birkin’s “twin-star” formulation in *Women in Love*. Tom and Lydia have transcended nationality and history, have found a more “impersonal” level of interaction, and have in effect, fulfilled their common destiny. They have transcended the limitations of personality, and have moved into a “new world”. Their union is finally successful, and is indeed the most successful one in *The Rainbow*, prefiguring that of Ursula and Birkin in *Women in Love*. (Lenz, 9)

Ultimately the struggle in the process of attachment for Tom-Lydia, attraction-repulsion of Will-Anna, and the fatal episode of Ursula-Skrebensky has religious connotations. All of Lawrence characters strive to dissolve into heterosexual marriage. Here the special feature of Lawrence's religion is that all the characters in determining their relationships are guided by the promptings of their soul.

Though Lawrence provides elaborate discussion on men-women relationship through the pages of *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, importance has also been given to the necessity of the growth and development of individuality. No wonder one of the basic tenets of Lawrence's religion that is aptly manifested in *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* is the growth of the individual: "The final aim of every living thing, creature, or being is the full achievement of itself", Lawrence wrote in *The Study of Thomas Hardy*. Lawrence had high hopes of forming an ideal community, one which he called "Rananim", which means "green" or "flourishing". Lawrence wrote:

I want to gather together about twenty souls and sail away from this world of war and squalor and find a little colony where there shall be no money but a sort of communism as far as the



necessities of life go and some real decency. (Quoted from the Biographical Documentary, *Famous Authors: D. H. Lawrence*)

This idea was to be with Lawrence all his life. It was a dream which he pursued all over the world. But his enthusiasm for community gradually subsided. For the later Lawrence “the glory of mankind is not in a host of secure, comfortable, law-abiding citizens, but in the few more fine, clear lives, beings, individuals, distinct, detached, as may be from the public.” (*Study*, 22) “By individualist” he meant, “not a selfish or greedy person, anxious to satisfy appetites, but a man of distinct being, who must act in his own particular way to fulfill his own individual nature. He is a man who being beyond the average, chooses to rule his own life to his own completion....”. (*Study*, 25) Lawrence’s married life is a good example of the kind of non-interference from either of the partners that he celebrated (Frieda herself was utterly individualistic in nature). One of Lawrence’s friends once remarked that temperamentally Lawrence was not a person who felt comfortable with his friends for a considerable time. These are very important issues of Lawrence’s religion. Since in Lawrence’s religion salvation is found only in individualistic fulfillment, his personal life together with his fictional creation is a manifestation of his attachment to the belief in “individuality”.

Not surprisingly, the characters in *The Rainbow* are distinct individuals seeking ultimate deliverance in individuality. The first and second generations of Brangwens are, no doubt, distinct individuals, but it is in the third generation i.e. in Ursula that the individual is seemed to be fully developed, as she is exposed to the world beyond the Marsh farm to a greater extent than are earlier generations of Brangwens. Anna, for example had established her individuality as she violated the marital allegiance by discarding Will condescendingly. Her naked submission to the Lord amounted to nothing less than rejecting Will as “she had to dance in exultation before him [Will]” (183), “she had to dance before her Creator in exemption from the man [Will]” (183), and “she would dance his nullification”. (184) Will, on the other hand, lived in a world where there is no vital “adherent”. Towards the end of the novel he “was oblivious and totally indifferent ...he was in a private retreat of his own (356).

The disintegration of her intimacy with her surroundings is almost completed as Ursula Brangwen reaches adult consciousness. She does not have her father’s unquestioning religio-aesthetic feelings, nor does she firmly believe in her mother’s solution of private fertility. Ursula feels with

twentieth century intensity that “she was a separate entity in the midst of an unseparated obscurity, that she must go somewhere, she must become something”. (281) She has been to school and has seen something of the social world. She meets the dashing young Skrebensky , who had “a sense of fatality about him that fascinated her”. (298) The military man awakens her latent sexuality and makes her conscious of a greater reality – tinged as he is with foreignness – and seems to be the perfect “door” to fulfillment. Yet ultimately Skrebensky is a dead-end, without strength or depth. Passion or a kind of awareness, he shares with Ursula, “but under it all was a poignant sense of transience”:

And after all, what could either of them get from such a passion but a sense of his or her 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. (301)

When Ursula asks this fatal question, “What is your purpose?” and receives his mechanical answer, she sees him as clearly as he is and can tell him that they two belong to two different poles. (309)



Consequently, Ursula remains committed to an individual search for the fullness of being. Ursula's relationship with Skrebensky and her engagement with the widening circle of the social world – grammar school years, lesbian affair with Winifred Inger, experience as a probationary teacher at Brinsley School, her student years at the University College and friendship with other suffragette young women – she considers as accidental phenomena: “a condition that happened to endure.”(219) And it takes no time for her to perceive the malice of the outside world against her where even her father is actively involved. So “very early she learned to harden her soul in resistance and denial of all that was outside her, harden herself upon her own being.”(224) Her pursuit of individuality has correlation with infinity in Lawrence's imagination, since “self was a oneness with the infinite”. (441) Just as in marriage where relation with the “beyond” provides fulfillment, in life the confinement of individuality can be transcended by communion with infinity. Ursula's ultimate realization, however, is of a self not rooted in anything:

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 trammeled 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. (493)

By breaking and bypassing her former identity she wants to be rooted in new ground which will nourish her. Lawrence indeed dramatizes two conflicting, irresolvable human drives, one merging with others, and the other towards independence, and towards the establishment of a belief in one's unique selfhood. "The final aim of every living, thing, creature, or being is the full achievement of itself", Lawrence writes in *The Study of Thomas Hardy*. For Lawrence "To be oneself was a supreme, gleaming triumph of infinity". (*The Rainbow*, 439) *The Rainbow* thus constitutes a religion for the individual wherein the path will be found which will lead to deliverance of human beings. Such a path, however, is not static or homogeneous, but responsive according to individual taste and need.

Lawrence strived for the attainment of a harmonious religion, but he had to accommodate evil in it. As in conventional religions, Lawrence believed that good must not be overwhelmed by evil forces, and so his

religion will never give in to evil forces. Some of the Lawrentian definitions of evil are important for my current discussion:

The Root of all evil is that we all want ... sprititual gratification.  
(*Studies in Classic American Literature*, 7)

It is our being cut off that is ailment, and out of this ailment everything bad arises. (*The Collected Letters*, 993)

There is a principal of evil. The principal of resistance. Malignant resistance to the life-principle. And it uses the very life-force itself against life, and sometimes seems as if it were absolutely winning.  
(*Kangaroo*, 111)

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The definitions suggest evil arises out of life-denial and spiritualism. In *The Rainbow* industrialism is the supreme evil that thrives as a consequence of the denial of life. In Lawrence's religion industrialism is evil, although modern Western societies had for some time taken pride in it, considering it as a journey of seemingly inexorable progress which they had defined, philosophically, as "enlightenment". That philosophy was based on belief in the emancipatory powers of human reason. Industry and technology, the fruits of reason, had made rapid advances, and seemed to promise unending triumph over the forces of nature. Lawrence never subscribed to this



philosophy because of what he considered to be its reductive and dehumanizing effects. But the evils of industrialism find vivid expression in *The Rainbow*. The disintegration of pastoral life and the introduction of industrial society is begun in Tom Brangwen's lifetime and brought to its logical, extreme conclusion in *Women Love*. The "close intimacy of the farm kitchen" becomes less and less possible. In fact, it dies at one point, and with it dies traditional means of personal fulfillment. Lawrence critiques the bond that exists between Winifred Inger and Ursula's Uncle Tom. Their meeting point, of course, is submission to a mechanical will: "at the bottom of her [Winifred] was a black pit of despair" (344) and Tom's submission to Wiggiston colliery and attainment of "a stability of nullification". (344) Through the depiction of the Wiggiston colliery in Chapter 12 Lawrence diagnoses the entire system of Wiggiston where his uncle works as a colliery manager and shows that it works against the spirit of "Life" itself. At Wiggiston human beings are not at the centre of things. So in Tom's opinion they are supposed to "alter themselves to fit the pits and the place, rather than alter the pits and the place to fit themselves". (347) Marriage and home are a mere "side-show" beside the colliery. The description of Wiggiston indicates that "[the colliery] was the main show, the *raison d'etre* of all". (349) The byproduct of industry and technology of course is the town and its

mechanical people. In Chapter 15 we find Ursula expressing her exasperation against the town and its mechanical people in a manner that echoes Lawrence's own attitude towards them:

The stupid, artificial, exaggerated towns, fuming its lights.

[...]the people as they moved or sat their only dummies exposed. She could see, beneath their pale, wooden pretence of composure and civic purposefulness, the dark stream that coiled them all. They were like little paper sheets in their motion. But in reality each one was dark, blind, eager wave urging blindly forward, dark with the same homogeneous desire. And all their talk and all their behaviour was sham, they were dressed-up creatures. She was reminded of the Invisible Man, who was piece of darkness made visible only by his clothes. ( 447-448)

Lawrence also implicitly links house and city, domestication and civilization, by presenting them as unsatisfying "indoor" alternatives to open-air living. In effect, a city is like a big house which insulates its inhabitants from the wilderness around them. At the heart of Lawrence's diatribe against industrialism, however, lies his belief that it had mechanized

humanity, murdered its passional impulses, reduced men to automaton, and killed in them all the ability to apprehend the religion of life.

Lawrence has depicted how evil incarnate in industrial society creates a rigid external order that led to internal disorder. Thus Skrebensky, committed to a social machine which is organized for death, dies internally. But if at the end of *The Rainbow* the men have been won over and enslaved by the Machine, the women have acquired a new sense of strength. After exposing Skrebensky Ursula learns of her power and finds out that it can be selfishly destructive: "She was always a woman, and what she could not get because she was a human being, fellow of the rest of the mankind, she would get because she was a female, other than man." (333) Skrebensky's significance as the potential builder of cities, the representative of the means of production; engineer and soldier, anticipates the industrial magnate Gerald of *Women in Love*, whose collapse is so tragic that it signals, to many readers, the end of an entire world. But Lawrence's creed is not vulnerable to the evil incantation of industrialization. We see that Ursula is only apparently subdued by the adverse effects of industrialization. Contrarily, she is purged off and comes out to form a more "concrete self".



In *The Rainbow*, Lawrence indeed, disapproved of Christianity and felt like Carlyle for a “new clothing” for Christianity. Nevertheless, from the beginning to the end of the novel the narrative is firmly grounded in the Bible. By discarding what is cerebral, intellectual or spiritual, Lawrence has reinterpreted the biblical myths by attaching vital importance to the promptings of the soul, that obviously lead towards the celebration of the body. In Derrida’s words Lawrence “supplements” the Bible, not simply adding to it but at times attempting to supplant it, to replace the traditional text with his own. (Wright, 85) In *The Rainbow*, Lawrence also provides newer dimensions of the relationships that exist between men and women. The narrative of each Brangwen relationship crosses the limit attributed by conventional Christianity. With each of the new generation the Brangwens are ushered in to the “Rainbow” mentioned in the Genesis: Ursula’s grandfather Tom perished in the flood, but she achieves at the very end of the novel a rainbow-vision that will replace the “old, brittle corruption” with a new “world built up in a living fabric of Truth, fitting to the over-arching heaven.” (496) And the novel ultimately finds refuge in the projection of a “self” in “oneness with the infinite”, or in other words, in “the fullness of being” of the individual denying the malice of so called progress and rejecting the advancement of the 20<sup>th</sup> century industrialized England.

Religion in *The Rainbow* thus involves a constant interweaving of heterogeneous themes. By systematically stripping everything away from Ursula, Lawrence has prepared both his character and his reader for the realization that Ursula's belief is, in a very real sense, open and evolutionary. What Lawrence does in *Women in Love* is begin with these ever-changing fate and belief of Ursula, only to continue to record the psychic dramas of his characters' evolutionary beliefs.

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<sup>1</sup> However, Michael Black (in *D.H. Lawrence: The Early Fiction* and its sequel *D.H. Lawrence: The Early Philosophical Works*), has noted that even in the early fictions Lawrence deliberately "made himself a channel for the whole of what he was searching to say", in other words, he strived to translate his intuited perception into words even in the early fictions. (4) It then comes as no surprise that the early fictions of Lawrence where Lawrence adopted "stable ego" is not without their complex aspects.

<sup>2</sup> A point made by Lawrence in an article reprinted in *Phoenix*. "The Novel and the Feelings" quoted in F. R. Leavis, *D.H. Lawrence: Novelist*, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1955), p. 59

<sup>3</sup> Lawrence, indeed, is a part of a broad tradition where the Bible in Northrop Frye's phrase has been considered as "the great code" of western civilization. T. R. Wright's *D.*



*H. Lawrence and the Bible* provides a comprehensive account of the influence of Bible on Lawrence's creative works, including *The Rainbow*. The novel, according to Wright, is most obviously a reworking of the Bible. It contains frequent references to biblical characters and symbols and "[Lawrence's] language is permeated by the rhythms of the Authorized Version". (4) Such deep impact of the Bible on him is acknowledged by Lawrence himself: "From earliest years right into manhood, like any other nonconformist child I had the Bible poured every day into my helpless consciousness". (Quoted in *The Early Years*, 68) The fact that that the interpretation of the Bible was fixed led to all of Lawrence's interest being lost regarding the Bible. For "a book lives as long it is unfathomed. Once it is fathomed, it dies at once ... A book lives only while it has power to move us, and move us *differently*, so long as we find it *different* every time we read it", discovering new meaning on each occasion. "The Bible" he concludes, "is a book that has been temporarily killed for us, or for some of us, by having its meaning temporarily fixed". (*Apocalypse*, 59-60) Therefore, in *The Rainbow* Lawrence's own reworking of the Bible combines a thorough 'scientific' critique characteristic of modernity and has been considered as "counter-Bible".

<sup>4</sup> I am using "moral" or "morality" here and hereafter in this paper to depict the sense of right or wrong in an individual person or a group of people which can be both within and also beyond the hierarchy of religion.

<sup>5</sup> Probably Lawrence's acquaintance with Carlyle's "clothes philosophy" led him to use the concept of clothing in *The Rainbow* (in p.341-42). It would be pertinent to mention here that Carlyle's "clothes philosophy" is an attempt to demonstrate the difference between appearances of things and their reality. The appearance of an individual depends on the costume he or she wears; the reality of that individual is the body underneath the costume. Carlyle's Clothes Philosophy extends to institutions like churches or governments being like clothes. "They may be useful 'visible emblems' of the spiritual forces that they cover, but they wear out and have to be replaced by new clothes" (Quoted in *Thomas Carlyle*, 130). What he is saying is that while those things need to go through changes, the inner core and foundation will always remain the same. Carlyle used the Christian church as an example of how it was "worn out and must be discarded" while "the underlying religious spirit must be recognized and kept alive at all cost" (133). Lawrence, however, deviated not only from the Christian church but also from Christianity itself.

<sup>6</sup> It is, indeed, amazing to find out that almost at the same period (in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century) Rabindranath Tagore shared similar attitude towards the power of "instinct". In an 1890 letter to Indira Devi, we get proof of Tagore's enormous faith in "instinct" : ... that which we call "instinct" and for which we use abusive terms – is, indeed, our life force – it



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flourishes us through well and woe, sin and redemption and directs us to the eternity. ... We do not see our ends but He who endows us enormous life force called instinct through our eternal life – knows how He will direct us by it. We always make the huge mistake that instinct will leave us where it drives us – we do not know that it will drive us back. (Tagore, 26) [My Translation]

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## CHAPTER THREE

### *Women in Love: Apocalypse and regeneration*

Lawrence's religious beliefs in *The Rainbow* underwent major changes while he was writing *Women in Love*, which in one way or other compelled him to split up *The Sisters*.<sup>1</sup> The belief he had manifested in *The Rainbow* he found to be untenable in the wake of the tumultuous early twentieth century scenario, especially because of rapid industrialization. Moreover, Lawrence had a penchant for change which led him to include new dimensions to his religion and to modify some of the beliefs he had established in *The Rainbow*. But some of his religious beliefs remain intact in this novel. The concept of male-female duality, a major component of Lawrence's religion in *The Rainbow*, undergoes radical changes in *Women in Love*; these changes are discussed fully in this chapter. It also spotlights Lawrence's recast notions of men-women relationships evident in the *The Rainbow*, and his new emphasis of "man to man" relationship. This highlighting of "man to man" relationship in *Women in Love* has also been related to blood-brotherhood. The disintegrating effects of the loss of the

promptings of soul because of massive industrialization continue to be prominent in *Women in Love*. In war-ravaged Europe, Lawrence also had to accommodate disintegration, dissolution and corruption, which turn out to be key terms of his religion in *Women in Love*. Degeneration induced by industrialized and mechanized life and the resulting disintegration and dissolution, according to Lawrence, have enormous creative potentials. This belief led to a remarkable shift of emphasis in *Women in Love*, since the disintegrating aspects would never offer any regenerative impetus in *The Rainbow*. Characteristically, the ideological stance Lawrence adopts in *Women in Love* is not a rigid one; rather, he is always amenable to change and ready to move forward to newer directions. Lawrence's true quest is to formulate a religion that ensures "life" to its fullest so that it is recurrently renewed by the creative process.

While the theory behind *The Rainbow* can be seen in "Study of Thomas Hardy" (discussed in Chapter Two); the philosophy behind *Women in Love* was first propagated in the essay "The Crown", *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* and *Fantasia of the Unconscious*. Lawrence wrote in *Fantasia of the Unconscious* that "[t]he novels and poems come unwatched out of one's pen. And then the absolute need which one has for some sort of

satisfactory mental attitude towards oneself and things in general makes one try to abstract some definite conclusions from one's experiences as a writer and as a man." (9)<sup>2</sup> We know that Lawrence as an artist is primarily religious and all his creative work, in one way or the other, are, guided by religious ends. His "conclusions" (extracted from his fictions), thereby, are chiefly religious. Since the religion manifested in *Women in Love* is demonstrated in "The Crown" and in *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* and in *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, I have given special attention to these non-fictional works to throw light on Lawrence's religion in this novel.

It is interesting to note that Lawrence's beliefs are consistently modified by his artistic experiences, which led him towards restructuring his new religious / philosophical formulations. One such formulation is Lawrence's belief in duality. It is a key term in any discussion of Lawrence's religion. The basic premise of Lawrence's duality is derived from Schopenhauer (discussed in detail in chapter one), although it is modified both in *The Rainbow* and in *Women in Love*. The following section will note how Lawrence's concept of duality, especially that pertaining to men-women relationships, evolves from *The Rainbow* to the *Women in Love* (or from the "Study of Thomas Hardy" to "The Crown" and *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*). In "The Crown" Lawrence reasserts his own duality



thus: "I know I am compound of two waves ... I am framed in the struggle and embrace of the two opposite waves of darkness and light." (24) He has also asserted that "everything that exists, even a stone, has two sides of nature." ("Love was Once a Little Boy", 183) Such utterances in "The Crown" make us believe that *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* are constructed on the model of a dual reality. Lawrence explicitly asserted in the Hardy essay that "everything that is, is either male or female or both, whether it be clouds or sunshine or hills or a fallen feather from a bird ..." (32) For Lawrence this duality is at the centre of all his beliefs: "In life, then, no new thing has even arisen, or can arise, save out of the impulse of the male upon the female, the female upon the male. The interaction of the male and the female spirit begot the wheel, the plough, and the first utterance that was made on the face of the earth." (31) Not only Lawrence's religious beliefs, but his conception of art has also been elucidated in terms of this male and female duality.

At this point Lawrence's shift away from the dualistic philosophy of men-women relationship that he adopted in *The Rainbow* (or in the Hardy essay) to the new dual conception which he adopted in *Women in Love* can be discussed. Though the initial sections of *Fantasia*, Lawrence's view of

male and female duality seems to be much like that in the Hardy essay, in the later part of *Fantasia* there is a marked change of views about this duality. In the "Study" Lawrence propagated his dualistic viewpoint thus: "[f]or every man comprises of male and female in his being, the male always struggling for dominance. A woman likewise consists in male and female, with female predominant."(42) According to Lawrence, a coherent personality would then be one in which male and female elements are reconciled. Man's creativeness would appear to be dependent not only on the stimulus received in his contact with woman but also on the fruitful interaction of the male and female elements within himself.<sup>3</sup> But contrary to this view, in the *Fantasia* he had written:

A child is either male or female; in the whole of its psyche and physique is either male or female, and will remain either male or female. Every single living cell is either male or female, and will remain either male or female as long as life lasts. And every single cell in every male child is male, and every cell in every female child is female. The talk about a third sex, or about the indeterminate sex, is just to pervert the issue.

Biologically, it is true, the rudimentary formation of both sexes is found in every individual. That doesn't mean that every individual is a bit of both, or either ...  
(*Fantasia*, 86)

Here Lawrence makes a distinction between male and female in terms of their creativity and mental makeup. It is clear that Lawrence in the "Study" wants to reconcile the male and female elements as parts of life. He has also shown the dependence of the one upon the other for fulfillment. But in *Fantasia* he makes a distinct separation between male and female. Though he believes in the inevitability of their "conjunction", the 'conjunction' does not lead to the formation of a unified self.

This changed belief in male-female duality is projected in the men-women relationships of *Women in Love* and leads to a new dimension of Lawrence's religion. In the portrayal of men-women relationship, it would appear, Lawrence expounded an important religious belief that was developed from *The Rainbow*. The characters of *Women in Love* seek consummation in their relationships. But their ways differ from that of Tom-Lydia, Will-Anna and Ursula who sought fulfillment in their relationships. In *The Rainbow* Lawrence showed the inevitability of the conflict between



“man and wife”. At the same time he indicated that the intensity of the struggle of Tom and Will with Lydia and Anna was due to the special nature of the demands (or dependence) that Tom and Will made to Lydia and Anna respectively. Lydia was awakened through Tom to a life of the senses; she represented for Tom a vital connection with the unknown. But Tom wanted to bring the unknown female (Lydia) within the limit of his known male world. Similarly, Anna realized that Will Brangwen “seems to expect her to be part of himself”, and wanted to make her to be “the extension of his will”. (170) Will Brangwen’s desire to mingle and merge with Anna in a union which drives away all their separateness is a clear echo of Lawrence’s hypothesis of the dual coexistence of man-being and women-being in both the male and female. Duality in male-female disposition, one of the core ideas of Lawrence’s religion, was to be transformed in *Women in Love*.

In *Women in Love* Ursula begins with the “integrated being” that she acquired towards the end of *The Rainbow* through the trial of earlier Brangwens and her encounter with Skrebensky. Ursula’s search in *The Rainbow* for the man from “the infinite” is fulfilled in *Women in Love* since she ultimately finds such a man in Birkin. Birkin is “one of the [Book of Genesis] strange creatures, from the beyond”. (324) Ursula discovers that

Birkin is “one of the sons of God such as were in the beginning of the world”.<sup>4</sup> (325) Birkin, in his part, establishes the “rich new circuit . . . of passional electric energy’ ( 325) with Ursula. Their love “was a perfect passing away for both of them, and at the same time the most intolerable accession into being.” (326) But because of marked changes in Lawrence’s religious belief, there are basic differences in the relationship of Ursula-Birkin and in the nature of the relationships of Tom-Lydia, Will-Anna and Ursula-Anton in *The Rainbow*. Ursula and Birkin are “female” and “male” respectively; the foundation of their relationship is not based on certain dependence upon one another. They are not like Tom-Lydia or Will-Anna, each of whom maximized their selves with the help of the other. Ursula and Birkin are independent, separate, and distinct beings. According to Lawrence’s changed religious beliefs, their coming together is for a “mystic creativity” which can be found in no other relationships in these two novels. Even in their “true consummation” their respective identities are integral and intact.

Ursula-Birkin’s duality must be judged in the light of Lawrence’s insistence that “the conflicting forces must retain their separate identities” (i.e. they are either male or female). The new whole which is created by

establishing a relation between opposites is not a fusing of the two but a complementing of the one by the other. The idea has been elucidated in the following passage of *Twilight in Italy*:

By projection forth from myself, by elimination of my absolute sensual self, I arrive at the Ultimate infinite, Oneness in the Spirit. They are two Infinities, twofold approach to God. And man must know both.

*But he must never confuse them. They are eternally separate. But the two are separate and never to be confused. To neutralize the one with the other is unthinkable, an abomination. ...*

The two infinities, negative and positive, they are always related, but they are never identical. They are always opposite, but there exists a relation between them. (29)

[emphasis added]

This quoted passage is a reiteration of the point made above – the essentiality of separating “male” and “female” as two distinct beings and bringing these opposite forces (male-female) into contact with each other. The male and the female might have “conjunction” but will remain two distinct identities. Ursula and Birkin typify this dual aspect of the men-



women relationship and this is an integral part of Lawrence's religious belief in *Women in Love*.

In contrast, Hermione Roddice's relationship with Birkin cannot culminate in a meaningful affair; she cannot maintain the duality Lawrence deems necessary for men-women relationships. Hermione, society hostess and baronet's daughter, is fully cerebral in nature and embodies the sterility of intellectual abstraction. Hermione wants to fulfill the deficit in her "women-being" with the help of Birkin. If they had been reconciled it would have been a repetition of the kind of marital relationships that we have seen in *The Rainbow*. Like Hermione, both Tom and Will were dependent on Lydia and Anna respectively.

Tom and Will's deficiencies were impediments in the formation of a fulfilling marital relationship between them. Lawrence seems to be suggesting that the Birkin of *Women in Love* cannot be free in his relationship with Hermione because she herself is never free. She has a "strange mass of thoughts" from which "she was never allowed to escape"(15). Hermione sees her own separate self as "deficient" and thinks that Birkin will make her "whole." This fundamental kind of dependence upon Birkin is perhaps the most salient feature of Hermione's character. This

situation is clearly conveyed through the description of the terrible anxiety that she experiences while waiting for Birkin to appear at a wedding:

*She always felt vulnerable, vulnerable, [...] she did not know herself what it was. It was a lack of robust self, she had no natural sufficiency, there was a terrible void, a lack, a deficiency of being within her.*

*And she wanted someone to close up this deficiency, to close it up for ever. She craved for Rupert Birkin. When he was there, she felt complete, she was sufficient, whole. For the rest of the time she was established on the sand, built over a chasm....*

If only Birkin would form a close and abiding connexion with her, she would be safe during this fretful voyage of life. He could make her sound and triumphant, triumphant over the very angels of heaven. If only he would do it! But she was tortured with fear, with misgivings. (16-17) [Italics added]

Birkin cannot accept Hermione's deficiencies because of his belief that the men-women relationship is based on the "sufficiency" of male and female. As a result, Birkin develops a hatred for Hermione, particularly for her incapacity to love, and for her complete and almost total lack of any physical desire for him. Her desire is all spiritual, "all in the consciousness". Lawrence's religion does not approve anything which is spiritual, mental or intellectual and this drives Birkin away from her and finally reconciles him to Ursula.

Though not a complete failure like the Birkin-Hermione relationship, the Gerald-Gudrun one is not a success either. Gerald's dependency on Gudrun is obviously the result of his inability to achieve a self of his own. We notice that Gerald's predicament is in many ways analogous to that of Will in *The Rainbow*. Like Will Gerald does not believe in his "own single self". Though his relationship with Gudrun is intensely passionate, he is "blind to her" and thinks "only of himself". (371) As a result, their relationship does not fulfill Lawrence's prescription that an individual must be single and separate even in union and that without such independence a relationship cannot be creative.

According to Lawrence, life is fulfilled when men and women reach a creative state. Indeed, believing in such a state is one of the central religious aspects of *Women in Love*. In this novel the creative state of relationship is given explicit formulation through Birkin's idea of "star equilibrium". Birkin continues to believe in the possibility of personal fulfillment through balanced relationship with others and sees the formation of such relationships as the only hope for the salvation of society. He is a promoter of the concept of "star-equilibrium," where the male and female are in balanced polar conjunction with one another and are like two stars, both free and single, where a person achieves his or her own "integral individuality,"



but is linked with another in mutual fulfillment. They are "a pure balance of two single beings." (173) As the novel proceeds, both Ursula and Birkin achieve a "perfected relation" that enables them to be "free together". (173) Consequently, they resign from their jobs, get married, and "flit" to the Continent. The success of their relationship becomes further defined by the failure of the relationship between Gerald and Gudrun, none of whom can preserve their "free, single self" as would be the case in "star equilibrium".

Men-women relationships in Lawrence change from *The Rainbow* to *Women in Love*, but the idea of relationship between opposite sexes also suffers a setback in the latter novel, since Lawrence questions and scrutinizes beliefs and ideas about such relationships that he had established earlier. He had explored some inadequacies in men-women relationship earlier and apparently put "man to man relationship" under trial to see whether it could substantiate his ever-changing beliefs and tenets. Indeed, Lawrence was "worried" about the overall theme of "intimacy between men" over a long period of time, although male relation / friendships can be traced in almost every novels of Lawrence. It is a major concern in *The White Peacock* and *Aaron's Rod*. But in *Women in Love* Lawrence has treated it with much intensity and a kind of solemnity. Lawrence's treatment of male relations in his fictions, especially in *Women in Love*, however, is not

homoerotic.<sup>5</sup> In the following pages I will show that Lawrence's craving for relationship between man and man never stems from the aspiration to provide his religion with relationships that substitute for marriage or take the place of or men-women relationship. In *Women in Love*, relation between man and man complements that between a man and a woman. Such a relationship strives to establish some pledges or bond beyond the institution of marriage.

Lawrence's reaction to homosexuality must be discussed at this stage of our argument. The existence of homosexual elements in his fictional and non-fictional writings, his comments on practicing homosexuals, and his acquaintances report about him around the time when he wrote *Women in Love* will help us to get a full perspective on his depiction of homosexual relations. By late February 1916 Lawrence had completed half of a philosophical work called "Goats and Compasses", that at its core is a bitter attack on homosexuality. In *The Rainbow*, Lawrence is highly critical of the perverted life of Winifred. In his essay on Whitman Lawrence unequivocally states: "For the great mergers, woman at last becomes inadequate... So the next step is merging of man-for-man love. And this on the brink of the death. It slides over into death." (222) During a visit to Cambridge in April 1915, when he had met two homosexuals, Lawrence had told a

correspondent that he had “come to detest [. . .] men [as] lovers of men, they give me a sense of corruption, almost putrescence that I dream of berries. It is abominable.” (*Letters*, ii.323) Moreover, Catherine Carswell, with whom Lawrence shared many of his private thoughts, records his loathing of sexual perversion. And, Knud Merrild, who lived for some time with Lawrence in New Mexico, insists on his absolute “normality”. (Merrild, 201) So it can be inferred that in Lawrence’s religion there is no place for homosexual relations or space for any other kind of perversion or abnormality.

Nevertheless, in the discarded “Prologue” to *Women in Love* Lawrence set forth his ideas of “special” kind of friendship between man and man. Lawrence wrote in the “Prologue” that though Birkin and Gerald “scarcely knew each other”, ... “each would die for one another”. (44) In the main chapters of *Women in Love* Birkin and Gerald are drawn towards each other on different occasions. One such occasion is in the chapter “Man to Man” where their attitude to male friendship is disclosed. In the second chapter (“Shortlands”) of *Women in Love*, there is a sharp quarrel between Birkin and Gerald. Then the two men part with “apparent unconcern”, but each of them suppresses his strange, burning attraction for the other. (27) Nevertheless “they had not the faintest belief in deep relationship between men and men”. (27) Their friendship takes a special course, however, when



Gerald's sister Diana drowns, and Birkin tries to draw him away from the dreadful scene. In the stress of the moment, Gerald confesses that he would rather chat with Birkin than do anything else: "You mean a lot to me, Rupert, more than you know". (163) Later, when Birkin becomes ill, Gerald visits him and sits indulgently by his bed. The slim man beside him seems too detached for any depth of friendship. Birkin's thought runs on opposite lines: he suddenly sees his lifelong need "to love a man purely and fully," (164) and so he advances towards *blutbruderschaft* (blood-brotherhood):

"You know how the old German Knights used to swear a Blutbruderschaft," he said to Gerald, with quite a new happy activity in his eyes. "Make a little wound in their arms, and rub each other's blood into the cut" said Gerald. "Yes – and swear to be true to each other, of one blood, all their lives. That is what we ought to do. No wounds, that is obsolete. But we ought to swear to love each other, you and I, implicitly and perfectly, finally, without any possibility of going back on it." ...Birkin sought hard to express himself. But Gerald hardly listened. His face shone with a certain luminous pleasure. *He was pleased. But he kept his reserve. He held himself back.* "Shall we swear to each other, one day?" said Birkin, putting out his hands to Gerald. Gerald just touched the extended fine, living hand, as if withheld and afraid. "*We'll leave it till I understand it better,*" he said, in a voice of excuse. Birkin watched him. A little sharp disappointment, perhaps a touch of contempt came into his heart. "Yes," he said. "You must tell me what you think, later. You know what I mean. *No sloppy emotionalism. An impersonal love that leaves one free.*" (178-79) [Italics added]

The point in this conversation that deserves special attention is Birkin's longing and insistence for an unwavering friendship with Gerald. Such a

friendship is intended to set oneself free, most probably, from feelings of emptiness and boredom and establishing a connection with the “beyond” where married life can prove inane. What is even more noteworthy is that Gerald postpones responding to Birkin’s proposition. The act of postponement proves that Lawrence himself is not fully convinced that blood-brotherhood (“*blutbruderschaft*”) should get a due place in his religion.

In the conversation that follows the wrestling bout in the chapter called “Gladiatorial” we see both Gerald and Birkin share unanimous feeling regarding a man’s deficiency in loving a woman. In this chapter, after returning from France Birkin comes to close to Ursula. But when his proposal ends in fiasco, he walks furiously away from the Brangwen home and straight towards Criches at Shortlands. He finds Gerald restless and irritable with his own emptiness, and is therefore, glad enough to find in Birkin an antidote to boredom. The famous wrestling scene follows, where “Gerald presses his powerful mechanical strength” against Birkin’s “organic energies”. Consequently, when the two slip back to normal consciousness, Gerald marks out the significance of his / their experience: “I’ve ever felt as much *love* for a woman, as I have for you.” (239) This is the *Blutbruderschaft*, that Birkin has been seeking, for the aim here is not sexual

gratification, but carrying friendship to a new height and scale. Thus the wrestling bout functions as a part of the step to be taken beyond marriage. But such steps fail to find place in Lawrence's religion as it is exclusively founded on the marital relationship between men and women.

After marrying Ursula, Birkin begins to expound to Gerald the repulsive nature of contemporary marriage. "It's a sort of tacit hunting in couples: the world all in couples, each couple in its own little house, watching its own little interests and stewing in its own little privacy – it's the most repulsive thing on earth." (402) Gerald agrees readily and the two men search for a more expansive way of life:

You've got to take down the love-and-marriage ideal from its pedestal. We want something broader, I believe in the additional perfect relationship between man and man – additional to marriage."

"I can never see how they can be same," said Gerald.

"Not the same – but equally important, equally creative, equally sacred, if you like."

Gerald moved uneasily. "You know, I can't feel that," said he. "Surely there can never be anything as strong between man and man as sex love is between man and woman. Nature doesn't provide the basis" (403)

It is noticeable that though Gerald promptly agrees on embarking a search for something new, it is his firm belief that man to man relation cannot be



substituted for “sex love between man and woman”. But it is not Gerald alone who can provide reason for such utterances, which comes mostly from his unconscious state of mind. Birkin too comes up with a full view of the importance of “sex love” which has central importance for an understanding of the development of Lawrence’s religion. Birkin is also the first character of Lawrence to think of sex “as a functional process, not as a fulfillment”. It is “functional” to Birkin (or for Lawrence), since no other living relationship hitherto explored can tie mankind in the sort of knot which “sex love” can. For him “sex love” is the critically important center around which mankind evolves.

Nevertheless, Birkin expresses his hatred for sex when it exhausts man being and/or woman being. His hatred for it comes out of his insistent desire to be “single in himself” despite his conjunction with a woman. Birkin’s demand should be considered against the backdrop of *The Rainbow*. In *Women in Love* Birkin castigates the kind of relationship that existed between Tom-Lydia and Will-Anna in *The Rainbow*, because we can clearly see through them the limitations of relationships that strive for fulfillment in “sex marriage”. Both Tom and Will manifestly exhaust their men-being in sexual relations with Lydia and Anna respectively. In *Women in Love* Lawrence focuses on the kind of “sex love” where “man-being” and

“women-being” are not exhausted in consummation. He is for the kind of sex act that produces unadulterated “man-being” and “women-being”, since only unadulterated individuals can be creative. These “pure individuals” are true disciples of Lawrence’s religion. Following the principles of Lawrence’s religious tenets, Birkin neither exhausts Ursula nor allows her (Ursula herself is not a threat) to exhaust his “man-being”. As they follow the principles of Lawrence’s religion, their relationship is more lasting and steadier than any other relationships that we find in *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*.

No wonder the theme of male friendship is recurrent in Lawrence writings. In the story “The Blind Man” the clasp of Bertie Reid’s hands over Maurice Pervin’s eyes becomes a pledge to Pervin: “We’re all right together now, aren’t we?” (107). And in *Aaron’s Rod* the way the writer Lily pulls the sick flutist, Aaron Sisson, off the street and cares for him is clear proof of the effort to launch a “different” kind of friendship. A similar friendship ceremony occurs in *Kangaroo*, when the writer Somers soothes the aching throat of fatherly Ben Cooley, the would-be dictator of Australia. Cipriano and Ramon, the two religious leaders in the *Plumed Serpent*, perform a

strange sensual rite between them which is also a “friendship pact”. Lawrence’s play *David* provides another example of Lawrence's version of male friendship where the two heroes (based on Lawrence and John Middleton Murry) swear a divine and eternal agreement that binds them together.

Lawrence also wrote a few poems on the theme of male friendship. These are “Compari”, “Behavior”, and “Refused Friendship”. The very title “Compari” is derived from “compare”, “comparatico”, Sicilian / southern Italian terms describing a semi-formalized friendship.<sup>6</sup> The connotations of the word help illuminate the quality of friendship Lawrence is seeking. It probably even carries the implication of “family”, which would provide a hint at a sort of symbolic sacred marriage among friends. Each of these facts mentioned above involves a sudden radical pledge, something more than any casual relationship between two men. Thus male friendship in Lawrence’s religion is the step beyond marriage which makes marriage possible and gestures at the kind of breakthrough to a fuller life which Lawrence tried to project, in a dozen different ways, in his creative works.

In *Fantasia of the Unconscious* Lawrence suggests that by male friendship he does not mean homosexuality and that “male relations involve



the upper, spiritual poles of consciousness, instead of the lower sexual poles” (Spilka, 47):

Is this new polarity, this new circuit of passion between comrades and co-workers, is this also sexual? It is a vivid circuit of polarized passion. Is it hence sex?

It is not. Because what are the poles of positive connection? – the upper, busy poles. What is the dynamic contact? – a unison in spirit, in understanding, and a pure commingling in one great work. A mingling of the individual passion onto one great purpose ...knowing what sex is, can we call this other also sex? We cannot ... It is a great motion in the opposite direction.  
(*Fantasia of the Unconscious* ,151)

So through “manly love”, Lawrence seeks implicit understanding and reliance between men. The demand for an “understanding” and “reliance” for the purpose of immersion tends to explain why Birkin likes Gerald. At least occasionally Gerald feels the necessity of a relationship that transcends marriage; nevertheless, his longing is not like Birkin’s who is at times skeptical about the validity of men-women relationships. *Women in Love* gives evidence that Birkin and Gerald do not long for each other physically;

their desire is to get some comfort from each other beyond heterosexual marriage. We can say that in the Lawrentian hypothesis relationship between men is complementary to men-women relationship. When combined with the alloy of male relations, heterosexual relations become a durable part of Lawrence's religion.

Birkin's attempt to place *Blutbruderschaft* upon an ideal pedestal is merely an experiment. For example, Birkin is scarcely convinced of the final validity of *Blutbruderschaft*: "I know I want a perfect and complete relationship with you," he tells Ursula. "But beyond that. Do I want a real, ultimate relationship with Gerald? ... or don't I?" This question is partially answered by the total failure of male friendship or *Blutbruderschaft* to take hold, and by Ursula's final categorical notification: "You can't have it, because it's false, impossible". (497)

The concept of twin love too proves ephemeral. If the love of man for man can never function as a perfect parallel to married love, the question still remains, how should it function? Again, Gerald has no respect for Birkin's notion of establishing a sacred bond between man and man. His mind is guided by convention; his will leads him toward self-annihilation. Lawrence considers marriage and friendship as "two great creative passions,

separate, apart, but complementary: the one pivotal, the other adventurous: the one, marriage, the centre of human life; and the other the leap ahead [of marriage]." (112) So friendship is a venturing out and marriage is the critically important center around which we spin or rotate. Not surprisingly, Lawrence was ready to accommodate any belief when it is in favour of creation. His recognition of male friendship as a "creative passion" (or pro creation) by and large finds its place in Lawrence's scripture.

But "creation", according to Lawrence's paradoxical concept of religion, follows disintegration and dissolution. Destruction and creation, in all probability, are the most important aspects of Lawrence's religion in *Women in Love*, constructed in the model of male-female duality. H.M. Daleski's binary divisioning of Lawrentian terms between male-female, is surely devoid of one important pair of Lawrence terminology. The pair is Lawrence's dualistic hypothesis of disintegration-dissolution-destruction-corruption and creation-regeneration-germination. In any balanced formulation of this binary opposition, the male part of the binary should be disintegration-dissolution-destruction-corruption, and the female part should encompass creation-regeneration-germination. This binary opposition has its distinct presence in "The Crown" and has been utilized in *Women in Love*.



In "The Crown" Lawrence proclaims: "The spirit of destruction is divine. In corruption there is divinity. ...decay, corruption, destruction, breaking down is the opposite equivalent of creation". (74) As ever, Lawrence conceives "Life" to be a combination of both destruction and creation:

Destruction and creation are the two relative absolutes between the opposite infinities. Life is in both. Life may even, for a while be almost entirely in one, or almost entirely in the other. The end of either oneness is death. For life is really in the two, the absolute is the pure relation, which is both.

If we have our fill of destruction, then we shall turn again into creation. We shall need to live again, and live hard, for once our great civilized form is broken, and we are at last born into the open sky, we shall have a whole new universe to grow up into, and to find relations with. The future will open its delicate, dawning aeons in front of us, unfathomable. (78)

In this quoted passage Lawrence shows that though destruction and creation are conflicting forces, "Life" is manifested in both of them. Lawrence asserts that the departure from either of them will lead to death. Nonetheless, we should not be afraid of destruction; it may be death, but not the end of things. Destruction, in no time, will follow creation, and foster the growth of the new.

The destruction-creation duality is a modification of Schopenhauer's idea of the "will to live" and the "will to die". Daniel J. Schneider writes (while summarizing the principles of philosophy that Lawrence derived from Schopenhauer and later reshaped) that "nature is both creative and destructive, both synthetic and reductive, both a life-impulse and death-impulse, so man carries within him these two primal impulses: the unitive impulse to create and synthesize, and the divisive impulse to separate and destroy the unity." (Schneider, 17) Persuaded by Schopenhauer's philosophy in "The Reality of Peace" Lawrence too argues that destruction and creation are one and are in us at all times:

We are not only creatures of light and virtue. We are also alive in corruption and death. It is necessary to balance the dark against the light if we are ever going to be free. We must know that we, ourselves, are the living stream of seething corruption, this also all the while, as well as the bright river of life. We must recover our balance to be free. From our bodies comes the issue of corruption as well as the issue of creation. We must have our being in both. ... The man I know myself to be must be destroyed before the true man I am can exist. The old man in me must die and be put away. (*Phoenix*, 676)

The “great desire of creation and the great desire of dissolution” exist in man as “pure equivalents”. (678) Man can not deny any of the desires. When he is urged towards destruction, he must die. His desire must coincide with the greater will which urges man to destroy “the old man” before one can be reborn. The destruction-creation duality thus turns out to be a major aspect of Lawrence’s religion.

The duality of disintegration / destruction and creation is the most important aspect of Lawrence’s religion in *Women in Love*. It would not be too much to say that the primary motive of the composition of this novel is to illustrate Lawrence’s sense of disintegration and corruption. The digging of the canal, the dehumanizing effects of industrialization, and Ursula’s battles to keep her “individuality intact” (in *The Rainbow*) – all have paved the way for the supreme reign of disintegration and corruption in *Women in Love*. In *The Rainbow* disintegration is most evident in Ursula and Anton’s relationship and least evident in the one between Tom and Lydia. Will and Anna’s relationship occupies an intermediate position between these two relationships. Consequently, in *Women in Love* all the characters, places and events herald the necessity for disintegration that will follow a new germination. Modified from Schopenhauer’s philosophy, the idea leads to a



depiction of the eternal struggle between destruction and creation that is at the heart of this novel and constitutes the central religious tenet of Lawrence's religion in *Women in Love*.

Through Gerald Lawrence presents a vivid picture of disintegration in *Women in Love*. Skrebensky, engineer and soldier, and potential builder of cities and representative of the means of production, anticipates the industrial magnate Gerald Crich. Gerald is able to go far beyond Skrebensky. He who is not merely an officer commanding a company of a Brigade like Skrebensky, rules an empire of workers; his domain extends over all the mines and to industries. But finally, Gerald too, "is nothing", and becomes the hollow god of the "Machine" by creating a perfect external order with his will. He unleashes a kind of chaos that devours his own self. Moreover, Lawrence shows that Gerald's phenomenal success as an "Industrial Magnate" brings misery not only to those deemed surplus to his needs, but also does injury to his own self. Just as the one-legged signman of "Coal-Dust" is symbolically incomplete, Gerald, who traps the fingers of his right hand in his own machinery, (168) is as much a victim of industrialism as his men.

The massive growth of industrialism gives birth to an existential as well as spiritual crisis for the characters of *Women in Love*. Though Gerald, the “Industrial Magnate”, runs his industrial endeavor with enormous power and authority, he cannot find a definite answer to vital questions such as “What did everything mean? Where was life ...?” (19) The growth of his business never coincides with his spiritual growth. He feels puzzled at Birkin’s query on the purpose of his life (19):

“Tell me,” said Birkin. “What do you live for?”

Gerald’s face went baffled.

“What do I live for?” he repeated. “I suppose I live to work, to produce something, in so far as I am a purposive being. Apart from that, I live because I am living.”(48)

Here Gerald’s consideration of “life” (as a means of “production”) comes out of his spiritual impoverishment. Through Gerald and his business Lawrence shows that disintegration is inevitable when material progress disregards spiritual upliftment. Gerald’s industrial enterprise, as a result, lacks creativity. Subsequently, it dawns upon him that a “great mass of energy seemed decaying up in that silent, hulking form” (188), but to spiritually inchoate Gerald this sense of “decay” never overwhelms his desperate passion for mere “production”. So due to the total negation resulting at the onset of industrialization, Gerald remains spiritually barren.

The colossal disintegration produced by Gerald's colliery not only victimizes the Criches but also an entire range of characters and their surroundings. The victims suffer from psychological disorder – neurosis or paranoia and indulge easily in misanthropic streaks or homicidal activities. Mrs Crich looks like a victim of shell-shock, wandering “about the house and about the surrounding country, staring keenly and seeing nothing” (224), and is said to be “a woman with a monomania” (212); Gerald suffers from the same psychological disorder (214). Hermione Roddice, while attending a wedding ceremony, appears as though she is “not quite there” (43). The same phrase is used to describe Ursula (269). Hermione comments elsewhere “I think we've all gone mad” (173). Birkin wonders if he has lost his sanity after rolling naked in the bushes (111) and his knowledge of Hermione is said to be “almost like a madness” (101). As for Gerald, “all his life [has been] been tortured by a furious and destructive demon, which possessed him sometimes like an insanity” (236-7). Birkin asserts that the world would be a better place if the majority of people “were just wiped out”. (24) On another occasion, he tells Ursula that he “abhor[s] humanity. [He] wish[es] it was swept away” (131). Gudrun feels “murderous” and itches to have the crowd of colliers' wives watching the Crich wedding “annihilated” (11). Later in the novel Gudrun is no less keen to have Mrs



Kirk, Gerald's ex-nanny and a harmless local busybody, "taken out at once and strangled" (220). Mrs Crich, Gerald's mother, likewise confesses that she would have strangled her children in infancy if she had had any inkling that they look beautiful when dead, as does her husband (348). This macabre set of characters of *Women in Love* suggests that it is a deep seated feeling of Lawrence that obviously reflects his belief that a form of disintegration and destruction results from the onset of industrialization.

The morbid and moribund states that hasten the disintegration process left their mark on Lawrence's religion. Disintegration and dissolution are important aspects of Lawrence's views on religion. It is remarkable to note that misanthropy, one of the heights of disintegration, has its place in Lawrence's religion:

The sense of jeopardy spoils it all--the feeling that one may be flung out into the cess-pool of a world, the danger of being dragged in to the foul conglomerate mess, the utter disgust one feels for humanity, people smelling like bugs, endless masses of them, and no relief: it is so difficult to bear. (*Letters*, ii. 424)

In the quoted passage it can be noticed that at one stage Lawrence's religion verges on misanthropy. Lawrence obviously thinks that the principles of

early 20<sup>th</sup> century religion cannot be like that of traditional religions. As a result, even psychological disorder and some aspects of misanthropy find their place in Lawrence's "specialized" religion. It is hardly surprising then that in *Women in Love* the characters actively perform many violent acts and even nurture genocidal feelings. As a boy Gerald has blown the top of his brother's head off with a gun. (48) As a man, he appears to relish inflicting pain on his horse (in "Coal-Dust"). Hermione Roddice brings a ball of lapis lazuli crashing down onto Birkin's head in "Breadalby" (108), while in the Tyrol Gudrun and Loerke fantasize about a man who invents "such a perfect explosive that it blew the earth in two". (470) As Birkin puts it at the end of "Shortlands", the British are either murderers or murderees. Birkin echoes Lawrence's idea in "An Island", when he declares: "The whole idea is dead. Humanity itself is dry-rotten, really". (130) Thus *Women in Love* shows that Lawrence could not work out his views on religion without incorporating into it an element of misanthropy that he has used in this novel.

*Women in Love* is permeated with a sense of pessimism. It is in the formation of such pessimistic views that we find in the novel the influence of Schopenhauer's philosophy. Schopenhauer, labeled the "pessimist philosopher", advocated a retreat from life, finding human-beings unable to feel the flow of the eternal life force and disinclined to go beyond a sense

of cheapness and pettiness. Birkin upholds Schopenhauer's attribute that only the "non-human is above the squalor of twentieth century industrial civilization". (222) In *Women in Love* Schopenhauer's influence is projected through Birkin and other characters who even reveal pessimistic streaks that betray misanthropic and genocidal feelings. But Schopenhauer's pessimism stems from an objective outlook, since he had considered human nature as a whole; Lawrence's pessimism (or occasional misanthropy), on the other hand, is the consequence of his acute sensitivity to the working of disintegrating forces in twentieth century England.

In *Women in Love* disintegration and dissolution in Lawrence's religion is typified by Gerald's colliery and his industrial enterprise. But manifestations of Lawrence's religious beliefs as articulated in the novel are also the contribution of the different places that he believes has hastened the onset of the destructive process. Beldover, where Ursula and Gudrun live, Shortlands, the Crich home, Café Pompadour, the haunt of London Bohemians – all of these places record the inevitability of what Lawrence felt was impending.<sup>7</sup> Although in F. R. Leavis's view, the episodes in *Women in Love* related to Pompadour (in chapter VI, VII, and XXVIII) are not relevant to the thematic development of the novel (Leavis, 68), Daleski believes that the "account of the bohemia" that is described in these chapters



is relevant to the specific development of the novel. (*The Forked Flame*, 129) Indeed through the scenes in the Pompadour, Lawrence has projected the dissolution and corruption of early twentieth century. These scenes most obviously captures Lawrence's sense of London as a "vortex of broken passions" – a "whirlpool of disintegration and dissolution". (396) The Pompadour scenes typify the disintegration Lawrence saw in the contemporary world and contribute to Lawrence's depiction of religion in the novel.

Lawrence's religious beliefs also lead to reductionist consequences as is evident in the depiction of Gerald's death in the Northern ice, scene of one of the most overwhelming reductionist pictures that Lawrence has depicted in *Women in Love*. John Turner (in an essay titled "Reducing Down: D. H. Lawrence and Captain Scott", collected in *Questia*, an online library ) provides evidence that Captain Scott's death in 1913 in the southern pole with his assault party taught Lawrence a lot about the reductive effects of 20<sup>th</sup> century progress. Lawrence conceived the destiny of Gerald from his knowledge of the exploration story of Scott. As was the fate of Scott in the Antarctic, Gerald in *Women in Love* freezes to death amidst the wastes of the Alps. Although in "search of new discoveries" in the southern pole, Turner explains, Scott was also "in search of himself". Like the explorer, Gerald

belonged with those people who went “to the ends of the earth because they have already come to the end of themselves”. (No pagination identified) We also know from Reginald Pound’s account that Scott was “somber”, and “suspicious of life” (quoted in the same essay) like Gerald, and the byproduct of the reductive effects of the twentieth century. Lawrence’s letter to Garnett written around this time is relevant in this context: “It always frightens me how life gets reduced down and down to fewer elements the further one goes.” (*The Letters*, vol-i. 517) According to Lawrence, “in struggle with natural conditions” (*Women in Love*, 216) people reveal a diminishing of their humanity. This is why Gerald in the novel as well as Scott in real life succumb to death, albeit in two different poles. Gerald is finally “reduced” in the Alps, but his downfall is so tragic that it signals the end of an entire world.

The notion of apocalypse is also behind Lawrence’s belief in the cycle of “creation-regeneration-germination”. Lawrence’s religious belief is such that the reductive process gives way to the process of regeneration. His treatment of this theme is uniquely his own and he merges the ancient belief of resurrection with it. Birkin, indeed, is the prophet of Lawrence’s religion in *Women in Love*, but it is through Gerald that Lawrence’s idea of resurrection has been clearly manifested in the novel. Gerald is the

embodiment of the idea that destruction and creation are intricately linked. In *Women in Love* Gerald is more or less responsible for terminating his own life as well as the lives of his brother, his sister and Dr Brindell. His iron hand controls the colliery and impacts on the lives of its workers, although he had dedicated his life to “making things go”. (56)

In Lawrence’s fiction Gerald has two precursors: Leslie Tempest in *The White Peacock* and Uncle Tom Brangwen in *The Rainbow*, though neither of them are captains of industry. But unlike them Gerald meets his profoundly symbolic fate outside England in the Tyrol. Through him, Lawrence is able to project a sense of the life and times of a doomed individual who is also a portent of his race; Gerald, after all, is “a phenomenon, not a human being” (430). In the final chapter of the novel when Birkin touches the “dead face” and “the sharp, almost glittering fair hair” of Gerald’s frozen body, he strokes an omen as well, “an omen of the universal dissolution into whiteness and snow”(264 ), the “great cul-de-sac of snow and mountain peaks” (416)

But Gerald’s death has a regenerative power: “the timeless creative mystery would bring forth some other being, finer, more wonderful, some new more lovely race, to carry on the embodiment of creation. The game



was never up". (497) The striking feature of Gerald's death is that it does not denote an end of his own entity or that of mankind. In fact, Lawrence's belief in "regeneration through degeneration" is brought into the foreground through Gerald, the representative of "making things go".

Even if Birkin is the leading actor of *Women in Love*, Lawrence very subtly underscores the dominant part played by Gerald in the novel. Mark Kinkead-Weekes has pointed out that

Lawrence put into Gerald all his fascination with power: handsome physical strength (very different from his own scrawny body), the power of mind over matter, the power of technology which revolutionized the coal industry in his lifetime". (Kinkead-Weekes, 337)

Kinkead-Weekes' observation is important for the argument of this chapter since Gerald potentially possessed the ability to replace Birkin as the protagonist. Lawrence's placement of Gerald as a forerunner of his race in the revised version of *Women in Love* clearly indicates Lawrence's predilection for him.<sup>8</sup> In the revised version Gerald and Birkin's holiday in Tyrol is important, since through the alteration of their places Lawrence implemented his vision of Gerald as an embodiment of regeneration.

Ultimately, Birkin is not the victim of disintegration, for it is Gerald's dissolution in the northern ice that heralds a long desired new germination and creation. Lawrence graphically upholds his ultimate belief in the duality of destruction and creation. It is a belief embedded in the plot at a very early stage of the composition of this novel. His absolute belief in this conflicting dual force is one of the most important features of the religious beliefs manifested in *Women in Love*. Lawrence's firm belief in this duality indicates that the future of mankind is not obstructed by any cul-de-sac; rather it ushers in hope for new creation and germination.

It is striking to note that in *Women in Love* destruction-creation and the male-female duality have surpassed instinctive impulse and individualism, Lawrence's two major religious beliefs in *The Rainbow*. The latter, in turn, have apparently received insignificant attention in *Women in Love*. It is as if these beliefs are overshadowed by the concept of the destruction-creation and male-female duality that occasionally retreat to celebrations of blood-brotherhood. Though their presences in *Women in Love* have not been uttered distinctly, they somehow determine the subterranean pulse of the text.

Perhaps to saturate the role of instinct with every other belief that he has dealt with in *Women in Love*, in one of the early chapters titled "Shortlands" Lawrence sets up arguments between Birkin and Gerald over the role and nature of the instinctive impulse in social life. Needless to say, the dominant theme of *Women in Love*, disintegration and dissolution, is related to the suppression of our instinctive impulse. Birkin argues that "to act spontaneously on one's impulses" is "the only really gentlemanly thing to do". (140) Contrarily, Gerald infers that the spontaneous behavior of individuals can only lead to social disaster. Both their opinions proceed from very different assumptions about what exists at the core of life. Birkin's idea implies that human nature, even if not essentially "good," is at least social, and that true relationships are formal only when human beings act according to their nature – that is, by impulse and in the absence of any form of outside intervention. Gerald, on the other hand, has a wholly pessimistic view of human nature, apparently believing that true society is realized only when human nature is restrained. This line of thought suggests that human beings must not follow rules that society has constructed to keep our natures in check. While to Birkin, true society begins with the complete freedom of the individual, for Gerald, who "stickles" for "convention" (142), it begins with collective forms of constraint. For Birkin, only the "gentleman" acts on his



real instincts; for Gerald, only the barbarian does. The entire novel, we can say, is the outcome of such conflicting notions of spontaneity and restraint through which Lawrence put to test his major beliefs. Thus Lawrence's belief in the instinctive impulse acts as the central driving force of *Women in Love*.

Another aspect of Lawrence's religion is individual fulfillment. Although most of Lawrence's beliefs discussed so far ultimately proved to be inadequate for him, in one way or other he finally sought salvation through individual fulfillment. As we saw in the previous chapter, Lawrence's belief in individuality is, of course, rooted in *The Rainbow*. For Tom Brangwen when the internal as well as the external world offered no promise or satisfying reward, he came into contact with a deeper reality so that he had to resist "the actions which wanted to absorb him." (*The Rainbow*, 20-21) He felt empty, without purpose and unfulfilled. He is the first of many Lawrence characters in these two novels who set out on the search for individual freedom. The seed of individualism, a prime anchor of Lawrence's religion, is sowed with the process of individuation of Tom Brangwen in *The Rainbow* and is brought to a point of stabilization with Ursula and Rupert Birkin in *Women in Love*.

Towards the end of *The Rainbow* Ursula's flight leads directly to individuality she is finally ready for a complete break with her previous existence. "What had she to do with parents and antecedents? She knew herself new and unbegotten, she had no father, no mother, no anterior connections". (425) According to the dust-cover synopsis of the novel, probably written by Lawrence himself, the book "ends with Ursula, the leading-shoot of the restless, fearless family [the Brangwens], waiting at the advance-post of our time to blaze a path into the future". (Quoted in Keith Sagar, 59) But it is only in *Women in Love* that Ursula succeeds in establishing her individuality.

It then comes as no surprise that the very first scene of *Women in Love* establishes Lawrence's belief in individualism. Here we find Ursula and her sister Gudrun exchanging views on marriage. Gudrun's point about the necessity of the experience of marriage is disapproved by Ursula. Conventional romanticized conception of love and marriage cannot be found in either of their views on marriage. Here it is taken as a possible means of "fulfilling" life, but the concept fails to get Ursula's approbation:

“You don’t think one needs the experience of having been married?” she asked .

“Do you think it need be an experience?” replied Ursula.

“Bound to be in some way or other,” said Gudrun, coldly.

“Possibly undesirable, but bound to be an experience of some sort.”

“Not really,” said Ursula. “More likely to be the end of experience.” (03)

Ursula, the young woman who has experience of Winifred Inger (her Uncle Tom’s wife and the woman with whom she had developed a lesbian relationship), and Anton Skrebensky, could not attain anything from marriage. Moreover, the Ursula who sits with Gudrun has already seen numerous failures at personal, social and national levels. She has also seen the disintegrating effects of traditional nineteenth-century beliefs. Therefore, Ursula cannot go just anywhere and seeks salvation in individualism.

On the other hand, Birkin’s failure to extract fulfillment from “the world’s constructive activity”, (327) his professional world, and male friendship set free his naked self. His relationship with the opposite sex advances through his characteristic sense of individual freedom. Birkin is knowledgeable about the essential futility of all attempts at social harmony. He always seeks to get away from this process of reduction, but he knows that all these processes were “universal but unacknowledged”. (326) Furthermore, Hermione’s company has a similar reductive and deadly touch.



An unconscious problem haunts Birkin perennially. “What should a man add himself on to?” He finds no means of ultimate adherence to his belief and for him: “The whole world’s constructive activity was a fiction, a lie, to hide the great process of decomposition, which had set in”. (327)

Birkin’s predicament in *Women in Love* is a clear testimony of the way Schopenhauer’s beliefs had embedded themselves in Lawrence psyche. The phenomenal world offers less reality and more challenge for Birkin (or Lawrence himself) who see through its futility. Lawrence also causes Birkin to flee society and its senseless activity and withdraw into a world of his own. Birkin goes beyond the limitations of ego and overcomes the phenomenal world to find “the only true peace”, which according to Schopenhauer, “the individual is allowed”. (*The World as Will and Idea*, 72 )

Consequently, in his professional life as a School Inspector, Birkin considers his work “terrible, horrible” (312); since he does not find his professional work meaningful. For him going from school to school, making reports and giving suggestions, is almost a “horror” as he recognizes it to be “mechanical” and “purposeless”. (312) In his private life as well, the same sense of futility and wrongness haunts him. Leaving aside all ideas, religious

and philosophical, all of which are mere “sounds”, Birkin turns to himself. He remains “detached”, “self-responsible”, and has “no communion with any other soul”. (314) This paradox is more clearly expressed when Birkin finds “paradisaal” bliss in individual freedom, possible only when individuality remains intact:

There was the paradisaal entry into pure, single being, the individual soul taking precedence over love and desire for union, stronger than any pangs of emotion, a lovely state of free-proud singleness, which accepted the obligation of the permanent connection with others, submits to the yoke and leash of love, but never forfeits its own proud individual singleness, even while it loves and yields. (264)

Since individuality faces perpetual threats, the rituals that are needed to save the individual should be changed from time to time. Thus Paul Morel, at the end of *Sons and Lovers* steps out quickly in a new direction, forgetting his three discarded lovers (including his mother). Ursula Bragwen, in *The Rainbow*, face that radiant arch expectantly, her soul new born, her “old selves shed behind her like so many wrinkled skins”. (494) In *Women in Love* too, Rupert Birkin entangled in marriage, seeks peace in blood-

brotherhood and towards the end of the novel indicates that he will keep on exploring new and different horizons.

Ultimately, then Lawrence's religious probings as we have seen throughout this chapter (and in the preceding chapter) does not offer lasting solutions. The variety of beliefs he espouses in successive novels expose the inadequacy of each; more accurately perhaps, beliefs formulated by human beings are intrinsically inadequate. Not surprisingly, in the 1919 "Foreword to *Women in Love*" Lawrence insisted on the following:

Every man who is acutely alive is acutely wrestling with his own soul. The people that can bring forth the new passion, the new idea, this people will endure. Those others, that fix themselves in the old idea, will perish with the new life strangled unborn within them. (14)

It is such proclivity that drives Lawrence to construct his fictions where his protagonists always appear with revised ideas and beliefs. Ursula's widening circle leaves her shattered and transforms her before she has a final vision of a newly discovered world. The widening circle of the two pairs of lovers in *Women in Love* leads them into the Alps. The purgatorial effect of the Northern ice cleanses them by obliterating Gerald. Therefore, Lawrence's



religion in *The Rainbow* culminates in the precarious conclusion of *Women in Love*. The inconclusive ending paves the way for accommodation of a “new passion”, and a “new idea” in Lawrence’s religion. Mustering strength from changing sensibilities, Lawrence’s religious probings ultimately set the individual free to stride towards any direction that is propitious for “life” and growth”. As a result, in the *Plumed Serpent* Lawrence attempts to resurrect the old Aztec religion. For Lawrence this Mexican religion remains open and is less enclosed within a particular metaphysical system, and makes no claims to absolute truth. The apocalyptic theme of the recovery of paradise in *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* is more fully developed in *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, where the protagonists consider themselves like Adam and Eve – naked in the Garden of Eden. No wonder that Lawrence wrote in the introduction to the American edition of his *New Poems* of 1920 that his religion could not be “fixed, set, static” (*Phoenix*, 219)

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<sup>1</sup> We know that *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* were initially conceived as *The Sisters* (Lawrence for sometimes also called it as *The Wedding Ring*). But Lawrence split up *The Sisters* for a number of reasons. First and foremost, he could not show the steady progress of his religious beliefs without dividing it into two. Secondly, Edward Garnett (Lawrence's early mentor and editor for the publishing house Duckworth & Co.) was "disappointed" with the manuscript of *The Sisters* and did not request Duckworth to publish it. Lawrence later made arrangements with Methuen to publish it, but he did so only after deciding to publish it in two different volumes. Lawrence was also "convinced" that the characters depicted in *The Sisters* should "fall into two halves and gradations between them" which ultimately was possible by the division. (*Letters*, 263)

<sup>2</sup> It is important to note that Lawrence's essay on Hardy, "The Crown" and *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious and Fantasia of the Unconscious* – all can be considered as philosophical conclusions drawn out of *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*. Though the Hardy essay is generally considered as *a priori* theory of *The Rainbow* since it is concomitantly written with *The Rainbow*, we should not forget that it was written when Lawrence was preparing the final version (between November 1914 - March 1915) of *The Rainbow*. After completing the final draft of *Women in Love* Lawrence summed up his beliefs scattered throughout it in *Psychoanalysis and Fantasia*. Again, though "The Crown" was composed at the initial stage of writing *Women in Love*, in the case of this novel we should remember that it was a part of *The Sisters* project which was first conceived in early 1913. So after completion of *The Rainbow* (in 1915) and when Lawrence was about to begin *Women in Love* separately, his beliefs had hardened and he

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was sure about the direction in which his religious probings was taking him in this new novel. Therefore, "The Crown" is also the philosophical conclusion of *Women in Love*.

<sup>3</sup> It would be pertinent to explain here that in the Hardy essay Lawrence's principle of "Law" and "Love" is manifested respectively through female and male, which is borrowed from the Judeo-Christian conception of the "Trinity". God the Father is the God of the Jews, "the God of the body, the rudimentary God of physical laws and physical functions". Thus the Father is the divine manifestation of the female principle of Law: "...in the God of the ancient Jew the female has triumphed. That which was born of woman, that is indeed the God of the Old Testament". ("The Crown", 27) The New Testament, on the other hand, "is the great assertion of the male", and the Son is the divine manifestation of the male principle of Love. (27) Christ is viewed as having risen "from the suppressed of Judea", to live the male life utterly apart from woman". Consequently, the body of Christ, "that of Him which was Woman", had to be put to death "to testify that He was Spirit, that He was male, that He was Man, without any womanly part". (28) What is vital for the apprehension of the duality in Christianity is that the Father and the Son are brought together in one Godhead by the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is analogous to Lawrence's mystical apprehension of the interaction of the male and female principles that he wishes to see established between man and woman. The Holy Ghost reconciles the Father and the Son and is viewed as opposites while the reconciliation of the male and female illuminates Lawrence's concept of the unified self.

<sup>4</sup> Here in Ursula's search for a man the biblical overtones are remarkable since the Bible plays a key role in nearly all D.H. Lawrence's work. See also end note 3 in Chapter Two of this dissertation.



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<sup>5</sup> Many critics have paid attention to the homoerotic elements in Lawrence's fictions. However, Harry T. Moore ruled out the existence of such elements in Lawrence's work. Mark Spilka shares Moore's views but notes the few exceptions. Even John Middleton Murry (in his bitterest attack in *The Son of Woman*) did not accuse Lawrence of "what is generally understood by the word homosexuality". However, in Lawrence's earliest novel like *The White Peacock* some homophobic streaks are evident, as for example George Saxton gives Cyril Beardsall a special kind of rubdown after a short swim. (248) The rubbing down of Aaron (in *Aaron's Rod*) by the writer Lily also strikes the readers' mind in this respect.

<sup>6</sup> The meaning of "compari" that I have used here is provided by one of the "Rananim" (The Yahoo group on D. H. Lawrence comprising of Lawrence scholars and enthusiasts from around the world) scholars.

<sup>7</sup> In the second part of the third chapter of *Forked Flame*, H.M. Daleski provides an exhaustive analysis of the places that epitomize Lawrence's sense of "disintegration". Daleski has shown interconnectivity of the places as an emblem of disintegration: "...if Shortlands meets Beldover in the mines, the mines in turn are clearly a symbol of the industrial complex which is modern civilization and supports alike Bredalby and Café Pompadour". (57) After Daleski's incisive analysis, there is hardly any necessity for further discussion of the influence of these places in Lawrence's religious formulation.

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<sup>8</sup> In an early version of *Women in Love* Lawrence provided a "Prologue" where Gerald and Birkin's meeting for a holiday in Tyrol is described, this "Prologue", however, was later discarded and the Birkin-Gerald's holiday in Tyrol is given utmost importance at the end of the novel.

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## CONCLUSION

Lawrence's achievement in dealing with religion lies in his constant effort to remain "a passionately religious man". (*Letters*, 272) Religion is certainly at the core of his creative endeavours. But his religious beliefs are atypical, a gross violation of religious traditions. Bored with the chapel Christianity of his adolescence, he gradually turned into a staunch enemy of the Christian tradition and turned the Bible against Christianity itself. Like the Victorian sages Carlyle and Ruskin, Lawrence learnt to re-write the Bible in terms of credible "modern man". (Wright, 39) An avid reader of both these writers, Lawrence would have found in them a model for the kind of creative reading and re-writing of the Bible. Subsequently, with a Nietzschean spirit he ventured to write a "counter-Bible". (Chambers, 101; Wright, 39) Moreover, dissatisfied with the answers of the civilizing mission of the early twentieth century, Lawrence grappled with contemporaneous events. In his religious journey he moved on with a process of selection and elimination of religious tenets one after another; he himself never knew where his religious probings would take him in the end. The only thing he

knew was that any religious end had to ensure the full flowering of human life.

If as a twentieth century prophet Lawrence's religious beliefs are inconclusive, his scathing critique of urbanization, commercial interests, mechanical and technological progress has its parallel in that of other contemporary thinkers. Though T. S. Eliot accused Lawrence of being insensible "to ordinary social morality", his diagnosis of 20<sup>th</sup> century maladies are pretty similar to that of Lawrence. Gerald's emptiness and boredom in *Women in Love*, for example, finds a parallel in the barrenness and futility of the existence of Prufrock. As Hasna Hasan puts it, "like a psychoanalyst" Eliot "tries to throw light on the darkest area of mind, and attempts to find a solution for the debilitating maladies of the mind. ("Alienation and Neurosis in Eliot's Poetry", 55) In Eliot's findings, rapid urbanization, immense material progress through the exploitation of mechanical and technical device and loss of faith (especially in Christianity) come out as root causes of the maladies afflicting modern society. Lawrence, however, shows Christianity itself (which imposes infringement on the promptings of soul) as a barrier to the religious imagination. Thus, according to Lawrence, Christianity together with the wrong path of material progress had led mankind to the verge of disintegration.



In the preceding chapters an attempt was made to trace Lawrence's progress in his religious probings. His engagement with religion was also scrutinized. But Lawrence's religion is inextricably merged with his personal experience. Indeed, no study on Lawrence can be conducted without taking into account the formative forces behind his literary talent. In the initial chapter we thus noted that one such major force was the Chapel Christianity of Eastwood in which he was born and brought up. His subsequent exposure to other ideas such as materialism, monism, pantheism, socialism distanced him from chapel Christianity, but they failed to create any lasting imprint in Lawrence psyche. It was in the philosophy of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche that he finally found the anchor of his beliefs. But it must be said that both Schopenhauer and Nietzsche are parts of tradition of thought that influenced Lawrence and inspired him to think of religious beliefs and biblical interpretations as subject of criticism.

Among Lawrence's major novels, *The Rainbow* is the chief outcome of Lawrence's "answer to blood" without "intervention of mind, or moral". (*Letters ii*, 217) It projects a religious journey that establishes a new relation between men and women or a kind of readjustment of the old one. *The Women in Love* is a continuation of the religious journey and embraces

newer challenges. These two novels have been considered as a series whose religious intent emerges only when taken together. As we have seen, *The Rainbow* sets Lawrence forth on a journey that obviously culminated in *Women in Love*. True, these novels generated volatile response among the early critics; later critics, however, were able to appreciate aspects of his religious sensibility. I have shown that these two novels register representative beliefs of Lawrence's religion. In the early novels Lawrence had to struggle to give up "the old stable ego" of character. Lawrence himself was not convinced with the beliefs manifested in these novels. But they certainly paved the way for Lawrence to reach a point of stabilization in *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*.

Among the later novels, religion in *The Plumed Serpent*, obviously leads to primitivism and barbarism. But Nietzsche's appreciation of "primitive" religions and Lawrence's adherence to Nietzschean philosophy meant that at this stage it was possible for Lawrence to opt for such religions. In *The Plumed Serpent* Lawrence is thus tempted to revive the Aztec religion. Analysis of this old Mexican religion in *The Plumed Serpent*, however, will require another critical enterprise. All we can say here is that

the novel can be considered as a further development of Lawrence's religious journey.

In his religious explorations Lawrence was guided more by emotion and passion than by reason and intellect. But what is true is that for Lawrence intellectual consciousness is abominable. Unlike Forster, Lawrence could not confine himself to mere aesthetic and moral ways of life. (Chowdhury, 24) Lawrence is not a humanist like Golding who can replace religion with love, sanity and compassion. Lawrence's values are not settled like those of Jane Austen. Lawrence both creates and establishes religion for his fictional characters. He is not only religious in his sensibility but also a convinced reformer. For him "the essential function of art is moral. Not aesthetic, not decorative, not pastime and recreation". (*Studies in Classic American Literature*, 162) That is why his quest for religion ultimately had profound implications for his novels particularly the ones he wrote at the peak of his career. Novels like *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* are the outcomes of his passionate search for a religious mindset that could bring fulfillment in life and men-women relationships.



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